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Terrell M. Thomas

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PERCEPTION OF CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION:
LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FORESHADOWING
FUTURE TEACHERS' ATTRITION

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

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May 2016

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Dissertation for the
Degree of Doctor of Education

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May 2016

Dedication

“Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” Mark 11:24

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

I want to begin by giving thanks and honor to my Heavenly Father. Any and all blessings come from God and I would be nowhere without Him. I have been blessed to accomplish something that I know is not possible without faith. Next, I want to thank my family, friends and loved ones. I would have felt so alone without their love, support and encouragement. I want to give a special thanks to my love, Makia. God has blessed me with such an incredible love with an exceptional woman. Your love and care have kept me going when I would feel overwhelmed. I could not ask for a better best friend. Next, I would like to thank the first woman that I ever loved, my mama. You are such an inspiration to me. I have watched you sacrifice so Trevian and I could have a better chance to reach our dreams. There is no question where my stubborn, fighting spirit comes from. You have loved us like no other person could. No matter what struggles, hardships or obstacles, you have kept us together. Now it is our time to take over and apply the lessons that you worked so hard to instill in us.

Now, I would like to thank my brother Trevian. I hope that I have shown you that with God, all things are possible. I want you to always know that God will carry you and to never be afraid to blaze any trail. To my Papa, I want to send a special thank you for all the talks and support. You are one of my biggest supporters and I appreciate it all so much. Next I would like to thank my Pop. I am thankful for your support and being that

voice of reason when I am feeling stressed or I want to quit. There are so many more family members (Mimi, Kent, the Etiennes, Deric) and friends (Brother Rowe, the Bennett family) that have all played important roles in my life and through this journey. I thank you all so much.

I would also like to dedicate this to any and every child growing up in less than ideal circumstances who wants to achieve more. Do not ever feel limited or confined to where you are. As long as you have a heartbeat, you have the opportunity to put your talents to work and to achieve your goals. It gets hard but that is what it takes to create something better for yourself. Do not ever be afraid to invest in yourself.

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Finally, I would like to give a special thanks to all of the men and women that have been mentors to me throughout me journey. Brother Rowe, I thank you for always being my coach. You are still taking me to school all these many years later. Thank you for always showing me to turn to God when I need comforting or advice. Dr. Whitney, thank you for showing me what type of professional that I would like to be. I am thankful you decided to be my unofficial advisor and guide me through those tough years at Morehouse. Dr. Rolle, thank you for helping me through this difficult journey. I appreciate how you took time out to help me in my times of need and made yourself available to give advice when I was lost. I am so thankful that God has blessed me to cross paths with such influential people.

There are so many more people that deserve roses but I cannot name you all. However, I want to thank you all for helping me become a better me and taking the time out to invest in me when others gave up. You all hold a special place in my heart and I am thankful for the love and support. I pray that I can be the type of mentor and inspiration for someone else that you all have been for me. I will work to serve others as

best that I can to continue my efforts to make a difference in this world. With God, all things are possible and I know that I am living proof His greatness. To God be the glory!

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify that identified the major factors that prompted early career teachers to decide to leave the teaching profession by recording their lived experiences through interview. Narrative inquiry is suitable for this investigation on the goals of this study. Data was collected using the tools of narrative inquiry, including responses to interview questions and responses to items of a Likert Scale survey (see Appendix A). The interviews focused on each individual participant, which resulted in detailed field texts. The interview questions and Likert Scale survey were not created by the researcher. They were used, with permission, from a larger research study and survey. The following questions directed this dissertation research:

- 1) What factors lead to teacher attrition in early career teachers?
- 2) How do teacher's perception of leadership impact teacher retention?
- 3) How does poor administration influence an early career teacher's resiliency?

The population of interest were former early career teachers that taught for less than five years in an urban setting or urban school district in the U.S. A sample of eight former early career teachers formerly employed in urban districts or urban settings were this study's sample of convenience. The implications of this study are the diverse factors teacher educations/school districts/administrators should contemplate as they seek to develop effective teacher preparation and retention programs. Also to be considered is

the role of the state, local board, county and school administrators requisitely play in retaining highly qualified teachers.

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Preface

Little Child Runnin' Wild - Curtis Mayfield

Little Child
Runnin' Wild
Watch a while
You see he never smiles

Broken home
Father gone
Mama tired
So he's all alone

Kind of sad
Kind of mad
Ghetto Child
Thinking he's been had

(In the back of his mind he's sayin')
Didn't have to be here
You didn't have to love for me
While I was just a nothin' child
Why couldn't they just
Let me be (4x)

One-room shack
On the alley-back
Control, I'm told
From across the track

Where is the Mayor
Who'll make all things fair
He lives outside
Our polluted air

And I didn't have to be here
You didn't have to love for me
While I was just a nothin' child
Why couldn't they just
Let me be, let me be, let me be, let me be

I got a jones
Runnin' thru my bones
I'm sorry, son
All you money's gon'

Painful rip in my upper hip
I guess it's time to take another trip

Don't care now what nobody say
I gotta take the pain away
It's getting worser day by day
And all my life it's been this way

Can't reason with The Pusherman
Finance is all that he understands
"You junkie, mama cries, you know"
Would rip her but I love her so,
Love her so now...

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Where is The Mayor /Who’ll make all things fair/ He lives outside/ Our polluted air”

(Mayfield, 1971)

Introduction to the Inquiry

Doubt can taint the most pristine childhood innocence. Mistrust jades the lens through which you perceive the world and the only place that seems unpolluted are your dreams. While growing up in a poor neighborhood, I would spend a lot of time daydreaming. I would wonder what I wanted to do with my life and what I could do to change things for the better. You realize how difficult life is and how no one seems to care. I noticed how people in other communities did not experience the same issues and struggles I faced. I wanted to escape and I tried to develop ways that I could escape the crime and poverty of my neighborhood.

I often reflect on why I decided to choose teaching as a profession. I frequently have the internal debate about what is more important—to have a career where I could become a master of industry or to give back to help others. What is more important to me: my success or helping others to become successful? People sometimes question why I decided to teach when they felt that I could enter into any career field I wanted. I have always responded by stating how I want to help people that feel they have no voice. I want to help people learn to advocate for themselves or others and help as many people as I can. It seems strange to others that I would continue to go to school with the intentions of helping others in need rather than promoting my own careerism or seeking to become wealthy. Most people in my old community, and some of my family members, only value the potential money that a person can earn and disregard the

difference a person can make on the lives of others. My family and I struggled financially and it was their wish that I would one day make something of myself and have a profitable career. My family's troubled background and certain family members' encouragement have motivated me to work hard and strive to be a success. However, the quality of my career has always mattered more than the quantity of money I would earn: making a difference in someone else's life is priceless.

As a young child, I could not imagine education as my future career field. I respected the importance of education and valued the impact that it could have on people and their communities. I also did not like to see people exploited or manipulated. I learned that I detested the idea of being blindly led or being taken advantage of. I witnessed the cruelties of injustice and the hopelessness resulting from alcohol, drug and sexual abuse. While growing up in my old neighborhood, I witnessed family members battle drug and alcohol abuse. I saw how addiction can turn a loving person violent and cause them to lash out and attack those they love. As a child, I made the decision to try to help others as much as I could when I had the opportunity. I did not want to grow up as a substance abuser so I focused on developing the merits and work ethic necessary to achieve my goals. I knew that I wanted more in my life and I pushed myself to work harder than anyone around me to eliminate the external factors that could keep me from accomplishing my goals. Although I had the right disposition to succeed, I learned that hard work and good intentions can give rise to opposition and disdain from others. As a young African-American boy, I felt the stares and experienced the harsh looks of dismissal and contempt. I knew people who looked at me had low expectations of what I was capable of achieving. The expectation of young men living in rough neighborhoods

such as mine was to live foolishly and die young. I felt the only way that I could protect myself was to become as knowledgeable and aware as I could. I wanted to pass this value on to others as well.

Hansen (1995) explained that the call to teach comes from what one has seen and experienced, as well as the inner calling from one's heart or mind. While reading various articles on teachers and their struggles, I realized that the feelings that I had were not uncommon. Many have responded to the summons or bid to serve others (Hansen, 1995). Teaching provides people with a unique opportunity give back to the community and fulfill the desire that motivates you to give of yourself. Teaching as a vocation comprises a form of public service to others at the same time provides the individual a sense of identity and personal fulfillment. It is up to the individual to determine why they want to go into teaching. If a teacher does not feel passionately about helping children learn and serving others, the educational experience will be ruined for the student as well as for the teacher. Any real teacher would not want to ruin the educational experience for children and miss the opportunity to help someone in their time of need. A true teacher wants to have a positive impact and is willing to give of themselves to make a difference in the lives of others. Regrettably, every teacher does not share this sentiment.

“Little child/ Runnin’ Wild/ Watch a while/You see he never smiles” (Mayfield, 1971, Track 1)

As someone with over two years of experience tutoring in an urban middle school, I feel that it takes a community to help raise a child. As Allsopp (2011) declares, “It takes a village to raise a child”. If the African adage is true, as a teacher, you play an essential role. I look at teachers as one of the strongest influences on children outside of

the home. A teacher can play a significant role in what young people learn, in how they learn, in how they come to view learning itself (Hansen, 1995). Teachers model the socially acceptable norms of society, as well as help students develop intellectually. Teachers also play an important role in developing a student's confidence and self-esteem. Students spend up to eight hours a day away from their parents while with their teacher(s). This can either be a rewarding positive experience or it can ruin a child's feelings toward learning and education.

While growing up, I lived in a harsh neighborhood. As mentioned previously, physical, substance and sexual abuse surrounded me. I always looked at school as a refuge from the drama of my life. I would look forward to going to school to escape from the negativity and to spend lighthearted time with my friends. I also discovered my love for learning and my passion for education. Although I was happy at school, things at home were not positive. I grew up in a neighborhood where drugs and violence were the norm. I spent time in a neighborhood crack house and witnessed drug abuse first hand. Several members of my family had drug and alcohol habits and I learned about the pain that substance abuse brings to the individual and their families. Although we had family problems, we still were a close-knit family unit and depended on one another. Things were not always great or safe, but we had one another and there was a sense of safety even amid adversity.

When I turned seven, my mother and I moved to a suburb of Houston, a predominantly Caucasian neighborhood. I attended a school where I was the only African-American student in my class. I did not enjoy going to school; things were difficult for me. I had previously attended a school that was predominantly African-

American and lived in a predominantly African-American neighborhood. I was comfortable being around people who looked like me and were a part of the same culture that I was. Although things were safe at home in this new environment, it felt as though things changed for the worst. It was the first time that I experienced culture shock in my life: the adjustment was not easy. Before moving, school was where I was the most happy and I looked forward to going to class in order to get away from any problems at home. At this point in my life though, I preferred to stay at home and dreaded going to school. I also missed being around teachers who I felt cared about me and took an interest in my success. One of the most impactful experiences I had in education came while I was in second grade at my new school. I had a second grade music teacher who would only address me by my last name. She would call the other students by their first name but would only call me by my last name. When I would ask her why she only referred to me by my last name but identified other students by their first names, she would ignore me. I hated going to school on the days we had music.

I eventually told my mother why I disliked going to school and the problems that I had. She told me that this would not be the first time that I would experience something like this and I had to stand up for myself. That was the first occasion where I learned that I needed to develop my voice and defend myself. I also experienced what it was like to have a teacher that did not care for or have respect for me. I understood that I would have to learn how to cope with teachers that would ignore me or treat me with contempt. It was very different from my previous school experiences: it opened my eyes to the hurt caused by someone in a position of trust—a position that I once admired.

“Kind of sad/Kind of mad/Ghetto child/ Thinkin’ he’s been had” (Mayfield, 1971, Track 1)

I next went to have a conversation with the music teacher about how I felt. She continued to refer to me by my last name and ignored my feelings. Then I told her that I did not want her to refer to me by my last name and that I wanted to be treated the same way as the other students in the class. She dismissed my feelings and replied that I would never go anywhere in life with “that attitude.” This exchange produced a very important lesson for me. This was the first time that I experienced racism and was put in a position in which I had to defend myself. As a small child, I had heard about racism and how I would one day experience it. While growing up in my old neighborhood, however, I was never a victim of racial discrimination and therefore could not fully understand it. After the experiences with my music teacher and my first year at my new school, I began to have a better understanding of the painful effects of racism. I also learned another important lesson about myself.

I learned that I can take negative experiences and use them as a source of understanding and motivation. This teacher did not seem to view her job as a calling nor seemed to care to serve all children. However, I gained a new understanding: A teacher that views his/her job as a vocation will not discriminate against children regardless of ethnicity, gender or any other human differences he/she may have with students. The experience with the music teacher would not be the only time I would experience discrimination or subtle forms of racism. Although it was not the first time something like that happened in that school, it became the instance that has stuck with me since

childhood. I internalized my feelings and have kept that particular memory to use in a positive way.

I used those experiences to motivate myself to make things better for those that need help. While still at the predominantly white school, I volunteered to help younger students that were struggling in school. I did not want other students to experience the loneliness that I experienced. I felt that there may have been others that were dealing with similar feelings of discrimination or neglect and I did not want to be responsible for ignoring someone else's pain. Although things were difficult for me, I look at the experience as one that helped me to mature and discover how much I want to help others. I can look back now and see that this was the first time that I experienced the calling to serve others. Although I had some negative experiences with teachers and administration, the positive experiences I had far outweighed the negative.

“Don’t care now what nobody say/I gotta take the pain away” (Mayfield, 1971, Track 1)

One of the first positive, influential experiences that I had with a teacher was with my junior high art teacher. Growing up in a single-parent home was not easy. There were times when the bills would begin to pile up and our electricity would be disconnected or we did not have enough to eat. We moved around a lot; it seemed we moved every year. I was used to packing up and starting over. We were always sleeping on someone else's couch with nowhere to call our own. I recall the times of hearing my mother voice concerns of not knowing where we going to live or where we could go. The fear of ending up on the street or living in a shelter loomed over us while I was a child. I felt that I did not have the time, or the place, to play as other children did. I had

to grow up and mature extremely really fast as a kid. I had to take on the responsibility of taking care of doing my homework on my own, staying home alone and sometimes cooking for myself until my mother came home from work.

My mother told me that I could not talk about anything that happened at home to anyone in school or in public. This was probably because I was attending a school out of my district and my mother told me that if anyone found out, I would not be able to attend my school. I understood that if anyone found out about my living arrangements or how difficult things were at home, people would investigate. I recall trying to sneak into school without the front office secretaries noticing me because I was frequently late to school. The secretaries did begin to notice, however, and would question and harass me once I stepped into the building. When I informed my mother about the harassment, she would tell me that I could not say anything and she would take care of it. I remember my mother going to the school's front office and telling the secretaries that they were not to ever stop or question me again and if they had any questions or concerns, they needed to talk to her. It was hard enough trying to adapt to leaving my old neighborhood and school, now I had to adapt to people questioning whether or not I belonged there. I dealt with these feelings until I eventually left that school. Consequently, I began to grow weary of trusting anyone or of even trying to establish relationships. I learned early not to share information and feelings with people and to keep my guard up. I did not know that this would also correlate to my previous feelings and attitudes toward teachers. Furthermore, I had no clue that a change would soon happen that would cause my calling to serve others to grow louder.

When I started junior high school, I knew I no longer wanted to take music classes. Although I always wanted to learn how to play an instrument, I was turned off by the idea of enrolling in music again due to my earlier experiences. Instead, I determined to follow my other hobby of drawing and decided to sign up for art classes. Having always loved to draw and color, I hoped that I would not have another negative experience. I remember having the class early in the mornings when I was often tired and hungry. I would come into class and put my head down to try and rest. Although I was tired and hungry, I did not want to tell anyone about any problems I had at home or how we struggled to make ends meet.

My art teacher noticed something was wrong and tried to help. I would not talk about the problems I was having. I had learned previously that I could not talk about my problems to others and I could not trust teachers. I carried the former negative feelings over into any new relationship I had with my teachers. I continued to struggle in the class and my teacher grew more concerned. She asked to speak with me privately in her office. She expressed her concern and wanted to know how she could help. I explained to her that I was okay and I did not need help. I was reluctant to open up to her and kept things to myself. She respected my privacy but figured out that I was tired and sluggish. One morning before class started, she told me that she needed to meet with me. I was concerned that I was in trouble and made sure that I made it to the meeting early. When I arrived to her office, I noticed that she had a small breakfast on the desk and asked me to join her. She told me that if I ever needed anything to eat or if I was tired, I could come to her and she would help me. Although I cannot remember if I ever took her up on her

offer, I do remember how that kind gesture stuck with me. My art teacher went beyond the curriculum and cared about me as a person.

This experience was very different from the experience that I had in elementary school. My junior high school art teacher went beyond caring about the lesson plan and focused on caring for my development as an individual person. She helped me to learn the importance of trust and of accepting help. She helped me to grow as a person and to realize that I wanted to be equally influential to others in need. I realized that, as a student, I needed teachers that were willing to invest in me as a person and not just my classwork. My experience in that class went a long way in helping me to adapt to what was going on in a new school and in dealing with the difficult pre-adolescence years. Things continued to improve and school became a place of joy once again.

“You didn’t have to love for me” (Mayfield, 1971, Track 1)

My next important influence came while I was in high school. When I turned fourteen, I experienced a very difficult time in my life. It was then that I had my first experiences with the death of several family members. My family has always been very important to me and I used my family as a support system. I was not prepared to have pieces of my support system snatched away from me. I remember the beginning of track season had started and things were tough. At the beginning of my sophomore school year, I lost seven family members. Our family experienced many hardships during that time. Things became most difficult for me with the passing of one of my favorite aunts. We spent a lot of time together and it was hard watching her during her final days battling cancer. I did not fully understand just how big of a void her death would leave. My family and I took the death very hard. Her son and I leaned on one another for

support during those trying times. We would ride around in his car for hours and listen to music to take our minds off the pain. Although riding around Houston listening to music helped, I never dealt with my under-the-radar feelings. When I was alone, I would wallow in the mire of my pain and loss. I struggled to stay focused at school and practice. I was angry and I felt I had no one with whom to talk to about my problems.

I remember going to class before practice and sitting in the corner alone. My track coach noticed how upset I was and tried to reach out to me. Although I wanted to talk to someone, I initially refused. I never liked talking about my feelings and I certainly did not believe in talking to someone who was not close to me. I never would have thought that the relationship I formed with my coach would change my life and continue to this day. I remember having conversations about religion and growing up as a young African-American man. However, I did not want to discuss my personal life or the private things that my family and I went through. There were certain things that I felt were not understandable by those who were not in my family or did not grow up in the places that I did. Chan and Boone (2001) describe how some children may not want their culture shared in the classroom community because they do not want to appear different from their peers. As I look back, I realize how much I could relate to this theory. I did not want to share any of my problems with my teammates or my coaches. Unfortunately my attitude and performance began to suffer and one of my coaches began to question what was going on in my life. He wanted to talk to me about my problems but I was unwilling to confide any of my personal issues. No matter how much I tried, my coach would not allow me to isolate myself and push everyone away.

My track coach tried to make me feel comfortable and not to keep me isolated from the team. He made an effort to try to understand my values and wanted to help me through problems. My coach exhibited behaviors and attitudes, "...characteristically associated with helping others learn and improve themselves intellectually and morally" (Hansen, 1995). Once, my coach shared that he lived in the same neighborhood that I once lived in and that he knew several members of my family. This helped me to lower my defenses and open up to him.

Through our conversations, I learned how to express my emotions in a non-destructive way and to mature in the process. He soon became my mentor that year and helped me while I struggled with my multiple family tragedies. Our relationship continued throughout high-school. I volunteered to help in his classroom and I learned how to assist with classroom management and differentiation of instruction. It was during this time that I volunteered to help in my high-school Big Brother and Big Sister program. My coach was a motivation for me to continue to reach out to those in my local community and offer help academically and emotionally to those in need. Although I experienced some difficult times growing up, I was blessed to have the support and encouragement from others close to me to keep me focused and persevering. I learned that with the right support, I was able to learn how to adapt and to continue to overcome hurdles that were placed in front of me.

"Can't reason with The Pusherman/Finance is all that he understands" (Mayfield, 1971, Track1)

The next big influence came while I was an undergraduate at Morehouse College. I felt it was best for me to leave Texas and attend college out of state. Although I thought

I was ready to accept the challenge, I was an immature freshman. My first year away from home was difficult. It was my first time alone and I was not prepared for the level of responsibility that being on my own required. I no longer had my support group and I had to learn to stand on my own. My faith, mettle and hard-wearing focus would be tested as I had learn how to live on my own in a different part of the country away from my family. As I left Houston, I knew things would be hard because my family depended on me so much and leaving them would change things drastically. Things became even more difficult when I found out that my father was losing his battle with addiction and was going to prison. It was a taxing adjustment for me and I considered transferring to another school in Texas. It was during that time that I met one of the most influential professors on campus. He was such a strong influence that I had to stay at Morehouse.

This professor instructed me in learning how to become a young African-American professional. I received advice on learning to develop a financial plan and how to begin my career path. He became my academic advisor and mentor. According to Chan and Boone (2001) it is the teacher's responsibility to understand that cultural differences may affect how children learn. All children, regardless of culture, are being taught a hidden curriculum: the White, middle-class curriculum (Chan & Boone, 2001). He instructed me on the difficulty of going through life without a plan and the importance of a young African-American man persevering despite adversity. He taught me about the issues that I would face as a young African-American male in the workforce. Working with him, I learned the importance of contributing to my community and being a positive example for those in need. My professor was there for me during that difficult time my father was away. He became a father figure for me while I was in college, providing

advice and direction for me anytime I was in need. Our lessons continued well beyond my assigned courses and semesters. Anytime I return to my undergraduate school, I stop by and say hello. I still call him to seek advice on how to help my students. I look to him for help in trying to establish a rapport with my students and to stress the importance of college and developing a career plan. I want to help my students and become a mentor to them as he role-modeled for me.

Some of the most important teachers in my life provided lessons for me that went well beyond the time I was with them. Dewey (1938) explains that every experience may not be educative: some can be mis-educative. Although every experience may not have been educative (Dewey, 1938), I learned what type of influence I wanted to be for others in my life. Whether directly or indirectly, I was able to learn how to become teacher. I initially started down a different career path. Although I knew I wanted to help children, I started studying to become a counselor. I began working at an inpatient treatment facility for children. While working at the facility, I interacted with children with emotional, psychological and substance abuse problems. I again found myself mentoring the children and taking on the role of a teacher. I would work on reading and math with the children. I would try to mentor them as well. I wanted to teach them the different opportunities they had to receive an education and to help improve their lives. I eventually found myself in a place where I never wanted to be: a prison.

As a counselor intern, I initially received an internship position working in a women's correctional facility. After a few months at the women's facility, I was presented with the opportunity to work in a men's maximum security prison. While there, I realized there were many lessons that I still needed to learn. I worked with

people who shared their pain and regrets with me. I felt the shame of misjudging people and had to come to terms with my own personal attitude towards prison because of my father's incarceration. It was then that I realized that I needed to inform as many people as I could and to help those that did not feel as though they had a voice.

Disheartened by the number of young men I came in contact with who could not read, I worked on trying to help them read and also finding better ways to deal with their issues. I tried to teach lessons from my heart and worked to help others. Working with the men, I learned that teaching was not only in the classroom but that lessons learned could stay with students their entire lives. I realize now that many of the lessons and advice that I tried to impart to others were the same lessons that others tried to teach me. It was also during this time that I learned that people may start out with the right intentions but as things change for the person, their motivation for teaching may be influenced. Eventually, I decided to move back to Houston and to help children in need in my home city.

When I began my career in the largest Houston-area school district, I knew—in an up-close and personal way—the many issues affecting lower socioeconomic urban schools. One of the most troubling problems that face urban campuses is the lack of resources they receive. It is not easy to teach in an urban school, especially if the funding is not equitable. Guin (2004) states that higher rates of teacher attrition are not only associated with additional financial costs, but also with concerns related to school stability and teacher trust. This makes staffing poor urban schools very difficult, as teachers are charged with teaching in undesirable conditions, often resulting in many teachers to leave the profession. Keigher (2010) noted that chronic turnover among new

teachers in urban schools is a growing problem, with up to 23 percent of public school teachers leaving in their first five years of teaching—14 percent migrating to different schools and 9 percent leaving the profession altogether. In Houston, the statistics are even more troubling with the number of first-year teachers leaving the profession being 50 percent by their fourth year of service.

Coming to the Inquiry

Over time, I have grown interested in this topic because it affects the school where I was taught and where I previously worked. It is difficult to find teachers that feel teaching is a vocation at such schools. Many of the teachers are unhappy and stressed and the school climate is one of frustration and tension. The administration is seen as an enemy and the children are depicted as hopeless. Working on a poor urban campus is no easy task. Many feel as though students in urban schools are unteachable and do not care to learn. People do not question the causes of the problems with teachers leaving urban schools and they do not question why people would maintain the belief that certain types of children are unteachable.

The idea that urban, poor children are unintelligent and unruly is a view produced by stable inquiry. Schwab (1960) states stable inquiries receive conceptual principles from others and that researchers treat these principles as matters of fact, not matters for test. The stable inquirer uses his principles as a means of inquiry, but not as objects to be inquired into (Schwab, 1960). These principles define his problem for him and guide the patterns of experiment which will solve it, but the principles are not treated as problems in themselves (Schwab, 1960). The other approach to this philosophy is the stance of a

fluid inquirer. The aim of a fluid inquirer in fluid inquiry research is to test the principles and ultimately to revise them or invent replacements for them (Schwab, 1960).

A stable inquirer looks at the problems in urban education and will not investigate them further. The stable inquirer treats the preconceived ideas of the struggles of urban education as law. A fluid inquirer tests ideas and beliefs, such as the notion that urban youth are unintelligent and hopeless. Personally, as a citizen in a democratic society and an educator, I do not believe that children in urban schools are hopeless and cannot be taught. I believe if the love and concern of teachers are present, the child can meet the expectation placed upon him/her. I am a witness to the success a child can have if the right teachers are in the classroom. If a child recognizes that there are people in the world that have not given up on them, they will want to work hard for them. Sadly, this is not the norm of most urban classrooms.

Throughout my experience while working in this large urban district, I have wondered what motivates people to walk away from teaching. I wondered if the same fate meets all those who want to help children in poor urban schools. I asked myself what causes a teacher to want to abandon children in need. I understand the idea of leaving to teach at another school or working in another district but I do not think leaving teaching is the right choice. I believe more research needs to be done in terms of teaching preparation via traditional and alternate certification programs. I also believe that more research needs to be done to see why teachers decide to quit. Cuban (1990) asserted that the American people have enduring faith in schools as the engine of social and individual improvement. However, if schools cannot better retain teachers in the classroom, faith in our public education system is lost.

Significance of the Inquiry

Although people may have faith in schools, people seem to have little to no faith in students of the urban variety. Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek and Morton (2006) explain that almost a quarter of entering public school teachers leave teaching within the first three years. What causes someone to lose respect in the value of education for those in need and to give up the desire to help others? While I believe those that quit teaching still value education and want to help others, I believe they may not receive the preparation or the support that is necessary to sustain them in teaching. Teaching in certain environments is a very difficult task. Although we can attribute teacher attrition to a number of factors, it is best that firsthand evidence be gathered through the stories that former beginning teachers lived and told, which ultimately led to their exit from the teaching profession.

It is important to gain a better understanding of why early career teachers leave teaching. If we are to continue working in the best interest of children, then we must understand what spurs teachers to leave. As new teachers leave, they carry with them considerable knowledge, skills and experience (Buchanan, 2009). As early career teachers leave the classroom, schools are left to pick up the pieces and serve the children as best they can. Teacher attrition takes human resources and stability away from those children that most need it. School administrators must concentrate time and money to recruit and replace the missing teachers.

Barnes, Crowe and Schaefer (2007) explain how chronic teacher attrition creates financial hardships for urban districts, where scarce resources must be diverted to recruiting, hiring and training. This dilemma leaves a large demographic group

underserved. Teachers leaving the classroom also hinders other teachers in planning with one another to best serve the children. Donaldson and Johnson (2011) describe how routinely high levels of teacher turnover impede a school's efforts to coordinate curriculum, track and share information about students as they move to different grade levels, and maintain productive relationships with those in the local community. If a school has a high turnover rate among teachers, then there is little chance the school is able to develop any depth of instruction or leadership on campus. This uncertainty can subtract from the school's climate and diminish the perception of the school in the neighborhood. People in the community will notice that teachers leave the school early and seemingly appear to not care about the children. This can negatively affect chances of parent participation and engagement. Although these consequences are severe, the most severe is the effect on the children.

If children feel as though the teachers in the school do not care, they may soon mirror similar feelings. I have personally learned that children need positive role models and often times, the school is one of the best places to start. Yet, if students are not able to find good teachers on campus, they may not learn the importance of investing in themselves and education. While working in poor, urban communities, there are numerous obstacles to overcome in the community. If the school is not preparing the students or the teachers to thrive and grow, then communities will continue to hold a negative influence over those children. Every year, campus administrators are charged with finding ways to recruit new teachers and struggle to try and retain those they have. School administrators should focus on the recruitment, development and the retention of young teachers. High teacher turnover creates a negative environment in the school for

those there and in the surrounding area. If the children are not receiving the education and attention that they deserve, we are lying to them and failing them each day. If our intentions are to truly serve children, we must first understand what motivates us to do so. Once one has an understanding of their motivation to teach, then one can begin planting the seeds and nurturing the development of students. If not, people will continue to enter into teaching and burnout. The consequences of those decisions are the ever increasing achievement gap that is growing in poor, urban schools.

Research Questions

To address the topic of early teacher attrition in urban school, I will examine the retention and attrition rates of Teach for America Teachers and other Alternative Certification Program teachers in Title I schools in the greater Houston Area. My qualitative research study will bring about a better understanding what causes beginning urban school teachers to leave teaching. It will address the following research questions:

- 1) What factors lead to teacher attrition in early career teachers?
- 2) How do teachers' perceptions of leadership impact teacher retention?
- 3) How does less effective administration influence an early career teacher's resiliency?

Terms

Alternative certification program: certification programs differ in length of time, curriculum, and classroom preparation when compared to traditional four- year programs meant to train teachers. These programs are typically shorter and can be completed in either a classroom or online education settings (Stanley & Martin, 2009).

Attrition: teachers leaving the classroom to take up other professional responsibilities, inside or outside education, or to spend time with their families (Miller & Chait, 2008).

AYP: signifies adequate yearly progress, or established expectation for annual student academic growth, as outlined by No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002).

Courage: “the capacity to move into situations when one feels fear or hesitation” (Le Cornu, 2013, p. 7; see also Jordan, 2006).

Place: the specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequences of places where the inquiry and events take place (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

Sociality: refers to personal conditions such as “feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006, p.480), as well as social conditions—the “milieu, the conditions under which people’s experiences and events are unfolding” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 40).

Teach for America (TFA): established in 1990, TFA strives to close persistent racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps in the U.S. public education by recruiting high-achieving college graduates to teach for two years in low-income and rural schools (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011).

Temporality: refers to the narrative perspective that “events under study are in temporal transition” therefore researchers reflect upon and consider experiences in regards to past, present, and future (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479),

Title I school: Title I is part of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, currently encompassed in the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, to provide federal funding at local schools to improve academic achievement of disadvantaged students (i.e., those from low-income families, reported as delinquent or neglected, living in foster care or whose family is receiving government assistance) (National Association for the Education of Young Children, n.d.).

Traditional teaching program: university-based undergraduate/graduate programs where a portion of classes fulfill degree requirements along with theoretical and methodological knowledge and skills needed for teaching (Flores, Desjean-Perrotta & Steinmetz, 2004).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

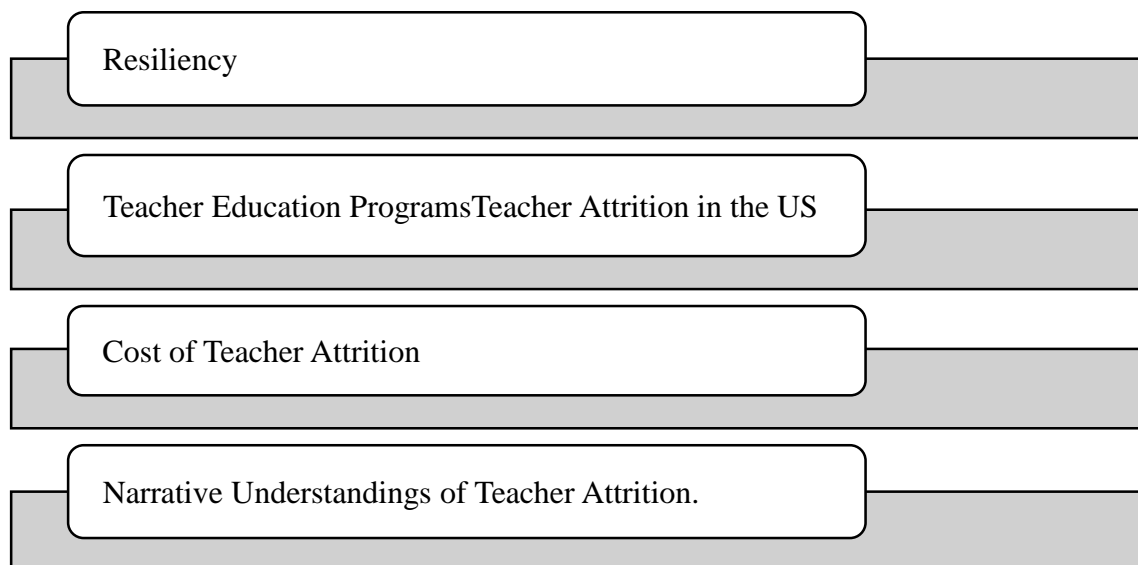


Figure 1 – Related topics of the literature review.

To address my study's research questions, the following five major themes (see Figure 1) will be taken up in this literature review: 1) Resiliency; 2) Teacher Education Programs (Traditional and Alternate Certification Routes) and Teacher Attrition; 3) Teacher Attrition in the U.S.; 4) Cost of Teacher Attrition; 4) Narrative Understandings of Teacher Attrition. The literature review opens with a discussion on teacher resiliency and its components. This is followed by descriptions of teacher education programs, focusing on traditional four-year programs and alternative certification programs. Statistics and concerns related to teacher attrition in the U.S. are then presented. Next, the cost of teacher attrition is explained, including both financial and non-financial, such as the impact of attrition on Title I schools, school climate, and school administration. The literature review ends with the narrative perspective of teacher attrition.

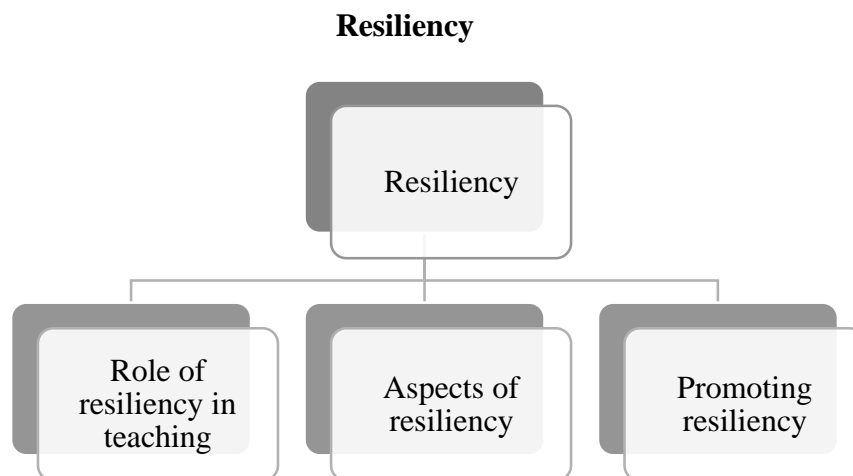


Figure 2 – Role, aspects, and promotion of resiliency.

The Role of Resiliency in Teaching

Teaching is a highly complex profession, involving not only the intellectual, but also the physical and emotional. It is important that teachers prepare themselves for the rigorous demands of teaching. Research has identified resiliency (see Figure 2) as a key factor in promoting teacher persistence, acceptance to feedback and professional development (Le Cornu, 2013; Day, Edwards, Griffith & Gu, 2011; Freeman, Leonard & Lipari, 2007; Bullough, 2005). What is resiliency and where does it come from? Is it something that is learned or is it something one is inherently born with? Le Cornu (2013) explains resiliency is not inherent in the individual but rests in one's ability to make connections. Relational-cultural theory (Jordan, 2006) suggests that resilience resides not in the individual but in the capacity for connection. Jordan's (2006) model of relational resilience has its theoretical foundations in relational-cultural theory which has as its core the belief that all psychological growth occurs in relationships. It is important that early career teachers establish healthy and open relationships with their fellow teachers and administration. Growth-fostering connections are characterized by mutuality, empowerment and the development of courage (Le Cornu, 2013).

Aspects of Resiliency

Mutuality. Mutuality is at the core of resilience (Le Cornu, 2013). Johnson et al. (2012) explain that mutuality resonates with the notion of reciprocity and reinforces many of the professional relationships that early career teachers engage in. Relationships with students and fellow teachers are significant for early career teachers and their resilience; teachers are both sustained and drained by the relationships that they develop with their students because they spend much time and effort trying to get to know their students and trying to form democratic relationships with them (Le Cornu, 2013). Hartling (2008) expresses that resilience can be strengthened through engagement in relationships that enhance one's sense of worth and sense of competence. Teachers also develop a stronger sense of resiliency when they feel a sense of connectedness and community with their fellow teachers; when they receive emotional and professional support from their peers, their sense of resiliency grows (Le Cornu, 2013).

Teachers also feel a greater sense of validation professionally when their ideas are respected. When teachers feel their ideas are respected and see those ideas being used by teachers who have been teaching longer than them, they feel they are making contributions to their peers and that the relationship is not a one-way relationship (Le Cornu, 2013). Additionally, teachers feel affirmed by the feedback they receive from their support network and value feeling a part of a support group.

Empowerment. Another aspect of resiliency is empowerment. When early career teachers are able to establish trusting, respectful and reciprocal relationships, they perceive themselves as more confident and competent, which enables them to feel more empowered (Le Cornu, 2013; Hartling, 2008). It is important that teachers form healthy

relationships with their administrative leaders. Teachers' ability to form these type of relationships with administrative leaders, their peers and themselves are important in establishing a teacher's resiliency (Le Cornu, 2013).

Courage. It is essential that teachers develop a sense of courage. Courage is defined as the capacity to move into situations when we feel fear or hesitation (Le Cornu, 2013). Teachers draw on the support of their peers and family to motivate them and to affirm them in their efforts to continue teaching. School leaders, mentors and support staff such as education officers and advisory staff are also important in developing an early career teacher's courage in their abilities (Le Cornu, 2013). Family and peers provide the emotional support that teachers need to combat difficulties while school administrators and staff provide the encouragement needed to feel competent in the classroom (Le Cornu, 2013). These relationships are important to forge for early career teachers. However, some early career teachers begin their careers in environments that suffer from high rates of teacher turnover, poor school climate and culture, and poor community support.

Promoting Resiliency in Teachers

The role of school leaders has emerged as a significant one for two reasons. Firstly, in the relationships school leaders establish with their early career teachers to encourage and support them directly, and secondly, in regard to the culture established in the school. Where leaders take the time to develop relationships based on respect, trust, care and integrity, early career teachers appear to flourish (Le Cornu, 2013).

A culture that encourages reflection and professional dialogue amongst all members of the school community and provides both formal and informal opportunities

for engagement promotes the building of a teacher's resilience (Le Cornu, 2013). As stated earlier, teachers also benefit from having strong connections to their fellow teachers. Pearce and Morrison suggest (2011) personal identity takes shape during teacher's social exchanges and interactions with other members of the school community. Once a teacher develops their personal identity, it is important that he/she become confident enough to engage with other teacher in order to grow professionally. Teachers develop their ability to talk about teaching and interact in a professional way and value of receiving support from others who were going through a similar experience (Le Cornu, 2013). Although teachers receive validation from the affirmation and non-judgmental support that they receive from their peers, it is also important that they have an important relationship with themselves. The relationship that each early career teacher have with themselves, that is, how comfortable they feel as a person and in their role as teacher, has emerged as a component of how well they are able to sustain themselves – and to contribute to sustaining others (Le Cornu, 2013).

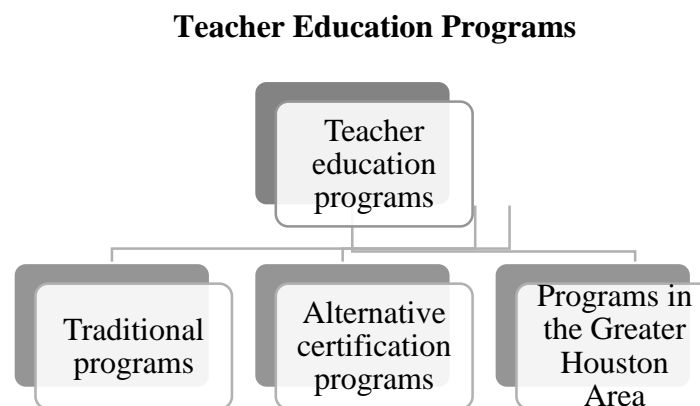


Figure 3 - Literature review components of teacher education programs.

Traditional Teaching Programs

Teacher education programs fall under one of two routes to certification—traditional or alternative—which will be explored in this section (see Figure 3). Flores, Desjean-Perrotta and Steinmetz (2004) define traditional teaching programs as being usually four-year, university-based undergraduate programs where a portion of classes fulfill degree requirements along with theoretical and methodological knowledge and skills needed for teaching. During the first two years, students complete required courses in core areas (i.e., English language arts, science, mathematics, etc.). Courses in the final two years focus on curriculum, instruction, child development, classroom management, and technology. This type of program provides an opportunity for student teaching under the management of a school/district assigned mentor and other college faculty (Flores, Desjean-Perrotta & Steinmetz, 2004). One of the questions in a study such as mine is whether traditional teacher education programs are part of the problem or part of the solution.

Alternative Certification Teaching Programs

In order to fill the number of growing teacher vacancies, innovative methods for recruiting and developing new teachers were created, establishing alternative certification teaching programs. Sander (2007) explains that alternative certification programs,

Typically involve some period of intensive, condensed academic coursework or training; a period of supervised on-the-job training; and candidates are typically expected to pass certification tests to become fully certified. (p. 31)

Stanley and Martin (2009) further explain that alternative certification programs differ in length of time, curriculum, and classroom preparation when compared to traditional four-

year programs meant to train teachers. Alternative certification programs typically have a shorter time commitment and can be completed in either classroom or online education settings. Many states have instituted alternative certification programs to reduce and postpone formal education training in order to place mid-career professionals from other fields into teaching immediately (Roellke & Rice, 2002).

State and national teacher training programs such as Troops to Teachers and Teach for America (TFA) were developed and implemented nationwide to specifically recruit new candidates into teaching in high-need areas (Roellke & Rice, 2002). For example, according to Donaldson and Johnson (2011), the alternative certification program Teach for America (TFA) was established in 1990 with the purpose of closing persistent racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps in the U.S. public education. TFA recruits high-achieving college graduates to teach for two years in low-income and rural schools. The problem then becomes one of TFA teachers cycling out of the system after a very short period of service. Also problematic is the fact that alternative certification teachers receive only partial training before being placed in the classroom, meaning that they are in the classroom teaching while still undergoing training. Although these alternative certification programs are able to help place teachers into classrooms, more support is necessary to insure that they stay in the classroom.

Teacher Education Programs in the Greater Houston Area

TEA reports show there are twenty-six teacher education providers in the Greater Houston area. In addition to nine colleges and universities, there are school districts, regional educational offices, web-based companies, foundations and individual consultants also preparing teachers (See Table 1).

Table 1 - Greater Houston Area Teacher Education Providers

Greater Houston Area Teacher Education Providers			
Teacher Education Provider Position based on 10-Year Average	Program Type	Number of Teachers Prepared in 2013	Number of Teachers Prepared from 2003 to 2013
Texas Teachers of Tomorrow (average since 2006)	Alternate Certification Program	2,726	14,039
State of Texas Region 4 Educational Service Center	Alternate Certification Program	466	10,279
ACT-Houston	Alternate Certification Program	341	6,438
Sam Houston State University	University Certification Program; Post- Baccalaureate Program	530	5,325
University of Houston, Main Campus (Tier 1 University)	University Certification Program; Post- Baccalaureate Program	357	4,292
Houston Independent School District	Alternate Certification Program	116	3,697
University of Houston, Clear Lake	University Certification Program; Post- Baccalaureate Program	260	2,667
University of Houston, Downtown	University Certification Program; Post- Baccalaureate Program	254	2,071
Kingwood College	Alternate Certification Program	125	1,912
Prairie View A&M University	University Certification Program; Post- Baccalaureate Program; Alternate Certification Program	62	1,423
Web-Centric Alternate Certification Program (average since 2006)	Alternate Certification Program	242	1,207
Pasadena Independent School District	Alternate Certification Program	46	1,145
North Harris College	Alternate Certification Program	0	734
Texas Southern University	University Certification Program; Post- Baccalaureate Program	44	721

Cy-Fair College	Alternate Certification Program	0	674
Houston Baptist University (private university)	University Certification Program; Post-Baccalaureate Program	47	611
YES College Preparatory School (average since 2010)	Alternate Certification Program	208	492
Blinn College (private college)	Alternate Certification Program	21	424
State of Texas Region 6 Service Center	Alternate Certification Program	22	413
University of St. Thomas (private university)	University Certification Program; Post-Baccalaureate Program	26	406
Alief Independent School District (previously supported its own 'corporate university')	Alternate Certification Program	0	403
Houston Community College System	Alternate Certification Program	17	299
Montgomery College	Alternate Certification Program	0	281
Tomball College	Alternate Certification Program	0	127
Rice University (top 10, Tier 1 private university)	University Certification Program; Post-Baccalaureate Program	5	89
Note: Providers of Teachers in the Proximal Zone of Professional Impact (Source files obtained from Teacher Certification Files, Texas Educational Agency Files, Academic Excellence Indicator System [AEIS] Data)			

In addition to the traditional teacher education providers already mentioned, seven other providers have more recently entered the teacher education marketplace, including six alternate certification programs and one Post-Baccalaureate program (see Table 2).

Table 2 - Non-traditional teacher education providers in Greater Houston Area.

Non-traditional Teacher Education Providers	
A+ Texas Teachers	Alternate Certification Program
Harris County Department of Education	Alternate Certification Program
Intern Teacher ACP	Alternate Certification Program
North American University	Alternate Certification Program
Relay GSE Houston Alternative Certification Program	Alternate Certification Program

Rice Education Entrepreneurship Program (private university)	Post-Baccalaureate Program
Texas Alternative Certification Program at Houston	Alternate Certification Program ⁴

Teacher Attrition in the U.S.

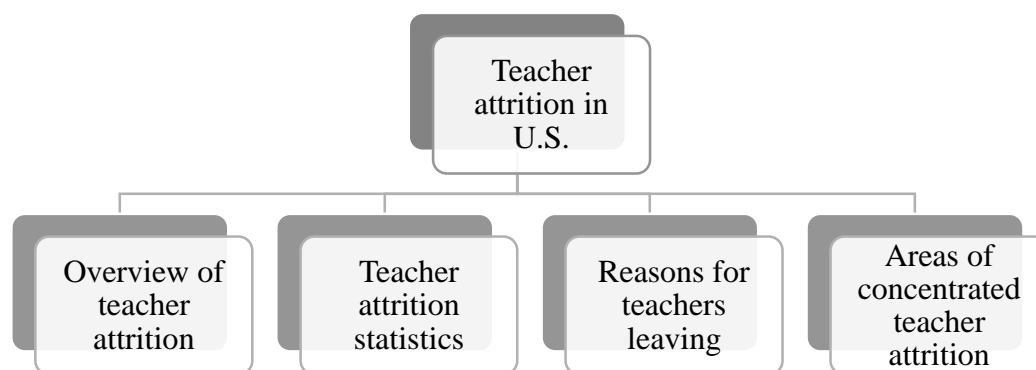


Figure 4 – Review of teacher attrition in the U.S.

Overview of Teacher Attrition

This researcher has found that there are growing amounts of data and literature which shows that teachers leaving the classroom and profession are an escalating concern in the field of education (see Figure 4). Miller and Chait (2008) define attrition as teachers leaving the classroom to take up other professional responsibilities, inside or outside education, or to spend time with their families.

Teacher Attrition Statistics

The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (2007) noted that teacher attrition has risen by 50 percent in the past fifteen years and the national turnover rate has ascended up to 16.8 percent. Justice, Greiner and Anderson (2003, as cited in Gawron, Harris, Kettler & Wale, 1998), state that the teaching profession loses more than 30 percent of first-year teachers within their first two years of teaching. Justice, Greiner

and Anderson (2003) assert that teacher attrition is the single largest factor contributing to the demand of new teachers each year, with approximately 75 percent of the demand for new teachers caused by teacher attrition. Justice, Greiner and Anderson (2003), as stated by Gawron, Harris, Kettler and Wale (1998), state the teaching profession loses more than 30 percent of beginning teachers within their first two years of teaching, thereby increasing state supported costs of recruitment and teacher preparation.

According to a Terry (2009) report regarding the largest district in the Houston area, 50 percent of beginning teachers quit by the fifth year and 70 percent by the seventh year. This leaves the large, urban school district with 80 percent of its teaching force having five years or less years of experience and 50 percent of its administrators having five or less years of experience.

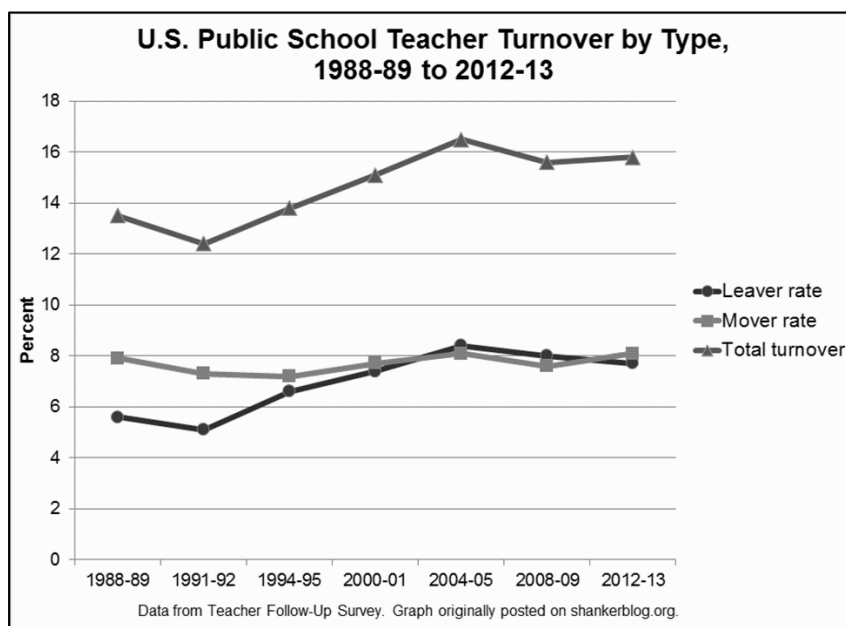


Figure 5 - Teacher turnover rates in U.S. (Di Carlo, 2015).

Di Carlo (2015) shows data from a 2012-2013 Teacher Follow-Up survey, which indicates that attrition has remained at a constant level (see Figure 5). Schaefer, Long and Clandinin (2012) explain that early leavers comprise a significant number of teachers

who are leaving the profession. This growing number of teachers leaving the classroom, are especially found in low-income or urban schools.

Reasons for Teachers Leaving

According to the most recent MetLife Survey (2013), teacher's job satisfaction in the U.S. plummeted to 39 percent in 2012, down 20 percent from 59 percent in 2009. In the same survey, 51 percent of U.S. teachers reported to experiencing extreme stress several times a week, demonstrating a correlation between teacher stress and low job satisfaction. Teachers' reasons for their exit from the profession reveal personal, financial, instructional, and organizational related motives. According to a Terry report (2009) the key reasons most often associated with teacher departures centered on teachers feeling undervalued in the workplace (46.3 percent), lack of administrator support (45.2 percent), and overall working conditions and policies (43.9 percent) (p. 2-4). Even when factors such as school location, school level and demographics of the students and teachers are controlled for; organizational factors pertaining to administrative support, teacher input in decision making, salary and aspects of school culture are associated with higher rates of teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001). Significant issues that influence teachers to leave the profession highlighted in research include: student discipline problems, low salaries, lack of teacher input in decision-making processes and lack of administrative support (Ingersoll & Perda, 2009), lack of parental support (Curtis, 2012), accountability-related tensions (Curtis, 2012; Keigher, 2010; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Stecher, 2002), lack of curricular guidance (Johnson et al., 2004), and lack of teacher collaboration and networking (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Research at the local level reveal similar findings, as shown in a 2009 teacher exit survey (Terry, 2009). Other

significant factors in teacher turnover included salary (5 percent) lack of job security (10 percent) and professional development opportunities (7.7 percent).

Areas of Concentrated Teacher Attrition

Attrition and low-income schools. Brown and Schainker (2008) assert that certain subject areas, such as math, science, bilingual and special education, remain precisely hard to fill, and schools serving high-poverty student populations continue to experience high rates of teacher turnover. Planty et al. (2008) states that 21 percent of teachers at high-poverty schools leave their schools annually, compared to 14 percent of their counterparts in low-poverty settings. In addition, Sander (2007) states that teacher retention rates appear to be most rampant in the poorest in schools with a student population that is not predominantly white. It is often argued that teachers working at higher risk schools experience greater workload stressors, lack sufficient resources, and work with high-risk student populations, thus putting them at greater risk for attrition (Sass, Flores, Claeys & Perez, 2012). As a result of the high turnover, high need urban and rural schools are frequently staffed with inequitable concentrations of under-prepared, inexperienced teachers who are left to labor on their own to meet the needs of their students (The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 2007).

Attrition and alternatively certified teachers. The data for alternatively certified teachers are equally alarming. Alternative Certification (AC) program participants are nearly twice as likely to leave teaching compared to those who have had clinical student teaching experience (Sander, 2007). Donaldson and Johnson (2011) explain that more than half, (56.4 percent), of Teach for America teachers leave their placement in low-income schools after two years. Stanley and Martin (2009) explain the

challenge is not to only prepare qualified teachers for the classroom but to retain certified teachers at the 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year benchmark. Ingersoll (2001) asserts that teacher recruitment programs alone will not solve the staffing problems of schools if they do not also address the organizational sources of low retention.

Cost of Teacher Attrition

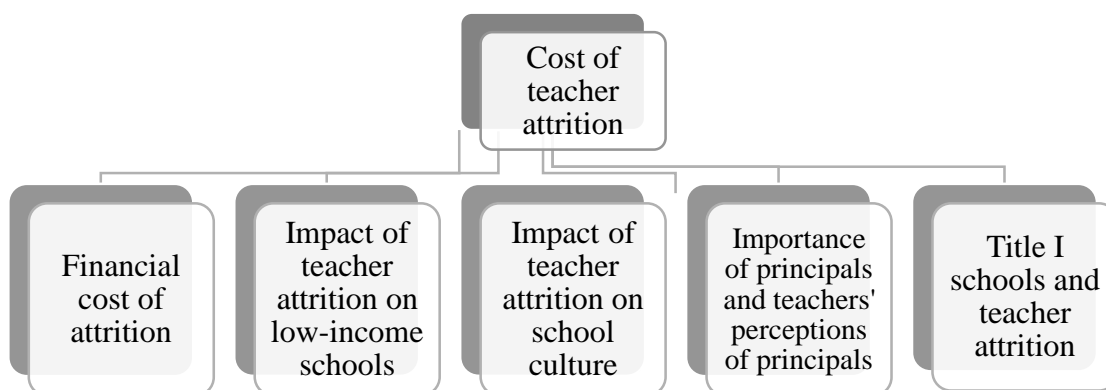


Figure 4 - Varied costs of teacher attrition.

Financial Cost of Teacher Attrition

This discussion on the costs of teacher attrition focuses first on direct financial costs before moving on to other more indirect, but equally important, costs (see Figure 6). Once these teachers leave the schools, the school must scramble and use what few resources are available to find someone to fill their spot. Had the teacher remained, these resources could have been used on the students of the school instead. As Keigher (2010) indicated, the constant search to replace teachers in schools costs the country billions of dollars each year. Barnes, Crowe and Schaefer (2007) explain that chronic teacher attrition causes financial hardships on urban districts, where scarce resources must be diverted to recruiting, hiring and training. The National Commission on Teaching and

America's Future (2003) estimates that \$7.34 billion is spent nationally to replace teachers. On average, in urban districts, individual schools spend \$70,000 annually on costs associated with turnover (Barnes, Crowe & Schaefer, 2007), compared to non-urban schools which spend an average of \$33,000 annually. Keigher (2010) reports that in Texas, over \$2.2 billion is wasted yearly because of teacher attrition. The Texas Center for Educational Research (2000) explained the total cost of turnover includes recruitment, hiring, induction, professional development, as well as separation costs (i.e. closing out payroll accounts, service records, appointment documentation, background checks). High teacher turnover drains urban school districts of precious dollars that could be used to improve teaching quality and student learning (see Figure 7) (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 2007).

<u>Cost of Teacher Turnover in Selected School Districts</u>	
<u>School District</u>	<u>Annual Cost of Teacher Turnover</u>
Atlanta, Georgia	\$10,920,000
Baltimore, Maryland	\$19,013,750
Boston, Massachusetts	\$13,020,000
Cleveland, Ohio	\$12,538,750
Dallas, Texas	\$28,892,500
Detroit, Michigan	\$26,565,000
Denver, Colorado	\$14,988,750
Fairfax, Virginia	\$28,350,000
Hartford, Connecticut	\$4,462,500
Houston, Texas	\$35,043,750
Los Angeles, California	\$94,211,250
Louisville, Kentucky	\$18,208,750
Memphis, Tennessee	\$21,866,250
Miami, Florida	\$47,775,000
Nashville, Tennessee	\$14,393,750
New York City, New York	\$115,221,250
Oakland, California	\$12,005,000
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	\$29,662,500
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	\$8,890,000
Prince Georges County, Maryland	\$23,292,500
Richmond, Virginia	\$6,072,500
San Francisco, California	\$11,865,000
Seattle, Washington	\$10,596,250
Washington, D.C.	\$16,598,750

You can calculate the cost for your own school district by using the *NCTAF Teacher Turnover Cost Calculator* at www.nctaf.org.

Figure 7 - Attrition costs, National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007).

Impact of Teacher Attrition on Low-Income Schools

The teacher attrition dilemma repeatedly leaves a large demographic group underserved. According to Barnett and Hudgens (2014), each year teacher turnover presents instructional, organizational, and financial burdens that impact students, teachers, schools and communities, particularly in schools deemed low-income schools in which the majority of students come from low socioeconomic family situations. High levels of teacher turnover not only drain valuable resources but also make it difficult to

build a high performing, stable teaching faculty. This is especially true in high-needs schools where teacher attrition levels are higher than average (Barnett & Hudgens, 2014). According to Di Carlo (2015), teacher attrition rates are higher among schools that have larger populations of students that receive free or reduced priced lunches (see Figure 8).

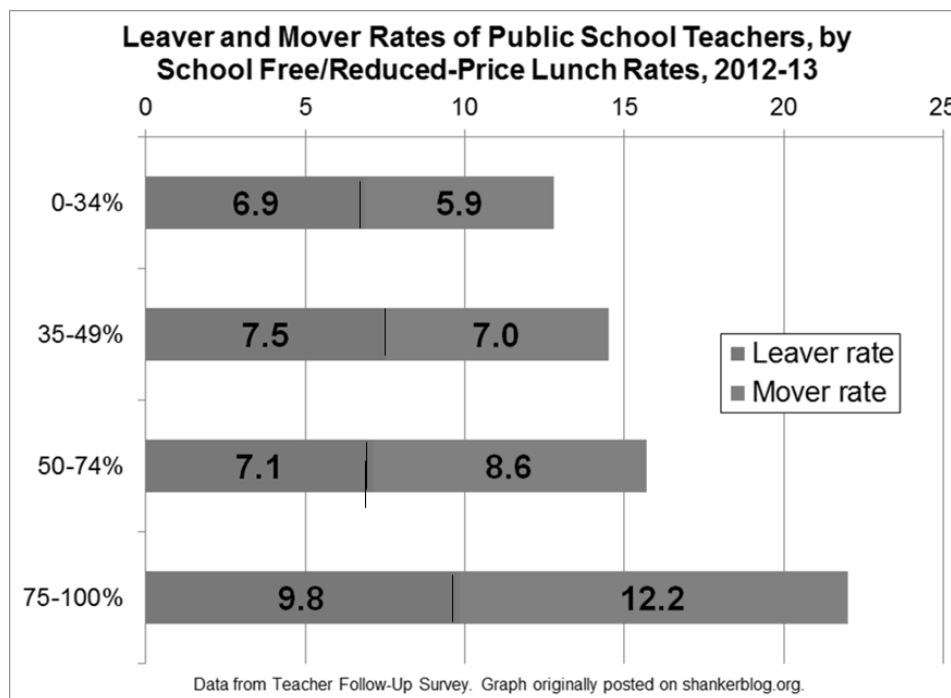


Figure 8 - Leaver rates in schools with fee/reduced lunch.

Since 2000, the least experienced teachers have been especially likely to leave (Simon & Johnson, 2013). The consequence of high teacher turnover not only affects school morale, school culture and financial stability, but also influences student achievement, further contributing to student dropout rates (Barnett & Hudgens, 2014).

Perhaps the most important cost of high teacher attrition is the cost to student learning. With the high rate of turnover, the education system is losing half of all teachers before they reach their peak effectiveness (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 2007). As stated earlier, departing teachers carry away considerable

knowledge, skills and experience (Buchanan, 2009). Sass, Flores, Claeys and Perez (2012) explain that teacher attrition in low-income, high-minority schools is a great concern. As Roellke and Rice (2002) point out,

The issue of staffing all classrooms with qualified teachers has received increased attention in recent years due to accumulating research evidence showing that teacher quality (i.e., subject matter knowledge, cognitive ability, selectivity of college attended) is the single most important factor affecting student achievement. (p. 139)

Low-performing, high-poverty schools “struggle to close the student achievement gap because they never close the teaching quality gap—they are constantly rebuilding their teaching staff (National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future, 2007, p 2). Routinely high levels of teacher turnover impede a school’s efforts to coordinate curriculum, track and share information about students as they move to different grade levels, and maintain productive relationships with those in the local community (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011).

Simon and Johnson (2013) proclaim that the odds that low-income children will be taught by inexperienced teachers are now higher than ever before. Often times, the teachers that are filling these vacancies are those from programs such as Teach for America or those from other alternative certification programs, which is potentially problematic in that teachers are teaching in classrooms while undergoing training. Stanley and Martin (2009) found that many understaffed schools where new teachers or provisionally certified teachers have been employed are in high poverty areas with at-risk students. It is often argued that teachers working at higher risk schools experience

greater workload stressors, lack sufficient resources, and work with high-risk student populations, thus putting them at greater risk for attrition (Sass, Flores, Claeys & Perez, 2012). Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005) reveal that teacher education can play an important role in teacher quality and a growing number of studies are focusing on teacher preparation.

There needs to better training, preparation and support among teachers in low income, urban schools to keep the teachers at their schools. If nontraditional certified teachers continue to be placed in low-income schools, there needs to be more effective preparation to train and support these new teachers. The training needs to focus on quality teacher preparation that prepares teachers to remain and thrive in their classroom.

Impact of Teacher Attrition on School Culture

Some research furthermore suggests that the problems that influence teacher attrition rests with the schools, not the students (Simon & Johnson, 2013). Guin (2004) states that higher rates of attrition are not limited to additional financial costs, but are also associated with concerns related to school stability and teacher trust. Johnson, Kraft and Papay (2012) report teachers that leave high-poverty, high-minority schools reject the dysfunctional contexts of the schools rather than the students. Ingersoll (2001) was the first to recognize the importance of considering school context in teacher moving patterns and found that organizational factors concerning administrative support, teacher input in decision-making, salary, and aspects of school culture, especially student discipline, were associated with higher rates of turnover- even when school location, school level, and demographic characteristics of teacher and students were controlled for (Simon & Johnson, 2012).

Terry (2009) found that schools that were organized to support new teachers and provide them with collegial interactions and opportunities for growth were more likely to retain their teachers than schools that were not able to provide such resources for their new teachers. The conditions and resources needed to support new teachers in their continuous learning, growth, and professional development include shared decision making on substantive issues, collaborative work with others to reach shared goals, and expanded teacher leadership capacity (Brown & Schainker, 2008).

New teachers that worked in schools that were organized to support them through collegial interaction, provided them with opportunities for growth, appropriate assignments, adequate resources, and school-wide structures supporting student learning, were more likely to stay in those schools than teachers that were new and did not have such support (Simon & Johnson, 2012). Futernick (2007) states that teachers not only want their principals to be effective instructional leaders, but teachers also want them to create and maintain a safe working environment for them professionally. School working conditions, including administrative support and collegiality, can help teachers achieve a “sense of success” and, thus, a commitment to remain in schools (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

Importance of Principal and Teachers’ Perceptions of the Principal

Jackson (2012) explains that the more influence that individual teachers perceive they have over school policy, the more likely they are to remain in their school and the less likely they are to either transfer to a different school or leave teaching. Teachers want school administrators who are eager to help a teacher when a need arises, active listeners, role models whose excitement for learning is contagious and spills over to

teachers, and who know teachers and students are in the school (Harper, 2009). School leaders concerned with increasing the stability of the school's teaching faculty should seek to cultivate opportunities for teachers in general to exercise influence over decision making in the school (Jackson, 2012).

The way in which principals view the personal influences of teachers matters. School leaders are encouraged to exercise caution to avoid a top-down model of leadership that unduly privileges the former leader over classroom teachers (Jackson, 2012). Where school leaders take time to develop relationships based on respect, trust, care and integrity, early career teachers tend to flourish (Le Cornu, 2013).

Title I Schools and Teacher Attrition

Being entrusted with the care of someone else's child is no small responsibility; being entrusted to teach and prepare someone's child for the future is even more difficult. As a first-year teacher, these responsibilities can be almost overwhelming. As a teacher begins in a new career, no one can anticipate the struggles and obstacles that lie ahead. New teachers are charged with the task to help with achievement gap issues, student discipline issues and school climate issues. The new teacher is placed in a new environment that may or may not be conducive to success for their students or their professional ability. School level decorum influences a teacher's ability to teach and influences their decision to stay in the profession (Simon & Johnson, 2013). This challenge becomes even harder when working in an underachieving, Title I school. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (n.d.), Title I, formerly known as Chapter 1, is part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It is the foundation of the federal government's commitment to

closing the achievement gap between low-income and other students (National Association for the Education of Young Children, n.d.). Title I schools receive extra funds to help improve academic achievement of students considered at-risk of not graduating due to the low-socioeconomic situation of family, being reported as delinquent or neglected, living in foster care or the student's family receive government assistance. (National Association for the Education of Young Children, n.d.).

Narrative Understandings of Teacher Attrition

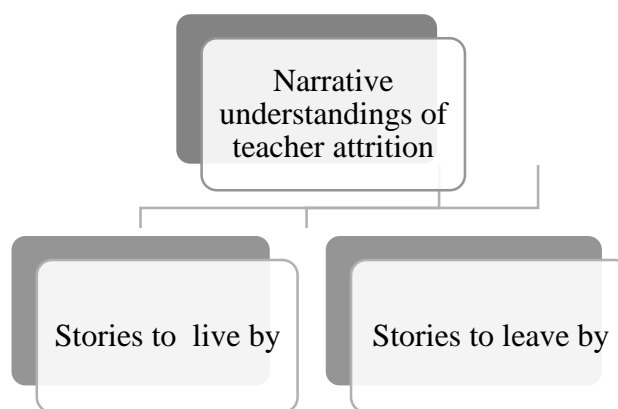


Figure 5 - Narrative concepts in teacher persistence and attrition (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999)

Stories to Live By

In the narrative literature, teachers live out their stories of practice productively in their classrooms (see Figure 9). These “stories to live by” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 149) become part and parcel of their identities understood in narrative terms. A “story to live by” is both personal and social because it reflects the milieus of the places in which the teacher interacts with students and others, and the experiences of a person’s life history (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Thus, exploring teachers’ stories to live by is a

way to examine how their identities are shaped within the context of their schools and classrooms and in relationship with their students.

Stories to Leave By

However, when teachers' stories to live by are not forward moving and productive, they may become "stories to leave by" (Clandinin et al., 2009) as teachers begin to feel stressed, experience burnout, and start to imagine plotlines that veer away from their chosen careers. A "story to leave by" is formed when teachers are no longer able to live out their personal practical knowledge in their "stories to live by" (Clandinin, Downey & Huber, 2009). This story and the culmination of the mis-educative experiences strains the one's inner resiliency.

Conclusion

It is essential that first-year teachers receive the support that they need and receive the training that is necessary to prepare them in their new career. If first-year teachers do not receive the proper training and support, they may not return to teach the next school year. The extent to which certain dynamics influence teacher attrition are unknown. This study aims to identify and expound upon factors influencing former teachers to leave the profession.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter shows the reasoning for selecting narrative inquiry methods, explains the selected research procedures of the inquiry and describes the analytical and interpretive tools that were used in the inquiry. This chapter will also provide the methodological framework for addressing the following research questions: 1) What factors lead to teacher attrition in early career teachers? 2) How do teachers' perceptions of school leadership impact teacher retention? and 3) How does poor school administration influence an early career teacher's resiliency?

Purpose of the Inquiry

The aim of this enquiry was to perform a study to identify the major factors that prompted early career teachers to decide to leave the teaching profession by recording their lived experiences through interviews. A qualitative research method is suitable based on the goals of this study. Freebody (2003) asserts that qualitative research methods allow researchers to be more open and adaptable. Patton (2002) explains that qualitative research offers deeply detailed reports that allows participants to use their own words to describe individual attitudes, motivations, beliefs, views, perceptions, and feelings. Johnson (2011, as cited in Hakim, 2000), further states that qualitative research offers richly detailed reports that allows the participants to use their own words to describe their attitudes, motivations, beliefs, views, perceptions and feelings.

This study is important because high teacher turnover is a growing problem in our current education climate and the consequences have an impact on the quality of education our students receive and their success. This research allows former teachers to

describe their story in their own words and express the circumstances that inspired them to become a teacher and express the major factors that ultimately led them to leave the profession.

Narrative Inquiry Research Methods

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a deep-rooted research methodology that places an emphasis on utilizing story and other narrative forms. According to Dewey, experience can be both personal and social (Dewey, 1938). It is essential to understand and share the unique stories and the context in which they take place. According to Clandinin & Connelly (2000), people should be understood as individuals and as part of the social context they are in. It is valuable for researchers to gain an understanding of the circumstances and situations from the participants' point of view. Narrative inquirers are interested in learning about lived experiences and their context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) (see Figure 10). As a narrative inquirer, one does not look at an individual in a vacuum or isolation but tries to gain a clear picture of the individual and their settings and circumstances. The objective is to understand the experiences of others and the stories that they tell and retell to shape their lives and create their personal meaning.

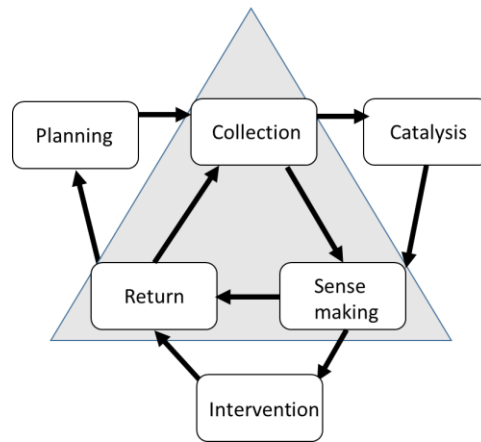


Figure 6 - Narrative inquiry (Krutz, 2014)

Although narrative inquiry is sometimes perceived as a less rigorous methodology, narrative inquiry is well suited for researchers in improving their own practice and gain insights into practices of others such as those teachers how become teacher attrition statistics. Clandinin, Pushor and Murray Orr (2007) mention that narrative inquiry “attends to teachers’ and teacher educators’ stories” (p. 21).

Narrative inquiry is my methodology of choice for several reasons. Taylor (2006) explains the purpose of narrative is to redirect the dominant gaze, to make it see from a new point of view that has been there all along. Clandinin & Connelly (1990; 2000) state narrative is central to our understanding of experience. It involves gathering information for the purpose of research through story telling. The problem of teachers leaving the profession is not new but few teachers have the chance to explain what influenced them to leave the profession. The story of the process that leads someone to leave their calling is something that requires attention and understanding.

My inquiry centers around investigating what experiences with administration influence early career teachers to leave the profession? I am curious to understand what causes someone to lose their resiliency? What can administrators do to encourage their

teachers and support them in following their calling? Clandinin & Connelly (2000) state humans are storytelling organisms who live storied lives. It is aimed at understanding and making meaning of the participant's personal experience by taking a view into their world (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state:

Dewey's notion of experience forms the underpinnings of narrative inquiry in which time (temporality), interactions (relational), and context (situational) create a metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, with temporality along one dimension, the personal and the social along a second dimension, and place along a third. (p. 50)

Clandinin and Huber (2010) explain the three commonplaces of narrative inquiry are temporality, sociality, and place, specify dimensions of an inquiry, and they serve as a conceptual framework for research studies such as my own. Commonplaces are dimensions that need to be simultaneously investigated while conducting a narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). "Attending to experience through inquiry into all three commonplaces is, in part, what distinguishes narrative inquiry from other methodologies" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 40; see also Clandinin & Huber, 2010).

Temporality. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) express "events under study are in temporal transition" (p.53). Pinnegar and Hamilton (2012) explain that although a researcher begins an inquiry at a specific moment in time, the inquirer draws on past events to make meaning of the present and re-imagine "multiple futures rather than a certain one" (p.5). Reid (2013) clarifies that researchers explore the temporality of their participants' experiences by "going back and forth in time since experience has continuity—past, present and future" (p.53). "Directing attention temporally points

inquirers toward the past, present and future of people, places, things and events under study” (Clandinin & Huber, 2010, p.5).

Place. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) define place as “the specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequences of places where the inquiry and events take place” (p.480). The key to this commonplace is recognizing that “all events take place some place” (p.481).

Sociality. Narrative inquirers focus on both personal conditions and social conditions during the investigation. By personal conditions, “we mean the feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p.480) of the inquirer and participants. Social conditions refer to the “milieu, the conditions under which people’s experiences and events are unfolding” (Clandinin & Huber, 2010, p. 436).

Interpretative Tools

Narrative inquiry utilizes four interpretative tools: broadening, burrowing, storying and restorying and fictionalization (Craig, 2014). For this study, three narrative inquiry tools were utilized: broadening, burrowing and storying and restorying. Broadening parallels field texts with events that are simultaneously happening at the school or in the participant’s life. Craig (2014) explains, “...changes in the socio-cultural political milieu that shape the contexts if schools and society are taken into account. Additionally, familial influences are discussed” (p.85). While conducting interviews and reviewing data, the context in which the data was collected was important. Some participants were in the process of researching graduate school programs, others were pregnant or recently married and beginning to start a family. These factors, coupled with

the stresses of the job, weighed heavily on their responses to my questions and their decision making. Burrowing is comprehensively looking at the experiences that the participant has lived.

While learning about the participant's lives and experiences, there were particular events that stood out in their lives and required more investigation. The third tool utilized was the technique of storying and restorying. Storying and restorying captures changes in situations and interactions (Craig, 2014). Throughout the interviews, some of the participants experienced important changes in relationships with not only some of their peers and fellow teachers, but also changes in the relationship they had with their supervisors or administration. Craig (2014) explains that this tool helps to uncover emerging and aggregate reasons for starting, staying in and leaving teaching.

Trustworthiness

Rather than validity, narrative inquiries consider the trustworthiness of the study. Trustworthiness refers to the validity of a qualitative study. Given (2008) explains that trustworthiness allows, "...researchers to describe the virtues of qualitative terms outside describe the virtues of qualitative terms outside of the parameters that are typically applied in quantitative research. Hence, the concepts of generalizability, internal validity, reliability, and objectivity are reconsidered in qualitative terms" (p.895). Trustworthiness allows researchers to make sure that there is credibility in their research study. Trustworthiness is the degree to which a narrative account is understood and seems plausible. If others resonate with what is included in an account and find that it speaks to their personal and professional lives, then the work has fulfilled its purpose. Narrative inquiries believe its trustworthiness is established at a particular point in time for

particular people: the original research participants, the researcher characterizing the events, as well as the reader for whom the narrative account is instructive.

Personal History Self-Study

Another integral part to this research study are my personal experiences. According to Eslinger (2014) self-study research demands an in-depth and systematic analysis of the researcher's teaching process and practice. One's individual knowledge impacts one's teaching style. Samaras and Fresse (2006) state, "formative, conceptualized experiences that have influenced teachers' thinking about teaching and their own practices (p.65). Personal history is examined and guides the researcher's investigation; Eslinger (2014) explains: "...calls for a detailed investigation into his or her own history, values and perspectives, actions and interactions, struggles and shortcomings, as well as insights and revelations" (p.216).

Study Participants

Participant Selection

The targeted demographic for the study consisted of former early career teachers that taught in an urban school district or urban setting. The former teachers who became my sample of convenience were invited to participate in the study through email, text messages and personal invitations. The invitation initially was open to 14 former early career educators that worked in an urban setting or urban district. Participants in the convenience sample were selected based upon having taught in public education for less than five years and participating in the research study within three months of having left

the profession. Four responded to initial contacts to participate in the study. Most of the participants came from large, urban districts throughout the United States, representing districts in Philadelphia, Houston and Central Texas. Informed consent was received from all participants, confirming their understanding of the research purpose, the confidentiality procedures, and the interview and questionnaire procedures.

Overview of Participants

Table 3 - Description of study participants.

Participants					
Pseudonym	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	Certification Route	Grade Level	Years Teaching
Jasmine	Female	White	Teach for America	Middle school	4
Karen	Female	White	Alternative	High school	9
Michelle	Female	Mexican- American	Alternative	High school	7
Hope	Female	African- American	Teach for America	Middle school	3
Denise	Female	African- American	Alternative	Middle school	3.5
Rachel	Female	African- American	Alternative	High school	4
Craig	Male	African- American	Alternative	Elementary & Middle school	3
Huey	Male	African- American	Alternative	Middle school	3.5

Participants (see Table 3 above) were selected based on their availability and their experiences. Creswell (1998) states, "...the individual may be "convenient" to study because she or he is available, may be "politically important case" who attracts attention or is marginalized, or may be a "typical" case, the ordinary person" (p.118). As stated earlier, the participants were selected based upon having similar experiences in the

classroom and having taught for less than 5 years to enter into a new profession. Each of the participants were assigned to pseudonym to promote privacy and anonymity.

The participants of the study each taught in Title I schools mostly in urban areas. The participants included elementary and secondary teachers from diverse subject matter backgrounds that include English Language Arts, Mathematics and Biology. Each of the teachers received their teaching certification from alternative certification programs. Some participants joined programs such as Teach for America to pursue their calling to teach and serve children in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Participants' Background Stories

Jasmine. Jasmine is a young Caucasian woman that grew up in a small, very close community in a small town. She grew up in a family of teachers and has a great appreciation for the value of education. She was accepted and attended one of the leading universities in her home state. Although she was not sure what she wanted to do, she knew that she did not want to go into teaching. While in school, she found her interest and became a liberal arts and journalism major. While in school she became involved in different organizations and met mentors that inspired her to try and join Teach for America. Jasmine recognized that she needed to think about finding a reliable job and began exploring her options. She was concerned about finding a job in the journalism or liberal arts field so she joined Teach for America in order to find a job and also make a difference in the community. She selected to accept a position as a seventh grade English teacher at Red Middle School in the seventh largest school district located in the fourth largest city in the United States. Jasmine left education after four years.

Karen. Karen is a middle-aged Caucasian woman that comes from a family of teachers. She had a strong appreciation for education and wanted to pursue a career somewhere in education. Although she came from a family of educators, she did not have a desire to work in public school. Her appreciation for education inspired her to pursue an advanced degree and aspire to work in academia. She received her Master's degree in student affairs and leadership studies and worked in academic advising and housing in higher education. After a period of time, she began to notice something was beckoning her. She began to question whether or not she was really following her heart and her passion. The call to teach began to gnaw away at her and she decided to enroll in an alternative certification program. She decided to teach at a high school in the seventh largest school district located in the fourth largest city in the United States. Karen's goal was to be the bridge between students in high school and higher education. After teaching seven years, Karen decided to leave education.

Michelle. Michelle is a Mexican-American woman that started school in a small town. Michelle's family was one of two Hispanic families in the town and experienced difficulty fitting in. Michelle grew up feeling less than peers and suffered from shame and embarrassment due to her parents not being able to speak English. She experienced difficulties in school and was enrolled in special education classes. These obstacles did not deter her from pursuing her education and even earning an advanced degree. Michelle soon found herself in a difficult situation when her marriage ended and she became a single parent. She realized that she needed to develop a plan to provide for her family. She decided to become a teacher in order to receive a decent enough income for a living and chose an alternative certification program to enroll in. She realized she was

passionate about helping students that had difficulty communicating and decided to teach Spanish. She wanted to get into teaching to empower those that have language barriers and help those appreciate their cultural background. Michelle left teaching after nine years.

Hope. Hope is a young African-American woman that did not have many particularly fond experiences as a child in school. As a child, she was often bored in school and would get in trouble for being talkative. Although her experiences were unremarkable, she was able to achieve academically. She was able to excel well enough in school to attend one of the most prestigious Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU). As an undergraduate student, Hope became interested in serving those in need in different communities and discovered Teach for America. Hope believed that Teach for America would provide her an opportunity to share her passion for learning with students in low-income communities. She decided to relocate and accept a position as a 6th grade Science teacher at Green Middle School in the seventh largest school district located in the fourth largest city in the United States. Hope decided to leave education after three years.

Denise. Denise is a young, African-American woman who did not put much effort in school once she left primary school. She did not feel talents or gifts were nurtured and felt her experience was unfulfilling. She later attended a small Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in her home state. While there, she discovered her passion for English and pushed herself to achieve the greatness she knew she was capable of. She then decided to pursue her Master's degree in English at another HBCU. She became concerned about finding a career and decided to seek the assistance of a career counselor.

The counselor recommended that she go into teaching to share her passion. She accepted a position teaching reading at Green Middle School in the seventh largest school district located in the fourth largest city in the United States. She also taught 8th grade reading and 6th grade math at the same school. After teaching for three and a half years, Denise left teaching.

Rachel. Rachel is an African-American woman from the country of Nigeria. She started school in Nigeria and spent her first 5 years of schooling in the Nigerian school system. She and her family then relocated to the United States and started the 4th grade in PG county school system in Maryland. During this time, she experienced a difficult social transition and struggled in school. She regressed academically and experienced many obstacles until she began middle school in a different school system. While there, she met an inspirational English teacher that helped to restore her confidence and provided her with a different outlook to help prepare her for high school. She later enrolled and graduated with a business degree from one of the largest universities in the state of Pennsylvania. She later enrolled in an alternative certification program and began teaching taught math and health wellness classes in a Title I urban high school in the eight largest school district in the United States. Rachel decided to leave after five years in the classroom.

Craig. Craig is an African-American male that grew up in a family of teachers. Craig also had many inspirational teachers that encouraged him in school. Although he felt as though his professional life was being steered in the direction of teaching and serving others, teaching was not his first career choice. Craig eventually came to the conclusion that teaching was how he could give back to the community and decided to

enroll in an alternative certification program. Craig wanted to inspire students and provide the same support that he received when he was in school. He then decided to accept employment at Green Middle School in the seventh largest school district located in the fourth largest city in the United States. He then became engaged and found himself in need of a better situation for he and soon to be bride. He then accepted a position at a charter school teaching math to primary aged school children. Craig left education after three years in the classroom.

Huey. Huey is a young, African-American male that grew up in a single parent home in a poor neighborhood. Huey's childhood was filled with many obstacles including: homelessness, violence, racism and abuse. He found comfort in school until his family relocated and he was forced to attend schools outside his community. With the help of some inspirational mentors, he was able to attend one of the most prestigious Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in the country and graduate with honors. Inspired by his former professors, he would continue his education and obtain his Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Although it seemed his path was leading to a path of private practice, he would soon realize his true calling. While interning in a maximum security prison, he realized that many of the inmates he spoke with had limited education and experienced similar childhood issues. He then realized that his true calling was wanted to help inspire children that experienced similar struggles and be the type of mentor and inspiration that can motivate children to overcome hardships. He soon decided he would pursue is doctorate degree and also become a certified teacher. He then enrolled in an alternative certification program and accepted a position teaching both math and reading at Green Middle school at Green Middle School

in the seventh largest school district located in the fourth largest city in the United States. After three and a half years, Huey left teaching.

Data Collection

Field Texts

Data collection occurred in a variety of different methods including recorded interviews, emails and text messages. Patton (2002) states that interviews allow for the collection of rich responses from the participants to gain a better understanding from the participant. Interview questions that were used in the study were intended to gain a more comprehensive understanding regarding the factors that influence teacher's decision to leave their career within five years (see Appendix A). Interviews were conducted in locations which offered privacy to promote confidentiality. The participants were also given a Likert Scale with open-ended questions to learn more of their stories and their experiences as an early career teacher (see Appendix B). The participants were interviewed in isolated office or in the privacy of their own home to insure privacy and confidentiality while the interview was taking place.

Data Analysis

Information from the field texts and questionnaires was analyzed using the narrative inquiry interpretive tools burrowing, broadening, storying and restorying and fictionalization. Broadening encompasses constructing generalizations of events to comment about "a person's character, values, [and] ways of life, or...about the social and intellectual climate of the times" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p.11). Burrowing concentrates on "the event's emotional, moral, and aesthetic qualities...aimed at

reconstructing a story of the event from the point of view of the person at the time the event occurred” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p.11). Storying and restorying captures changes in situations and interactions (Craig, 2014). Throughout the interviews, some of the participants experienced important changes in relationships with not only some of their peers and fellow teachers, but also changes in the relationship they had with their supervisors or administration. Craig (2014) explains that this tool helps to uncover emerging and aggregate reasons for starting, staying in and leaving teaching. Fictionalization was used to create pseudonyms for the participant’s names and their former schools. The stories of each participant were then analyzed and to discover any similar themes.

Chapter 4: Findings

This investigation centered on the storied experiences of former early career teachers. The objective of this qualitative research study was to explore the phenomena, both real and perceived, behind the substantial amount of teachers that are leaving the profession within only five years of being in the profession. Data analysis and the results will be discussed in this chapter. Eight former educators agreed to participate in the research study. The interviews were a significant source of data material. The interviews were conducted in places that were convenient for the participants and lasted between thirty to sixty minutes. The following questions were addressed:

- 1) What factors lead to teacher attrition in early career teachers?
- 2) How do teacher's perceptions of leadership impact teacher retention?
- 3) How does less effective administration influence an early career teacher's resiliency?

The study findings that follow are arranged thematically. First, background stories of each participant are presented, in which the former teachers share their personal early school experiences, their decisions to enter teaching and their teacher preparation programs. This is followed by the teacher's perception of administration and eventual exit from the profession. From there, the issues with school culture and school climate are explored. Up next, the teacher's stories of student achievement are explored. This is then followed by the stories shared by the male participants to gain an insight on the male's perspective. The final theme that will be explored with by the administrative influence on the teacher's decision to leave the profession.

Background Stories

Childhood School Experiences

I began each interview wanting to learn about participants' experiences with school growing up and the things that stood out for them. When I began the interview, I anticipated that the experiences would be positive. I quickly learned that each participant had their own unique experiences and were willing to discuss them in detail. Some of the participants enjoyed school and reflected on their experiences with joy, while others.

For Karen and Jasmine, early school experiences evoked pleasant memories. As Karen recalled:

I mean, overall I've always liked school. Both of my parents were school teachers. So I always enjoyed at least the learning part of school. I didn't – I wasn't always the most socially adept person at school, but I always, you know, enjoyed learning, enjoyed school in general.

She continued:

School was emphasized. It was stressed to do "good" in school, those sorts of things.

Jasmine remembered:

My experience as a student were always very positive. I don't have any specific, negative memories from growing up in school. I was from a very small town, and so there was no really options of where to go to school. It was elementary, middle, high school, that's it. Everybody knew each other. The community was very connected, so I didn't have any negative experiences growing up in school.

Others, discussed their childhood school experiences with feelings of sadness and contempt. They shared stories of feeling out of place or ashamed of who they were.

Huey remembered:

I had teachers that didn't believe in my future. I actually had a teacher that said I wouldn't go anywhere in life because of my attitude. I didn't like going to school at all. I would get into trouble for talking and fighting. I really didn't like the first week of school. I would not have school supplies or new school clothes. I would hate when the teacher asked us to share what we did over the summer vacation. I could never go anywhere. I ended up staying home or visiting family while my classmates took family vacations. The first week of school was always an unwelcomed reminder of how poor I was growing up.

Rachel recalled:

I had a difficult social transition which impacted my academic performance, and [I] regressed academically.

Michelle expressed:

My family was one of two Hispanic minority families in the town. I grew up always feeling less than the other students I went to school with. I remember feeling ashamed of myself. I was embarrassed...

Michelle then recalled:

I don't really remember ever doing any homework. I do remember being placed in special ed. classes...

Jasmine stated:

I have lots of relatives who are teachers. I never thought that I would go into teaching.

Unpacking childhood school experiences. Each participant came from a different cultural background and educational experience. Participants that had family members that were teachers tended to reflect on their education experience more favorably. The minority participants tended to have less pleasant memories of their education or their teachers. The minority participants reflected on the cultural bias and racism that they have experienced in school. Similarly, participants that experienced moving to different schools or different neighborhoods underwent difficulties adapting to new schools and suffered academically. The participants also shared stories of negative experiences with new teachers. Human beings are constantly in interactions that are either encouraging or discouraging (Le Cornu, 2013). Encouraging interactions help develop a person's sense of resiliency. A majority of the minority participants reported not being empowered at school and often reflected upon their time as students poorly or unremarkable. However, many of the minority participants reported having mentors or someone that was special that inspired them. That experience was enough to motivate them to achieve their goals and rise above an overall negative experience in school.

Transition to Teaching

Each of the participants described their process of becoming a teacher and what motivated them to enter teaching.

Karen stated:

Well, actually due to both of my parents being teachers, I said I was going to do anything but be a school teacher. And I kind of worked in other areas of education. I worked in higher Ed. I got a master's degree in student affairs, leadership studies and worked in, like academic advising, housing – those sorts of things on the college campus.

Huey shared:

I didn't think I would find myself in a public school teaching. I didn't think that my background in psychology or counseling would qualify me to teach children. I thought I would be working to build my private practice for a career and possibly teach a Bible study class in church or participate in a community mentor program. I was considering developing a young adult Bible course. That along with any community service that I engaged in would be the way I contributed to my community or those in need.

Others saw teaching as a refuge to escape the anxiety of job hunting in their degree field.

When asked what their plans

Jasmine stated:

...I didn't have to worry about job hunting or job seeking or anything that would have happened in a journalism or liberal arts field. I have no idea what I would have done if I wouldn't have gotten mixed up with TFA.

Denise shared:

...the career counselor submitted my application because she thought I would be a good candidate and wanted me to receive some work experience before going

back to college for a third degree. It was never my desire to teach elementary, middle or high school. It was just easy to get hired and move up.

Michelle expressed:

I chose teaching as a career after I had kids and found myself as a single parent. I felt teaching provided a decent income and the schedule was well suited for single parents.

Unpacking transition to teaching. Each of the eight participants received their teaching certifications from an alternative certification program. Similarly, each of the participants came from a different academic background and did not initially see teaching as calling professionally. Some of the participants reported getting into teaching through Teach for America. Others went into teaching due to being concerned about their ability to compete in the job market. Another participant reported becoming a teacher due to becoming a single parent and needing a career that provided a decent income and allowed the flexibility to spend time being a parent. Although some of the participants had positive experiences as a student, they were looking to explore other options professionally. The participants that had negative experiences did not report wanting to go into teaching as their first profession.

Teaching Preparation and Support

The former teachers were asked to share their perception of their teacher preparation experience and the support they received on campus and their experience with their alternative certification program.

Denise shared:

My teaching preparation program did not really prepare me for life in the classroom. I also didn't have a mentor at my campus and I didn't get any help to become a better teacher. Administration didn't offer any support to help me either.

Jasmine expressed similar feelings of being unprepared. She stated:

.... I definitely know that I was naïve coming in as a teacher. TFA's training is in depth but not extensive, and so you have a lot of things you still have to learn while you're on the job the first couple years, but I felt like I was relatively supported and able to be successful with my students...

Rachel expressed the lack of tangible support on her campus. She shared:

My teacher preparation program did not support me or prepare me to teach. Things weren't different when I started teaching. I didn't have a mentor or any kind of support to help me. The only support I received as a teacher was through verbal acknowledgement and praise for certain actions. In terms of concrete support or feedback outside of the mandated semi-annual observation which sometimes didn't happen, and often happened in a very rushed manner. There were no relevant professional development sessions aimed at supporting teachers to better achieve student goals. In general, there was a lack of support outside of support received from other teachers.

Michelle also had difficulties with support and preparation. She stated:

Neither my teacher preparation program nor my administrators offered the support I needed when I was in the classroom. I also didn't have the greatest relationship with my fellow teachers. School wasn't exactly the greatest place for

me. I didn't feel empowered or valued on the campus. My input wasn't important.

Huey had similar feelings when sharing his opinion of his preparation. He stated:

My ACP program went by pretty fast. All of our exercises were done at the meeting site and there weren't any opportunities to actually work with the kids. Everything is easy when you have adults that are working with you in scenarios just so we could leave on time. No one wants to cause any problems when they come to class after work. We all wanted to go home. But once you stepped into the classroom, things happened fast. Classroom management was the first thing you have to deal with. You didn't have time to get prepared or acclimated to anything. You had to hit the ground running. I can't image what it was like for my students to be in my class for the first week.

Huey also expressed feelings of isolation and feeling unappreciated once he started in the classroom. He shared:

There were plenty of times when I felt like I was an expendable tool. Our administrators felt they could ask anything of you because you were new. The veteran teachers weren't any better. They were very disrespectful and didn't want to listen to anything that I had to share. I would come in to work with students that needed extra help on Saturday. These students were not mine and I had no rapport with them. I received little support when there were behavioral issues. I actually had an administrator say that I had bad classroom management because I would send kids to the office if they were disruptive during Saturday school. I felt that it was voluntary and if they didn't want to be there or they were going to

misbehave, they needed to leave so the other students could learn. I know they needed the help but if they weren't there to work, they could go. It's not mandatory to attend. The thing that bothered me the most was they didn't even sit down to talk to me. I found out about it at the end of the year, many months after Saturday school ended. If they didn't want me there, they could have told me. I would have gladly enjoyed my Saturday mornings.

Craig shared:

Teaching wasn't exactly what I thought it would be. I didn't receive a mentor or any kind of assistance when I needed it. I was like the low man on the totem-pole. It kind of made me want to rethink exactly what I wanted to do and where I wanted to do it at. I mean, when they say "give back to the community and, you know, work with people who really need your help," it's not as easy as it sounds.

Unpacking teacher preparation and support. Each participant went through an alternative certification program (ACP) to become a certified teacher. Overall, the participants reported feeling unprepared to step into the classroom with the training from their ACP program. Although the training programs provided a breadth of information, the participants shared that the programs were not in depth enough and didn't prepare them to work in the environments that they were going to work in. Once they began teaching, the participants reported being unsupported by administrators. The administrators did not take time to encourage or empower the early career teachers and did not value their input or suggestions on campus. The participants also reported not receiving support from their fellow teachers or receiving quality professional development (PD) sessions.

The participants also mentioned not receiving a mentor to give them feedback or advice on how to deal with the difficulties of being an early career teacher. Other participants shared their frustrations about not receiving tangible feedback that they needed to be a successful teacher. Parental support was also an issue for the former educators. There was little to no consistent engagement with the parents or guardians of the students. When communication was made, the parents were shocked that the teachers were actually committed to helping their children and cared about their success.

Teacher's Perception of Administration and Eventual Exit from the Profession

Although the each participant had their own unique journey to reach the classroom, each found themselves in the same situation at their schools. Each teacher found themselves experiencing the difficulties every early career faces while working in an urban setting. Each participant laments on the issues faces both in the classroom and with administration. *How does teacher's perception of leadership perception impact teacher retention and what factors lead to teacher attrition in early career teachers?*

The former teachers shared the level of support they received from their administrators and supervisors.

Denise shared:

When the administration changed, everything about the school changed. I didn't really have any issues in the classroom when I started teaching, my challenges came when someone else became my boss, and came up with a different method of teaching. In addition, they took reading classes away from me and made me teach math. My degree is in English!

She continued:

I had great relationships with my students, other campus teachers, and parents. I respected them and they respected me. Administrators were different...they didn't support us by lying to us...although I had more education than the vice principal and my coordinator, they would typically treat others (with a lower pay rate) as though we were beneath them.

When talking about her experience with administration, Michelle shared:

...I didn't feel supported at all. I felt like the administration would hide back in their nice offices while the teachers faced all the issues that students had. For example not one time do I remember ever having the principal or the curriculum person come to my room. It seemed like there were like 20 principals and on occasion I would see the one assigned to my floor but never the big wigs from the first floor like the principal and curriculum person. There were fights that included racial tension, vulgar comments, as a teacher I felt I could hardly turn around...I hated that job because I really felt alone.

Craig expressed:

...the most frustrating part is that when you don't feel like a teacher, you feel like a baby sitter. And you feel like there's no support out there, you know what I mean? The parents don't—the parents aren't doing anything about it, and the administration, especially towards the end of the year, really don't care.

Unpacking teacher's perception of administration and eventual exit from the profession. The former teachers shared their former administrator's lack of concern for their professional development and success. The administrators were seen as distant and unwilling to take the time to develop a rapport with their staff. The teachers were treated

as expendable tools and felt they were at the whim of whatever request that the administrators made. There was no professional respect for the teachers on the campus. The administrators treated the teachers as though they were beneath them. When administrators took the time to develop relationships with their teachers based on respect, trust, care and integrity, the teachers were more likely to flourish (Le Cornu, 2013). The former teachers reported not trusting the administration and viewed them as deceptive and insincere. In some cases the former teachers reported viewing their administrators as an enemy. The administrators appeared to be more concerned with securing their own job security rather than investing in their staff.

School Climate and Culture

The participants describe the difficulties of working on campuses with a poor school culture.

Hope shared feelings of frustration with the poor school climate and inconsistency in expectations. She shared:

There was a lack of expectations for the students therefore; behaviors that were accepted in other classrooms were not acceptable in my own. This confused the students and cultivated inconsistent school culture

Jasmine also shared her story with the problem of poor school climate and culture and the administration's role. She stated:

Myself and my other colleagues who came in with Teach for America and we realized from the start that would be a little bit—it could be tense at times. And so we went to great lengths to try to involve ourselves with these other teachers and not be the hip, young know-it-alls on the block who didn't take any advice,

but there were still people who really were just not receptive to the fact that we did know what we were doing, and we were able to work hard. And we were able to have success with students. And, I mean, not specifically to me, but some of my friends, my roommates at the school were just verbally berated by these teachers. Angry, angry emails, kind of like try to blackball them to the rest of the faculty even though they were doing good work, or they were trying to. And the administration wouldn't really get involved in that and try to correct it, which is just toxic to your environment. It's not helping anyone to let that kind of behavior go unchecked.

Jasmine continued:

Eventually I did have some of that directed at me, but that was in my last year when I was an administrator there was one teacher—specifically one teacher who was just, it seemed, like very against my presence at the school at all. While the administrator did standup—or the principal did stand up for me a little bit, it was, I mean, the teacher is still there. That teacher was continually, like cursing at students. There were parent complaints, and when you let someone like that keep a job it doesn't really show that you're onboard with really taking a school where it needs to be. Administrators, other administrators, assistant principals in meetings would curse about teachers and just complain, and talk about how busy and angry they were. And, I mean, I thought that their focus would have been on, like, what can we do? We are busy, here's the action items, like let's do this, but instead time was taken us with, you know, angry and mean and really, really rude

comments about teachers—lewd comments about teachers. And the principal would sit there in silence, cause she seemed, like scared of dealing with that.

Unpacking school climate and culture. There was little collaboration among teachers and a negative school climate. It was difficult to keep both the students and themselves motivated when trying to learn on such difficult campuses. The participants shared experiencing situations where either they or a fellow educator was verbally attacked or threatened. Some of the former educators reported being placed in situations where they were either victim or witness to blackmail. There was a lack of institutional control on the campus and teachers operated in a sense of apprehension.

Student Achievement

The former teachers reflected on the importance of student achievement on their campus and how the school prepared the teachers to help the students succeed. Rachel also expressed her story and the sentiments regarding the planning and structure that administrators provided in the school and the school culture. Rachel stated:

I encountered issues with students entering far below grade level, lacking gateway skills, lack of practice with critical thinking, and most importantly, a lack of intrinsic student motivation. There was also conflicts in student assessment and grading between myself and administration where I firmly believed that the grading policy contributed to a subpar academic environment For instance, homework didn't couldn't account for more than 10 percent of a students' grade, yet administration wanted a lot of independent student practice. While independent practice yields results, particularly in math, many schools achieving

these results also have an expectation that students do a bulk of independent practice via homework.

Karen also shared identical feelings of frustration with student achievement and student motivation. She stated:

I think most of it is just motivation with different groups of students. You always have some students who enjoy school who are going to work hard who do what they're supposed to do, but then you also always have what in my opinion felt like a pretty significant group of students that it didn't seem like no matter what you did, you could make learning fun for them or make it where they wanted to be there. And just try – always working to try to motivate that group of students was, you know, probably one of the toughest things for me.

Unpacking student achievement. The former teachers expressed their frustration with the motivation of some of their students and the lack of certain foundational skills that the students lacked. The former teachers expressed feeling frustrated and overwhelmed by the achievement gaps. The schools also struggled to develop effective ways to implement interventions and lesson plans to improve student achievement. There wasn't a strong culture of collaboration amongst the teachers due to high teacher turnover at some campuses. Some campuses were dealing with not only turnover of staff but also from the administration. The constant teacher turnover caused issues with developing or continuing any relationships with the community members and partners. These issues resulted in some of the schools failing to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP).

Male Perspective

Each male participant was asked to share his experience as being a male on the campus. Each shared the difficult expectations that males on the campus and their struggles with balancing needing help and providing assistance to others.

When discussing the experience of being teacher from a male perspective, Craig stated:

Well the school that I started off with, there were a lot of behavioral problems. But the students that did actually want to learn were worth all the headache of disciplinary issues. I think also the campus might have been a little bit dysfunctional.

When talking about his autonomy as a professional and the support from administrators, he expressed:

I'm sympathetic to the administration to some extent, because they're under a lot of pressure to make sure that their school is exemplary, and they show progress on test scores. At the campus I was at, they did a lot of testing, practice testing, real testing, and practice tests for the practice test. And it was exhausting, so to them they were always, well, our lesson plan should be data driven. So we're going to collect all this data by taking all these tests. But if you add up all the time taking days spent taking tests and not teaching, at some point it starts to get counterproductive. And so that kind of creates a cycle where students aren't performing, so we're going to do more tests. They're doing more tests instead of learning, students aren't performing, you know what I mean?

Interviewer responds:

Okay. So when you're in that cycle—when you're in that system, do you feel as though the student received the support and care they needed? 'Cause when I hear you share your story with me, it doesn't seem like they put the students' interest or needs first. They value the data and the test and their procedure more.

Craig responds:

I don't know if that was—I think that was probably just a bi-product, you know, unintended consequence of all this data that they were collecting, but I don't think it was positive for the students. I mean, I wouldn't want to take that many tests, and I'm an adult, you know, sitting in there for what, hours all day taking a test, doing math and reading and all that stuff. At a certain point it just, you know, you had—it wasn't as productive as it could have been.

When discussing the campus culture that the administrators cultivated, he shares:

...at the particular campus I was at, discipline was inconsistent and ineffective. So it creates an environment where you're babysitting and teaching at the same time. Now I'm sure a lot of those behavioral problems were – some of them were on medication, attention deficit disorder or they were emotionally disturbed coming from bad homes. So it's not the students' fault, but at a certain point they need to be in a class where they're not disrupting other students, because the other students really couldn't—they didn't have the wherewithal to ignore those students and focus on their work. So that was the most frustrating part is that when you don't feel like a teacher, you feel like a baby sitter. And you feel like there's no support out there, you know what I mean? The parents don't—the

parents aren't doing anything about it, and the administration, especially towards the end of the year, really don't care.

Interviewer replies:

So you felt isolated at times?

Craig responds:

Yes, I think that's a fair characterization.

Huey expressed similar sentiments of poor school culture and climate when reflecting on his experiences. Huey stated:

There was constant turnover happening at that campus. I witnessed two principal regime changes, approximately 6 changes in the assistant principals and countless changes in the staff, all within three years! There was no consistent institutional control, preparation or expectations. Every day you had to be prepared for the unexpected and be ready to call an audible to whatever game plan you had. And that's only the adults!

Huey continued:

Things with the children were also difficult. Classroom management and campus discipline were a problem. There were several incidents of fighting among students and even some incidents of violence between teachers and students. You never knew what to expect. There times when students would bring or find weapons on campus and the police had to investigate. There were issues of fires and several lock-down situations. I remember during one state-wide assessment, there was an attempted robbery in the surrounding community and the suspect ran onto our campus. We had to go into a lock-down situation while trying to deliver

a state assessment. I battled feelings of being overwhelmed and frustration. I felt like I was letting my students down because I couldn't overcome the chaos and drama of the campus and make learning fun for them or get them to appreciate education. Who could really see the value of education when they were at a school like that?

When reflecting on his experience as being one of the few males on his campus and his expectations, Huey responded:

There were times when I felt like I had to do everything. If there was an issue with one of my neighbor teachers and a student, the student was sent to my class or I was asked to help diffuse the situation. This made things difficult for me and my students because I was always being pulled away from my room. When I would recommend finding another solution besides calling me to handle their discipline issues, the other teacher would get defensive or become upset that I didn't have their back. It was difficult trying to find that balance.

Unpacking male perspective. The male participants expressed feelings of frustration with working on campuses and battling feelings of isolation and being overwhelmed. The former teachers also reported feeling frustrated with the leadership on the campus and the dysfunction they were working in. There was also added pressure to be an authority figure for other teachers when they experienced disciplinary issues in their classroom. The former teachers also were opposed to data driven atmosphere in education and the burnout that occurs when the results take precedent over the actual needs and teaching the students. Teacher autonomy and innovative techniques were replaced with standardized, regimented teaching.

Administrative Influences

The next section delves into the former educators' relationship with their campus administrators and whether or not the former administrators affected their spirit to continue teaching. *How does less effective administration influence on early career teacher's resiliency?*

Denise shared:

...Due to the poor administration and drama at the school, I made a vow to never return to a school district. I didn't feel valued as a teacher. My input was not well received. It wasn't a positive place to work.

When asked to elaborate on the situation that caused her to feel like a target of the administration, Denise shared:

The administration needed to find a way to save money and so they found ridiculous reasons to fire staff members. Because I was close to my due date, I was pregnant, they targeted me. I'll just take the experience and use it as a learning experience and a stepping stool.

Hope stated:

Administration was not very concerned with my development, more or so due to the fact that my students wouldn't take statewide tests in the subject I taught. There was a time when I had over 40 students in a class at a time. This did not benefit my students at all. My classroom was rarely observed so I rarely received feedback. I liked teaching science but I do not plan on returning to the classroom to teach...my experiences have somewhat deterred me from pursuing a career in schools...I didn't learn anything positive that I can walk away with.

Rachel also expressed similar sentiments regarding the planning and structure that administrators provided in the school and the school culture. Rachel stated:

Out of classroom challenges were centered around poor administrative decisions. The administration set very low standards for student achievement but constantly wanted high results, which created a conflict. I also felt like the institution I worked for generally didn't value the work of teachers, and felt teachers were expendable. I also didn't like being in such a test driven environment, and most importantly, I wasn't teaching what and how I wanted to teach, given very little autonomy. There was a lack of support from administration, unwillingness to make necessary changes and nepotism within the organization.

Jasmine shared how difficult it was to have a relationship with administration and its impact on her decision to leave. She stated:

...the bigger picture of the school itself being pretty severely dysfunctional at times was harder to deal with. I always tell people when they ask why I left teaching, it wasn't the kids, it was the adults. We had an extremely dysfunctional administrative team that I then strangely tried to join in my last year to try to correct things from the inside, but that's another story. It was a divisive environment. It wasn't a team environment. It was kind of an "every man for himself" type of thing. And it wasn't benefiting the students in the way that it should have been. We had the resources, and we had the campus, and we even had the students there that were willing to kind of learn and be successful, but the way things were run wasn't supporting that.

She continued:

...before I left, I came to the realization that the principal was very concerned with outward appearance. She was terrified of perceptions of the school, so she wanted people to look at us and see good things and think good things. But on the inside it was just falling apart. So while maybe parents or students might not have seen that, or even new teachers seen that in their inner workings as someone who had been through the different ranks and seen from different perspectives and finally in the inner circle how dysfunctional it was, it was very clear that it was not going anywhere good fast.

Huey shared:

There was constant turnover in the staff; either an administrator or a teacher was leaving so there was no consistent support. The administration wasn't much help. There were times when I witnessed principals walk in the other direction of a fight or some disturbance. Then there were the times when you would write a student up or send them to the office and they would send them back to class with no punishment. They would ask if you followed protocol and what could I have done to help avoid the situation. I felt attacked and insulted by the lack of support and the idea that I wasn't competent enough to handle a problem with a student. The final straw for me was when I had an assignment for my doctoral class that involved going over the school budget with the principal. The principal said she doesn't discuss that information and that there wasn't anything that she could do for me. She didn't know that I knew she was lying and the school budget is a matter of public record. I just smiled and walked away knowing she was of a liar. Eventually an assistant principal convinced her to help me.

He continued:

The new principals weren't very helpful. Once the old principal left and the new administration came in, there were problems. The administrators brought in their own staff and many of the veteran teachers were not pleased. There were many unpleasant and hostile staff meetings and grade level meetings. Things finally culminated with the district sending someone in to investigate what was going on. I remember receiving a confidential survey in my box stating the district wanting to get a better understanding of the school climate and the problems with the administration. I didn't even wait around to see the results. I began to look for other positions outside of public school. I eventually decided to take a pay cut and work as a graduate assistant at a local university. Before I left, I watched several of my closest coworkers leave the campus to take positions in another district or city. It was really hard having those conversations with their students. Little did I know that I would soon be in the exact situation with my students. I won't ever forget the sadness, anger and disappointment in their faces when I said I was leaving. I felt like I failed them and I continue regret quitting but I felt that the campus was too toxic. Anytime you have teachers leaving before Christmas break, district investigations and students fighting staff and administrators, it was time to go.

Karen stated:

I would say probably the only one that really sticks out is I had one in the AP that I just really did not have a very good relationship with. He tended not to treat people very professionally, and didn't give people, in my opinion, what was

common courtesy or—you know, I by no means think I'm perfect. I think I always have things I can work on and improve, but he would, you know, like point out your flaws in a room full of people. Like one of the biggest problems that I ever had with him was that he disagreed with the way I took care of a situation, and he literally yelled at me in front of my classroom full of students. But he is probably the only person I would say that I just consistently had a bad relationship with.

She continued:

We ended up having to get the principal involved, because he was also my appraiser that particular school year. And then I didn't feel like I got a very fair appraisal the next time he did, like walk-throughs and that kind of stuff. So I ended up going to the principal and, you know, letting him know what had happened and all of that sort of stuff. And he ended up intervening in the situation.

When responding to how the situation was resolved and the frustration and the uneasiness it caused, Karen shared:

I would say in some respects it got worse, but the principal ended up making somebody else my appraiser so, I mean, we still had to deal with certain students or certain situations together, because he was also the grade level AP for the grade I was teaching at the time. But he made a different person my appraiser so we didn't have to deal with each other on that level.

Michelle shared:

I'm not sure what it would take for me to ever return...I would say administration involvement and engagement would be important. I doubt that I ever return though. My administrators and mentors did not provide me with any support to help me develop as a professional or to become a more effective teacher to help my students. The work was overwhelming and there wasn't much autonomy.

Unpacking administrative influences. Overall, each participant shared the relationships with administrators and the school's dysfunction contributed to their decisions to leave the profession more than the behavior of the students. Some participants reported feeling frustrated with the selfish attitude of the administrative teams of the campus and the lack of professionalism that was exhibited by certain administrative team leaders. Half of the participants reported working on a campus that featured high turnover among the teachers and the administration. This made it difficult to develop consistent expectations and goals for the school. This also made things difficult to foster a positive school culture and change the negative school climate and reputation in the community.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Next Steps

This study was conducted in order to gain an understanding of the experiences of former career teacher that left the profession with their first five years. The objective of this final chapter is to review the study, summarize the results, highlight a discovery gleaned from the data and discuss further implications and recommendations for further research. The study was guided by the following questions:

- 1) What factors lead to teacher attrition in early career teachers?
- 2) How does teacher's perception of leadership perception impact teacher?
- 3) How does less effective administration influence an early career teacher's resiliency?

Methods and Procedures

This qualitative study employed narrative inquiry methodologies, attending to the commonplaces of place, sociality, and temporality of former teachers' contextualized experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006). This study consisted of eight participants, six females and 2 males, which were alternatively certified to become teachers. Each participant taught in an urban school setting and is no longer in the profession. The participants agreed to be interviewed at a secure location and to take a Likert survey. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed. The major themes that emerged from the study are: relationships with administrators and the school's dysfunction contributed to their decisions to leave the profession more than the behavior of the students. The former teachers also reported feeling undervalued and unsupported on their campus as significant factors that influenced their decisions to leave as well.

Major Findings

The results of this study are encouraging. They echo much of the research regarding why teachers leave the profession early. The results show that a teacher's perception of leadership does have an impact on teacher retention. Each of the eight participants reported dysfunction amongst the school leadership on their previous campuses. The former teachers each reported leadership issues and campus dysfunction as being the primary reasons for their departure. These results provide insight to what factors motivate teachers to leave the profession in their first five years. Successful teacher retention efforts can be achieved if providing early career teachers with: 1) professional respect 2) tangible and emotional support 3) equal input in decision making 4) healthy school climate and culture.

Question 1 – Related Findings

- 1) What factors lead to teacher attrition in early career teachers?

As participants discussed their early career experiences, numerous aspects came to the forefront that contributed to their decisions to leave education. These included working at schools with high teacher attrition, feeling disrespected by other teachers, lack of support, and negative school culture/climate.

Over half of the participants worked at a school that had high rates of teacher turnover. This made things difficult to collaborate in making lesson plans and sharing skills with one another. Huey described his situation as follows, "There were a lot of new teachers each year that I was there. There were not many veteran teachers on the campus and the school had a difficult time hiring veteran teachers." He continued, explaining,

Our school had a bad reputation and the only new teachers we could bring in were those from TFA or an ACP program. These teachers really didn't know the school and the issues that you had to deal with. They rarely stayed longer than a year or two. I didn't even finish my third year.

Participants often felt disrespected by more veteran teachers. This was evident in Huey's discussion on feeling disrespected by administrators when he added, "The veteran teachers weren't any better [than administrators]. They (veteran teachers) were very disrespectful and didn't want to listen to anything that I had to share."

The teachers also lamented on the lack of support, particularly in not having a mentor to give them feedback that would help them grow and develop as teachers. Hope expressed this succinctly when she shared, "My classroom was rarely observed so I rarely received feedback." From Craig's perspective, "the most frustrating part is that when you don't feel like a teacher, you feel like a baby sitter. And you feel like there's no support out there, you know what I mean?" His continued discussion provided insights into the ways in which lack of support impact beginning teachers' image of self and teaching.

I didn't receive a mentor or any kind of assistance when I needed it. I was like the low man on the totem-pole. It kind of made me want to rethink exactly what I wanted to do and where I wanted to do it at. I mean, when they say "give back to the community and, you know, work with people who really need your help," it's not as easy as it sounds.

The school's climate and culture also proved to be key factors that determined whether the teachers were going to leave the profession. Jasmine shared, "The bigger

picture of the school itself being pretty severely dysfunctional at times was harder to deal with. I always tell people when they ask why I left teaching, it wasn't the kids. It was the adults." Huey experienced a similar situation at his school. As he explained,

There was a lot of turnover on our campus. In my time there, I had two different head principals and seven or eight assistant grade level principals. There was also a large number of teachers that left the school. There was not an opportunity to develop any kind of cohesion in lesson planning or developing any rapport with the staff or members of the community.

Working in schools with high attrition in which they felt disrespect from veteran teachers and unsupported in the development of their professional skills, participants soon developed a sense of isolation. As stated earlier in a Terry 2009 study, schools that were organized to support new teachers and provide them with collegial interactions and opportunities for growth were more likely to retain their teachers than schools that were not able to provide such resources for their new teachers. The conditions and resources needed to support new teachers in their continuous learning, growth, and professional development include shared decision making on substantive issues, collaborative work with others to reach shared goals, and expanded teacher leadership capacity (Brown & Schainker, 2008).

Question 2 – Related Findings

2) How do teacher's perception of leadership impact teacher retention?

Although working with the children was challenging, participants reported that their primary challenges did not lie with students but with the adults on the campus—particularly school administrators. The former teachers stated that dysfunction of the

campus, lack of respect for teachers, poor school climate/culture and ineffective leadership were major factors in their decision to leave teaching.

The former teachers participating in this study did not see their administrative leaders as support or allies. For example, Michelle shared, “I didn’t feel supported at all. I felt like the administration would hide back in their nice offices while the teachers faced all the issues that students had.” In addition to feeling of isolation from administrators, former teachers also found themselves feeling disrespected by both administrators and their fellow educators. As Denise explained, “...although I had more education than the vice principal and my coordinator, they would typically treat others with a lower pay rate as though we were beneath them.” Huey shared similar experiences, saying, “There were plenty of times when I felt like I was an expendable tool. Our administrators felt they could ask anything of you because you were new.”

The lived experiences shared by participants in this study in regards to teachers’ decisions to leave education support the idea that teachers’ perceptions of leadership has a potential negative impact on teacher retention.

Question 3 – Related Findings

3) How does less effective administration influence an early career teacher’s resiliency?

The perceived degree of administration effectiveness emerged as a major factor in the resiliency of the study participants. In particular, the lack of institutional control, administrator turnover and unprofessional practices led to teachers becoming overwhelmed and eventually lead to them leaving the profession with no desire to return. According to Denise, “Due to the poor administration and drama at the school, I made a

vow to never return to a school district. I didn't feel valued as a teacher. My input was not well received. It wasn't a positive place to work." Jasmine summed up her views on school administration, stating, "We had an extremely dysfunctional administrative team. It was a divisive environment. It wasn't a team environment."

The experiences shared by former teachers participating in the study suggest that less effective administration is a key factor in their decision to leave the profession.

Participants' Stories to Leave By

The participants shared what they considered was their "last straw" or "turning point" in their teaching career that damaged their resiliency and ultimately became their "stories to leave by" (Clandinin, et al., 2009). For Denise, the turning point came when she felt deceived by the district. As she explained,

It wasn't a positive place to work. They didn't support us by lying to us. We were promised pay raises and at the last minute told us that we would not receive the pay raise. We received a promotion without a pay raise. They also took my reading classes away from me and made me teach math. My degree is in English! Due to the poor administration and drama at the school, I made a vow to never return to a school district.

After being lied to and not receiving a raise, Denise decided the administration was too ineffective and it was time for her to leave.

Rachel's turning point moment centered on teaching, testing, and less-than-positive relationships with administrators. She explained, "I wasn't teaching what and how I wanted to teach. I didn't like being in such a test driven environment. I was underpaid and given very little autonomy." When asked if she tried to express her

concerns with administration, Rachel shared,” I felt like my relationship with the administration was inconsistent and it centered around how they felt about receiving critiques.” She added, “There was rarely any administrative support or feedback and if it did occur, it occurred in a rushed manner. I felt like they didn’t generally value teachers and felt we were expendable.” Rachel’s poor relationship with the administrative team on her campus caused her to turn away from public schools. She went on to say, “I learned a lot about leadership within organizations and the crucial elements to have a successful organization. You need to appeal to stakeholders, there should be transparency, opportunities for growth and being receptive to feedback is important.”

Hope’s “last straw” occurred when she came to a very sobering realization. She shared, “The guidelines and principles set by administration and the district did not benefit the students or myself. I realized that the system sets many low-income children up for failure.” She continued, “Administration was not very concerned with my development more or so due to the fact that my students wouldn’t take statewide tests in the subject I taught.” Hope believed that she was not able to make the type of difference that she wanted in public education. She shared that she wants to make a difference but it will no longer be in schools. Hope shared, “I want to work with children of ages and not be plagued by the politics of the education system.”

Huey also shared issues with politics on his campus that caused him to walk away. Working in a school with high teacher turnover was difficult for him. According to Huey, “Although things were tough, I tried to stay.” He related the events that led to his decision to leave as follows:

The “last straw” happened when I went to my new head principal to get some help with an assignment for one of my doctoral classes. She attended the same program that I was enrolled in at the time and I didn’t think that it would be an issue for her to assist me. I had some assignments like interviews that I needed to conduct or monitoring or shadowing and I received help with and I didn’t experience any problems with receiving help. However with this new principal, things were different. I needed to see the school’s budget and I went to her to get some help. She refused to help me and told me that she doesn’t disclose that type of information to teachers. She did not know that I was aware that the information was public information and I was aware of how to get it without her help. When she refused to help me, I smiled and walked away.

Huey knew that he couldn’t trust the administration and they did not have his best interest in mind. He continued,

One of the assistant principals decided to help me and went in to talk with the principal. She wanted to talk to me about what my career plans were and my school I attended. Although I didn’t want to talk to her, I answered her questions. She then went on to convince her head principal to help me.” I received a partial print out of the school’s budget and went on my way. I later spoke with some of my professors and they were disappointed in my principal’s actions. I knew then that it was time for me to go. I didn’t want to work for people that wouldn’t support me or I couldn’t trust.”

Huey shared that although it pained him to leave, he knew he couldn't work in a mistrustful environment and felt that his relationships with school administrators were ruined.

These “stories to leave by” (Clandinin, et al., 2009) emphasize the importance of the relationships and encounters that these former teachers had with their administrators, and demonstrate the ways in which they greatly influenced the teachers' decisions to leave. As reflected by each participant's story, dysfunction in the administration and poor school climate were the primary reasons they decided to leave. This study has shown that a teacher's decision to leave comes down to relationships and the type of leadership they work under. The misuse of authority, the denial of their professional voice and the lack of access to vital information were some of the central themes that arose from this study.

Implications of the Study

This study has important implications for administrators. Campus leaders should be mindful of the potential factors that lead to teacher burnout and eventual teacher attrition. Administrators should also be mindful of the types of teachers that they select to staff their schools. Teachers from certain certification programs Principals as well as educational leadership programs would benefit from a focus on the development of effective leadership practice. The association between principal and teacher perceptions of effective leadership could lead to an increase in teacher retention. Although there are certain situations or circumstances that are out of an administrators control that can cause a teacher to leave the profession, others factors can be addressed with proper retention efforts.

The former teachers shared their desires to be that catalyst to change and give back the community. However, they soon found that their passion and good intentions were not enough. Experiences of the former teachers of this study, and in particular their “stories to leave by,” bring us back to the understanding that teaching is a relational profession (Hargreaves, 1998). The lived experiences that the participants shared shows the importance of the relationships to early career teachers. Each participant shared their disappointment with some of the relationships they developed on their campus. Some of the former participants were looking for that mentor to guide them through the murky waters and lead them safely to shore while others searched for the leader that would help them reach their full potential and give them the tools they needed to make the difference in the community they served. Although their expectations were not met, each of the former teachers tried to endure the hardships and work to serve the students as best as they could. This study illustrates how essential it is for early career teachers to have collaborative and nurturing relationships with their fellow teachers and the leadership on their campus. Without the respect of their peers and their principals, the teachers are left to figure out the complexities of the profession by themselves. The mutual discourse between professionals is important to early career teachers and their success.

Limitations of the Study

This study is not without its limitations, primarily due to the small number of participating former teachers. Although eight former teachers participated in the study, this sample size may be considered small to some researchers. Attempts were made to include more participants, but the other potential participants either declined, did not respond or were not reliable. It should be noted, however, that the limited number of

participants allowed for more in-depth interviews with participants. Another potential limitation is that all participants were alternatively certified and no traditionally certified former teachers participated. Efforts were made to include traditionally certified teachers in this study, however, none agreed to participate. While this may be viewed as a limitation, the fact that all participants were alternatively certified enabled me to focus on this particular aspect of teacher attrition. Future studies could use a larger sample size of former teachers which includes teachers from both alternative and traditional certification routes in order to provide a comparison of experiences between the two groups. A more in-depth and comprehensive study might include multiple interviews and questionnaires.

Next Steps

Although the research study was designed to incorporate teachers that received their certification from traditionally certified programs and those that were alternatively certified, the research study did not develop according to plan. The participants that responded to the invitation to partake in the study were alternatively certified teachers. Further research studies could be replicated to incorporate teachers that were traditionally certified. This perspective is lacking in this study and the information could be instrumental in gaining a better understanding of early career teacher's experiences with leadership and understanding the factors that motivated them to leave the profession.

As seen in this study, the environment is an important factor in determining a teacher's satisfaction. However, more research can be conducted in determining what ways have principals developed positive environments for teachers. Another issue that has been addressed in this study is the teacher's perception of the administrative leadership. Now that we better understand the behaviors that teachers perceive to be less

leadership qualities, these measures can be used to test if principals are developing these practices in their schools and what steps are being taken to correct them.

Although attention was given to early career teachers and the experiences that they face, I believe future research could address the issue of high administration turnover and explore the lived experiences of former administrative leaders. It may be beneficial to explore schools that have high rates of turnover among administration and teachers to develop a better understanding of the factors that influenced them to leave. High rates of attrition on campuses not only affects the student's achievement, it affects the entire community. If schools begin to fail the students on their campus, the school will lose the trust of its community stakeholders. Each of these things influence whether or not businesses or housing developers will come into the community. If they don't, the school's finances will be effected because schools receive money from property values of businesses and homes. If we do not find a way to properly staff our schools with effective teachers and administrators, we will continue to deprive our children of the opportunity to have a chance of success.

Effect on the researcher

As a young man, I decided to study counseling because I wanted to help people. I understand the hurt and pain that people experience growing up and the innocence one loses when they are hurt. I decided to go into the counseling profession because I thought I could help heal from the unseen wounds. My journey led me to become a counselor in the state prison system. While serving those that were incarcerated in the prison system, I counseled in a variety of settings and heard numerous stories. I developed my skills quickly and was asked to transfer from my original prison facility to

another facility that needed another counselor. I was adjusting to the change of working in a maximum security environment and dealing with extremely dangerous offenders. Things seemed to be progressing well and I began to receive offers in the prison system to move up in position.

Although things were going well and I was making a name for myself helping the inmates, the work began to take its toll on me. The turning point occurred while I began performing an intake evaluation for a new offender. He was a young man that was a few years younger than me. As I listened to his story, I began to see some of the similarities that we shared and some of the similar disappointments and hurt. I then realized that I needed to make a change in my life and find a different way to help those in need. I wanted to help the youth before they became inmates in the prison system. I decided to make a career change and go into teaching. I realized that I wanted to become the type of mentor and teacher that I needed when I was a kid.

I eventually moved back home and started working at one of the local Title I schools in the school district. The job was difficult but I felt that I was making the type of difference that I wanted to make in the community. I even decided to continue my education and earn my doctorate. I would go to work in the day and attend school at night. Although things were hard, I developed a routine that allowed me to serve as a mentor and try to help students that were in need. Although the job allowed me to teach children and help become a mentor, the dysfunction of the school became an issue. The school experienced high rates of teacher turnover and I thought that I was able to withstand the dysfunction. Sadly, this was not the case. After three and a half years, I left the school. It saddened me deeply to have to tell my students that I was leaving them.

They were highly upset with me and accused me of abandoning them. I would ask myself, how could I let this happen? How could I quit? Am I a failure? I wanted to help those that experienced similar mis-educative experiences in education.

My goal was assist them in learning how to grow and become resilient. Instead, I abandoned them like everyone else. I contributed to creating a mis-educative experience for my students and I carried the regret with me even until this day. While in school, I began to study and research teacher attrition in urban schools. I desired to know if there were other schools that experienced the same problems that my school faced. My experience motivated me to continue to learn as much as I could about teacher attrition and the problems that it causes urban schools. I wanted to take the opportunity to learn as much as I could so I can turn my failure into a success someday. Although I could not help my former students, there is still time to make a change in the system as much to help children in the future. I plan on either working in higher education working to help support teachers or in public education to develop mentorship programs for administrators and teachers in urban schools. I want to utilize the skills that I learned from counseling to help listen to the issues that plague schools and collaborate with others to develop practical methods to remedy the problems in retaining teachers in urban education.

Although my story consist of some difficult experiences, there are also stories of perseverance and achievement. I've learned that no matter where you come from, you can still achieve your goals if you are willing to work hard enough. Although you may have to take a different route than others, you can still reach the same destination. You

no longer have to feel like the sad child that's been "had" with no control. You can leave the polluted air and smile.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview Protocol

Reasons for becoming a teacher in the first place

1. Tell me about your early school experiences.
2. How did you come to be a teacher?

Experiences (positive and less positive) about teaching

1. Tell me about the in-classroom challenges that you have encountered as a beginning and/or early-career teacher.
2. Tell me about the out-of classroom challenges that you have encountered as a beginning and /or early-career teacher.
3. Tell me about your relationships with students, mentors, other campus teachers, administrators, parents, and the wider community.
4. In what ways were you supported or not supported as a teacher?

Circumstances that led to leaving the teaching profession

5. Explain the experiences that led to your decision to leave teaching?
6. What do you consider to be the primary reasons that you left teaching?
7. In what ways would you consider that decision externally or internally motivated?
8. What did you learn from those early-career experiences?

Current occupation, career

9. Please describe your current position and career field.
10. Briefly describe any additional schooling or training required for your new occupation.
11. What are your goals in your current career path?

12. In what ways did your experience in education influence your current career choice?

Intentions of returning to teaching

13. Share with me your current view of teaching and the possibility of your returning to teaching.
14. What would need to change (i.e., in the classroom, in schools, in society) for you to return to teaching?

Appendix B - Likert Scale Participant Survey

Section I – Anonymous Demographic Profile					
1. Grade level you taught: _____			2. Content area(s) you taught: _____		
3. Total years in education: _____			4. Is teaching your first career? (circle) yes		
5. Route to certification: (circle one)			College/university teacher education program		Alternative certification
Section II – Reasons for becoming a teacher					
Overall views of teaching	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. Teaching is key to an informed democratic society.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Teaching is a calling.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Teaching is a respected profession.	1	2	3	4	5
Personal Experiences in School	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. Growing up, I enjoyed going to school.	1	2	3	4	5
10. One or more teachers (grades K-12) made a significant difference in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I formed positive relationships with my teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
Reasons for becoming a teacher	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. I always wanted to be a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I was drawn to teaching by specific content area(s).	1	2	3	4	5
14. I wanted to help children to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
Section III – Experiences about teaching					
Personal satisfaction from teaching	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
15. I liked being a model for my students.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I enjoyed learning alongside my students.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I feel that teaching is not the career path for me.	1	2	3	4	5
Transitions and support	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
18. Teaching was much as I had imagined it would be.	1	2	3	4	5
19. My teacher preparation program prepared me well for the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
20. My district/campus provided me with a mentor.	1	2	3	4	5
21. The experience with my mentor helped me to be a better teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
Personal efficacy in teaching	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. While in the classroom, I felt empowered to make decisions regarding my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Students learned what they needed to learn while in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5

24. My teaching was valued by school administrators.	1	2	3	4	5
25. My input in school-based decision-making was valued.	1	2	3	4	5
Section IV – Circumstances that led to leaving the profession					
External influences on decision to leave	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. Testing requirements limited the curriculum that I was able to teach.	1	2	3	4	5
27. The workload of teachers was overwhelming.	1	2	3	4	5
28. The impact of student performance on my annual teacher evaluation influenced what I taught.	1	2	3	4	5
Personal experiences impacting decision to leave	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
29. Student discipline problems influenced my decision to leave teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I felt supported by school administrators.					
31. I felt valued as a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
32. The school environment was a positive place to work.	1	2	3	4	5
Section V – Intentions of returning to teaching					
Current occupation / career	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
33. My new career required additional formal schooling.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I have been able to utilize my teaching skills in my new position.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I am happy in my current occupation.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I have more opportunities for advancement in my new position than I did as a teacher.					
Section VI – Intentions of returning to teaching					
Intentions of returning to teaching	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
37. I am considering returning to the classroom soon.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I intend to return to teaching at some point in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
39. My new career path has led me away from teaching indefinitely.	1	2	3	4	5
Section VII – Open-ended Questions					
Please give a brief narrative response to the following questions:					
40. Describe your current position and career field.					
41. Briefly describe any additional schooling or training required for your new occupation.					
42. What are your goals in your current career path?					

