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TEACHERS AND THEIR STRUGGLE WITH PERSONAL SATISFACTION AS YOUNG MOTHERS

by

Katherine Homer

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of The Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy
Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Technology
Advisor: Van Cooley, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University Kalamazoo, Michigan
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The purpose of the study was to explore how the day-to-day experiences of teachers who are working mothers of young children shape their level of comfort and satisfaction with the dual role they live. This investigation also explored the dynamics of teacher retention by understanding the dilemmas female teachers with young families encounter. There is limited literature on working mothers who are high school teachers. There are many different issues this study examined to gain a better understanding of the complexities of the lives of women who are high school teachers while raising young children.

This study consisted of six individuals who are female, married, full-time high school teachers that also have at least one son or daughter between the ages of 2 months and 5 years. Participants were selected using purposeful sampling. Interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and member checks were done to ensure validity. These transcripts were coded and themes surfaced as a result of the analysis. At least five of the six teachers were required to address a particular topic to label it an established theme and at least three of the six teachers were required to address a particular topic to be an emerging theme. If fewer than three teachers addressed a particular topic then the theme was non-existent. Interviews lasted approximately 50
minutes and locations varied. The average age of the participants was 36 and the average years teaching of the participants was 13. The ages of the children range from 15 months to 7 years.

Eight themes and three emerging themes were revealed. The eight established themes were: (1) trusted daycare, (2) self-fulfillment, (3) busy, (4) learn to be a better mother because of teaching, (5) guilt, (6) helpful husband, (7) supportive staff/administration, and (8) being a better teacher through parenting. All eight established themes are represented under the research questions. The three emergent themes discovered were: (1) organization, (2) utilizing a maid, and (3) poor feelings of staff and administration. Two of the themes are represented under the research questions. Utilizing a maid is not included under any research question.
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Thank you to the participants in my study. You welcomed me into your life and allowed me to tell your stories. I am amazed by your hard work and dedication to your career and your family.

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Katherine Homer
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It would be very easy to start a debate on the challenges of working mothers in the workplace. The evolution of women in the workforce has changed over the years as only 8.2% of women with children worked outside the home in 1955 compared to 70% of women with children employed in 2004 (infoplease, 2005).

The working mother (a mother who works outside the home for income) has significant challenges emulating from her multifaceted and sometimes conflicting roles as parent, homemaker, spouse, community member, and working professional (Axel, 1985; Corcoran, Evans & Schwab, 2004; Di Meglio, 2006; Hewlett, 1986; Hochschild, 1989). Demands of teachers have increased in terms of time commitment and complexity due to a number of sociological and educational reform factors (Kerchner, Koppich, & Weeres, 1998; Tucker, 2001). The reality is increased accountability for student learning outcomes means increased professional demands for the classroom teacher. This study will examine how teachers who are mothers of young children (two months to five years old) negotiate the balance between their professional duties and their family while attempting to attain personal satisfaction and remain in the classroom.

The typical classroom in regards to demographics, culture and student needs have shifted while national mandates force educators to produce better results (Fullan,
2001). Furthermore, the teacher needs to meet new requirements of additional training and continuing education credit hours (Dove, 2004; Ingersoll, 2003).

Teachers are also asked to be involved in their school district. Besides ensuring standards and benchmarks are met, teachers are often encouraged to become club advisors, committee members, coaches, and assist in after school tutoring. These added out-of-classroom responsibilities take away from the time and attention that teachers have for classroom teaching (Little, 2001) as well as spending time with their family. This can be extremely difficult for mothers who are already feeling guilty for being away from their young children for, at least, eight to nine hours of the work day.

Key Conceptual Elements of the Problem

The major factors addressed in this investigation are working mothers, the expectations of teachers, and the relationship between these expectations, and the challenge of retaining teachers in their first years in the profession. Finally, the relationship between teacher retention and student achievement in retaining working mothers in the workforce will be examined.

By 1986, two-thirds of all mothers were in the workforce (Hochschild, 1989). Several studies revealed that while women are working full time, they are also doing the majority of work at home with the children as well as housework and miscellaneous duties such as paying bills (Hochschild, 1989; Brayfield, 1992; Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Higgins, Duxbury & Lee, 1994). Working mothers
experience higher levels of role overload and conflict in balancing their work and home life (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001).

Knowing that more women are working outside the home and that many women are struggling with work-family conflict, it is surprising that there is not a great amount of research on women who are teachers and the dilemma they have with raising a family and working full time. Teaching is a female dominated career (Klecker & Loadman, 1999; Kyriacoua, Kunc, Stephens, & Hultgren, 2003) which necessitates research in the area to investigate ways to ease the stress of raising a family and having a career.

As a result of No Child Left Behind (2002), accountability for student achievement is at its highest for classroom teachers (Webb, Vulliamy, Hamalainen, Sarja, Kimonen, & Nevalainen, 2004). A 2004 study revealed that 96% of teachers surveyed stated they were deeply dissatisfied with their workload (Rhodes, Nevill & Allan). Other investigations have revealed that 25-50% of new teachers leave teaching during the first three years on the job (Ingersoll, 2003; Inman & Marlow, 2003; Rosenow, 2005). These numbers are discouraging because research has shown that teachers become more effective with experience. For example, a 2004 study indicated that student reading comprehension and vocabulary test scores can be raised significantly after 10 years of teaching experience (Rockoff, 2004). Reyes and Hoyle (1992) reported that a factor in school success was the teachers’ ability to communicate with their administrator. Reyes and Hoyle further stated that younger, less experienced teachers did not have the rapport with administrators needed to create this high level of communication.
According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2005), the total national cost of replacing public school teachers who leave the profession is approximately $2.2 billion a year. The total national cost for teachers that transferred to another school was $4.9 billion. Although there are a number of studies related to how school districts accommodate their employee’s work-family issues, there is insufficient research on how school leaders help their employees with such issues. A female teacher who is experiencing anxiety or stress related to balancing her roles as both teacher and working mother, may or may not be able to (a) continue to grow professionally, (b) do their best work, (c) or sustain their career as a teacher (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001).

**Research Problem and Study Purpose**

There is significant research focusing on the dilemmas working mothers face and how those challenges impact career and family (Acker, 1992; Bar-Yam, 1997; Cohen, Mrtek, & Mrtek, 1995; Coltrane, 2000; Hewlett, 2002; Parker, 2009; Woog, 2006). There is also evidence in the literature that teacher retention affects student achievement (Guiarino, Santibañez & Daley, 2006; Wayne & Youngs, 2003) and the economic stability of a school district (Graziano, 2007; Shockley, Guglielmino & Watlington, 2006). Recent studies have begun to link these two issues by showing that changes in family status such as marriage, pregnancy, and adding children dependents to the family influences a teacher’s decision to leave the profession (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener & Weber, 1996; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). What these studies do not show, however, is how the day-to-day experiences of teachers who are
working full time while raising young children play into their decisions to either remain in their teaching position or leave to assume full-time parenting responsibilities or combine some other form of employment with their parenting status.

The purpose of this study was to explore how the day-to-day experiences of teachers who are working full time while parenting young children shape their level of comfort and satisfaction with their dual teacher/mother role and, ultimately, their decisions to either remain teaching full time or change their work status. This study also investigated ways these teachers describe possible changes in either their work or home environment and experiences would make it easier, more satisfying, and more comfortable for them to continue in the dual role of full-time mother and full-time teacher. Finally, this study helped identify strategies that full-time mother/teachers are employing at home and at school to make the dual roles work well together and achieve good outcomes in both roles.

Research Questions

The overarching question that guided this study is: how is the dual role of full-time teacher and parent of one or more children, ages two months to five years old, working for secondary teachers and what can be learned from their experiences to improve the conditions at home and at work for supporting this dual role? This study focused on secondary teachers, since secondary teachers often have earlier start times for their work day and extra-curricular activities as part of their work responsibilities. They may experience the dual role of full-time teacher and parent of young children
in different ways than elementary teachers. Additionally, secondary teachers may have a little more flexibility in their internal day than elementary teachers, because of multiple period and class schedules rather than the traditional elementary single-class, full-day schedule. This study also focused on teachers with children ages two months to five years old because studies show that this is a particularly demanding period of parenting work load and responsibility (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001).

Specifically, this study investigated the following sub-questions, utilizing a three-part interview structure with a sample of secondary teachers who are working full time and parenting young children at the same time:

1. How do teachers with young children manage the dual role of full-time secondary teacher and parent?

2. How does balancing child rearing and full time teaching impact the dual roles of a parent and teacher and teacher’s decision to remain in the profession?

3. What strategies and conditions do teachers identify that would enable them to make their dual role more workable?

4. What do these teachers with young children describe as changes in their home or work environment that would enable them to sustain their dual role and increase their likelihood of remaining as a full time teacher?

Rationale for the Study

This research is noteworthy because society has changed over the years and women are no longer choosing between a career and family but are doing both. “Twenty-six million mothers—more than 72% of all moms in the United States today—work full- or part-time” (Evans, 2006). However in terms of their home life, most female roles and responsibilities have not changed. Women who have part-time
or full-time jobs still continue to be responsible for a majority of household work (Coltrane, 2000).

National mandates have placed increased accountability on schools. This study can assist administrators in providing strategies that will allow teachers who are young mothers to be more involved and effective in the school. The results may also save districts money as these effective teachers with dual roles can be retained through child rearing years. Districts expend hundreds of thousands of dollars on mentoring, professional development, supervision, and other related administrative costs, only to have teachers with young children resign at a time when they are most effective. This study will examine ways in which teachers who are young mothers can possibly make the most out of their family time and their career.

Methodology

A qualitative methodology was used to address the problem and research questions. A qualitative approach is appropriate when the research problem requires the researcher to learn about the views of individuals or make theories based on particular perspectives. Marshall and Rossman (2006) stated a qualitative design is “emergent rather than tightly prefigured” (p. 3). The researcher also looked to explore a phenomenon which also entails a qualitative approach.

This study used a phenomenological approach due to the desire to describe the lived experiences of the teacher who is a young mother in a high school setting. Phenomenology examines the essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or group of people (Patton, 2002). Using the criteria described below, the
researcher studied the everyday experiences of mothers of a young family in an effort to reveal the true essence of their life at work in balance with their life as a working mother.

The investigation used purposeful sampling as well as open-ended data which is a characteristic of qualitative methodology (Creswell, 2003). This strategy is appropriate because of the need to seek out individuals who can shed light on the issues that the research is trying to elaborate (Schwandt, 2001).

Participants needed to meet a specified criterion to be a part of this study. The study consisted of six female secondary teachers who are young mothers (children from two months to five years old). The participants were also required to be married.

Limitations

This study population was limited to working mothers with children from the ages of 2 months to 5 years of age. Furthermore, the study was limited to high school teachers (grades 9-12). Only teachers with at least one young child who has a spouse living in the same home were used in this study. Another limitation is only teachers in a public school setting within Southwest Michigan participated in this research.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter II will provide a review of research and literature. Chapter III includes a detailed explanation of the methodology, research design, population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis methods. Findings of the research
are contained in Chapter IV and Chapter V consists of a summary, conclusions, observations, and suggestions for additional research.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore how the day-to-day experiences of teachers who are working mothers of young children shape their level of comfort and satisfaction with the dual role they live. This investigation also explored the dynamics of teacher retention by understanding the dilemmas female teachers of young families encounter. There is limited literature on working mothers who are high school teachers. There are many different issues this study will examine to gain a better understanding of the complexities of teachers with young children. This chapter is comprised of research and literature divided into five sections. These topics include (1) teacher retention, (2) teacher job satisfaction and workload, (3) employee benefits for working mothers, (4) the home life of a teacher, and (5) a look at the home life of a working mother.

These five topics are major elements in the conceptual framework for this study. The literature review shows research on teacher retention and reasons why teachers leave the profession as well as the ramifications for their decision to leave. Teacher job satisfaction and workload literature shows the effect it has on teacher retention and student achievement. Due to the cost of high employee turnover rates as well as the increase of women working outside the home, many corporations are
providing employee benefits for working mothers. Lastly, the home life of a teacher and the home life of a working mother is shown as busy and role overload.

Teacher Retention

A 2003 study by Jacqui Goddard found that in American schools, almost one-third of teachers quit after three years in the classroom and 50% of teachers leave after only five years in the profession. Figure 1 represents the findings from Ingersoll’s 2003 study. After one year of teaching, 14% of teachers leave and the percentages increase each year with 46% leaving the teaching profession after five years.

![Figure 1. Beginning Teacher Attrition](image)

Every year more than 200,000 new teachers are hired, however at least 22,000 of these teachers resign by the end of the same school year (Graziano, 2007).
shaped pattern of attrition also appears to be present when focusing on the teacher’s age and experience (Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006). The highest rate of teacher turnover is at the early stage of a teacher’s career due to change of jobs, graduate school, and childbirth (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). Studies have identified age as the leading predictor of teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001; Stempień & Loeb, 2002). According to the National Education Association, 37% of the teaching profession is over 50 and considering retirement (Graziano, 2007). Therefore, school districts are losing a significant amount of new teachers and experienced teachers each year.

Using the 1990-1991 Schools and Staffing Survey as well as the 1991-1992 Teacher Follow-up Survey, a 2001 study found that male teachers were less likely to quit teaching (Ingersoll). Stinebrickner’s quantitative study consisted of analyzing occupational change and departure from labor force found that 67% of exiting female teachers left the workforce altogether (2002). A study in Massachusetts also revealed that many perceive their teaching profession as short term. Descriptive analysis of longitudinal interview data collected in 1999, 2000, and 2001 from 50 teachers that were in their first and second years of teaching in public schools in the state of Massachusetts by Johnson and Birkeland (2003) indicated that those who left teaching during the first three years saw their career as short-term or left due to experiencing a sense of failure. Kirby and Grissmer (1993) introduced the human capital variable. This theory is:

The fundamental tenet of the human capital theory of occupational choice is that individuals make systematic assessments of the net monetary and non-monetary benefits from different occupations and make systematic decisions throughout their career to enter, stay or leave an occupation (p. 10).
Kirby and Grissmer (1993) stated that teachers were more likely to leave their profession early in their career because they have not invested as much human capital into their career. A transient faculty has a negative effect on student achievement as well as adds extra costs to the district. Factors that contribute to teacher retention include administrative support and family change variables (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Reyes & Hoyle, 1992; Rockoff, 2004).

**Financial Concerns**

There are several financial concerns a school leader needs to address in terms of teacher retention. Such costs do not appear in a school district’s annual budget, but are embedded in areas such as teacher recruitment, separation processing, training and orientation/training requirements for new teachers (Shockley, Guglielmino & Watlington, 2006). It is estimated to cost a district $11,000 to replace a teacher and this approximation does not include indirect costs such as the school’s lost investment in professional development and curriculum (Graziano, 2007). An organization may lose more money that it would expend to simply provide more supportive policies (Barnes, Crowe & Schaefer, 2007; Ohio State University, 1997).

The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) conducted a pilot study to investigate the cost of teacher turnover in five school districts (Barnes, Crowe & Schaefer, 2007). The pilot study found many teachers leaving are beginning teachers who have not yet reached the higher salary levels and therefore do not have a salary differential large enough to offset the other costs of loss and replacement. Chicago Public Schools was part of this pilot program and was
discovered to have a cost per leaver at the school and district level of $17,872. During the pilot study, 4,844 teachers left the district that resulted in the district costs of leavers at $86,571,968. Another school in the pilot study lost $780,125 due to teacher turnover. The program identified eight cost categories to determine the cost of teacher turnover to a district. The categories are: (1) recruitment and advertising, (2) special incentives, (3) administrative processing, (4) training for new hires, (5) training for first-time teachers, (6) training for all teachers, (7) learning curve which includes the cost to student learning at the school that results from having new teachers each year, and (8) transfer which includes paperwork to change a teacher’s school sites as well as substitutes that are needed to cover for teachers who transfer during the school year.

Another study conducted by Shockley, Gugliemino and Watlington (2006) collected data from two school districts in South Florida with the intent to discover the fiscal costs that are related to teacher attrition. The first school district reported a district cost of $4,631 per teacher with a turnover percentage of 16.4%. The second school district has invested in a program to assist new teachers. This program is costly so the school district has a cost of $12,652 per teacher. This school district is saving money however since it has a turnover percentage of 7.25% (Shockley, Guglielmino & Watlington, 2006).

Although it appears school districts are not buying into the theory that it costs less to keep employees, many corporations have (Axel, 1985; Friedman, 1986; Moskowitz & Townsend, 1993). Such policies that have been adopted in the corporate world will be discussed later in this chapter.
Administrative Support

Teachers are often not satisfied with their benefits and salaries, which are often low especially for the amount of graduate work most teachers have completed. However, the majority of teachers decide to leave their position due to inadequate support from the administration (Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Bobbit, Leich, Whitener & Lynch, 1994; Graziano, 2007; Jehlen, 2003; Teachers Quitting, 1994). Administrators who want to retain their employees need to demonstrate to their staff that they are approachable and that teachers are supported. Guarino, Santibañiz and Daley (2006) reviewed recent empirical literature on teacher recruitment and retention. They found schools that had more administrative support had a lower level of teacher attrition and migration. The National Center for Education Statistic’s 2001 survey of 8,400 public and private school teachers discovered that the leading cause for dissatisfaction was administrative support at 38% and workplace conditions at 32% (Graziano, 2007). Johnson and Birkeland (2003) revealed that teachers who receive high levels of support from administrators were more likely to show high levels of commitment to their profession as well as higher levels of job satisfaction. In an analysis of the follow-up surveys from the 1990-1991 Schools and Staffing Survey, Shen (1997) indicated teachers were more likely to quit teaching or transfer out of the school if they felt they had less influence on school policies and if they believed they were not understood by their administrators. Administrators not only need to support their teachers, but also realize that support needs will vary between the staff and have many dimensions (Singh & Billingsley, 1998).
Family Change Variables

Research shows that first-time motherhood has a significant effect on employment for women whose husbands work full-time (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997). There is also research specifically about teachers and how family change variables affect their choice to stay in the classroom (Acker, 1992; Boe, Bobbit, Cook, Whitner & Weber, 1996; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). Research has revealed a relationship between family status (such as marriage and birth of a child) in the initial years of teaching to moving within and leaving the profession (Boe et al., 1996; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). In Acker’s 1992 study titled, Women Teachers at Work, she states, “Careers are influenced by family stage and work needs of teachers’ spouses, as well as by unexpected life events” (p. 148). According to findings from the Teacher Follow-up Survey of 1988-1989 by the National Center for Education Statistics, for all teachers combined, if a teacher experienced a change in marital status from 1987-1988 to 1988-1989, they were twice as likely to move to a different public school or to leave public school teaching than teachers who remained in the same public school (Boe et al., 1996). This study also found that teachers who had no minor dependents in 1987-1988 and gained one or more dependents by 1988-1989 were more likely to leave public school teaching.

Several studies have revealed that pregnancy and child rearing were common reasons for female teachers to leave the profession (Allred & Smith, 1984; Bobbitt, Leich, Whitener & Lynch, 1994; Kirby, Girssmer, & Hudson, 1991, Murnane, Singer, & Willet, 1989; Stinebrickner, 2002). According to a study conducted using a sample
of Indiana public school teachers newly hired in the 1988-1989 school year, 55% of returning teachers stated they left teaching due to pregnancy/child-rearing issues (Kirby, Grissmer, & Hudson, 1991). The study denoted this information was important because it was necessary to see if changes in policy could prevent teachers from leaving the profession. The study also examined reasons for reentering teaching. Following an increased need for extra family income, a reduction of childcare responsibilities was the second highest reason for a teachers returning to teaching.

Murnane, Singer and Willett (1989) conducted a study using hazards modeling methodology to analyze data from a larger study that focused on the factors influencing career paths of teachers. Participants in the study were Caucasian teachers in North Carolina who were initially hired between 1976 and 1978. The researchers examined the relationship between the risk of leaving teaching and salary and opportunity cost. Data suggested salary had a relatively small effect on retaining female teachers who were at the prime childbearing age. Unfortunately, it needs to be noted that this hypothesis was not able to be tested since the researchers did not know the specific reasons why the participants quit teaching.

Stinebrickner (2002) used a sample of newly certified teachers created from the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972. Stinebrickner’s research found that a woman with a newborn child was 7.83 times more likely to leave the teaching profession than a woman who does not have a newborn child. This finding is statistically significant and shows that teacher attrition is directly connected to a female teacher having a newborn child. According to Stinebrickner’s research, approximately 67% of female teachers who leave the teaching profession are doing so
permanently and that the presence of a newborn child is the greatest factor for a female teacher to exit the profession.

Student Achievement

There is limited research that combines recruitment and retention with the topic of teacher quality (Guiarino, Santibañez & Daley, 2006). Many studies show that students who were academically superior in college are less likely to enter the teaching profession (Lankford, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2002; Murnane, Singer, Willet Kemple, & Olsen, 1991; Schlecty & Vance, 1981). According to Rollefson (1993), another problem is that teachers that are replacing teachers are also not as qualified in terms of teaching experience, thus affecting student achievement. The National Survey of Secondary Schools 2003 report stated, “most schools, and especially lower decile schools, were experiencing difficulty attracting suitably qualified teachers and relieving teachers, especially in the core curriculum subjects” (Hipkins & Hodgen, 2004). The Murnane, Singer and Willett (1989) study found high-scoring teachers on the National Teacher Examination were more likely to leave the profession after only a few years in the classroom and less likely to return. The authors also stated over time the average academic aptitude of teachers would decline if these high scoring teachers were replaced with teachers that are being randomly drawn from the distribution of applicants’ scores.

Although it may seem obvious, research reveals that student achievement is dependent on their classroom teacher (Wayne & Youngs, 2003). Puriefoy (2003) reported that having a good teacher is the most important factor for indicating student
achievement and students can learn up to six times more with a high-quality teacher. Other studies support Puriefoy revealing that the quality of the teacher is the most important aspect to student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ferguson, 1991; Rivkin & Hanushek, 2003; Sanders & Horn, 1994; Wright, Horn & Sanders, 1997).

Teacher Job Satisfaction and Workload

Many companies rely on excellent work/life benefits as tools to recruit and retain employees and to improve employee satisfaction (Roberts, 1997; Rothbard, 2001). Job satisfaction is important for both employees and their employers. Studies have identified a relationship between job satisfaction and job retention, commitment to the organization and work performance (Bogler, 2002; Perie & Baker, 1997). In fact, studies that specifically focused on teachers found that teachers’ job satisfaction is connected to student achievement (Michealowa, 2002; Perie & Baker, 1997). Studies have revealed that teachers who are more involved and have stronger relationships with their colleagues and students are more likely to experience a higher level of job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001; Prelip, 2001). Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordan (2009) reported that adults were unable to compartmentalize the different roles in their lives. They also reported that teachers’ other roles in their life (such as raising a child or assisting an elderly parent) directly affect their instruction. Their instruction may be compromised due to the increase in absenteeism and decrease in loyalty to the organization that comes with high role overload and high work to family interference (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001).
Effects of Technology

There are now more work requirements for most employees, including teachers. Technology has reduced work for employees, but at the same time technological innovations has resulted in many employees taking their work home (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2008; Niles, Herr & Hartung, 2001). The Pew Internet and American Life Project conducted a national survey of employed adults. The sample consisted of 2,134 participants 18 years and older (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2008). This study found that 50% of respondents occasionally checked their work-related email on the weekends and 22% did so often, 46% assessed their email on sick days, and 34% occasionally checked their email while on vacation while 11% do so often. A co-author of the report, Mary Madden, Senior Research Specialist with Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, stated, “Along with the benefits of increased connectivity comes a host of new issues into workers’ lives. How do you strike a work-life balance when you are always reachable by the boss?” Duxbury and Higgins (2001) noted that boundaries are becoming blurred between work and non-work due to technological advances.

Working Hours

According to a Harvard economist, the average American is now working 163 additional hours a year (basically an extra month of work) when comparing time worked 20 years ago (Hewlett, 2002). Another source stated the average American worker is working approximately 200 hours more each year and this is only
maintaining the same standard of living Americans experienced in the early 1970s (Niles, Herr & Hartung, 2001). In fact, there are now Hallmark cards available for parents who are not able to see their children as often as they would like due to work conflict (Hewlett, 2002). There is evidence that parents are still finding time to spend with their children; however, it tends to be more in terms of multitasking, such as having the child accompany the parent while grocery shopping (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001). Children of employed mothers also spend less time in play, structured activities such as church, learning activities such as reading, and family activities such as eating and sleeping (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001).

Little’s (2000) research on teachers’ work at the turn of the century, found that high school teachers see approximately 150–180 students per day, have inadequate work space and supplies as well as limited telephone access and bathroom breaks. Data from a time diary survey suggested that the average elementary school teacher worked around 20 minutes shy of a 10-hour day (Drago et. al, 1999). Findings from a 2000 study conducted in Canada revealed a typical work week for teachers as 47 hours; however beginning teachers averaged 66 hours per week (Michelson & Harvey, 2000). Perhaps teachers are willing to put in more hours due to the fact that teaching is a unique career in the sense that the teacher is usually emotionally involved in the lives of their customers which are the students (White, 2004). Teachers estimated that they worked approximately 43 hours a week; however research showed their actual work week to be 49 hours (Ingvarson et. al, 2005). In Campbell and Neill’s 1994 study, *Secondary Teachers at Work*, the researchers took the calculated mean for their two samples, which consisted of 384 teachers, and found the weekly hours per week was
54.3. This is equivalent of 10.9 hours per weekday, although the researchers stated the time did include weekend hours. Campbell and Neil (1994) stated teachers’ workload has dramatically increased since Hilsum and Strong did a similar study in 1978 and credit the change to work requirements that has been brought on by educational policy.

A 2005 study, *Secondary Teacher Workload Study Report*, stated 57% of teachers do not have good balance between work and home, 71% thought their workload was affecting their quality of teaching, 75% felt their workload was heavy, 43% noted their health was being affected because of their workload, and 21% were thinking of leaving their job because of the heavy workload (Ingvarson et al.).

**Work-Family Conflict**

A 2005 study that focused on parent’s balance between work and family found that workers who attempted to combine their work life and their home life were the most stressed with the result, thus clear boundaries between home and work must be established (Blacher, 2005). On the other hand, work and family lives are interdependent of each other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Although work and family domains can be mutually supportive, work schedules, marriage, children (especially younger children), the stage in an employee’s career (especially at the earliest stages), and being in a dual earning family can create pressure to work extensively in either the work role or the family role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). There is a significant effect on dual earning families in terms of work-family conflict (Higgins & Duxbury, 1992). The number of hours an employee works is related to work-family conflict as well as the inflexibility of the work schedule (Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980).
Colleague support is a key factor for parents of pre-school age children as well as flexibility in their schedule due to unforeseen problems as well as several general medical visits that occur during that stage in a child’s life (Darcy & McCarthy, 2007). Some employees are able to work long hours and not experience work-family conflict if the employee does not have strong pressure to participate in family activities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Therefore, if a mother does not receive pressure from her husband, her children, or even herself to partake in family activities, work-family conflict will not be present.

Support for Teachers

Although teachers may feel the need for support from their administrators, teachers are not always as comfortable asking for such assistance. Drago (2001) stated many teachers feel overworked and stressed over balancing work and their home-life, however many teachers do not feel they can ask for support. Drago suggested:

To voice commitments to one’s own family in this context would provide ammunition to those who view teachers as undeserving of professional status, as requiring a tight leash in the form of standardized curriculum and extensive standardized testing of both students and teachers. (p. 6)

Schools need to find ways to limit the demands on teachers and possibly provide additional release time or limit extracurricular responsibilities in order to reduce attrition (Blazer, 2006). Lortie (1975) stated many people are drawn to teaching because it is a human service/work profession and they are motivated by intrinsic rewards. Although work demands are increasing, while compensation for teachers has decreased, when compared to other professions with comparable education (Liu et al.,
2000) schools do not necessarily need to increase teacher salaries to attract and retain teachers, but reevaluate working conditions, especially for younger teachers (Blazer, 2006). A 2006 study on teacher burnout and work engagement reported that the most promising approach in tackling the issue of teacher retention is enhancing job resources and preventing teachers from burning out which would increase teachers’ job commitment (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli).

There are many more requirements of teachers. Many teachers feel pressured to teach on the topics specific to the standardized tests that their students will be taking which eliminates creativity and is making teachers want to quit (Seldon, 2005). Schools are also adopting several different reform packages in order to meet such federal legislation such as No Child Left Behind (2002). In fact, most schools are systematically or concurrently adopting several reform packages which impacts teachers’ job satisfaction along with their well-being (Drago et al., 1999). Times have changed and teaching is being more regulated by both state and local bureaucracies. In fact, the teaching profession can be seen as “more bureaucratically controlled, more demanding of personal resources, and less predictable in the matters of day-to-day, moment-to-moment practice” (Little, 2001, p. 293). All the while, studies are finding stress related to work increases absenteeism and decreases loyalty to the organization (Lockwood, 2003). Michelson and Harvey’s study that focused on gender issues in teaching stated women are more affected by reforms that place additional classes and students into a teacher’s school day. Such reforms are forcing teachers to complete more work outside of normal working hours; hours that they
may not have to give since women are already completing more domestic activities at home than men (Michelson & Harvey, 2000).

In the United Kingdom, teachers' excess work load has been acknowledged and legislature requires such practices as hiring teacher assistants and imposing restrictions as to the amount of teacher workload that is permitted (Berliner, 2003). Unlike the United Kingdom, the United States government has been more cautious regarding the changing workplace (Duxbury & Higgins, 2002). The United States is one of only two industrialized nations that do not require paid maternity leave; in fact, before the Taliban took control, even the Afghanistan government required this benefit (Kornbluh, 2002). Duxbury and Higgins (2002) indicated the work place is changing with everyone looking for someone else to take responsibility.

Employee Benefits for Working Mothers

Women in the Teaching Profession

Although there are more women than men in the teaching profession, fewer women are becoming teachers (Flyer & Rosen, 1997). Flyer and Rosen (1997) used data from the Current Population Survey from the 1960s to 1990 to show that while half the women graduating from college in 1960 went into teaching, the numbers decreased to fewer than 10% in 1990. The likelihood of a female who was at the top of her high school class becoming a teacher has dramatically decreased (Ballou, 1996; Corcoran et al., 2004; Gitomer, Lathem & Ziomek, 1999; Henke et al., 2000; Podgursky, Monroe & Watson, 2004).
It has been speculated that the number of teachers leaving the profession could be due to the fact that there are now more opportunities for women outside of teaching (Acker, 1992; Corcoran, Evans & Schwab, 2004). School district officials need to understand they are not only competing with other school districts, but with the corporate world as well. If these school leaders want to have the best and the brightest, they are going to have to offer better incentives to recruit and retain these top females. Individuals with higher ability are more than likely to have more job choices (Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006).

Corporate Policies

Although corporations are not being forced to provide such work-family benefits, they are starting to become more family friendly. The corporate world has recognized it is beneficial to the worker as well as the employer to become more family friendly (Woog, 2006). Employers that offered flexible working arrangements not only assisted employees with work-life issues, but also increased productivity, helped to attract and retain qualified employees, and cut over-head costs (Hanen, 2000). Allowing flextime also extends the hours of operations for an organization. By allowing a working mother to arrive later in the day to ensure her own children get to school on time, this teacher can possibly stay after school an hour later each day to keep the computer lab open, creating a win-win situation which is what every principal should be looking to do. Another favorable situation may be releasing students early once a month for service learning opportunities to give teachers time to work collaboratively during the school day.
Instead of offering extravagant benefits, some companies are now simply sticking to fundamentals, such as flex time, that help employees balance their work and their personal life (Read, 2004). It is evident that an employer is willing to support workers and their struggle with work and family conflict when they are willing to provide family-friendly benefits to their employees (Marshall & Tracy, 2009).

Infant Nursing in the Workplace

Accommodating working mothers' nursing issues can also help with retention rates as well as increase productivity (Checklist for Supervisors, 2006, U.S. Breastfeeding Committee, 2002; Woog, 2006). With the research on the added benefits of nursing a child, it should not be surprising more women are choosing to breastfeed their children. According to an exclusive study, 67% of women reported their workplace lacks an adequate place to pump or breastfeed, which leads to 35% of women pumping in the bathroom at their work (Evenflo, 2006). In a 2006 study, 54% of women who returned to full-time work within three months after giving birth made the decision to stop nursing; however only 35% of women who did not go back to work decided to stop breast-feeding their infant (Woog, 2006).

It would benefit the employer to be sensitive to family issues, especially mothers who wish to continue nursing after returning to work (Bar-Yam, 1997; Cohen, Mrtek, & Mrtek, 1995). Females are more likely to return after their maternity leave if the workplace is supportive of parents, which reduces the costs of training, recruitment and advertising for these positions (Checklist for Supervisors, 2006).
Companies that offer support for employees who want to continue to nurse after returning to work also receive benefits such as increased productivity, staff loyalty, better public image as well as decreased absenteeism, health care costs and employee turnover (Bar-Yam, 1997; Cohen, Mrtek, & Mrtek, 1995). Research also indicates that there tends to be reduced absenteeism with mothers who breastfeed since the infants are healthier from the nutrition and antibodies that the breast milk provides (Checklist for Supervisors, 2006). A health survey in Los Angeles revealed that there was a decrease in absenteeism by up to 57% for workplaces that were family friendly (Woog, 2006). The U.S. Breastfeeding Committee (2002) also shared why a company or school district may be interested in being family friendly. Their research suggested that for every $1 spent on breast-feeding support, the company saves $3. Companies supportive of breast-feeding mothers also found lower health care costs, higher morale, improved employee productivity, and gained a reputation of being family friendly which has helped these companies attract and retain employees (U.S. Breastfeeding Committee, 2002). The teaching profession is a female dominated occupation (Klecker & Loadman, 1999; Kyriacoua, Kunc, Stephens & Hultgren, 2003). Being so, it would seem reasonable to look into adequate accommodations for these females that want to continue to nurse their child once they go back to work. While this would be a family friendly policy, it would also be one that would economically benefit the organization (U.S. Breastfeeding Committee, 2002).
Commitment to Organization

Duxbury and Higgins (2001) revealed through their research on work-life balance that if a person is experiencing high role overload and high work-to-family interference, they were less likely to be committed to their employer, are absent more often, exhibited reduced work performance, and regularly thought about quitting their job. Companies realize that women are often responsible for the day-to-day care of children and are investing a great amount of money in different benefits and new corporate policies because they are increasingly more interested in retaining female employees (Plosky & Winfry, 2009). Costs of work-life conflict revealed that Canadian firms lost just under $3 billion per year due to cost of absenteeism (Duxbury, Higgins & Johnson, 1999). Research conducted in the United States also found that companies lose approximately $3 billion a year when their employees miss work due to caring for their children (Ohio State University, 1997). Axel (1985) reported corporate executives from corporations that employed more than 10,000 employees discovered that workplaces perceived as responding to family needs had an impact on worker productivity and gave the firm a competitive edge. In response, some employers are now offering concierge services to help employees with miscellaneous duties such as grocery shopping, laundry, and automobile repair (Niles, Herr & Hartung, 2001). Johnson and Johnson offers a “Wednesday dinner” program which offers employees with an opportunity to order cooked meals to take home to their families (Niles, Herr & Hartung, 2001). It is no longer uncommon for companies to provide on-site day care and health services for their employees (Ploskey &
Winfrey, 2009). Wang (1990) reported companies that have a female-intensive workforce are more likely to take child care issues into consideration. Companies offering day care programs have found substantial benefits and a return on equity of 6.99% (Sherbin, 2007). Although some public schools are offering high school-based day care centers the objective seems to be to help lower dropout rates of pregnant teenagers and usually only permit these teens to participate in the services (Muir, 2004). Albert Shanker, the president of American Federation of Teachers in 2006 stated he believes there should be continuity between the early-childhood years and the school age years and that child care in public schools will provide greater transition (Auerbach, 2006).

Giving an employee greater flexibility helped reduce work-family conflict and absenteeism or tardiness (Axel, 1985). According to Axel’s 1985 research of corporate executives, younger workers were more likely have stress related to work-family conflict (since a larger proportion will be working parents) and that employers who manage large female work forces were more likely to offer such family-supportive benefits and services. Axel’s study revealed that many family friendly policies have been in place for females in management and then eventually became corporate policy. This is interesting since there is discrepancy in female-to-male administrators in school districts.

Another factor in work-life balance may be caring for an aging parent. A survey by Travelers Corporation found that approximately one out of every five employees over the age of 30 cared in some capacity for an elderly parent (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001). The average lifespan has increased and elder care has become an
issue for many baby boomer's children (Read, 2004). This is significant because working mothers who are teachers are not only raising young children but possibly supporting elderly parents.

The Home Life of a Teacher

Many people refer to memories they have of their teachers when they think of what teachers do (Campbell & Neill, 1994). As pupils we saw teachers working short hours and having several long vacations during the year. Teaching is seen as semi-professional in status due to the perception that the job is undemanding (Etzioni, 1969). Campbell & Neill (1994) researched what they considered to be visible work (work that can be seen by the public) and invisible work (work that is conducted mainly in private, such as at home). Their research revealed that the majority of teachers work is invisible work. Most teachers prefer to work at home or during “quiet” times when students and most of the staff is out of the building (Ingvarson et al., 2005).

It is often difficult for teachers to separate their personal and professional life. Teachers state they are often organizing their home life and their time with friends around the extra time they needed to prepare for school (Burden, 1982). Often teachers quit leisurely activities that they have done in the past in order to find time for their increased workload as well as their family responsibilities (Acker, 1992). Burden (1982) conducted a study to determine teachers' perceptions of personal and professional conflict and found that teachers state their career puts a strain on their families and their mental health. Burden (1982) also discovered that teachers that
were early into their careers were not as able to separate their personal and professional lives, whereas teachers in their later years were not only able more to create boundaries, but also refused to allow their professional life to interfere with their personal life.

Teachers do have planning time set aside during the school day, but that is seldom enough. A teacher's planning time is usually spent on interacting with students, colleagues and the school community which results in more time for lesson preparation as well as grading to be conducted after school hours (Hipkins & Hodgen, 2004). Teachers are working a great number of hours outside of regular working hours because they just can't get the work done during the day and this is time that they are not paid for (Drago, et al., 2000). Many teachers need more uninterrupted time to complete their professional duties (Ingvarson et, al, 2005). Some teachers come in early in the morning and work most of their lunchtime as well as after school to complete their work before going home, a strategy used to allow them to separate their home life from their professional duties (Acker, 1992).

The Home Life of a Working Mother

The term *motherhood mandate* was introduced to describe the expectation society places upon mothers to be readily available to their children and to be their primary caretakers (Russo, 1976). According to *motherhood mandate*, not only should women be the primary caretakers, they should *want* to be. Although this term was introduced in 1976, today women are still struggling with whether working full-time is best for them and their family (Parker, 2009). "Women have transformed the
American workplace over the past 50 years, and in so doing created a series of conflicts and challenges for today’s working women that have been proven to be difficult to resolve” (Parker, 2009).

The Second Shift

The second shift is a common term that refers to the domestic responsibilities of women. Females still assume most of the housework and childcare issues (Coltrane, 2000). This may even be considered a triple shift: work, home, and childcare responsibilities (Acker, 1992). Acker (1992) points out in her notes that her students stated teachers like themselves who are enrolled in part-time higher degree courses had a quadruple shift. This concept of a quadruple shift would be a possible term for any female who is a mother, full-time employee, and student.

According to a recent United Kingdom study, mothers spend 84 hours a week on domestic work when there is a preschooer in the house (Hewlett, 2002). Most people are awake approximately 100 hours a week and research shows that working mothers are spending at least 90 hours each week caring for their family (including elder care) and working outside of the home, leaving only 10 hours that may possibly be used for leisure time (Levin, 1998).

The amount of time women work outside the home or earning does not seem to change this second shift for women. Even if women earned more than their husbands, or if they worked the same or more hours than their husbands, they are still putting in more hours of housework at home (Brines, 1994; Hewlett, 2002). Mothers of young children spend 2½ times longer dealing with child care and daily
maintenance that is related to the family whereas fathers have very little change in housework or employment (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997). Women were also more likely to assume the most unpleasant and repetitive child-related duties (Coltrane, 1996).

When a child comes into a home it is the mother who has a greater change in time allocation (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997). The day-to-day lives of working mothers are often felt as more rushed and stressed than stay-at-home mothers and working fathers (Parker, 2009). Duxbury and Higgins (2001) found from their research that parenthood increases stress and is more difficult for women than for men. In fact, their study revealed lower levels of stress and depression for men who were parents. Having a young child in the home affects the father as well as the working mother, but the working mother is often left to find the solution to the new work-family conflict or balance between work and family (Hochschild, 1989). The phrase work-family balance has been described as the wrong term though because it implies that one needs to decide between the two and the term navigate or integration should be used instead (Galinsky, 1999).

Working mothers tend to hold themselves responsible for work-family conflict and will resort to trying to work more efficiently rather than rely on external resources (Elman & Gilbert, 1984). Women also create family myths, a term developed by Hochschild (1989) that refers to women believing their husbands help out more than they do. Hochschild believed these family myths were a way for women to deal with the annoyance that their husband is not putting in as much time
working the second shift and the myth is then created to avoid frustration that may lead to divorce.

Working mothers may be too hard on themselves considering a 1999 survey revealed that 46% of the mothers believed their children thought they worked too much, but only 25% of the children thought this (Galinsky). The same survey revealed 34% of the mothers thought they were truly successful in managing their work and family life, but in reality 74% of the children thought this. According to a study focused on the life of a working mother, women are feeling a great amount of pressure because only 13% of moms who work full time believe this is an ideal situation for a young child (Parker, 2009). Hochschild (1989) stated although society has changed dramatically over the last 30 years in terms of women working outside the home, our way of thinking about working mothers has not.

Summary

A review of the literature on this subject shows a need to better understand the lives of women teachers who are also parenting a child from the ages of two months to five years old. Research also revealed the annual turnover rate for teachers averaged 11.9% nationally over the past decade which is greater than other higher-status professions such as professors with a 9.3% rate, as well as technology and scientific professionals with rates of 3.6% to 9.2% (Ingersoll, 2003). High teacher turnover impacts student achievement (Rollefson, 1993) and is costly in terms of finances (Graziano, 2007). Additionally, due to demands on teachers and working mothers, teachers are experiencing less job satisfaction as well as an increased
workload as a result of No Child Left Behind and pressure to address the void in
student achievement (Duxbury & Higgins, 2002). Although, employee benefits help
corporations improve morale as well as their profits in the private sector (Axel, 1985),
there is little research on such benefits for public school teachers. Studies also
revealed that schools that had more administrative support had a lower level of
teacher attrition and migration (Guarino, Santibañz & Daley, 2006). Teachers are
working a greater amount of *invisible* work (work that cannot be seen by the public)
as opposed to the *visible* work that is often seen by parents, students, and colleagues
(Campbell & Neill, 1994). Furthermore, when a child comes into a home it is the
mother who has a greater change in time allocation (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997).
Chapter III provides a comprehensive overview of the methodology used to conduct
this study.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore how the day-to-day experiences of teachers who are working mothers of young children shape their level of comfort and satisfaction with the dual role they live. Chapter II provided a literature review that supported the need to study female teachers who are also parenting a child between the ages of 2 months and 5 years. Chapter III will now offer a comprehensive overview of the methodology used to conduct this study. This chapter is divided into seven sections that include: (1) research questions and problem statement, (2) research design, (3) sample selection, (4) instrumentation, (5) analysis, (6) background of the researcher and possible bias, and (7) a summary of the chapter.

Research Questions and Problem Statement

This investigation attempted to address the following research questions:

1. How do teachers with young children manage the dual role of full time secondary teacher and parent?

2. How does balancing child rearing and full time teaching impact the dual roles of a parent and teacher and teacher’s decision to remain in the profession?

3. What strategies and conditions do teachers identify that would enable them to make their dual role more workable?
4. What do these teachers with young children describe as changes in their home or work environment that would enable them to sustain their dual role and increase their likelihood of remaining as a full time teacher?

This study examined the day-to-day experiences of a high school, female teacher with at least one young child at home; how these experiences contribute to how teachers feel about their dual role as teachers and parents; what strategies and conditions (at home or in the workplace) help these teachers with their dual role; and what changes teachers feel would help them be a better teacher and mother. There is significant research focusing on the dilemmas working mothers face and how those challenges impact career and family (Axel, 1985; Corcoran, Evans & Schwab, 2004; Di Meglio, 2006, Hewlett, 1986, Hochschild, 1989). Teacher retention affects student achievement and the economic stability of a school district (Wayne & Youngs, 2003). Recent studies have begun to link these two issues by showing that changes in family status such as marriage, pregnancy, and adding children dependents to the family influences a teacher’s decision to leave the profession (Boe et al., 1996; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). What these studies do not show, however, is how the day-to-day experiences of teachers who are working full time while raising young children play into their decisions to either remain in their teaching position or leave to assume full-time parenting responsibilities or combine some other form of employment with their parenting status.

The purpose of this study was to explore how the day-to-day experiences of teachers who are working full time while parenting young children shape their level of comfort and satisfaction with their dual teacher/mother role and, ultimately, their
decisions to either remain teaching full time or change their work status. The ways these teachers describe possible changes in either their work or home environment and experiences that would make it easier, more satisfying, and more comfortable for them to continue in the dual role of full-time mother and full-time teacher was also investigated. Finally, this study helped identify strategies that full-time mother/teachers are employing at home and at school to make the dual roles work well together and achieve good outcomes in both roles.

Research Design

Qualitative Research

A qualitative approach is most appropriate for this study because the rich information that was gleaned from interviews provided an accurate depiction of the challenges of working mothers in public schools. Although a quantitative approach is typically thought of when people think of research, a qualitative approach can also be appropriate in situations where issues need clarity. While quantitative research uses numbers to present statistical results, qualitative research uses narration of words to present its data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). A qualitative approach is appropriate when the research problem enables the researcher to learn about the views of individuals on particular perspectives. The researcher does not have the purpose to test a theory, but to simply learn more about the experiences of the teachers within the study. Marshall and Rossman (2006) stated that a qualitative design is “emergent
rather than tightly prefigured” (p. 3). A qualitative research study explores a process, event or phenomenon.

Phenomenological Approach

Common qualitative methodologies include phenomenology, case study, grounded theory, and ethnography (Patton, 2002). Since the objective was to attempt to understand the experiences with the phenomenon of making the decision to be a working mother of a young child and stay in the classroom working full time, the phenomenological approach was the most appropriate. This study sought to collect information and discover the true essence of participants’ experiences, especially regarding how those experiences are connected with making the dual role of teacher and parent of young children work. According to Ospina and Dodge (2005), qualitative research allows stories to emerge and, through these stories, new voices arise which provide new information. Although qualitative research can be time consuming, it allows the researcher to gain information that may not be obtainable through a quantitative research design (Hoepfl, 1997). Quantitative research sometimes blocks away effects that may be important only because they are not statistically significant (Cronbach, 1975). Cronbach stated qualitative research is able to obtain the many interaction effects that are present in a study (Hoepfl, 1997). The phenomenological qualitative tradition selected for this study allowed for the examination of all variations of how the sample of high school teachers who are also mothers of young children experience their dual role. The phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to examine how the participating teachers are
interpreting their experiences for the purpose of remaining in or leaving their teaching position either temporarily or permanently.

Ethical Considerations

Before the study took place, a proposal to the Human Subject Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) of Western Michigan University was submitted. The form included “a description of the study, the right of refusal, an explanation of risks and potential discomfort, an opportunity to withdraw without penalty, and the potential for feedback” (Rudestam & Newton, 2001, p. 88). Upon permission, the researcher provided documentation of the study’s objectives, data collection methods, and the processes that will be used and be available for questions. The researcher then asked for written permission from each participant. During this time the researcher ensured participants knew they were volunteering to participate and that they could leave the study at any time.

Data, including audiotapes, was stored at the researcher’s home in a locked file cabinet during the study. Upon completion of the research, data will be stored for at least a three-year time period and then destroyed.

Sample Selection

The researcher used purposeful sampling as well as open-ended data which is a qualitative methodology (Creswell, 2003; Marshall, 1996). Qualitative research tends to use purposeful sampling in order to completely understand the individual’s experience (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). “The idea behind qualitative research is to
purposefully select participants or sites...that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (Creswell, 2003, p. 185). According to Patton (1990), purposeful sampling is a dominant strategy in qualitative studies.

The researcher used what is known as snowball or chain sampling which is a form of purposive sampling (Patton, 1990). Snowball or chain sampling is simply identifying participants from people who know people that would fit the criterion of this study. A benefit to purposive sampling is it allows the researcher to find participants that will help understand and shed light on the research question. According to Patton (1990), snowball sampling allows the researcher to identify participants that are good examples for the study and who are able to bring relevant information to the interview. A disadvantage to purposive sampling is possible bias due to non-random selection (Wong, 2008).

Merriam (1998) stated that when submitting a proposal the researcher needs to give an approximate number of participants; however this number can be adjusted in the course of the investigation. Boyd (2001) stated two to ten participants in a qualitative study is sufficient and Cresswell (1998) suggests up to ten people with long interviews. Based upon Boyd (2001) and Cresswell’s (1998) suggestions, the study consisted of six female, full-time high school teachers who are young mothers (children from two months to five years old).

The researcher was concerned with how to determine the age frame for the teacher’s children in this study and determined 2 months to 5 years old would be the most appropriate. According to Duxbury and Higgins (2001) almost three-quarters of parents with children under the age of five report high role overload. Having the
minimum age of the child set at two months will most likely allow for teachers to be back from maternity leave. For these reasons, the researcher determined that after the age of five, the child would most likely be in school; therefore a two-month-old to five-year-old age frame would be the most appropriate.

Participants also needed to fit a certain criteria to be a part of this study. In addition to being a female teacher who works full time and has at least one child between two months and five years old, the participants also needed to be married. According to research on family and work issues, married females have the greatest amount of work-family role strain (Ohio State University, 1997). This criterion allowed a more uniformed inquiry to the phenomenon.

Instrumentation

The researcher relied solely on semi-structured interviews for data collection. This form of interviewing allowed the researcher to respond as new questions emerge from the interview. Focus groups were considered; however, there are several disadvantages to this method, such as the issue of power dynamics, the fact that the interviewer usually has less control and time can be wasted on irrelevant issues (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Where a quantitative study would use possibly a survey tool or form of an experiment for instrumentation, qualitative research utilizes the researcher as the primary source of collecting data. Patton (2002) stated interviews are an excellent way for the researcher to enter the world of the participant for a short period of time. The long interview is a standard method of data collection for a phenomenological
study (Moustakas, 1994). Interview questions were developed by the researcher and then a crosswalk with the research questions was performed. The researcher used a three-part interview structure based on Moustakas and Seidman that has the participant recollect and talk about their experiences, process that recollection in terms of what it means to the participant, and then combine reflection and projection by stating how recalling their experiences has changed their way of looking forward. (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Seidman (1998) stated:

Making sense or meaning-making requires that the participant look at how the factors in their lives interacted to bring them to the present situation. It also requires that they look at their present experience in detail and within the context in which it occurs. (p. 12)

Interview questions were then field tested in a pilot study. Merriam (1998) suggests conducting pilot interviews after the questions have been written to ensure the quality of the questions. Researchers want to avoid dead-end questions that not only waste time, but also present unusable data. By conducting pilot interviews, the researcher will also be able to practice not showing judgment when interviewing, ensuring all questions are singular and that they are not leading or simple yes/no questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

Through the use of field testing the interview questions prior to the data collection, the researcher seeks to ensure quality responses. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), field testing is a method that looks to preventing unpredictable responses that will be of no use to the study. From the field test, it was determined 29 questions were appropriate and the interview would take approximately 30 to 60 minutes. The field test also allowed the researcher to learn that the tape recorder can
be possibly seen as intimidating. The researcher determined to have the recorder
slightly hidden when conducting the interviews so that the participants are able to
relax more and not focus on the recorder. The participants still knew they were being
recorded and knew that it could be turned off at any time, however having the
recorder tucked away made the participant more relaxed and focused on the interview
and not the recording device. The field test also helped the researcher learn to be sure
to be able to write notes without the participant being able to read them during the
interview. The field test was conducted at the participant’s home in the living room.
The seating arrangement made it possible for the participant to look over the
researcher’s notes. Because the researcher may write notes on the participants’
behavior and demeanor, it is important to feel free to write such notes without the
participant looking over such notes.

Interviews were audio recorded. This method was helpful in making sure all
the information was gathered and therefore, able to be analyzed. The researcher let
the interviewee know they were being recorded and gave them an option to
discontinue at any time. If the interviewee was uncomfortable with the interview
being recorded, the researcher would simply take notes. Participants were told the
interviews would be transcribed verbatim, either by the researcher or a person
employed by the researcher. Only the researcher and the transcriber reviewed the
interview to ensure confidentiality. The transcriber was also required to complete a
confidentiality form to guarantee the interviewee’s privacy.

The interviews took place wherever and whenever it was most convenient for
the participants. Locations included the teacher’s classroom or at her home. Although
the researcher allowed the interviewee to pick the time and location, the researcher required that the location be a quiet area and one that allowed for confidentiality. All interviews were face-to-face. Interview durations were between 50 and 60 minutes.

The interview questions were given at least two weeks prior to the scheduled interview so that the interviewee had time to go over the questions and reflect upon them before the interview. Names were also protected during this research. Teachers interviewed were given names such as “Teacher One” and “Teacher Two” to allow the teachers to remain anonymous. A prepared opening statement was read to the participant before the interview which stated the purpose of the interview, and allowed a standard way to start each interview (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher also used a strategy from Moustakas (1994) that has the participant complete a Post-Interview Reflection Sheet approximately three days after the interview. Following the interview, the researcher sent the participant the Post-Interview Reflection Sheet in the mail. The researcher felt it was vital to wait the additional days instead of simply handing the participant the form so that they were given time to reflect upon the interview and what was or was not said. Once the interviews were transcribed verbatim, member checks were done and participants had another chance to include experiences or stories that they did not think to include during the interview. To complete the member check process, the researcher transcribed the participant interviews and asked each participant to read the transcription of their interview for the purpose of adding to the transcript in any way they felt would make their story more complete. By providing participants with the opportunity to add the transcribed interview, the researcher was able to verify and enhance the data.
Analysis

Creswell (2003) breaks the data analysis and interpretation procedure into six steps: (1) organize and prepare the data for analysis, (2) read through all the data, (3) begin detailed analysis with a coding process, (4) use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis, (5) report findings, and (6) make an interpretation or meaning of the data.

Organize and Prepare Data

When organizing and preparing the data, the researcher transcribed interviews verbatim and arranged the data. The Post-Interview Reflection Forms were collected and prepared for analysis. Merriam (1998) suggests analyzing data during data collection as well. Merriam gives the scenario of a researcher sitting down at the end of his research, going through his interviews at that time and realizing he should have asked the second participant about a certain topic that he thought of when reviewing the first interview’s transcripts (Merriam, 1998).

Read Through All the Data

The next part of data analysis was reading the data over and over again. The researcher was important to note what was not being said or observed when analyzing the data. The tone of the ideas as well as the general impression of the credibility and use of the information was looked at during this step. The researcher wrote down ideas and comments in the margin as the data was read (Creswell, 2003).
Horizontalisation, a term used by Moustakas (1994) to mean considering every statement made in an interview as being equally important, was used as the researcher read over the data. By using horizontalisation, the researcher was also able to keep bias out of the data analysis process.

Detailed Analysis with Coding Process

During the detailed analysis with coding process the researcher organized the material into chunks (Creswell, 2003). At this time the researcher was simply looking for common features. The researcher realized meaning should not be made out of these chunks, yet the researcher was simply categorizing the data (possibly pictures, a line of text or a paragraph from an interview or even an image). The use of color coding different categories was used for this study.

Using Coding to Generate a Description, Categories or Themes

Once the information had been chunked, the data was used to generate themes or categories. Creswell (2003) suggests five to seven categories. Each one of these themes appeared as a separate heading in the findings section of the research report. The researcher included several quotations and evidence to support each theme. Although the researcher first read the material with the initial research question in mind, the researcher was also open to ideas and concepts that emerged as well. Patton (1990) states it is inappropriate for a researcher to finalize research strategies before data collection begins. Although the researcher has specified primary questions to be used in the study, the researcher understands the importance to emphasize the
emergent nature of qualitative research (Hoeplf, 1997). The researcher used the following criteria to establish themes: emerging themes—two of the six teachers addressed the particular topic; an established theme—at least four teachers addressed the particular topic. If fewer than two teachers addressed a particular topic then the theme was non-existent.

Eisner (1991) states boundaries for the study should be established to determine a focus for the research. The researcher used Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) concept of open coding to identify the themes emerging from the raw data. During open coding the researcher must name the conceptual categories that will group the phenomena observed (Hoeplf, 1997). The researcher next conducted axial coding which takes the categories identified in open coding and finds a link to these categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The researcher during axial coding determines if there is sufficient data to support interpretation (Hoeplf, 1997).

Report Findings

The researcher wrote up findings of the analysis in a report. A table that includes descriptive information from each participant in the study was included. Quotes from the study were included to support the findings. While the researcher planned to prepare a complete report, the researcher also focused on the most useful and meaningful material. All of the findings presented in the research were relevant to the study, organized and drawn from systematic analysis of data rather than preconceptions of the researcher (Malterud, 2001).
Interpretation of the Data

This section noted personal interpretation as well as new questions raised through conducting this research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicated it is important to understand the meaning of the data as well as the lessons learned. Creswell (2003) stated interpretation in qualitative research can be done in a variety of forms and is flexible. The researcher was also sure to provide evidence for each interpretation to ensure credibility as well as note the lens from which the researcher was interpreting the data.

Background of Researcher and Possible Bias

The researcher is a woman who recently fit the criteria of this study. The researcher is using emerging themes in the study so that all possible themes will be recognized and not just those the researcher may possibly believe to exist. The researcher avoided leading questions and bias when interviewing. The interviews were less guided by theoretical lens and focused more on eliciting experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2003). Interpretation was based on the data. Recognizing the researcher’s assumptions and possible biases is one of the strategies that have been implemented to ensure internal validity (Merriam, 1998). To increase validity of the research, the researcher conducted numerous member checks continuously throughout the study (Merriam, 1998). After interviews were conducted, member checks were conducted and individual transcripts were available for each participant to review and verify. This process ensured an accurate interpretation of the interview.
This strategy was used to avoid bias and increase validity. Member checks are common in qualitative studies and confirm the accuracy of the findings (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). The researcher understands that there is no exact way to avoid researcher bias; however member checking is a common method to reduce bias and incorrect transition thus increasing external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Peer examination was also used to increase validity. Creswell (2003) states “peer debriefing” is a way for researchers to analyze the study through another lens. The researcher asked colleagues to question data collection, analysis and interpretation, and play the role of “devil’s advocate” to strengthen validity (Rudestam & Newton, 2001).

Summary

This study consists of six individuals who are full-time high school teachers that also have at least one son or daughter between the ages of two months and five years. Participants were selected using purposeful sampling. Participants were required to fit certain criterion that had been established for the study. Each participant is a full-time high school teacher who has a child between the ages of two months and five years. All participants are married. Interviews will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher or a transcriber and member checks were done to ensure validity. These transcripts were coded and themes surfaced as a result of the analysis. Chapter IV will provide the results of the study.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The primary objective of the study was to explore how the day-to-day experiences of teachers who are working mothers of young children shape their level of comfort and satisfaction with the dual role they live. The study was designed to determine how the responsibilities a mother with young children impacted the role of a secondary teacher. The focus of the investigation was on working mothers with young children, ages two months to five years old. Many mothers work two to three full-time jobs, balancing their child rearing and home responsibilities with a challenging teaching career. A significant amount of research has been conducted regarding teacher retention, teacher job satisfaction and workload, employee benefits for working mothers, and the home life of a working mother. There is limited research on a teacher’s home life. There is even less research on secondary teachers who are young mothers.

This study focused on secondary teachers who are married, teach full time and have at least one young child. The research questions included:

1. How do teachers with young children manage the dual role of full-time secondary teacher and parent?
2. How does balancing child rearing and full-time teaching impact the dual roles of a parent and teacher and teacher’s decision to remain in the profession?

3. What strategies and conditions do teachers identify that would enable them to make their dual role more workable?

4. What do these teachers with young children describe as changes in their home or work environment that would enable them to sustain their dual role and increase their likelihood of remaining as a full-time teacher.

A qualitative methodology was conducted to address the problem and research questions. This study used a phenomenological approach due to attempt to describe the experiences of teachers who were young mother in a high school setting. The researcher studied the everyday experiences from the perspectives of six teachers who are mothers with young children with the intent to reveal how these young mothers balanced their role as a secondary teacher with their life as a working mother. Purposeful sampling was used to identify to six participants.

The researcher used the six step data analysis and interpretation procedure Creswell (2003) introduced: (1) organize and prepare the data for analysis, (2) read through all the data, (3) begin detailed analysis with a coding process, (4) use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis, (5) report findings, and (6) make an interpretation or meaning of the data. The researcher established pre-determined criteria that five of six teachers would need to address a certain topic for it to be considered an established theme. If three teachers discussed a certain topic it would be considered an emergent theme.

This chapter is divided into five sections that include: (1) participant demographics, (2) data reported under each research question, (3) an analysis of the
established and emergent themes, (4) interesting statements, and (5) a summary of the chapter.

Participant Demographics

The researcher interviewed six female, full-time high school teachers who are young mothers (children from two months to five years old). Interviews averaged 50 minutes in duration. Interview locations varied. Three of the teachers chose to meet at the researcher’s home, the researcher went to one participant’s home, and the other two interviews were in a public setting (such as the participant’s school).

The average age of the participants was 36, with 34 being the youngest and 41 the oldest. The average years teaching of the participants is 13 years, with 11 years being the shortest teaching experience and 16 years being the most experienced. Two participants have one child, two participants have two children and two participants have three children. The ages of the children ranged from 15 months to 7 years old. Although the age criteria was up to 5 years old, two teachers have children that fit in the criteria while also having a seven-year-old child. Three participants are foreign language teachers, one a math teacher, another teaches science and the other participant is a special education teacher. All six participants are public high school teachers. Table 1 represents the participant demographics from this study.
Table 1

Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years Teaching</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Ages of Children</th>
<th>Subject Taught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 and 2</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15 months</td>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7 and 16 month old twins</td>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 and 2</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5, 4, and 2</td>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Reported Under Each Research Question

Research Question 1

The first research question asked: how do teachers with young children manage the dual role of full-time secondary teacher and parent? Two themes from this research question emerged: (1) feelings of being busy and (2) guilt.

Busy

All participants stressed they were busy. Each participant discussed how busy their life was at this stage in their family’s life. Table 2 shows the frequency of comments per teacher on being busy. Teacher 4 mentioned being busy 10 times while Teacher 6 only mentioned it twice. The average among all of the teachers is 6.33. This means the teachers mentioned being busy on average of six times in an interview that averaged less than one hour.
Many of the teachers commented on being sleep deprived and indicated that they did not have enough time in a day to complete their responsibilities. For instance, Teacher 3 commented:

I get up at 5:15, get in the shower, if the babies don’t wake up before 6 then I get to eat breakfast...scramble and get whatever I needed to do done...school ends at 2:30, but I stay until 3:30 grading and prepping (3 days a week). On two of the days I would stay until 5 because of meetings and department stuff. Go to bed around 11:30—if I was lucky.

Teacher 3 went on to explain that the dual role is too much for her physically and emotionally. When discussing her previous year in teaching she stated, “I just got no sleep. I literally was just tired all the time.” Teacher 1 reported during the school year she is also mentally and physically exhausted. Teacher 4 shared she felt overworked and never had enough time to get everything she wanted done. Teacher 5 wished she could have more time to work on researching and putting together creative lessons,
but she feels she only has time to keep up with grading and the daily lessons as well as caring for her children and home.

The topic of being busy was common in many of the interviews. For example, after Teacher 5 talked about how busy she was at school she stated she then goes home and it’s “go-go-go.” Teacher 4 indicated “I wake up at 5, at the latest 5:15; anything later than that and all hell breaks loose.” Teacher 2 described her day as “fast and furious” and packed from 6:30 a.m. until about 7:30-8:30 at night. She felt her days as a teacher always flew by, but adding her daughter to the picture now made her day equally as fast from the moment she wakes up to the moment she finally goes to sleep:

I would say the day flies by, even more so now than it used to. Being a teacher, I always felt like my job literally lasted 10 minutes because just every second was just busy from the moment I arrived to the moment I left and now adding a child into it I find the day is equally as fast, but it just starts as soon as I wake up til the moment I go to sleep. The day just speeds by.

Teacher 2 also discussed what she does when she finds herself with an extra five minutes, “I try to squeeze 10 things into the five minutes because those little five minute chunks don’t come up very often. I think it makes me more frazzled.” Later in the interview, when Teacher 2 was asked what was not working in her dual role, she stated, “What’s not working, I think, sometimes I feel there’s just not enough time during the day. It’s that constant thing I don’t have enough time to do what I want to do.” She also confessed, “I don’t know if it’s because I have so many preps or if it’s because I am literally trying to do too much and I just need to simplify—it’s a constant battle.”
Teacher 4 indicated her workload and parenting keeps her busy, but it is also
the meetings. She has mandatory staff meetings, school improvement meetings,
meetings with parents for special education requirements and department meetings
each month. She mentioned her principal has already stated that next year he expects
her to increase the number of meetings.

Teacher 1 said, “I, you know, have a crazy life. I’m crazy, busy. I’m
constantly having to, you know, balance two things. I am a teacher all day and I am a
mom all night and that’s really hard.” When Teacher 1 was discussing how busy she
is she mentioned, “Every single day I feel like I am, I am nobody except a teacher and
a mom.” She then stated:

I feel like I have just given, I have just given up being me, just have had to say
that until my kids can handle themselves better or don’t need me that much…I
feel I am just a mom now.”

Teacher 1 stated, “I have no time to myself. Every night I, every night is spent
grading papers until 10, 11:00 at night and it really catches up to me and I feel like I
lose myself. Just it’s exhausting.” Teacher 2 commented on how busy her life is and
every year she hopes the chaos will die down, however it never does. Although
Teacher 5 said she works hard during the school day to get paperwork done and
assignments corrected, she confessed it still doesn’t always happen. Teacher 4 also
said she was “spending a lot of time after school, at night and on the weekends doing
special ed. stuff.” She said the paperwork for special education and requirements has
increased over the years. She commented, “it’s the special ed. paperwork that just
drops me at certain times of the year. It’s overwhelming. But in a…I don’t know, you
tend to burn out on it quick, but it’s part of my job.” Teacher 3 stated:
Besides that group that I have to interact with for curriculum, I don’t really interact with anyone else because I don’t have time. I don’t have time to go into the conference room and chat. I don’t have time to…like you know before or after school. I have 15 minutes to get ready or I have 1 hour that if I’m not done then I have to do that tonight.

Teacher 2 mentioned how busy she is doing school work and shared:

…now that I do have a child I tend to leave around 4:00, but I am still back here later in the evening. I bring her back or I get a babysitter and come back and do some work. Or I do work at home now.

Although Teacher 1 talked about little time for herself, Teacher 6 discussed the limited time she has to be with her daughter. She commented about negative aspects of her job:

I don’t have enough time to bond with my daughter. I come home and uh, you know I utilized a lot of my personal energy and I have now only six hours or so before she goes to bed and I’m tired, um so that’s one. The other thing is I can have very scary, or sad or upsetting days for one reason or another and I bring that home.

Teacher 5 mentioned she was concerned about her children. She stated they are a very busy family and have a lot going on. Teacher 5 is married to a teacher who also coaches and she said her kids especially start to feel it around November. She also teaches part time at a community college:

I work part time for a college so I am gone two nights a week, but it’s a full night so I am basically home one hour for those days. You know I get home from there; I’m home for a hour and then I leave. Yeah, that’s hard.

Teacher 2 remarked she gets so busy she has to have reminders just to ensure she picks up her daughter at daycare:

I have to have to-do lists. I have about five different lists. I have to set alarms on my phone more than I ever did before. During the really, really busy times when there’s a lot going on I literally have an alarm for each of the silly steps I have to do or reminders to pick her up. I have a reminder on my phone
everyday to pick her up from daycare. I had it scheduled because I find at the end of the day I will work up until the very last second.

Teacher 4 also mentioned daycare issues and always feeling rushed to get to school in the morning and rushed to get out of school to pick up her children:

You know honestly I want to say it was almost easier when both kids were at daycare full time because I could just, you know, I felt like I could get there at 4 and get them, but now I don’t know. My son is tired at the end of the day, as is my daughter and I don’t feel comfortable burning the midnight oil even after school-to-work until 4-4:30 and then go get the kids. So Monday, Wednesday, Friday I bust my ass out of there at 2:45 and um my son is dismissed at 3:30 from school so I can get there, get him... parking is always an issue, but I can get him Monday, Wednesday, Friday and then go over to daycare to get my daughter.

Teacher 3 mentioned the weekends are not necessarily time to relax, but time to recover from the previous week and prepare for the next week. Although all of the participants were tenured teachers and have been teaching a number of years, they all appeared to be extremely busy still prepping for classes. For instance Teacher 2 observed:

And even after being a teacher for 15 years I still feel I’m just as busy as the first year I was teaching and I just don’t understand how that’s possible. I feel like I’m restarting in a way and I don’t know if it’s just the new condition, my new mind set... I don’t know what that is, but I still feel frantic as I once did. I feel more prepared, able to handle the franticness, but I still feel it’s there.

Teacher 4 shared she was extremely busy during the day and cannot get caught up in the copy room or engage in conversations with her colleagues. She admitted she stays in her room until the last five minutes of her prep period and then quickly gets her copies she sent to the copy machine and goes to the office to pick up her mail. Teacher 5 said, “My planning hour is correcting, correcting—yeah work, work, work. There’s not much down time at school.” Teacher 1 wished she had more
to time to develop the curriculum and come up with better lesson plans. She stated, “I feel like my lesson plans are okay, what can I throw together in five minutes because I feel like that’s all I have...have right now, you know.” She mentioned this would be especially helpful for her special education students.

Teacher 1 summarized her feelings of her dual role stating, “I, you know, have a crazy life. I’m crazy, busy. I’m constantly having to, you know, balance two things. I am a teacher all day and I am a mom all night and that’s really hard.”

Once again, the average number of years teaching for the participants is 13, with 11 being the shortest time in teaching and 16 being the longest time in teaching. Even though all teachers were established in their career, all six of the participants reported their life was busy. Not only did they mention their lives were busy, but their dual role as teacher and parent made their families life more busy and stressful.

**Guilt**

Guilt was brought up 32 times throughout all of the interviews. Each participant felt guilty in one way or another. There was guilt for the time away from their family, guilt for time they couldn’t give to the school or students, and guilt for time they could not give to their husbands. Table 3 shows the frequency of comments per teacher on the topic of guilt. Teacher 3 mentioned feelings of guilt eight times while Teacher 4 had the least amount with three comments about feelings of guilt. This means the teachers mentioned feeling guilty on average of 5.33 times in an interview that averaged less than an hour.
Teacher 3 stated eight times in her interview feelings of guilt. In fact, in her post interview reflection she wrote that she realized through the interview that she felt her family suffered much more than her school life. During the interview she made several comments at different times that she felt she did well at school and her family suffered in different ways—such as, her not being there as much as she would like, having a short temper because she was tired all the time, and not being able to be there at all on certain days such as parent teacher conferences. Teacher 3 stated at one point during the interview:

I think I did well at school, like I don’t think the kids suffered. Um, but I think my family suffered, just because I was not only so busy, but my temper was so short because I was so tired all the time. So, especially my seven year old, he kind of got the brunt of that.

When asked how she viewed herself as a mother she said she feels like a terrible mother most days. Phrases such as “missing out” and “I want to just be with them” were said several times throughout her interview. For instance she confessed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Guilt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
she feels she’s “missing out on their childhood—especially the first year—it’s rough, you feel like they’re just changing so much.” Although she said she felt better about them being at daycare together (since they are twins) she still said she would rather quit her job and stay home. She said, “I mean most of it is my husband doesn’t want me to quit working. Honestly, like I think, I probably would not have gone back this year if he were not encouraging or pushing.” Teacher 3 continues to work because of the financial security for their family. Teacher 3 discussed why she feels like a terrible mother:

We struggled for a long time to get pregnant with them so for a long time...then we had them and I’m like...this sucks, I don’t want to go back to work. I want to just be with them. So it was hard. You just feel like a bad mom dumping them off at daycare every day before 7:00.

Six of the teachers experience guilt from being away from their children and also mentioned they felt like a horrible mother. Teacher 4 discussed coming back from maternity leave:

It was weird coming back and stressful. That first day when I dropped them off at daycare and I’m like, oh my God, I’m leaving my baby. Um, and then you just kind of get over it I guess. Yeah that, I had the full second semester to get through for her, that was a long haul, but you just do it, I guess.

Teacher 6 reported she felt bad about being away from her daughter when her daughter was around the age of one and two because, as Teacher 6 stated, “really what she wanted and needed in this world was to be with her mom more...that’s when I felt bad about it...” Teacher 2 commented during the school year she just can’t be with her daughter most of the day, but she tries to give her daughter all of her attention when she is with her. Teacher 2 also said she would like to have more time to take care of herself and exercise, but she feels she can’t:
I just have to say I need it, it’s good for me, it’s good for my family, it’s good for me being a teacher if I’m healthy, but I just have to tell myself, I just have to do it. I feel like every half hour that I exercise I feel that it’s a half hour I’m not spending with her or school or neglecting my husband again.

Teacher 1 said she doesn’t feel like a good mother on certain days, especially when her children are being exceptionally naughty and she feels they are acting that way perhaps because she is not with them more and her patience is thin. When asked in the interview if Teacher 5 felt like she was a good mother she said that the question made her want to cry. She stated:

I don’t think I am a good mother. I should have looked at these questions! Yeah, I wish I could be there more for my kids and I know that some people kind of look down on the time that I am gone. So...but I also like the fact that they see me working, you know, they see a strong woman in the house, but at the same time I wish I could see them more.

Later in her interview she confessed:

It’s hard because I do spend much more time working and/or dealing with work than I do with my kids. I can’t see that ever changing necessarily, however in a perfect world I would be home more.

Teacher 2 mentioned she teaches an elective so she feels she needs fun and exciting lessons, which take up a lot of time. When asked if she felt the dual role was working for her and her family she stated it has been really hard and she would like to simplify more. However:

Especially since I do teach an elective subject...I feel like there is a lot of competition between other electives for students. So I feel like in order to save my job, which I love, I feel like I have to go above and beyond...that now is not a good time to simplify, which I would love to do. So that I feel that I am very torn in that sense. So I don’t know, I don’t know. I think that some days, yes and some days it’s a disaster.
Teacher 5 said she is not home as often as she would like and she knows there are a lot of mothers home more than she is. Teacher 3 talked about bringing her stress and problems home with her:

If I have a problem with a student at school and I bring it home, my son, like really out loud once said just because you’re mad at that kid doesn’t mean you have to take it out on me. I was like, oh my gosh, I almost started crying. I was like, oh my gosh, he’s seven and he can see that I’m doing that. Or he’s like it’s not my fault the kids were naughty today.

Teacher 4 also said she sometimes comes home in a negative mood because of her students. She stated, “maybe a negative run with a kid that day is still on my mind or any angry parent, you know maybe I’m not the happiest…and I try to keep it separate, but you know that doesn’t always work…” Teacher 6 made a promise to herself:

When I was pregnant I made a resolution to try to get as much work done in the eight to nine hours that I am in the building so I don’t take a tremendous amount of work home. I used to when I was footloose and fancy free, but the minute I got pregnant I was like okay why don’t you use as much time effectively as possible. And I taught the same subject for 11 years—there is some freedom to that.

Later in her interview, Teacher 6 did mention while she is not bringing home papers to grade, she is bringing home the emotional side effects of her work. In fact, Teacher 6 started seeing a therapist to help her deal with the emotional struggles of her work.

Although Teacher 4 fit the criteria because of her daughter being younger than 5, she also commented on her seven year old son:

I do feel guilt for my son—he doesn’t have to be to school until 8:30 and he’s up every day at 6 so that he can go spend a good hour at daycare before he goes to school. I feel guilt about that.
Teacher 1 mentioned the guilt she feels everyday she leaves for school. She reported in her interview:

I miss my kids terribly when I’m at work every day and I know I will never get these years back. That I beat myself up about that every day when I drive away to school. Like should I be doing this or should I be home with my kids? So, just yeah...I miss them a lot and feel like I am missing lots and lots of time away from them.

Teacher 2 also mentioned the guilt she felt when she first came back from maternity leave:

...there were days that I did zip out of here and there are days that I had to remind myself that she will still be there, she’s not going to notice the time so I have to remind myself about those little things.

Along with feelings of guilt for their families, teachers also mentioned feelings of guilt for the time that they cannot give their school and students. Teacher 1 stated:

I think that my school expects that you are not just a teacher that you are going to be a teacher, but you are also going to take on A, B, and C extra-curricular activities. You are going to attend athletic events at night, you are going to go to the choir concert, you’re going to do things on the weekends, you know chaperone dances, and that’s the part where it just puts me over the top. Those are things that, I think that makes me think...you know because when I don’t do them I feel guilty that I’m not doing them, though no one, no one is ever saying that you have to, it’s just like expected, though they can’t force you to do it. So, those are the things that I think are a little overwhelming.

Teacher 2 said she felt like a good mom and a good teacher, but she constantly felt pressure at school that “good is not good enough.” Teacher 2 also stated she did not have enough time in the day so she had to start using her planning period to run errands (for school) which she never had to do before. She said at the beginning she did the errands after school with her daughter, but it affected her daughter’s sleep.
schedule and forced her daughter to be in the car for longer periods of time (especially since she already had a long commute from her school to her home).

Teacher 2 is involved in many extracurricular activities such as student council and organizing a trip to France with her students, but it was taking too much time after school and negatively affecting her daughter. Although, she felt it was justified to use her planning time for school related activities, there seemed to be negative feelings towards this. She even mentioned she never asked permission:

I finally got to the point where I got tired of always asking permission for things and I’m usually a rule follower and somebody that doesn’t want to make my boss mad and I want to stay on their good side and I used to always ask for permission to do whatever and I got to the point last year where I was like you know what, something’s got to give. I’m a good employee, I’m loyal, I do a good job in the classroom, I’m going to cut corners here or there in the parts that doesn’t affect the students so I had sixth hour prep and I was planning a trip to France and so the travel agency I was using was clear out on 28th Street on the other side of town. Well, I live in a different city and here’s daycare over here by the school so it was hard for me to make the meetings, go get her, get there on time and then go home. It was just too much. So what I would do is leave sixth hour and I would go pick her up and then go. So technically I probably shouldn’t have picked her up, my day wasn’t done, but it was during my prep hour and I figured the time was the same.

Teacher 6 mentioned two years ago she had surgery and it took her a great amount of time to recover. She stated she stayed in teaching, but knew the dual role was too much for her:

I would either be a lame teacher and save my energy to come home and be a mom or really literally sleep from 5:30 until the next morning and that went on for about a year and that was a huge...that was a very negative experience...there wasn’t enough of me to go around and that was really bad. I thought I can’t apply only the energy, you know, if I have to make a life choice here. Do I have the energy to my career or to my daughter...I was also so sick and so depressed that I didn’t have time to formulate actual conscience thought of hey maybe I should quit my job for awhile. You know what I mean? I was just getting through the day so I wasn’t looking at hey, this isn’t good. I was just getting through it.
She later stated when she mentioned her tipping point:

The other tipping point was when I was ill and um really I don’t know if I can articulate this, but as a mom even though my husband...again I have been very flattering of him...if as a mom I was to go three houses down and talk to someone I have to hand off my daughter and say hey I’m leaving her behind for a couple of minutes. There was a time where I no longer had to do that. I could fall asleep or whatever and I didn’t have to hand her off to anyone and that was a tipping point for me where I knew I had not...I was spending too much energy on my job and not enough energy on my daughter because I didn’t have enough to go around...

Teacher 6 proclaimed she started therapy when she reached that tipping point. She confessed she started to get better physically, but was still struggling:

But then I was still kind of depressed and connected to that. It was the thought of not having to pass off my daughter that threw me into a therapy situation and then medication in that sense where I said I can’t do this to her and to the career I worked for, again it is fulfilling to me. Um, yeah teaching drives all women into therapy, but it’s okay...you don’t want to bring home the craziness that you deal with everyday so you end of bottling it up...sometimes you need to share it with someone.

Teacher 4 indicated she feels guilty because she cannot attend certain events after school and other teachers will talk about it at lunch and say comments like “you should have been at the basketball game” or “oh my God, did you go to...” Teacher 4 confessed with her young children at home and being that she lives so far away, she just can’t make many after school events.

Several of the participants also commented on being torn between being a good teacher and a good mother. Teacher 4 said she just doesn’t have as much time to devote to her work because of her dual role. Teacher 3 revealed she felt like a horrible mother or horrible teacher when one of her children was sick. She wanted to be home
with her children, but she also knew the students won’t learn as much with a
substitute teacher and she wants to be there with the students:

I guess going back to the most miserable times are when the kids are sick. Like I remember talking to a colleague who had a baby around the same time I did. So we are both going through some same things this year. Um, but we would say like I feel like I am either being a cruddy mother or cruddy teacher today when my kids are sick because we are either like not at school and I have this whatever sub plan, whatever you can do with a sub that doesn’t speak Spanish, so I’m like I’m ditching the kids and staying home with my kids or I’m having someone else stay with my kids when I know they want to be with Mommy and so you feel like you are either being a crappy teacher or crappy mother. So it’s like what’s it going to be like today...just it’s a bad feeling.

Teacher 6 also mentioned the guilt she feels when her daughter is sick:

There’s days where my daughter is not running a fever, but she’s not herself either. And then what do you do? Do you send her? Do you stay home? Not to mention there’s probably three to four absences a year that are contributed to me having to go home with her being ill. But there’s days where you’re like I really don’t want to send her, but my focus is on my home life for one reason or another. It affects my work.

Teacher 1 feels guilty when she gets a phone call from school and needs to leave right away:

I get a call from my kid’s daycare that my kids are sick and I have to go and so I have to immediately throw together some plans that aren’t necessarily plans that a sub, or that my kids, my students should be doing, they should be, you know I should be there to help them because I know they’re learning more from me than they would be from someone sitting in a chair telling them this is what your teacher wants you to do today.

Teacher 2 stated:

I admit there’s times when there is something pressing at school that I have to do that I might do before she goes to bed, when I get home those moments I feel very torn between trying to do a good job with my job and also making sure she gets the attention she needs and what she deserves at home.
Teacher 6 commented on being a coach and raising a young child. She said she gave up her position as head coach when she had her daughter, but agreed to be a consultant:

So there were times I was with my daughter and I knew I had to disappoint her and not be where she was or I was out with the dance team and I knew I would rather be home with my, then, very young child. And so I had to resign because that was the tipping point for me. When I was either place and constantly feeling guilty for not being at the other place that was it. I couldn’t do that—to that team of girls that I promised to be helpful with and I couldn’t do that to my daughter and that was a tipping point.

Finally, two participants discussed the guilt they experienced when they could not give their husband as much time they felt they deserved. Teacher 1 stated she and her husband do not have as much time together as a couple because they spend most of their time as a family. She explained:

I don’t go out on the weekend, I don’t, you know, we don’t go out to dinner, we don’t go on dates because in order for our kids to grow up the way we want them to grow up we have had to make a lot of sacrifices. For instance my husband and I haven’t been on a date in I don’t know how long because we feel like if we do that we are taking time away from our kids and we just have a really hard time doing that.

Teacher 1 admitted if she was home more often she would be able to get more done around the house, be more relaxed and probably be able to go on more dates with her husband. She indicated for her kids to grow up the way they want them to grow up they have had to make sacrifices and date night seems to be one of those sacrifices.

Teacher 2 revealed her husband was the one that was getting truly neglected with working her dual role. She was the one that takes her daughter to daycare so she feels she has that extra time with her during their longer commute. She will also take
her daughter after work to run errands, so her husband does end up with less time. She admitted, “I don’t see him much and the three of us together don’t get a lot of time during the school year to spend together. Um, and certainly my husband is the one who gets neglected.”

When asked for reasons to possibly quit teaching, Teacher 2 said she would be compelled to quit teaching to spend more time with her husband. Many times throughout the interview Teacher 2 mentioned the limited time she gets to spend with her husband and stated she knows she puts him behind her daughter and her job:

I think that the negative impact has to do more with me and my husband than me and my daughter. I don’t see him much and the three of us don’t get a lot of time together. Um, and certainly my husband comes third. So I would say most of the negative probably has to do with neglecting my poor husband.

All six of the participants were dealing with feelings of guilt. Feelings of guilt can rise from being away from their children, not being able to give as much to the school, or not being able to spend as much time with their husband.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked: how does balancing child rearing and full time teaching impact the dual roles of a parent and teacher and teacher’s decision to remain in the profession? Three themes emerged from this research question: (1) the teachers felt they were a better mother because of their teaching career, (2) the teachers felt they were a better teacher because of being a parent, and (3) a sense of ownership and self fulfillment.
A Better Mother Through Teaching

All six participants believed they were a better mother as a result of their being a teacher. The teachers stated their career helped them with disciplining their children, teaching them certain academic skills as well as teaching their children social skills. Teacher 6 is even thinking long term and said being a high school teacher will help her have a realistic view of what a teenager really is. She believes this will help her someday when her daughter is a teenager. Teacher 2 discussed the aspect of discipline and stated:

I find that the little things in class I did over the years...that I find those tricks are working at home. I also find in terms of discipline, even though she’s only 15 months, I still find that the simple ways that sometimes work for high schoolers actually are working for her especially now that we’re approaching the toddler stage.

Teacher 6 also felt the strategies she used for her students helped her with her daughter. She commented:

You know you learn essentially love and logic style. You learn how to...how to control behavior without consequence or reward. You know you learn how to get what you want without yelling, screaming, bribing otherwise you die as a teacher. So I have been able to translate that on some level to my parenting and that’s a real big positive.

Later Teacher 6 discussed the different theories she has learned, such as Capturing Kids Hearts, and strategies. She brought up her favorite book, *Discipline without Stress, Punishments and Rewards* by Dr. Marvin Marshall and how the principles of classroom management taught in that book are “beneficial with an opinionated five year old.” Teacher 4 also said her undergrad and graduate training such as in behavior management has helped her as a parent.
In reference to teaching their children academic skills, five of the six teachers stated their children benefited from their expertise. Teacher 3 and Teacher 5 spoke about how they are teaching their children Spanish. Teacher 3 said she is using the curriculum to teach him and it is working out wonderfully. Teacher 2, also a foreign language teacher, reported her skills has not only helped teach her daughter French, but in terms of overall communicating in general. Teacher 6 commented she has witnessed how parents can negatively impact students with their decisions and she has seen parents be a positive force in their children’s life. She is learning from the parents of her students to be a better mother:

I work with kids and parents so often I see how the parents can negatively impact the kids with their decision. Negative: I fear doing things to hinder my daughter the same ways. Positive: I am constantly aware of this and work to be a positive force in my kid’s life. The reverse is also true. I see parents make smart parenting moves that I can emulate.

As a special education teacher, Teacher 4 felt she was raising her children to enjoy school. She also saw the importance of parent involvement and ensures that she and her husband are involved in her children’s learning. Teacher 2 stated she believes she observes her child more which has helped her with the learning process and said, “I watch her when she learns...I notice...all of a sudden she picks up a word or after a while it sinks in.”

Teacher 1 found her career helped her as a mother:

So I think it is good that they see that I am educated, and some day it will make more sense to them. When I have...you know we talk about college and...that I, that I am educated and that...that would be a good thing for them to do someday too. I also think that being a teacher also makes me aware of what my kids know and what my kids need to know and how I want my kids to act and how I don’t want them to act and actually I have found that when I was trying to decide if my son should go to kindergarten or to go to
developmental kindergarten I found that after talking to people I kept expressing that my son is very shy and very quiet...or I kept saying shy and someone once asked me, “well is he shy or is he quiet?” And I said, “Well that is a good question.” And after I really thought about it and talked about it with people...he is not really shy, he is very quiet and I thought, you know what, I like my quiet kids in class. So I feel like it made me aware that he is probably going to be, you know, well-liked by his teachers because he is that kid.

Teacher 6 said her daughter benefited from the activities and environment their secondary schools provided. Often she took her child to the extracurricular events she is encouraged to attend. Teacher 6 commented that she believes her daughter benefits by being able to join the atmosphere such as attending football games, talent shows, and plays.

Teacher 5 and Teacher 6 talked about how they are a better mother because their career makes them happy. Teacher 5 stated she feels she has dimensions to her life. She also said she did not feel she could be a stay-at-home mother and would be miserable if that were the case. Both Teacher 5 and Teacher 6 said their job makes their life interesting. Teacher 6 reported:

I am personally fulfilled by my job...intellectually stimulated...personally fulfilled. It makes my day more interesting and exciting and um, so as a mom, as a person I am a happier person and therefore that makes for a better mom.

Teacher 3 reported she likes that her son sees her contributing to the family. She also believes she is able to connect with his teachers as well; it’s as if she has a different relationship with her son’s teachers because she is also a teacher.

In summary, all participants felt that in one way or another they were a better mother because of their teaching career. Many noted that their children were benefiting academically as well as socially. The teachers also thought they were a better parent by seeing what the parents of their students do or neglect to do.
Being a Better Teacher Because of Parenting

Five of the six teachers reported they felt being a mother has helped them be a teacher. There were several different reasons for this, such as being more patient with the students, being more patient with the parents, better teaching strategies and more energetic about the learning process.

Teacher 2, Teacher 3, and Teacher 4 stated they are more patient as a teacher now because of being a parent. Teacher 4 said when a child is pushing her buttons she thinks about how she would want someone to respond to her children if they were acting that way. She is sure to be kind and respectful when confronting the student.

Teacher 2 commented:

Where now every time I discipline someone or how I talk to them, I ask myself is this how I would want my teacher to respond to my daughter. Is this how I want her future teachers to treat her? So I think it’s reminded me that these students are other people’s children too.

Teacher 4 also commented on thinking of the students in this regard:

I think having kids it makes me aware that when I’m not...just I don’t know how to say it other than I want all my son’s and daughter’s daycare teachers to be kind to my kids, you know and I think the same thing. So if a kid is pushing my buttons or whatever, like you know this is still somebody’s kid and try to be kind and respectful and not just go off on him and I think I want, and not that I ever talk about this stuff, but I think it is important for my students to see and I’ll tell them a home story every once in awhile, but I want, especially my kids, a normal home life and not maybe the chaos that they probably a lot of them have in theirs.

Although Teacher 1 said being a parent has helped her be more patient with students, it has also increased her expectations of the students. She observed:

You know, when I didn’t have children I didn’t know, you know, what expectations I should have sometimes about my students, but once I had my
own children and I can relate to my students' parents more because I have my own children...I feel like my expectations of my students are probably higher now because I think of how I would not want my children to behave in a class and if their children are behaving that way...I would not want my own children to behave, I think I feel better about saying, no that that is not okay for you to be acting like that.

Teacher 1 also indicated she talks to her students about their behavior and compares it to her children. She said the students usually don’t like to be compared to a five and a two-year-old so they start acting better. Teacher 2 mentioned her patience with the students understanding the curriculum:

Before I would often find that I would expect the students to just know it after once I told it to them, you know, once, twice, three times okay, eventually I kind of would put the responsibility all on them, that they should get this by now. Um, but I find that I am more patient with them because I am observing the true literal learning process...I also see how that relates to them. Because a lot of them are starting out from zero as well, especially in French; they don’t know anything so it literally is that same process what my daughter is going through at home.

Teacher 3 indicated she was more patient with the students, but she also discussed her patience with the parents and her ability to connect more with the parents of her students.

I think I can connect with the kids a lot better and I think I can connect with the parents, at parent teacher conferences. My conferences are now a lot different than before I had kids. Certainly because you realize that that’s some body’s child; like what they want to hear and not want to hear...or maybe how you could say it.

Teacher 2 also commented on her patience for the parents:

The other part that I think has made me a better teacher is that now I am a parent and I find I am a lot more patient with parents. Um, before I would just kind of expect it, okay they are in high school now...you know you should know this by now, this isn’t, I’m not asking a lot of your child kind of attitude.
Teacher 2 thought she observes more now and sees the learning process better because of her interactions with her daughter. Teacher 2 felt she was not only more patient, but more energetic and excited to see the progress of her students. Having her daughter helped her see that a mind can really mold and can learn a new language and she is now excited to see this with her students. She reminds herself to be as patient with them as she is with her daughter; they are both learning with no prior knowledge of the curriculum.

Teacher 3, who also teaches a foreign language class, said she uses her kids for parts of the curriculum. There is a unit that includes child activities so she uses videos of her children to teach that unit. She remarked her students love it.

As a special education teacher, Teacher 4 stated she feels it is beneficial for some of her students to hear stories every once in awhile about her home life. She said many of them do not know what a normal home life is like since many of her students have issues at home. Teacher 5 revealed she was a better teacher because she now understands how busy a home life can get. She is more lenient now when giving out homework because she understands they may not be able to just go home and do their homework; their lives may be just as busy and chaotic as hers:

And I know our home life is busy and chaotic everyday so I can just imagine what their life is like. I know they can’t just go home and do their homework for five hours. You know that’s just not the way it works. That’s not how our home works. So I guess I can see more into that aspect.

Teacher 5 also knows that many of her students have younger siblings at home. She empathizes more now when a student says he or she didn’t get any sleep because the baby was crying all night.
Comments made by Teacher 6 did not qualify as a theme; however Teacher 6 did state she felt she was a happy teacher because of her home life. Teacher 6 commented:

I am very happy in my marriage and I am very comfortable with who my daughter is...I think she is a very positive...you know I wouldn’t trade her. And so I have a soft place to land...you know my home life makes me a happy person.

Ownership or Fulfillment from Career

All six participants discussed how their career contributed to their personal fulfillment and how they had a sense of ownership to the curriculum they teach. Teacher 6 said her job is intrinsic and she does not have a reason for doing it; it’s just who she is and what she should be doing. Teacher 6 later stated she is thankful she is a teacher and reported, “I am fulfilled. I am more fulfilled than if I were a stay-at-home mom.” Teacher 5 commented she felt like she has dimensions to her life due to her career.

Teacher 2 proclaimed she was proud of her program:

I do feel because I am the only one. It’s all on me. I feel like there’s no one else to blame. What I put into it is what I get out of it, what the students get out of it; there’s no one to blame, but myself and I feel like it all comes back on me; that pressure often makes it more complicated because I don’t have the luxury to say can I borrow your quiz for this because there isn’t anyone to borrow from.

Teacher 2 said while she would love the luxury of teaching only one subject, she knows it would kill her program.

Teacher 1 discussed her personal fulfillment, but also in respect to her children. She stated, “I think that having a job has allowed me to have my own life
too. I am not just a mom and my kids know that I am not just a mom.” Teacher 5 stated a positive impact her work had on her home life was:

I guess that I have another life outside of the house...makes it more interesting. Now I don’t want to be offensive to anybody, like the stay-at-home mothers where it seems they only have that and all they have to talk about is the stay-at-home mother stuff; it’s just not that much to it.

Teacher 5 later stated, “I just think having something different in the house like my husband has his own job and then just bringing it in; having your own time and your own job is positive.” Once again, Teacher 5 also works part time at a community college. Although she said it keeps her away from her family two nights a week, she stated, “it is just such a nice job and I love it—you know I love it—I don’t really want to give it up.” At a different time in the interview Teacher 6 revisited the topics of fulfillment from her career and how the fulfillment relates to her daughter:

I am personally fulfilled by my job...intellectually stimulated...personally fulfilled...it makes my day more interesting and exciting and um, so as a mom, as a person I am a happier person and therefore it makes for a better mother.

Teacher 1 stated her job is rewarding, especially when she is rewarded at school:

...just having that own separate thing...that is what I do you know, it’s my own thing. This is what I do, I’m not just a mom, I’m a teacher and I guess that is rewarding especially when you are, when you’re rewarded at school or any job for doing something well, you know it makes you feel good. You know, I mean how often does someone say gosh you know you are doing such a great job folding that laundry today...you know if I was staying at home with my kids. So, it’s rewarding because I accomplish something every day.

Teacher 2 mentioned she felt valued by her students and believes they enjoy coming to her class which makes her feel great and appreciated.
While five participants mentioned the benefits of summer break; Teacher 2, Teacher 5 and Teacher 6 stated by the end of the summer recess they were eager to start the new school year. Teacher 6 said she gets to live the life of a stay-at-home mother during the summer, but “You know I think I’m meant to be a working mother.” Teacher 2 mentioned the summer break gave her a sense of what it’s like to be a stay-at-home mother. She remarked, “I do look at oh, I get to stay home and I would get to do other things, but I think eventually I don’t know if it would be enough for me.” She also stated she was ready to come back and “clean house” after her maternity leave. While it was somewhat difficult leaving her daughter at daycare for the first time, she was also eager to get back to work.

Teacher 4 mentioned her tipping point would be if her own children were miserable and couldn’t handle their mother being away, but other than that she would not give up her profession:

I think if my kids...I don’t know, just cried every day when I, or my husband, dropped them off, or cried when I picked them up or, you know, if there was something emotionally scarring or if they couldn’t handle it. I can’t see me...I mean I get satisfaction teaching and I don’t think I’m the stay-at-home...I love summer and I...but there’s something to be said for going back to school and being a professional. So I can’t see me...it ever being overwhelming for me to just totally give it up, now half-time sure. Um, but I can’t see me ever giving up teaching unless it was kid related.

Teacher 5 stated her love for teaching by proclaiming she just loves it and doesn’t want to give it up.

Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 mentioned there were times they would need to miss school due to sick children, but they knew the students would not learn as much with
a substitute teacher. Teacher 2 spoke of her maternity leave and how it affected her students and her program. She said:

Yeah, and so it was a big mess, so I had a lot of clean up and coming back I had several students very nervous about their AP grades and in fact I just got back my AP scores and it was just that—they were horrible—how much did that affect them?

Teacher 2 also said she felt she couldn’t fully be away on her maternity leave because the students were suffering and the parents were consistently calling her with complaints:

My maternity leave was interrupted almost every other day by emails and phone calls from students and parents and colleagues and administration because my sub was a complete debacle. So much so that this fall when I was back, because I had her in April, right around Spring Break and I came back the very last week of exam week so I really saw my students for half days for that last week and by that point they were all in arms, all up in an uproar because the whole last six weeks was a waste of time. They didn’t do anything. They didn’t learn anything and they were all really mad and I had several parents emailing constantly because the grades got all screwed up…

Teacher 5 stated she also dealt with many issues during her maternity leave for one of her children. Teacher 4 revealed she had a need to come back during her maternity leave to attend certain meetings. During her maternity leave for her daughter, Teacher 4 felt she just needed to be at school a few different times:

She was just a few weeks old and I know that um I had to do something too. My husband ended up staying home with both kids—it was the switch of the trimester and I was still on maternity leave and he took the day and I went to school for I think the first day of the second trimester, which I think is bizarre now, but honestly it was probably me; like I felt I had to be there, but um so I went to school that day. But, it was an interesting maternity leave where I checked my email every day and…but again a lot of that’s me too.

Teacher 4 spoke of another time she brought her daughter to an in-service day while she was still on maternity leave. Another teacher’s teenage daughter watched her
infant at the school while she attended meetings. As she stated, she “had to go” not because it was mandatory, but because she felt it was necessary. Teacher 6 complained her substitute teacher during her maternity leave was horrible and she was annoyed her students did not receive the curriculum they were supposed to receive.

Teacher 5 mentioned she enjoyed her maternity leave, but at the end she was ready to get back to teaching. Teacher 6 also stated a positive for her was that she went back with approximately four weeks left of school. She remarked, “And then going into the summer I was a mommy, but I was a mommy connected to the outside world which was a connection I had completely lost during those nine weeks of maternity leave.”

Two of the teachers discussed possibly teaching a different curriculum, one for budget cut reasons and the other for an opportunity to work fewer hours. Each teacher was extremely distraught over the possible change. Teacher 3 approached her principal about working fewer hours because she felt the balance of full-time teacher and mother of three was too much for her. The principal found a “quick fix” and said she could work at a different building and different level in order for her to go part time. She was upset that she spent 13 years to build a curriculum to then be possibly switched. Teacher 3 stated she “panicked” and decided to stay full time because she was not willing to give up her program. She was proud of her program and brought up the fact that when she started out she was the only foreign language teacher at the high school (which now has three).
Several times in Teacher 2’s interview she stated “my program.” There was a great sense of ownership from her. Teacher 2 remarked she does have her minor to fall back on in case budget cuts eliminates her program, however she has a sense of ownership to her French program. She confessed she spent 15 years building this program and it bothers her to think that it can be easily taken away.

Three of the six participants (Teacher 2, Teacher 4, and Teacher 6) discussed how hard it was to let go during their maternity leave and three of the six participants (Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 3) discussed the difficulties of letting go when having a substitute teacher. Not only did the participants feel they were more fulfilled from their career, two of the teachers stated their children are also more fulfilled due to their teaching position.

Research Question 3

The third research question asked: what strategies and conditions do teachers identify that would enable them to make their dual role more workable? Four themes were found under this research question: (1) daycare, (2) supportive husband, (3) supportive staff and administration, and (4) organization.

Trusted Daycare

Daycare was important as each of the six participants discussed the need to have a trusted daycare provider. Only Teacher 5 had a nanny and the others used daycare facilities. (Teacher 2 and Teacher 6 used home facilities and the others used child development centers.) Teacher 3 said she would love to have someone come
into her home to watch the children, but she has not found anyone yet she could trust. Teacher 2 stated she was pleased with the daycare situation and felt whatever she can’t give her child; the provider would be able to. Teacher 6 also has her daughter attend a preschool center within the school district she is employed, even though the district she lives in provides such a facility. She proclaimed she was so impressed with the preschool at the school she works for; she didn’t want to change. Teacher 1 stated about her children’s center:

I know that where they are going, they are in a daycare, but they are in a child development center, where they are learning so much more than I know I would be teaching them at home.

Teacher 1 likes that her children are around other kids their age and improving their verbal skills with fun songs. She also likes that they have their own separate life away from home:

I actually feel like being at work every day allows my kids to have their own...their separate life...and I don’t know about everything that happens in their day. I know the gist of it, but the little things that they know and they learn and they do...is probably good that I don’t know. They have that separate thing that I don’t know about.

Teacher 2 mentioned her daughter is resilient, really outgoing and great with a variety of people. She credits the daycare for this and believes whatever she can’t give her daughter, her daughter gets at daycare.

Teacher 6 also stated her daughter is learning much more by being at a daycare center. She said: “I am a very big home body and I don’t think I would be the stay-at-home mom that has 14 play dates—social groups and um, you know heads up the girl scouts or whatever.” Later she stated:
I think she benefits more from the consistent social interaction... as an only child—she’s not awkward or shy so she loves having kids... we don’t have a lot of kids in our neighborhood so if I was a stay-home mom I think it would be very boring for her.

Teacher 2 commented on how fortunate she feels to have a daycare provider that is so close to her work and one that understands if she is late due to unforeseen circumstances. She mentioned she feels she needs to go “above and beyond” and do the extra things in the lesson because she teaches an elective so she does need a trusted daycare:

Luckily I have a great daycare provider that’s really close to my school, she’s only ten minutes away from here and without her I know I would not be able to do my job because she’s really great. If I’m late... after school meetings which sometimes go late, um it’s nice to know she is willing to help me out and without her there’s just no way I could do both.

Teacher 3 mentioned she needed to switch daycare providers because the one they used in the past was too far away. It was more difficult for her to find a daycare because she needed two infant openings.

Teacher 5 stated a top priority for her was to hire a nanny willing to still watch the children if they were sick. She mentioned this has been a wonderful strategy for her family and has allowed her to not take as many sick days. Teacher 2 stressed on how important it was to her to have her child somewhere safe. She appreciates knowing her child loves going to daycare and is in an environment she will thrive in. Not having a trusted daycare was one of her biggest fears in being a working mother for Teacher 2.

As a teacher, Teacher 6 felt her life is more fulfilling, but she also said her daughter has a more fulfilling life as well. She stated her daughter is a very social
creature and benefits from being at daycare, especially because she is an only child. Teacher 1 also expressed her children are more fulfilled by having their own life outside of the home. Just as Teacher 1 believes her career outside the home makes her more fulfilled, she feels the child development center also adds dimensions to their life.

Teacher 2 still uses her daycare provider at times during the summer:

Last year I brought her to my student council meetings and it was just really difficult to try to watch her and keep track of what was going on, so this summer I scheduled them out with the daycare provider so that she could go there. She can play with some of the...some of her friends go there and she can play and have a good day and take naps and do what she normally does each day and then I can come here and have meetings. Or like today, I knew I had to come here and I had to work on some lesson planning for next year. Um, so I just had decided it’s easier that way. I just take her to daycare on those days and I come here and can focus and that works better...that I found works much, much better for me if I can totally separate myself, if I can send her someplace to have fun and I can totally come here; it works better that way. It’s hard to do both together.

During the school year Teacher 2 also used the time her daughter is at daycare to run errands. A strategy she used is to keep her daughter at daycare, a place her daughter enjoys being at, and does her grocery shopping or other errands. Teacher 3 and Teacher 4 both have older children who attend elementary school and rely on the after school care for them two nights a week. Although they are able to leave their younger children in daycare later into the evening, their older children end school around 3:30 and need supervision. Both teachers state they use the after school program so that they can have two days a week set aside for staff meetings, parent meetings as well as curriculum planning and grading. Teacher 3 also uses the before school care when her husband travels. Teacher 4’s husband daily takes her school age
child to daycare at 7:00. The child is then able to take the bus to school in the morning from his daycare location.

Teacher 6 felt lucky her good friend decided to open a daycare facility when Teacher 6 mentioned she was looking for someone to watch her daughter. Not only is her daughter with someone she trusts greatly, she also only has to go next door to take her daughter to daycare:

And I was fortunate that um, I had a different daycare situation than anyone else. I had a really great friend that I met as my next door neighbor that I met 12 years ago or so and I was pregnant and sitting in her pool and I said, you know, I really wish you did daycare... because she was a stay-at-home mom at the time and her youngest was in school. She called me back a week later and said, you know, I’ll get licensed, I’ll open a daycare center. She opened a daycare center in her home and so one of my truly best friends in the world became my daughter’s daycare provider so I didn’t worry about her. You know, I have friends who have had problems, you know, whatever I’ve never had a worry though.

Later she stated not having a trusted daycare would be a reason for her to quit teaching. She said, “I’ve watched my friends struggle because when they send their kid to a place their not comfortable with, that is huge. That would be a job quitter for me if I didn’t have a comfortable place.”

A strategy for Teacher 6 in her dual role as mother and teacher is compartmentalizing:

I try not to think about it. I found people I trust and I just have to trust that she’s okay until I pick her up. I have to compartmentalize her world and my world and otherwise I would be concerned about her all the time. Are people bullying her? Is she okay? Is she missing her mommy? You know, and I have to... really compartmentalize that. I have to shut her out for six to eight hours and then the minute the bell rings I pull her back into my world. So that’s a big strategy.
Teacher 5 stated her nanny has been a blessing. The nanny she had before was wonderful with the children, but did not pick up the house. The nanny she has now does both. While she does have a maid that comes, she said it is nice to have someone daily pick up after the children. She loves that she does not have to come home to a mess. Teacher 5 also said the nanny has been wonderful with sick children and truly different from when her children were in a daycare:

So when that happened it was terrible because daycare would call me, I would have to find a sub, and I wouldn’t get to my daycare until at least an hour because I lived 20-25 minutes, or sorry I worked 20-25 minutes from the daycare so I would find a sub, get plans ready for the day...and I have three kids so it happened quite often where I’d get the call from daycare. And I hated that outside the district ring because I knew that was what it was...you have a sick kid please come and pick them up. So I wouldn’t get to the daycare until one hour at least and that would get daycare upset because it’s an hour. Where some people could just punch out right there and leave and get there...I can’t do that; so that was stressful—always stressful. And now that we have a nanny come, that is one of the first questions I always ask when I interview, are you willing to stay home with sick kids and yes, they are...one reason that I hired a nanny or caregiver in the house is so that I could have an easier time with work and home life and that’s one thing, I don’t want to have to rush to come home. Now if the child is so sick and puking then I will come home. That hasn’t happened yet, but yeah, definitely less time that I have to leave work.

Teacher 2, Teacher 3, Teacher 4, and Teacher 5 mentioned they have limited support from their family to help with childcare. Teacher 2 and Teacher 4 mentioned their parents live farther away, as well as their in-laws, so they really need a daycare in place that allows the teachers to stay later when needed. Teacher 3 and Teacher 5 stated they can get help sometimes from family members, but it is not often.
Helpful Husband

Five of the six participants mentioned their husbands’ flexible schedule as well as assistance around the house has helped them in their dual role. Teacher 5 was the only teacher not to mention that support of her husband as a strategy for the dual role (although, once again, Teacher 5 is also the only teacher that has a nanny and a maid). When dealing with sick children, Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 3 commented how much easier it is when their husband has the ability to stay at home. Teacher 2 said, “luckily, my husband’s job is pretty flexible, so um, we alternated. We figured out our schedule…” Teacher 3 also noted she alternates with her husband when a child is sick. Teacher 1 stated:

My husband has a pretty flexible job for the most part. If we need to, he, if we need him to, he can leave work, get the kids. Actually, his schedule is more flexible than my schedule because when I leave you have to know I am leaving 100 kids where he is just leaving his office and he can make up the time later. Also if there is something going on in the morning or if our kids are, you know, just had a bad night and need an extra hour or two to sleep in, he is always able to do that...

Teacher 4 stated she and her husband used to argue over who would stay home when a child was ill; however things have gotten better. Before, when her son was sick, she said, “Oh God, all hell breaks loose. Um, guaranteed fight…” Now, after their second child, she remarked:

I’ll call in and it’s okay, first day. Now day number two my husband knows it’s his. Like if it’s one of them is sick for two days or the second gets sick or whatever, um and then we alternate. So, um every once in awhile he might do the first day. It just depends on what he’s got going too and then we just alternate days...
Teacher 4 said her husband even stayed with the kids a few days when she was on maternity leave because she felt she needed to attend some meetings at school (such as when the school switched from semesters to trimesters).

In the area of helping around the house and child rearing, the participants—Teacher 2, Teacher 3, Teacher 4, and Teacher 6—mentioned their husbands were helpful around the home. Teacher 1, Teacher 3, Teacher 4, and Teacher 6 said their husband assists with getting the children ready in the morning. When Teacher 6 was asked what factors or conditions make the dual role work better, she stated: “having a husband who is contributory in a positive way, honestly that is very helpful.” Teacher 2 commented, “I find that life is better when my husband really is on top of things, when he can kind of take that slack and I don’t have to do it.” Teacher 4 shared having a supportive husband has really helped her. She said she finds her dual role getting harder as the children are growing (especially with her older son in sports) but her husband “has really stepped it up since the kids have gotten older. Before I was the one dropping him off at daycare, but now he is.” Teacher 1, Teacher 4, and Teacher 6 mentioned their husbands dropped off the children to daycare which eased their morning and permits the children to sleep a little longer. Teacher 3 drops off her twins to daycare, but her husband helps out by taking her son to school. She said he is also responsible for getting her school age son ready for school, which greatly helps out since she is dealing with the twins.

Teacher 6 mentioned her husband greatly helps out when she has to attend parent teacher conferences. Her husband leaves work early which is the only way she can make her conference schedule. Teacher 3 said her husband also takes care of
everything when she is gone for parent teacher conferences or extracurricular events such as plays or games.

Teacher 3 had an arrangement worked out with her husband. She stated she really did not want to work full time and wanted to be at home more with her children; however for financial security reasons, her husband encouraged her to continue working. Teacher 3 revealed:

It was kind of the deal with my husband encouraging me to work; well then you’re in charge of dinner because I can’t do everything. So he would make dinner maybe two nights a week and then we got leftovers and then we got take out two nights a week.

Teacher 6 had several positive comments about her husband. She mentioned she has a happy marriage and a “soft place to land.” She observed:

My husband and I call it being the rock. If I need to pass off being the rock for the night—I’m like honey, you’re the rock tonight—he knows that I had a rough day and he’s the rock for that night and he can do the same with me and so, you know my home life makes me a happy person.

Teacher 6 is also happy with the arrangement she and her husband have worked out. She indicated her husband does an equal portion of the housework, but she does a greater portion of the parenting. She stated, “I don’t mind. I don’t want to give up that role and he’s okay with that too.”

Teacher 2 mentioned her husband is also helpful in helping her plan out their schedule. She claimed a strategy for her in being successful in her dual role is to schedule and plan ahead and her husband helps with this. Teacher 4 stated their extended family lives hours away so “we make it work between us.” Teacher 6 had a different situation than the other participants. At one point she was physically ill from
her two surgeries, her husband greatly helped out. In fact she stated: “he just stepped in and he assumed almost a maternal role.”

In summary, a husband that contributes at home became an established theme in the research. Five of the six participants mentioned the necessity for their husband to assist at home in order for the teacher to be successful in her dual role.

Supportive Staff and Administration

All six of the participants stated having a supportive staff and administration has helped them with their dual role. Teacher 2 stated in her post-interview reflection:

I should add that since becoming a mother, I’ve actually become closer friends to some other coworkers who do have young kids. I also have to admit that I try to be more understanding of my colleagues as now I understand more fully the challenges they’ve faced trying to balance kids/family with work.

The questionnaire asked what made the teacher think of the comment. She remarked:

One of my colleagues called me to have a play date with her and her son and I was reminded that a wonderful support system exists at work. I just have to used it and reach out to others too.

Teacher 1 said she and her colleagues talk about their home life and share stories:

A lot of the colleagues I work with have children at home so it is...really it has been great because we can bounce ideas off of each other and vent and talk about how horrible our night was or talk about things that have worked well in their life, you know trying to balance a career...a young family at home too. I also have a lot of teachers that are young and have not started a family yet, but will be soon and so that’s been really fun for me to share with them what it’s really like to have a career and have young children at home. And I also feel when I am telling them stories I am learning. Like telling them stories about my own life, I am learning by telling them because I am listening to myself talk and think I shouldn’t be doing that and this is, I mean, I would not, I would not think that is a way that a mother should parent or should do. So I feel like it checks, it puts myself in check by telling, by telling them this is what I do, but this is really what I should be doing.
Teacher 6 mentioned a secretary who makes it convenient for her to get an emergency substitute teacher when she gets a phone call from the daycare provider stating her child is sick. Teacher 5 did not have as much to say about supportive staff except that she is grateful for one teacher who helps her out with department meetings. She explained each department is required to pick a time for their monthly department meetings. Her department decided on 6:30 in the morning, but she cannot make this due to daycare issues:

I always say I will get there when I get to school. And they start the meeting at 6:30 in the morning, which means I would have to leave at 6:00 and I’m not doing that. I am not doing that. That is outside our nanny’s work schedule so I would have to pay extra for that and I just don’t want to. So I get to the meeting when I get to school.

The department head simply puts her name on the attendance sheet, but does not state anywhere that she missed part of the meeting. Other teachers have not said anything to her about this. She appreciates this, but also believes it may be because she is the only Spanish teacher and is required to attend the department meetings with the English teachers. She said most of what they cover is not related to her, which may be why they have been so understanding.

Although Teacher 4 wished there was a better atmosphere at her school for working mothers, she did state there was one teacher that really helped her out:

...she’s really good because I typically co-teach with her 5th block and she’s really good about, you know at 2:30 because I got to get to my room and get my stuff and then get out the door. So she, and she was a single mom too, when she was raising her kids, so she is really good...but there’s still the behind the back talk...
Teacher 4 was happy with her special education director. Although they have many meetings after school due to special education requirements, the latest the director will schedule a meeting is 3:45. Teacher 3 stated the director has kids and her husband works out of town so she “feels our pain, or she has her own pain.”

Teacher 6 mentioned the special education teacher she works with truly helped her out when she was on maternity leave. The substitute teacher was not teaching the curriculum effectively so the special education teacher really took over. Even more, the special education teacher made sure Teacher 6 did not know about it so that Teacher 6 could enjoy her maternity leave.

Many of the teachers also mentioned the importance of having supportive administration. Teacher 6 shared a positive that her administrators had younger children of their own and understand the role of children and the issues of sick kids or other problems that arise:

Positives are my administration all have children and their children are positive and a central portion of their lives so they have an understanding of a sick kid or um whatever...I think I have a positive relationship with my administration based on my work effort, but, so positives are they understand the role of children and they have a balance in their own lives.

Teacher 6 stated, “I feel they are caring people” and “understand that teachers are often parents of young children and that’s priority in our lives.”

Teacher 1 was also thrilled with her administrators and felt they were extremely accommodating and supportive. She mentioned her administrators have always given her the preparatory period that she needed and have never looked down at her for not being able to do something for them. She shared her experiences with
returning from maternity leave with her first child and not feeling comfortable going back to work full time. She stated:

With my son I was having a really, really hard time leaving him. He was my first baby, so I was supposed to come back on a certain day, so I called, kind of the last, not the last minute, but a couple of weeks before I came back and asked if I could get my sub in my classroom to stay for an extra week, if I could come back...a week early, but come back only half days instead so that I could ease into it and they were very, very supportive and it ended up working out with my sub and everything, but they were just, they were awesome.

The researcher probed into this statement and asked what made her administrators awesome. She said:

Just because, because whatever I wanted they said yes to. They never questioned anything. In fact, my superintendent saw me in the hall one day and said whatever makes it easier for you to come back we will do for you. Which, you know was his exact words, well pretty exact that I can remember. But he was pretty much along those lines. But he was, our superintendent at that time, the grandpa of very young grandchildren so I think he understood. I think, I think his daughters work...

Teacher 1 also mentioned both her building administrators are male, but still understand the challenges of the dual role:

They, both of my administrators, that work in my building have young children at home and are leaving the building as often, if not more often, than I am. So they have no, they have no negative thoughts about anyone raising a family at the same time. Which makes it, you know, so much easier to work there because they’re awesome.

Teacher 3 had a new principal that year and stated, “He is just amazing. It’s like a breath of fresh air...he is going to make it work for me.”

Supportive colleagues and administrators have truly helped five of the six participants. They stated in one way or another the support has helped them by understanding when they need to call in sick for sick kids, help getting a substitute
teacher in a timely manner in emergency situations, as well as venting and bouncing off ideas from one another. Participants also mentioned just having administrators with younger children themselves helps the administrators understand the challenges the teachers are going through.

Organization

Four of the participants stated organization and/or scheduling was a strategy they used to work full time and raise a young family. Teacher 3 and Teacher 6 both utilize the night before to organize for the following day. Teacher 6 stated, “I do my best to be prepared at night, to go into the next morning.” Teacher 3 remarked:

You definitely have to be organized. Like I would have to do all the bottles and lunches at night, for sure because it’s not going to happen in the morning. I would lay out all their clothes on Sunday night. All the five outfits for the week for the kids were set out with a onesie, socks and pants and shirt. You have to because in the morning if you can’t find something, you’re late... So yep, I did that for all three kids.

Teacher 3 also claimed the weekends weren’t a time to relax, but a time to get everything ready for the next week.

Teacher 4 said organizing and de-cluttering was a strategy to maintain her dual role as full-time teacher and mother. When asked what strategies she uses to maintain her dual role she stated:

being organized—structured—and trying to do things as they come in. I don’t know, if there’s a note from school I try to do it right away because I just...I just don’t know the thought that, oh, I can do that on the weekend or whatever. I’m like no, just do it tonight and get it done with.
Teacher 2 also stressed the need to schedule to make sure she does not waste any time. She schedules and makes sure she can get everything in, especially when her daughter is in daycare.

Teacher 2 also believes organization is an important strategy:

So we schedule, schedule, schedule. We use lots of calendars, lots of lists. I try to plot when I’m going to be at school, to make a strategy, so I know she’s going to be at daycare, and I have a little bit of work after school, I have an hour...I’ll instead of going to get her, I will leave her at daycare and go to the bank, or grocery store or the post office and I try to do a lot of those errands while she’s there as much as I can.

Teacher 2 later remarked, “our families find it very strange that we know what we are doing next March on the third weekend, but we have to because there’s just too much going on.”

When Teacher 2 was asked what factors make it work better she stated:

When I really plan ahead and can stick to my plan it makes life easier so that I don’t have a lot of wasted time. You know like calling ahead to places and checking things on the Internet. If there’s little things that I can...if I don’t really need to go anywhere like I can just call or email, I do a lot more of that than I ever did before. Um, I even looked into doing online groceries and stuff. So even little things like that I’ve found, like little things, like going to the post office, if I know I’m going to send a thank you note out soon or a birthday gift or...I do a lot of shopping at once instead of doing you know several different shops—trips—um Christmas shopping...I think I did all online last year so a lot more of those kinds of tricks I found has really made life a lot better...

Later in the interview she said:

I have to really plan ahead um, because I live so far away. I have to really make sure that if I come here, my time is going to be well spent cuz, again, I really don’t like to take that time away.

The four teachers stressed they live a busy lifestyle and being organized was essential for them to maintain their dual role. Whether it be preparing the night
before, making sure there is always a schedule to follow or ensuring they are utilizing
daycare in the most efficient way, four of the six teachers rely on organization as a
strategy.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question asked: what do these teachers with young
children describe as changes in their home or work environment that would enable
them to sustain their dual role and increase their likelihood of remaining as a full-time
teacher? The only theme to fall under this research question is more support from
administration.

Poor Feelings of Staff and Administration

Although a contradiction to earlier statements, four of the six participants
discussed negative feelings toward co-workers and/or administrators. While
participants may have been happy with some colleagues or administrators they had
issues with other coworkers. Reasons included the lack of work effort they perceive
their colleagues are doing as well as comments about the lack of work effort they
displayed. Other reasons included not feeling comfortable talking to their
administrators or feeling their administrators expected too much.

Teacher 2 stated she was resentful of her co-workers that seem to rush out of
school as soon as the bell rings. She doesn’t understand how they can leave as quickly
as they do and questions their workload. She confessed:
I think I get resentful sometimes, not towards my students, but I get resentful towards other teachers... I may be wrong, but it seems they don’t have as much workload as I do. Um, before I would usually be one of the last people to leave and now I’m still technically one of the last to leave. I still see people who can skedaddle out the door really quickly and I don’t know what their secret is and I’m hoping that I will learn soon. I shouldn’t be resentful of them, but I still sometimes, I think I still am resentful towards some of my colleagues who somehow either don’t put in the effort, or they don’t need to or they don’t have six preps or four preps. They teach the same class all day and obviously that’s easier. So I find that is the negative thing that creeps in my mind that I have to try really hard to keep that away.

Teacher 2 did state:

I’m too busy, too busy to develop closer relationships with my colleagues and maybe that is part of the problem, the resentment. Maybe if I did put more effort into it they would teach me their tricks so I could know how to simplify life.

Teacher 4 was also resentful of the workload some teachers have. She mentioned she was jealous of teachers who teach the same thing year after year and are able to get their curriculum down. Teacher 2 also mentioned she is disturbed by the lack of quality grading by her colleagues. She discussed a conversation she had with one of her students:

And she flat out told me that nobody grades papers. She’s like you’re the only one who grades papers every night. People give a check if it’s done or not done or they might grade something once a week or whatever. No one grades papers every day. And I was astounded. And little things like that just eat away at me because I feel like, well, why would you do the homework? Don’t you want me to grade your homework to know? It’s little things like that that I realize you know, the students don’t really care because they are now accustomed to this whole new way of doing things that they’re all graded on their quizzes so why am I spinning my wheels 20 times faster when the students aren’t really getting a lot out of the graded homework anyways.

Teacher 6 discussed a co-worker of hers who is a single guy, without any kids that comments to her repeatedly about how he is always doing the extra things because others can’t (due to issues such as having to pick up their kids from daycare).
She stated she is bothered by his passive aggressive behavior. When asked if he was simply kidding or if he was truly upset she remarked:

No he’s really kind of pissed and you know some day he’ll probably get married and have kids and he’ll understand so it doesn’t bother me at all, but when I read that question on the interview that’s the first thing I thought of—there are people who don’t understand—who have older kids and don’t remember or um but, really there’s a lot of women in teaching—there’s a lot of moms in teaching so generally it’s not a problem and I don’t personally feel guilty because I taught for 6 years before I had a kid and I put in the 90-hour weeks and now I’m finding a balance. So there’s a few people and you know their point is legit—there’s a number of times where somebody needs to stay after school til five, six, or seven and when your entire department has to go get their kids off the school bus and that leaves two guys—I see their point. But I’m going to get my kid off the school bus.

Teacher 5 was upset with co-workers who seemed to get special treatment because they were coaches. She stated her department has the authority to decide when they will have department meetings and her department decided on 6:30 in the morning because it was convenient for a teacher who coached a sport. She told her department that this would mean she would need to leave at 6:00 in the morning to get to school on time and that it was outside her nanny’s work schedule. The department did not seem to care and was more concerned about the football coach than her childcare issues.

While Teacher 2 was upset about teachers leaving right after school, Teacher 4 was upset about the comments she hears from other teachers about her leaving right after school. Teacher 4 said she has heard remarks or has seen passive aggressive behavior from coworkers for leaving at 2:45. Teacher 4 lives a half hour away from school and commutes with several teachers that also live in that area. All of them
need to leave at 2:45 (which is the time allowed by their contract) to be able to pick up their children from daycare or school.

Teacher 4 commented there have been incidences when she walked down the hall to exit the building and a teacher called out, “must be nice to leave so early.” Another time that same teacher wanted to talk to someone in their car pool about a school matter and the teacher in the car pool stated she couldn’t talk right now because she has a car full of moms waiting to leave so they could pick up their kids from school. The teacher would not understand and kept saying it was a quick question. It put the teacher in the car pool in an awkward situation and made many of the moms worried that they would miss pick up. Teacher 4 stated: “there’s really no cushion there for us to have a quick question or conversation…we’re out the door.” Teacher 4 revealed another teacher will look at the clock when they walk by the room, which she interprets as his passive aggressive way of questioning what time they are leaving school.

When asked what administrators could do to help their dual role, Teacher 4 stated she wished her administrator would create a better atmosphere for the working moms. She remarked, “Yeah, to create a better atmosphere for the working moms. I don’t know, like how do you change that mind set, like maybe just at a staff meeting. Yeah, what could he do just to change the culture of….”

Teacher 2 also had suggestions for administrators. She would appreciate more praise and assurances. She remarked:

Having someone, an administrator, just flat out tell me “you’re doing a great job, we are not intending to get rid of your program any time soon” having them just say that verbally would take a lot of the pressure off. They would
just say, we’re not gunning for your program. I have yet to hear that and I’ve been here 15 years and not like I should worry about it, but I still do.

She later stated:

I spent 15 years building one thing just to be shuffled into another direction which could happen very easily. So I think if they could give me some sense of...something to reassure me that my efforts aren’t in vain, that I think would actually ease my mind and I think it would help me be more effective...or even some acknowledgement that, some comp time for the teachers who have so many preps, give them comp time you know, or let us have a sub for you every once in awhile. Something like that...little things like that would really go a long way, cuz for me I find it’s the time, I don’t necessarily feel I need more money. I feel I need the time, I need time to...I need the time.

Teacher 2 understands there are many people that are worried their program may be cut, but she stated there is that constant stress in her life. She commented, “a constant cloud hanging above that I have to watch out for and that takes a lot of energy I think.” Teacher 5 was disappointed with her administrator and felt she was given little praise. She commented the administrator had the belief that he’s the boss and knows everything.

Teacher 4 and Teacher 5 were upset with the amount of meetings they are required to attend. Teacher 5 mentioned a teacher friend who lives in Wisconsin that do not have meetings outside of the school day. The school year is longer, however many childcare issues were resolved. Teacher 5 stated:

And if that means adding on a couple days here and there, you know I guess so be it. I guess it doesn’t matter adding a couple of days at the end if it means we don’t have to come back at night. Those make it so long, those days are very hard.

Teacher 4 wished her administrators would be more considerate when scheduling special education meetings. She has had meetings set for 4:30 on a Friday and other inconvenient times. She feels she is not being treated like a professional:
Teacher 2 remarked she was uncomfortable approaching her administrator with certain problems. For instance, she stated her school does not allow personal refrigerators in their classrooms; however, she needed a place to store her breast milk after she pumped at school. There were two factors that prohibited her from using the staff lounge refrigerator. First, it was in an inconvenient location so it would take too much time for her to take it there. She said she was already hurting for time and she just couldn’t afford the extra 10-15 minutes to take it to the lounge. Next, and most importantly, she mentioned she did not feel comfortable leaving her breast milk in a public location; especially because students had access to it. Teacher 2 knew this was something she would not compromise on and she did not feel comfortable asking her administrator for permission to have a personal refrigerator in her classroom. She confessed she simply hid one in her classroom and left a note for the janitor not to remove it due to personal issues. She stated:

I never asked permission. I was going to at the beginning, however I knew they would probably say no and that would mean I wouldn’t be able to pump...again it would be another five minutes down the hall to put it in the storage and there’s no refrigerator here in our building that kids don’t have access to. That was the other problem, that we have two refrigerators in our staff lounge, but students constantly go in there. They don’t keep it locked and I wasn’t about to put my breast milk in a public space where anybody could have access to it so I just used my illegal fridge and I just stored it there...It took a lot of time and I was getting resentful at the end of the time it was taking, but in the end I still feel glad, like that was one of the parts where I did put her first over my job and that I was willing to fight tooth and nail that if anyone were going to say something to me that I would just throw a big fit.
That was one of the things that I was willing to do, that I wasn’t going to negotiate on...

Teacher 2 also suggested it would have been easier if her administrator would have given her a preparatory period that worked better with her nursing.

Teacher 2 waited to have children because she was worried about how it would affect her career. She stated:

I personally haven’t had a problem, but I think it’s because they see me up here late at night and she’s in tow and I think they, like they see me in the summer times; they still see me. I think other people aren’t supported because they think that they don’t do a lot of the extra stuff anymore, which I think is unfair because they shouldn’t have to. It’s extra, they’re doing their job. It shouldn’t be a big deal, but I know one of my colleagues, she has three girls and she is a great teacher. She is an awesome teacher. She does her job, she’s professional, she does a great job, she connects with her students, but she just does not...she lives far away too. She does not have the time to do the extra evening things and they often, I think will make comments to her.

Teacher 2 then stated this is one of the reasons she waited, because of the treatment she saw others receive:

I waited a long time to have kids and part of it was because I saw a lot of that and I was nervous as to what it would be for me and I finally got to a point where I thought, that’s ridiculous, that’s stupid to put off having a family because you’re worried about how it’s going to work. People do it every day.

Teacher 5 also discussed her lack of comfort in talking to her administrator and asking for favors. She mentioned several times that she has asked to leave school early to attend a child’s holiday party, and although the administrator allows her, she stated she gets a double look or a question such as, “are you sure you want to go to that Valentine’s Day party for your kid?” Teacher 5 said because she is so uncomfortable she asks for as little as possible.
Teacher 5 later mentioned she does not get along with her boss and she tries to talk to him, for any reason, as little as possible. When probed for a reason as to why she does not get along, she simply stated, “we just don’t get along, we don’t see eye-to-eye.” Later she remarked her principal has questioned her teaching methods. She stated sarcastically, “he’s still my boss so he knows it all and I know nothing!”

Teacher 6 mostly talked positive about her administration; although she did say a negative is they are “tough people.” She stated:

I think negatives...they’re tough people. I think my boss is like the type of people who would break their arm and drive themselves to the emergency room so when I had a difficult pregnancy and wanted to take an extra week there was nothing said...but there was...it was not appreciated I don’t think, but I don’t think it has in any way hindered my relationship with them.

Teacher 6 did have one wish for her administrators and was sure to bring this up when she was asked if there were any final thoughts for her interview:

We have a lot of get-togethers through the year...like simple stuff...like hey let’s meet at a bar after graduation or hey bring your spouse over to my house for a party. There are no get-togethers that are hey let’s meet everyone’s kids. Let’s get the kids together, a picnic on the lawn. And since nearly all of us have kids, high school age to infancy, I find it interesting we never have anything that is a social gathering where we bring kids, because I’m not going to leave my kid behind. I’m beyond the stage of let’s go drink at someone’s house. I did that often in college and I’m done with that, but I would love to come to a picnic and bring my daughter and have her play with all of my teacher friend’s kids. So that would be a nice thing to have, but I also don’t have the time or the energy to organize it...being a mom of a young child.

An Analysis of the Established and Emergent Themes

The researcher required at least five teachers to address a particular topic for it to be labeled an established theme. Following this criteria eight established themes were discovered during this research: (1) trusted daycare, (2) self-fulfillment, (3)
busy, (4) learn to be a better mother because of teaching, (5) guilt, (6) helpful husband, (7) supportive staff/administration, and (8) being a better teacher because of being a parent. Table 4 shows the eight established themes along with the teacher who is represented in the theme.

Table 4
Established Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Mother</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Husband</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Staff/Administration</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All eight established themes are represented under the research questions. Table 5 shows the eight established themes and the research question in which it is represented.
The researcher required at least three teachers to address a particular topic for it to be labeled an emergent theme. Following this criteria, three emergent themes were discovered: (1) organization, (2) utilizing a maid and (3) poor feelings of staff and administration. Table 6 shows the three emergent themes and the teachers who represent each emergent theme.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maid</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Feelings of Staff/Administration</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organization and poor feelings of staff and administration were discussed under the research questions. Table 7 shows the three emergent themes and the research question it is represented in.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent Themes and Represented Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Feelings of Staff/Administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Utilizing a Maid

Utilizing a maid is the only theme that was not represented under a research question. Three of the six participants mentioned the use of maids as a strategy or possible strategy for success in their dual role. Teacher 5 was the only participant who hired a maid. She emphasized this strategy helped greatly with running her household and stated about her nanny and housekeeper, “I wouldn’t be able to do it without them!” Teacher 1 thought it would be wonderful to have someone come in and help around the house. She stressed the point that she would want a maid and not necessarily a nanny. She mentioned she would not want someone to help with the child rearing duties because she enjoys that part, but someone to clean the house and get dinner ready. She said this would be useful “so that when I got home I could just come home and just eat and just be a mom for the rest of the night rather than have to
worry about the other small details that always get in the way.” Teacher 2 also

mentioned the possibility of hiring a maid:

I think hiring, this is something my husband and I sort of talked about, I think
hiring, um, someone to help at home...maid doing kind of housecleaning, that
sort of thing to take that pressure off. I think that would be kind of
helpful...that I think maybe someday we might end up doing that.

Interesting Statements

While the participant’s statements in this section do not meet the criteria for
an established theme or emerging theme, the researcher wanted to include them.

These statements do not fall into a specified theme or category, but proved
interesting. Teacher 1 talked about some of the tasks she has to do as a teacher that
perhaps someone else should do to give her more time to develop the curriculum. She

stated:

We used to have, we used to have student aids, the state of Michigan allowed
us to have a student assistant that came in and graded papers or filed things, or
make copies and they’ve taken that away from us. That was huge to have all
of those little things done that I don’t necessarily, I mean I am getting paid a
lot of money to do some of the things I am doing. Some of the things I don’t
think I should get paid to do...to develop curriculum, to come up with better
lesson plans because sometimes I feel like my lesson plans are okay, what can
I throw together in five minutes because I feel like that’s all I have...have
right now, you know.

She continued:

If I could just have a parapro in my classroom. I have a lot of special ed. kids
that really just need a separate curriculum and I don’t have time to come up
with that special curriculum all the time. So if I had someone in my classroom
that, an adult, that I could explain, okay, this is what we are going to do today
and they only need to learn A, B, and C, could you just make sure they
understand that. That would be incredible.
Teacher 3 noted in her post-interview reflection her issues are similar difficulties any woman with children who works full-time outside the home may have. She did, however, mention what perhaps makes it harder for a teacher is that it is difficult to be gone. The hassle of making substitute teacher plans as well as the effect it has on the students academically causes more stress for teachers. Teacher 3 also stated there is a great amount of work to be done outside of school hours (preparing and grading).

Teacher 1 and Teacher 6 discussed their summer vacation. In her post-interview reflection, Teacher 1 wrote, “the school year is hectic, but the summers are such a great chance to get caught up with life and reconnect with my family (especially my kids).” Teacher 6 said it is hard to find balance at the beginning of the school year. She remarked:

Again balancing teaching and motherhood—um, yeah my stress is increasing being the end of August and starting to think about school days and getting stuff back. It’s a positive stress, but it’s a stress none the less. I am going to go from being…she’s incredibly attached to me right now and I am going to go from being with her 14 hours a day for 3 months on end to being with her 5-6 hours. Um, and that’s going to be a huge transition. But again we are both going to be more fulfilled by the experience.

Teacher 5 mentioned the dual role is getting even harder now that her daughter is getting older:

Our oldest daughter is going to be in kindergarten and now she can be a part of all the sports, um so I signed her up for soccer during the school year and this is the first time now...how I am going to have to figure out how she is going to get to these practices twice a week, plus games on Saturday, I guess. So that might not be working. Yeah, I don’t know how that is going to be, with me gone two nights and I still don’t know what we are going to do with childcare during those times.
Later in the interview Teacher 5 was asked what changes in her day-to-day environment (on the job or at home) would make her dual role work better:

Nothing that I would want to change. Like I’m thinking my oldest is in soccer, but I don’t want to change that. I don’t want her to be in less things just to make it easier for me. So, yeah I can’t think of anything.

Teacher 6 said a negative in her profession is the time and the emotions:

Teaching is intense. You don’t sit there at a desk. You stand five solid hours of your day with 150 kids staring at you and your responsible for their...you know you are on so that’s exhausting.

Teacher 4 wrote in her post-interview reflection she did not think a lot about her dual role previous to the interview, it was something she just did. She stated:

By completing the interview with you, I realized my dual role of being a mother and full-time teacher is huge. I am much more aware that I should be patting myself on the back rather than beating myself up.

Summary of the Chapter

Participants in this study include six female, full-time high school teachers who are young mothers (children from two months to five years old). At least five of the six teachers were asked to address a particular topic to label it an established theme, and at least three of the six teachers addressed a particular topic to be an emerging theme. If fewer than three teachers addressed a particular topic then the theme was non-existent. Interviews lasted approximately 50 minutes and locations varied. The average age of the participants is 36 and the average years teaching of the participants is 13. The ages of the children range from 15 months to 7 years.

Eight themes and three emerging themes were revealed. The eight established themes were: (1) trusted daycare, (2) self-fulfillment, (3) busy, (4) learn to be a better
mother because of teaching, (5) guilt, (6) helpful husband, (7) supportive staff/administration, and (8) being a better teacher through parenting. All eight established themes are represented under the research questions. The three emergent themes discovered were: (1) organization, (2) utilizing a maid, and (3) poor feelings of staff and administration. Two of the themes are represented under the research questions. Utilizing a maid is not included under any research question. The researcher also included interesting statements that did not fit any themes, but may be used for future research. Chapter V consists of a summary, conclusions, observations, and suggestions for additional research.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to explore how the day-to-day experiences of teachers who are working mothers of young children shape their level of comfort and satisfaction with the dual role they live. The study was designed to determine how the responsibilities of a mother with young children impacted the role of a secondary teacher and vice versa. Participants were working mothers with young children, aged two months to five years old. Participants were also required to be secondary teachers who are married, teach full time and have at least one young child. Six participants were selected for this study. Chapter V consists of five sections: (1) an analysis of each research question, (2) conclusions, (3) limitations of the study, (4) recommendations for future studies, and (5) a summary of the chapter.

Research Question 1

Research question 1 focused on how teachers with young children manage the dual role of full-time secondary teacher and parent. The focus was on the complexity of these demanding and complex roles of a teacher with young children balancing their professional obligations with their role as a homemaker, parent, and care giver.

Two themes emerged from Research Question 1. The first theme focused on the feelings teachers and mothers with your children experienced in terms of feeling
rushed or busy during the school year. Phrases such as “fast and furious” and “go-go-go” were used to describe their day. All participants mentioned how busy their day was and how they rarely had down time. Teachers mentioned their mornings were busy getting themselves and the children ready for the day, their school day was busy (especially their planning period) and then their evenings were busy with their family as well as grading and prepping for their class. Teacher 2 supported this theme by stating she always felt her teaching day was busy, but now with her daughter, her day was busy from the moment she gets up to the moment she goes to bed.

The second theme was the feelings of guilt teachers experienced as a result of this complicated parenting and teaching role. All teachers stated they felt guilty for one reason or another. Six of the teachers experienced guilt as a result of being away from their children. Phrases such as “missing out,” and “I just want to be with them” were stated throughout several interviews. Teacher 3 and Teacher 5 went on to say at times they felt like a “horrible mother” because of the lack of time or energy they can give their children. Five of six participants mentioned they periodically experienced guilt for what they could not accomplish at school. The participants wished they could give more to their profession and family, but there isn’t any more to give at this stage in their families’ life. Participants stated they wished they had more time for creative lesson plans, to attend more extracurricular activities or coach and advise clubs, but it was too demanding to balance extra work responsibilities with family demands. Two participants reported they felt guilty for the lack of time they are able to give their husband. Teacher 2 stated the demands of teaching and caring for young
children made her realize that her husband was the one that was neglected in their family. She confessed she puts him behind her daughter and her job.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 explored how balancing child rearing and full-time teaching impacted the dual roles of a parent and teacher and teacher’s decision to remain in the profession. This research question focused on why or why not a teacher would stay in their profession and what factors are involved in this decision.

All six participants felt they were a better mother because of their teaching career. Collectively, the teachers stated their career helped them with disciplining their children as techniques they learned for the classroom were also beneficial at home with their own children. Teacher 6 discussed theories she read about, such as disciplining without consequences or rewards, and how it has helped in both areas of her life. Other teachers mentioned their career helped them teach their children in terms of certain academic skills. The foreign language teachers stressed the curriculum they used for their students also benefited their children. Teacher 2, who is also a foreign language teacher, stated she was more aware of the learning process. She said she would observe more and actually see the learning process. Lastly, participants mentioned their career was helping their children with their social skills. Teacher 6 stressed her daughter gained more by attending school activities such as plays or sporting events. This was a residual positive effect of being a teacher and a parent of young children.
Five of six teachers reported they felt being a mother strengthened their role as a teacher. Participants shared that being a parent helped them be more patient with students. Empathy and connecting the student to a parent also emerged from the parenting role, many of the teachers mentioned they now think of the students as someone else’s child. Before disciplining a student, they often stop and think how they would want a teacher to treat their child. Teacher 5 noted how chaotic her life was and she now understood a student may have the same type of home life. She realized her students may not arrive to a peaceful home and have five hours to do homework; there could be piano lessons, hockey practice, an after school job, family pictures, or possibly a younger sibling they need to babysit. Teacher 2 indicated she has a better relationship with the parents of their students due to being a mother. Before she had children, she had feelings of frustration with the parents and felt she wasn’t asking a lot from them; especially because they are in high school. Now, she clearly understood parenting isn’t always that easy. Teacher 2 also revealed she was more energetic about the learning process. It has been exciting for her to see her daughter learn and grow and now she relates this to her students. She now understands the foreign language is also new to her students, just as it is for her daughter. Lastly, Teacher 6 disclosed her family life makes her a “happy person.”  

All six participants discussed how their career contributed to their personal fulfillment and how they had a sense of ownership to the curriculum they teach. A sense of ownership was clearly seen in all of the teachers. Phrases such as “intrinsic,” “fulfilled,” and “added dimensions” were used by participants. Teacher 2 repeated “my program” several times in her interview. Teachers remarked they enjoyed having
something in their life that was “theirs,” they enjoyed being rewarded for a job well done (something many stay-at-home mothers do not receive), and even though they loved the summer break, felt ready by the end of the summer to start up teaching again. A number of the participants stated they do not like to miss school because they know students learned more when they were in the classroom and that the students suffered academically when a substitute teacher was in the classroom. This resulted in a dilemma that the teachers with young children encountered. There were times when their children were sick and they knew they should stay home, but they had the urge to go to school so that their students will receive the curriculum they need. Even after maternity leave, the teachers expressed a desire to be back in the classroom. While there was love for their children and the desire to be home, there was also a longing to have a career. Teacher 3 discussed a situation where she could have gone part-time (something she desired), but didn’t because it would require her to change buildings and curriculum. She felt like she built that curriculum and could not walk away from it.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 focused on what strategies and conditions teachers identify that enables them to make their dual role more workable. This research question explored strategies and conditions that are helping the participants be successful in their dual role as well as conditions that create havoc and problems.

All six participants discussed the need to have a trusted daycare provider. Teacher 5 employed a nanny; however, all of the other teachers used daycare
facilities. Teacher 6 said she loved teaching, but it would be a reason to quit her job if she could not find the right person to watch her daughter. Participants mentioned their child learned more and gained valuable social skills at the daycare facility. Teacher 1 stressed how her job gave her personal fulfillment and she surmised that daycare was providing a sense of growth and fulfillment for her children. She believed daycare provided her children an opportunity to have their own life outside of the home.

Supportive staff and administration was another theme. All six participants stated having a supportive staff and administration helped them with their dual role. Participants felt having children around the same age as other teachers helped them bond and support each other. Teacher 1 appreciated bouncing ideas off of each other as well as venting about frustrating situations involving their children and the hardships of the dual role. Teacher 4 mentioned a particular teacher she team teaches with that has been good to her. Teacher 4 believed this teacher had been so accommodating because the teacher had small children at home and was teaching while being a single mother. The director for special education was a working mother who also had young children and had been supportive of Teacher 4. Teacher 1 has male administrators, but stressed how supportive the administrators have been. She believed this has to do with the administrators having young children at home. In fact, she mentioned they may miss more school than she does.

Although the theme met the pre-establish criteria, some of the comments seemed to contradict teacher perceptions of substantial administrative and office support. For example, Teacher 6 mentioned a secretary made it convenient for her to get an emergency substitute teacher when she gets a phone call from the daycare.
provider stating her child is sick. This was accompanied by her feelings of guilt for missing school when her daughter was sick and the fact that she needed to stay home with a sick child. The researcher looked at this incongruity and surmised there was validity in both statements. Teachers were in a “no-win” situation when they had a sick child at home. Teacher 6 experienced ownership versus guilt. She experienced ownership and loyalty to her job, but also had obvious loyalty to her daughter. It was concluded that the teacher appreciated the ease of getting a substitute teacher, but also experienced feelings of guilt for leaving her classroom to attend to a sick child.

Four participants stated organization and/or scheduling was a strategy they used to work full time and raise a young family. Because four of the teachers mentioned organization, the theme is classified as emerging. Teachers shared the need to plan ahead and always be prepared the night before. Teacher 4 said she does not have the luxury of waiting to do something at the last moment. For instance, if there was a form from her child’s school that needed to be filled out, she did it right away. She confessed if she doesn’t stop to do it then, it will not get done. Teachers also used their spare time to catch-up and to maintain the dual role. Using the weekend to get organized, actively using the calendar to schedule, and keeping the house organized and de-cluttering were strategies used to maintain the participant’s full-time teacher and mother roles.

Research Question 4

Research question 4 focused on measures that could be taken by administrators to address the complex roles of teacher and mother with young
children. Specifically, the question focused on “What do these teachers with young children describe as changes in their home or work environment that would enable them to sustain their dual role and increase their likelihood of remaining as a full-time teacher?”

Although a contradiction to earlier statements, four of the six participants discussed negative feelings toward co-workers and/or administrators. This theme could be seen as the greatest discrepancy in the research. Once again, only four teachers supported this theme so it was an emerging theme. This contradiction could be explained in the sense that a school had many staff members with a variety of personalities and perspectives. It could be possible for some teachers and administrators to be helpful in the dual role while others make their experiences more challenging. However, this was the exception rather than the rule.

Teacher 2 questioned her colleague’s professionalism. She was irritated with teachers who seemed to race out of school and not put the time in that she is doing. Teacher 2 stated before she had her daughter she was usually one of the last ones to leave and since she has had her daughter it has not changed. Interesting enough, Teacher 4, Teacher 5, and Teacher 6 were upset with colleagues who are passive-aggressive about the teachers that need to leave early to pick up their children from school or daycare.

Teacher 2 also questioned her colleagues’ grading practices. She shared a conversation she had with a student in which she found other teachers do not grade papers, but simply put a check mark to indicate they were graded. She did not understand the limited feedback and thought the students deserved more. She then
questioned her detailed grading and thought perhaps she should stop since the students don’t expect or appreciate the added effort.

Teacher 5 was disappointed her department focused on the needs of coaches rather than the needs of a working mother. She was frustrated the department chose to have their monthly meetings in the morning to help accommodate a coach when she told them she did not have a daycare option that early in the morning.

Participants were also disappointed in their administrators. Teacher 4 stated she wished her principal would create a better atmosphere for the working moms. She suggested a staff meeting set aside to discuss this issue and possibly create a better working climate. Teacher 2 wished for more praise and assurance from her administrators. Teacher 2 is constantly worried about her job and wondering if this is the year they will cut her program. She said there is “a constant cloud hanging above that I have to watch out for and that takes a lot of energy I think.” Teacher 5 was not concerned her school will cut her program, but she is upset with the lack of support from her administrator. She stated there was a sense that she is always wrong and the principal is always right because “he’s the boss.” She mentioned he will often question her when she wants to leave early to attend a school function for her daughter. He will give her permission to leave, but it is usually after he gave her grief for the request. This was interesting because Teacher 5 is the same participant that hires a nanny so that she will not have to miss as many days if one of her three children is sick.

Teacher 4 and Teacher 5 both wanted their administrators to be more considerate of the after school meetings. Teacher 5 mentioned the meetings were
becoming more frequent. She said it would make her dual role easier if there were more half-days to allot time for meetings. She realized this would increase the school year, but it would make her life easier. Teacher 4 was disappointed she had so many after school meetings for meetings with parents due to special education requirements.

Teacher 2 felt the administrators did not question her work ethic since she has had kids because she is still putting in the hours, but she has seen them harsh to other teachers. In fact, she waited to have children because she was worried about how it would affect her career after seeing other teachers have issues with the principal. She also confessed she was not comfortable asking them for anything. For instance, teachers are not allowed to have private mini-refrigerators in their classroom, but she did not have any other secure place to store her breast milk. This was an issue that was extremely important to her so she didn’t want to chance any possible difficulties by asking the principal for permission. She simply kept an illegal fridge in her room and hoped that no one caught her. She wished there was a better relationship to have been able to talk this over with her administrator instead of simply hiding.

Teacher 6 had a different type of request. She said the staff was great about having social events, but they were all adult only. She wished there were some events set aside for the entire family. She mentioned it would be great if the principal would have the Christmas party that involved the kids or possibly a picnic to start up the school year or celebrate the end of the school year with a family friendly event.
Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to explore how the day-to-day experiences of teachers who are working mothers of young children shape their level of comfort and satisfaction with the dual role they live. This investigation also explored the dynamics of teacher retention by understanding the dilemmas female teachers of young families encounter. There is limited literature on working mothers who are high school teachers. There are many different issues this study examined to gain a better understanding of the complexities of teachers with young children.

The literature review has shown support for the need to study this topic. Research has indicated that teaching is a female dominated career (Klecker & Loadman, 1999; Kyriacoua, Kunc, Stephens & Hultgren, 2003). Research also revealed the annual turnover rate for teachers averaged 11.9% nationally over the past decade which is greater than other higher-status professions such as professors with a 9.3% rate, technology and scientific professionals with 3.6% to 9.2% (Ingersoll, 2003). High teacher turnover impacts student achievement (Rollefson, 1993). High teacher turnover also costs a district in terms of finances (Graziano, 2007). Due to demands on teachers and working mothers, teachers are experiencing less job satisfaction as well as an increased workload as a result of No Child Left Behind and pressure to address the void in student achievement (Duxbury & Higgins, 2002). Employee benefits help corporations improve morale as well as their profits in the private sector (Axel, 1985), but there is little research on such benefits for public school teachers. Studies also revealed that schools that had more administrative
support had a lower level of teacher attrition and migration (Guarino, Santibañz & Daley, 2006). Teachers are working a greater amount of invisible work (work that cannot be seen by the public) as opposed to the visible work that is often seen by parents, students and colleagues (Campbell & Neill, 1994). Furthermore, when a child comes into a home it is the mother who has a greater change in time allocation (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997).

This study consisted of six individuals who are married, full-time high school teachers that also have at least one son or daughter between the ages of 2 months and 5 years old. Participants were selected using purposeful sampling. Interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher or a transcriber and member checks were done to ensure validity. These transcripts were coded and themes surfaced as a result of the analysis. At least five of the six teachers were asked to address a particular topic to label it an established theme, and at least three of the six teachers addressed a particular topic to be an emerging theme. If fewer than three teachers addressed a particular topic then the theme was non-existent. Interviews lasted approximately 50 minutes and locations varied. The average age of the participants is 36 and the average years teaching of the participants is 13. The ages of the children range from 15 months to 7 years.

The researcher concludes this study discovered valuable information and insight into secondary full-time teachers who have young children at home. The theme of ownership was especially strong for the participants in this study for the researcher. All of the teachers had a great desire to be in the classroom. Teacher 1 stressed the need to have something of her own in her life. Teacher 2 started many of
her sentences with “my program.” Teacher 3, who confessed she wanted to quit to be
home with her children more (although her husband has urged to stay employed)
refused to go part-time because she could not give up her curriculum. Teacher 5 felt
like a horrible mother and stated she knows she should be home more; however she
also has a need to be in the classroom.

Ownership and guilt were two themes in this study that seemed to challenge
each other throughout the findings of this study. While teachers did not want to leave
their classroom with a substitute teacher, they also felt guilty if they were not home
with a sick child. Maternity leave was another issue. Teachers did not want to leave
their baby, but they also did not want to leave their classroom. Many of the
participants were actively involved and stayed in touch with the long-term substitute
teacher while they were on maternity leave.

This study also discovered the participants felt their sensitivity was increased
after becoming a mother. One of the limitations to this study is that all of the teachers
were experienced teachers prior to having children. Although this is a restriction to
the research, it does illuminate the feelings of the teachers before they had children
and then after. The participants mentioned they had unrealistic expectations for the
students as well as the parents of the students. Teacher 5 thought her students should
be able to come home each night and do lengthy homework assignments. After
children of her own, she realized their home life may not be as peaceful and tranquil
as she expected. Participants also blamed parents if a child were to misbehave or not
get their work done. They now see parenting is not as easy as they thought. Lastly,
having children of their own allowed the teachers to experience a great sense of love
and protection. The teachers in this study described how, after having children, they understood every student in their classroom is someone else’s child. Obviously they knew this before, but after becoming parents themselves, they were able to see this from a different perspective.

This study discovered there seemed to be inconsistency in the school work environment regarding understanding and responding to the needs and circumstances of working mothers with young children. Some of the results seem to suggest awareness and accommodation, while other results seem to suggest resistance to accommodation or outright disregard. The researcher found some administrators seemed to understand the hardships and challenges of the dual role, while other administrators did not seem to recognize such issues. According to this study, the difference in administrator attitudes was not a factor of gender. Teacher 1 had a male administrator who was supportive, while Teacher 4 and Teacher 5 had a male administrator who was not. A female administrator did not guarantee the administrator would be supportive to the working mother. Teacher 2 had a female administrator and did not feel comfortable with her. Teacher 1 suspected her male administrator may have been supportive because he has young children at home; however Teacher 2’s administrator also had an elementary aged child at home.

Teacher 6 discussed how she appreciated a secretary that assisted with getting an emergency substitute teacher into the classroom when it was necessary. Although Teacher 6 did not like to miss school because she felt the student’s would lose valuable instruction due to her absence, the arrangement with the secretary seemed to put her at ease. Teacher 4 discussed a teacher she team teaches with in her school
district that recognizes the difficulties of the dual role. Teacher 4 co-teaches with this teacher during the last hour of the day and the accommodating teacher never tries to keep her longer since she knows Teacher 4 has to leave right away to have time to pick up her son.

Teacher 5, however, was frustrated because her department agreed upon morning meetings even though she stated this would be difficult for her because of daycare issues. In the end, the decision was made to accommodate a coach. Teacher 4 and Teacher 5 were also irritated with the increased frequency of after school meetings. These meetings are making their dual role more stressful. Teacher 5 even mentioned she would be willing to increase the number of work days, it’s just the extended days that makes it difficult for her.

Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 both discussed how difficult it was to nurse their children after returning back to work. Teacher 3 stopped nursing once returning from maternity leave because it was too difficult for her. Teacher 2 continued to nurse, but she said it took its toll on her. She was frustrated because there really wasn’t any adequate place to go to express her milk during the working hours. With only one female staff bathroom on the second floor she felt she could not use it for the lengthy time she needed. It was also difficult to get privacy in her room because of windows to the hallway. An added difficulty was that she did not have an adequate place to store the milk. This left Teacher 2 in a complicated situation. Teacher 2 said had a strong desire to nurse her daughter for one full year and this was something she was not willing to negotiate. Once again, teaching is a female dominated profession (Klecker & Loadman, 1999; Kyriacoua, Kunc, Stephens & Hultgren, 2003). It would
be reasonable to believe that Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 are not the only teachers who had difficulties with this.

Conclusions for a Supportive Work Environment

The data and/or the literature suggests there are realistic changes that can be done for working mothers of young children who are also full-time, secondary teachers. A possible suggestion to administrators would be to have friendlier accommodations for teachers returning from maternity leave who would like to continue to nurse their children. As the literature review pointed out, companies that offer support for employees who want to continue to nurse after returning to work also receive benefits such as increased productivity, staff loyalty, better public image as well as decreased absenteeism, health care costs, and employee turnover (Bar-Yam, 1997: Mrtek, & Mrtek, 1995). Research also indicates that there tends to be reduced absenteeism with mothers who breastfeed since the infants are healthier from the nutrition and antibodies that the breast milk provides (Checklist for Supervisors, 2006).

Since studies have shown it is costly (financially and academically) to replace teachers (Shockley, Guglielmino & Watlington, 2006), it would perhaps be wise of the principal to make these small accommodations to help keep these teachers with their dual role. Besides Teacher 3, all of the teachers did not seem to want to quit teaching. However, they are all experienced teachers. If Teacher 2 had to go through all the obstacles she did to nurse her child as a first year teacher perhaps that would have been enough to make her end her career. The researcher does not propose
elaborate changes, but possibly trying to give the teachers a planning time that would work with their nursing schedule. Space is also limited within a school, but perhaps there could be a small area set aside for nursing mothers/teachers.

Administrators should ensure it is convenient and easy for teachers to leave quickly when they receive an emergency phone call. According to Covey in *The Speed of Trust* (2006), it is important not to penalize everyone because of the few that may be abusing the system. The researcher concludes this could be a recommendation for other administrators. It does not appear that teachers in this dual role leave school often. (In fact, Teacher 5 hired a nanny so that she would not have to leave school as much.) Giving teachers this sense of security could take a great amount of stress off of a teacher who has young children. Flex-time is another possible solution, but it would require trust. Obviously, teaching limits the possibility of flex-time, but there are times it can be used. For instance, a teacher may have a husband that can usually take their kids to school in the morning. However, her husband does occasionally have to travel for work. The teacher will have to pay $14 a week to reserve a spot in the before school care program (use it or not). A great amount of stress would be eliminated for this teacher if she had first period as her planning time and was able to come in late that day (only missing part of her planning period). This could also be the case for a teacher that needs to leave early once in a while to pick up a child from daycare. There are issues involved here. For instance, the administrator will need to look at the contract with the union as well as trust that the teachers will make up the time they missed and believe that this opportunity will not be abused.
Teacher 4 mentioned the need for the principal to address the passive-aggressive behavior that has been present at her school. She feels that she puts in the hours after school; they are just spent at her home and not in her classroom where everyone can see her. She also spends a great amount of time at special education meetings. There are teachers that are staying after, but it does not mean they are actually working on the curriculum or grading. Most of the participants mentioned their planning periods are extremely busy. Teacher 4 even mentioned she does not go to the copy machine or go to the office until the very end of her planning period so that people do not stop her and talk. Campbell & Neill (1994) researched what they considered to be visible work (work that can be seen by the public) and invisible work (work that is conducted mainly in private, such as at home). Their research revealed that the majority of teachers work is invisible work. Most teachers prefer to work at home or during “quiet” times when students and most of the staff is out of the building (Ingvarson et al., 2005). Other teachers may be putting in more time at the school, but this does not guarantee they are actually working more.

Teacher 2 mentioned the desire for praise and recognition from her administrator. In an analysis of the follow-up surveys from the 1990-1991 Schools and Staffing Survey, Shen (1997) indicated teachers were more likely to quit teaching or transfer out of the school if they felt they had less influence on school policies and if they believed they were not understood by their administrators. Teacher 2 puts in a great amount of work to prepare for her classes, she gives elaborate feedback to her students and she even held off having a family because of how it would affect her career. Teacher 2 is not asking for more money, she merely wants to know that she is
appreciated for what she does; she wants to feel validated. The researcher recommends administrators provide praise and recognition to hard working staff. A teacher of the month award can be given, but it really doesn’t even need to be that official. A mere memo in the teacher’s mailbox thanking them for their hard work could be a step in the right direction. This is a low cost solution that could provide high price benefits.

Lastly, Teacher 6 mentioned a need for family friendly events. She confessed at this point in her life she does not want to go to events that requires her to leave her daughter behind. She already feels that she is away from her enough, but she would also like to spend time with her colleagues outside of school. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) revealed that teachers who receive high levels of support from administrators were more likely to show high levels of commitment to their profession as well as higher levels of job satisfaction. Fortunately, this will not cost a great amount of money. An informal Christmas party that includes family, a picnic before the school year or an end of the year party are all low cost possibilities the researcher recommends.

Limitations

The researcher recognizes there are limitations with this study. The population was limited to working mothers with children from the ages of two months to five years old who taught at the high school level (grades 9-12). The researcher also limited the study to teachers with at least one young child who has a spouse living in the same home. This study was limited to working mothers in a public school setting.
within Southwest Michigan. Although it was not intended, all of the participants had a great amount of teaching experience. Participants had 11 to 16 years of teaching in the classroom. This is the most significant limitation. This topic could have been explored more thoroughly if there was more diversity in the participants in terms of teaching experience.

The number of participants was another limitation within this study. The researcher chose to use six participants to gain deeper knowledge of the experiences, but also for manageability of the study. Although it would have been beneficial to have more participants, the number of subjects in this study is sufficient for this qualitative exploratory study because it allowed both a deep penetration of the working parent phenomenon for female teachers in a high school setting and a thick, rich description of how a small sample of high school teachers are experiencing this phenomenon.

Recommendations for Further Research

There are several suggestions for further studies on this topic. The researcher recommends looking directly at different cultures or economic groups. Another research recommendation is to target teachers with multiple children. A study could examine teachers in this dual role who have male administrators compared to female administrators. Since single-parent families are now more common in society, it would also be beneficial to investigate female teachers with young children who are single mothers. Another possible extension from this research could be to study participants with school age children. Teacher 4 mentioned her dual role may be
harder now because she needs to pick up her son in time for school. Teacher 5 also confessed she did not know what she will do during the upcoming school year because her daughter will be starting sports. It could prove beneficial to explore the daily experiences of teachers who have school age children.

This study used snowball sampling. By chance, all of the teachers in this research had several years of teaching experience. Although it is beneficial to hear from the same participants the differences between teaching without children to how it has changed with children, it would also be valuable to hear the experiences of beginning teachers. A purposeful sample could help increase the range of data exposed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This research focused on secondary teachers. A study involving elementary teachers could prove valuable. Lastly, the researcher suggests exploring this topic under a quantitative lens.

Summary

Eight themes and three emerging themes were revealed. The eight established themes were: (1) trusted daycare, (2) self-fulfillment, (3) busy, (4) learn to be a better mother because of teaching, (5) guilt, (6) helpful husband, (7) supportive staff/administration, and (8) being a better teacher through parenting. All eight established themes are represented under the research questions. The three emergent themes discovered were: (1) organization, (2) utilizing a maid, and (3) poor feelings of staff and administration. Two of the themes are represented under the research questions. Utilizing a maid is not included under any research question.
REFERENCES


Alliance for Excellent Education. (2005, August). Teacher attrition: A costly loss to the nation and to the states. Washington, DC.


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Appendix A

HSIRB Approval Letter
Date: June 3, 2010

To: Van Cooley, Principal Investigator
   Katherine Homer, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 10-05-13

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “Teachers and their Struggle with Personal Satisfaction as Young Mothers” has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals

Approval Termination: June 3, 2011
Appendix B

Interview Questions
Interview Questions

Contact Information:
Name __________________________
Address _________________________
Phone _________________________ (H)
______________________________ (W)
______________________________ (C)

Location of interview ________________________________
Time of interview ___________________ to ______________________

Scripted interview permission form reviewed and signed ______

Basic Information
For this study you will be called Teacher _____

1. What is your age?
2. How many years have you been a teacher?
3. For what reasons did you become a teacher?
4. How many children do you have?
5. How old are your children?
6. Please describe your current job as a teacher- i.e.: grade level, subject, a little about school.

RESEARCH QUESTION: How do teachers with young children manage the dual role of full time secondary teacher and parent?

1. As a mother of a young child/children and a full time teacher, please describe your day-to-day experiences?
2. It’s a typical day for you- you get up, it’s a work day- tell me about this day.
3. Talk about how this day is illustrated your experiences as being a working mom.
4. How does this dual role play out with this school, this job, or your family?
5. What is your view of yourself as a mother while working to balance career and motherhood?

6. Could you tell me what positive impacts your work has had on your home life?

7. Could you tell me what negative impacts your work has had on your home life?

8. Could you tell me what positive impacts your home life has had on your work?

9. Could you tell me what negative impacts your home life has had on your work?

10. Please describe relationships with work colleagues while working to balance career and motherhood.

RESEARCH QUESTION: How does balancing child rearing and full time teaching impact the dual roles of a parent and teacher and teacher’s decision to remain in the profession?

1. How are these experiences shaping your assessment of how this dual role is working for you?

2. What are possible reasons to quit at this stage in your family’s life?

3. How do you feel about staying in the profession at this stage in your family’s life?

4. Describe what is working or not working, how, and why?

5. What conditions or circumstances make it more challenging?

RESEARCH QUESTION: What strategies and conditions do teachers identify that would enable them to make their dual role more workable?

1. As a mother of a young child/children and a full time teacher, how do you make it all work?

2. What strategies do you use to maintain this dual role?

3. What factors or conditions make it work better?

4. How has administration supported you with family issues you may have had?

5. Following maternity leave after having your child, what actions did administrators take, if any, to make you feel more at ease with coming back?
RESEARCH QUESTION: What do these teachers with young children describe as changes in their home or work environment that would enable them to sustain their dual role and increase their likelihood of remaining as a full time teacher?

1. What changes in your day to day environment (on the job and at home) would make your dual role work better and possibly increase your likelihood of maintaining this dual role?
2. If you could make changes at school or at home, what would you change to make this dual role work easier for you, your students and your family?
3. What is your tipping point- the point where you would know this is not working for you or your family or your students?

Any final thoughts?
Appendix C

Post-Interview Reflection Form
Post-Interview Reflection Form

Contact Information:

Name: ________________________________________________________

Location of Interview: _______________________________________

Time of Interview: __________________________________________

Thank you again for participating in my doctoral dissertation research. As I stated at the time of the interview, this post interview reflection form is a way for you to add any additional information that you may have thought of after the initial interview. Upon completion, please return this form in the self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed. Feel free to answer on this page, on the back or on a separate page.

1. Since the interview have you thought of any other additional information that you would like to share with me?

2. If you did think of additional information, why do you think this additional information occurred to you after the interview? Did an event happen to make you think of this?

3. Are there any questions, comments or concerns that you have for me?

Thank you for your participation.
Appendix D

Requesting Participation Letter
Dear Teacher,

My name is Katherine Homer and I am a doctoral student at Western Michigan University. I am writing to ask if you are interested in learning more about participating in a qualitative research study on how the experiences of female teachers who are young mothers play into their day-to-day work, their satisfaction with and confidence in their work, and their prospects for staying in their role as teachers throughout their child raising years. This study is part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership.

Participating in this study will include: An interview conversation that should last between 50 to 60 minutes. This interview can take place at a time and location that is convenient to you. I will submit the interview questions to you at least two weeks before the interview so that you may review them ahead of time. I would like to record the interview, however if you are uncomfortable, I can turn off the recorder and only take written notes. You will also be given an opportunity to review the transcripts to ensure their accuracy.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating or for withdrawing from the study. If you agree to participate in this research, your identity will be kept confidential. Your name and school will not appear in the study and your name and stories will be referenced by a pseudo name. All transcripts will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home during the
study and then stored on the Western Michigan University campus for at least three years.

If you are interested in learning more about participating in this study, please contact me through my e-mail at homerclass@yahoo.com or by mail to 2138 Hollyhock, Belmont, Michigan 49306. Please feel free to contact me by phone at 616-361-2554.

Sincerely,

Katherine Homer
Appendix E

Consent Document
You have been invited to participate in a research project titled "Teachers and their Struggle with Personal Satisfaction as a Young Mother." This project will serve as Katherine Homer’s dissertation for the requirements of the doctor of philosophy in Educational Leadership. This consent document will explain the purpose of this research project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

What are we trying to find out in this study?

The purpose of this study will be to discover what the experiences are for working mothers of children from 2 months to 5 years old who are also teachers in the K-12 setting. This study looks to produce findings on teacher retention by understanding the dilemmas female teachers of young families face.

Who can participate in this study?

The researcher will purposefully select individuals for the proposed study. This will allow the researcher to select participants that will faciliatate the researcher in answering the research questions and best understand the problem. Snowball or chain
sampling is being used for this study and is simply identifying participants from people who know people that would fit the criterion of this study.

The study will consist of 6 female full time teachers who are young mothers (children from 2 months to 5 years old. Participants will also need to be married to a husband. This criterion will allow a more uniformed inquiry to the phenomenon.

**Where will this study take place?**

The interviews will take place wherever and whenever it is most convenient for the participants. Possible locations may include the teacher’s classroom or at her home. The researcher will allow the interviewee to pick the time and location, however the researcher will require the place to in a quiet area and one that will allow for confidentiality. All interviews will be face-to-face.

**What is the time commitment for participating in this study?**

It is estimated that each interview will last between 50-60 minutes. The interview questions will be given at least two weeks prior to the scheduled interview so that the interviewee will have time to go over the questions and reflect upon them before the interview. Three days after the interview you will be mailed a follow up form that will ask if there is anything else you thought of that you would like to include in the study. Participants will also be given the opportunity to conduct member checks. After interviews are conducted, the researcher will carry out member checks and have individual transcripts available for each participant to review and verify. This process will ensure an accurate interpretation of the interview. Member checks will be done as quickly as possible. The member check process should not take a great amount of time of the participant. Being that the interview will only be approximately one hour
long, the transcriptions should be minimal and less than a half hour to read. Lastly, participants will have the opportunity to read draft copies of the study.

**What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?**

Participants will be asked to be interviewed once for an estimated period of 50-60 minutes. Prior to the interview participants are asked to look over the interview questions and reflect upon them. Participants will also be asked to review transcripts of the interview and ensure that they are an accurate interpretation of the interview. Draft copies will be available to read if the participant would like to at the end of the study.

**What information is being measured during the study?**

The researcher is gathering qualitative data to gain understanding of emerging themes as the researcher gathers information about your and other experiences.

**What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?**

This study does not pose a great amount of risk to the participants. Inconvenience would be the biggest risk for the subjects. Being that the participants are working a full time job and have at least one young child, taking time to be interviewed could be an inconvenience. The researcher plans to be extremely flexible when scheduling interviews and will allow the interviewee to pick the time and location for the interview.

Although this study does not pose a great amount of risk, the researcher wants to ensure that the participants feel freely to talk about their experiences. The researcher plans to keep the names of the participants protected during this research. As
mentioned earlier, teachers interviewed will be named such as “Teacher One” and “Teacher Two” to allow the teachers to remain anonymous.

**What are the benefits of participating in this study?**

There are no direct benefits to subjects for participating in this study. Participants will not be paid for their time nor will they receive any sort of incentives.

**Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?**

There are no costs associated with participating in this study. The researcher is willing to meet at a time and location that is convenient for the participant so this will hopefully eliminate the need for the subject to pay for a babysitter for their young child.

**Is there any compensation for participating in this study?**

There is not any sort of compensation for participating in this study. Participants are volunteering their time for this research and should not be expected to be compensated for participating.

**Who will have access to the information collected during this study?**

Data, including audiotapes, will be stored at the researcher’s home in a locked file cabinet during the study. The audiotapes will be transcribed and member checks will be done. Once the member checks have been completed and approved, the audiotapes will be destroyed. Upon the completion of the research, data will be stored for at least a three-year time period in a locked file cabinet and then destroyed. Once again, privacy of the subjects will be ensured by not using their names in the study. Teachers interviewed will be named such as “Teacher One” and “Teacher Two” to allow the teachers to remain anonymous.
Only the researcher and the transcriber will review the interview to ensure confidentiality. The transcriber will also be required to fill out a confidentiality form to guarantee the interviewee’s privacy. The researcher understands that the transcriber needs to be appropriately trained in human subjects protection issues. The researcher has not yet identified a transcriber, but once the researcher does have a transcriber in place the name and training information will be given to HSIRB. The researcher plans to publish this study as a dissertation through Western Michigan University.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?

You can choose to stop participating in the study at anytime for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study.

The investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the primary investigator, Dr. Van Cooley at 269-387-3891 or van.cooley@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.
I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

Please Print Your Name

Participant’s signature  Date
Appendix F

Transcriptionist Confidentiality Form
Transcriptionist Confidentiality Form

1. __________________________, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentation received from __________ related to her doctoral study on __________________________.

Furthermore, I agree:

1. To keep all the research information shared with the researcher confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the researcher. Confidential information shall include all data, materials, products, technology, computer programs, specifications, manuals, software and other information disclosed or submitted, orally, in writing, or by any other media, to __________ by __________.

2. To keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in transcriptionist’s possession.

3. To return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the researcher when the research tasks have been completed by the transcriptionist within ten (10) days of such request.

4. Upon consulting the researcher, to erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the researcher (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive).

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in audiotapes and/or files to which I have access to.

______________________________  __________________________
Signature                      Date
Appendix G

Member Check Form
Member Check Form

Dear Participant,

After interviews are done I need to have member checks conducted. Enclosed is your individual transcript for you to review and verify. This process will ensure an accurate interpretation of the interview. This strategy is used to avoid bias and increase validity as well as confirm the accuracy of the findings. Please look over the transcripts and sign on the last page to indicate you agree with the interpretation of the interview. After you sign, please return to the researcher. If you do not agree with the transcripts, please notify the researcher as soon as possible so that this matter can be looked into.
Appendix H

Email Script for Snowball Sampling
Email Script for Snowball Sampling

Hello,

As you may know I have been working on a Ph.D. in educational leadership at Western Michigan University. Currently, I am working on my dissertation titled “Teachers and their Struggle with Personal Satisfaction as a Young Mother.”

As a full time high school teacher and mother of a child five years old or younger, you fit my criteria for the study. I am asking for you to participate in my study. If you are interested, I will send you more detailed information.

I am also hoping that you can give me referrals for other participants. Once again, I need full time high school, female teachers who are also a parent to a child five years old or younger.

If you are interested or know of someone who fits my criteria, please contact me at: homerclass@yahoo.com or 616-361-2554.

Sincerely,

Kathy Homer