Career Commitment and Retention Strategies for New Teachers: A National Study

A. Celeste Shelton-Harris

Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations

Part of the Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations/1140

This Dissertation-Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.
CAREER COMMITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES
FOR NEW TEACHERS: A NATIONAL STUDY

Advisor: Dr. Van Cooley
A. Celeste Shelton-Harris, Ed.D.
Western Michigan University, 2004

In spite of the logical link between new teacher support and retention, the attrition rate for beginning teachers continues to be greater than their more experienced colleagues. To this end, this study examined the relationship between new teacher career commitment and retention strategies across gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level.

Comprehensive national data, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 1999-2000, were analyzed primarily utilizing chi-square and logistical regression tests. Key findings were found for new teachers with 3 years or less classroom experience.

First, more beginners are “very committed” (62.3%) than “not so or not committed” (37.7%) to their chosen teaching career. Second, new teachers participate in a variety of formal and informal support practices and activities: induction programs, mentoring, seminars for beginners, common planning time, scheduled collaboration, networking, supportive administrative communication, extra help, and observational visits. Weak and strong participation varied according to the activity and across gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Finally, there is a relationship between career commitment and participation in four retention strategies: common planning time, scheduled collaboration, supportive administrative communication, and extra help.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have numerous people to thank as I traveled my dissertation journey. The following acknowledgment is dedicated to my family and dearest friends who continually showered me with inspiration, love, and encouragement through this journey. To my father, Carey Brooks Shelton, Jr., and in honor of my mother, Johnnetta Shelton—who were my first teachers: Thank you for teaching me the lessons of perseverance, faith, and hard work. To my son, Austin, you have helped me to realize the true meaning of “If there is no test... there is no testimony.” Thank you, I know that at many times my journey was your journey and must have been difficult for you also. More importantly, I must pause to publicly express thanksgiving to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—my eternal source of strength and wisdom; I dedicate this work to you.

I was blessed with an outstanding dissertation committee composed of members who were absolutely awesome. Dr. Van Cooley, my committee chairperson, you were there when I took my first step of this journey. Your confidence in me and my ability to complete this journey is invaluable. Thank you for believing in me early on and for providing me with a rich learning experience that will last me a lifetime. Your guidance illuminated my path. In addition, my sincere appreciation is extended to Dr. Jianping Shen who taught me the rudiments of research in the academia sense and to ask the questions that guide the study. Your tutelage kept me focused on the
Acknowledgments—Continued

path of completion. Lastly, Dr. Romeo Phillips, I am truly grateful for your presence, especially when taking the next step appeared too difficult for me. You were the energy I needed to continue my journey. Thank you for holding my dreams and aspirations clearly in my view. Drs. Cooley, Shen, and Phillips, I am forever grateful to you for my rite of passage.

A. Celeste Shelton-Harris
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ....................................................................................... ii  
LIST OF TABLES ............................................................................................ ix  
LIST OF FIGURES ......................................................................................... xi  

CHAPTER  

I. INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................... 1  
  Background of the Study ............................................................................. 2  
  Growing Population of Diverse Learners.................................................... 3  
  New Teacher Turnover and Attrition .......................................................... 5  
  Statement of the Problem .......................................................................... 8  
  Purpose of the Study ................................................................................... 9  
  Research Questions .................................................................................... 9  
  Significance of the Study .......................................................................... 10  
  Operational Definitions ............................................................................ 12  
  Conceptual Framework ............................................................................. 14  
  Strengths and Limitations of the Study ..................................................... 16  
  Organization of the Study ....................................................................... 17  

II. LITERATURE REVIEW ............................................................................ 19  
  New Teacher Overview ............................................................................ 19  
  New Teachers’ Concerns/Challenges ......................................................... 19

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER

New Teacher Support and Retention Practices ........................................... 22
Formal Teacher Support (FTS) ............................................................... 26
Induction Programs ......................................................................... 26
Mentoring Programs ....................................................................... 33
Collegial Support (COLL) ................................................................. 39
Collegiality .................................................................................. 39
Teacher-to-Teacher Collaboration .................................................. 41
Administrative Support (ADM) ............................................................ 44
Roles and Behaviors .................................................................... 44
Remaining Challenges ................................................................ 51
Literature Review Summary ......................................................... 54

III. METHODOLOGY .................................................................................. 56
Research Questions ......................................................................... 56
Research Design and Instrumentation ............................................... 57
Data Source ............................................................................... 58
Validity and Reliability ............................................................... 60
Sample Size .............................................................................. 62
Race and Ethnicity ................................................................. 64
Instructional Level ................................................................. 66
Research Procedures and Analysis ................................................ 67

v

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
# Table of Contents—Continued

## CHAPTER

Research Procedures ......................................................... 67  
Weighting and Relative Weighting ........................................... 68  
Data Analysis ....................................................................... 69  
Research Question 1............................................................. 69  
Research Question 2............................................................. 71  
Research Question 3............................................................. 76  
Chapter Summary ............................................................... 78  

## IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA ................................................... 80  
Research Questions ........................................................... 81  
Descriptive Statistics of the Sample ........................................ 81  
  Gender ............................................................................. 81  
  Race/Ethnicity ................................................................. 82  
  Instructional Level ............................................................ 83  
Research Question 1 ............................................................ 83  
  Gender ............................................................................. 85  
  Race/Ethnicity ................................................................. 85  
  Instructional Level ............................................................ 87  
  Summary of Research Question 1 ....................................... 87  
Research Question 2 ............................................................ 88  
  Formal Teacher Support (FTS) ........................................... 89
Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER

Collegial Support (COLL) .......................................................... 90
Administrative Support (ADM) ......................................................... 90
Low Participation ........................................................................ 91
Low-Medium Participation ............................................................... 91
Medium Participation .................................................................. 92
Medium-High Participation ............................................................ 92
Gender ......................................................................................... 93
Race/Ethnicity .............................................................................. 93
Instructional Level ...................................................................... 95
Research Question 2 Summary ....................................................... 95
Research Question 3 ....................................................................... 99
Chapter Summary ...................................................................... 101

V. CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ......................................................... 104

Conclusions ............................................................................... 104
Discussion ..................................................................................... 105
Implications of the Study ............................................................ 113
Recommendations for Future Studies .................................................. 117
Table of Contents—Continued

APPENDICES

B. Permission to Use the Schools and Staffing Survey.......................... 121
C. New Teacher Participation Continuum........................................... 123

BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................................................. 125
LIST OF TABLES

1. New Teacher Sample ................................................................. 68
2. SASS New Teacher Career Commitment Responses .................... 70
3. SASS New Teacher Career Commitment by Gender ..................... 70
4. SASS Career Commitment by Race/Ethnicity ............................. 70
5. SASS New Teacher Career Commitment by Instructional Level ...... 71
6. SASS New Teacher Support Participation ................................... 73
7. SASS New Teacher Support Participation by Gender .................... 74
8. SASS New Teacher Support Participation by Race/Ethnicity .......... 75
9. SASS New Teacher Support Participation by Instructional Level ..... 76
10. SASS Logistical Regression Analysis Predicting New Teacher Career Commitment ......................................................... 77
11. Distribution of New Teachers by Gender ................................... 82
12. Distribution of New Teachers by Race/Ethnicity ......................... 83
13. Distribution of New Teachers by Instructional Level .................. 84
15. New Teacher Career Commitment by Gender ............................ 86
16. New Teacher Career Commitment by Race/Ethnicity ................... 86
17. New Teacher Career Commitment by Instructional Level ............ 88
18. Summary of New Teacher Participation ..................................... 89
List of Tables—Continued

22. Logistical Regression Analysis Predicting New Teacher Career Commitment ........................................................................................................ 100
LIST OF FIGURES

1. Conceptual Framework ................................................................. 15
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In the coming years, thousands of college graduates will enter the nation’s classrooms to begin their teaching careers (Ganser, 2001; Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Rasmussen, 1999). For the most part, new teachers, who have received high grades in their teaching methods courses and student teaching experiences, will begin their careers with a genuine affection for young people and a sense of commitment to making a difference in the lives of their students (Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Halford, 1998). Some claim that these beginning teachers are more dedicated, enthusiastic, and better prepared today than in previous years (Gitomer, Latham, & Ziomek, 1999; Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Halford, 1998). Nonetheless, when enthusiastic and qualified new teachers find their way into the classrooms, the battle is only half won (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], 2000). Despite good intentions and high expectations, beginners drop out of teaching at a much higher rate than their more experienced colleagues (Gordon, 1991; Public Agenda, 2000; Richardson, 1994a).

To this end, a study that examines new teachers’ decisions whether to remain in teaching or not (career commitment) and describes support practices (retention strategies) is valid and has far-reaching possibilities. For organizational purposes, a Background of Study is presented and Chapter I is also divided into the following
sections: Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Research Questions, Significance of the Study, Operational Definitions, Conceptual Framework, and Organization of the Study.

Background of the Study

The demands in today's education have never been greater. The range and type of information students need to know far exceeds that of previous decades and public attention on academic expectations for all learners is increasing (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a, 2001; Rasmussen, 1999). Communities are demanding more from their school districts and this high-stakes accountability places tremendous pressures on educators, especially new teachers (Smith-Davis & Cohen, 1989). In addition, new teacher responsibilities such as managing a classroom, choosing or creating the curriculum, developing sound instructional strategies, accurately assessing student understanding, and adjusting to student needs are complex tasks for beginning teachers (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Gratch, 1998; Moore-Johnson et al., 2001; Neibrand, Horn, & Holmes, 1992; Palumbo, 1998). For the first time, new teachers are fully responsible for blending their educational insights with the realities of today's classroom and for inspiring students on a day-to-day basis (Moir & Gless, 2001). Consequently, studies show that new teachers leave the profession in disproportionate numbers than their more experienced counterparts (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Ingersoll, 2002; Richardson, 1994a).
Throughout the United States, school officials are either anticipating or already experiencing a teacher shortage (Ingersoll, 2002; Moore-Johnson et. al., 2001). Shortages of qualified teachers are especially felt in high-poverty communities, certain regions in the country and subjects (math, science, foreign language), school districts with large student enrollment areas, and with teachers of color (American Federation of Teachers [AFT], 2001; Blaze, 1985; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ingersoll, 2002; Moore-Johnson et al., 2001). The dramatic increase in the demand for new teachers results mostly from two converging demographic trends: increasing student enrollments and increasing new teacher attrition and teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2002; National Education Association [NEA], 2003b). The Harvard Project on the Next Generation of Teachers (Moore-Johnson et al., 2001) suggests that the key to addressing teacher shortages lies not in attractive recruitment policies, but in supporting and training new teachers at the school site.

Growing Population of Diverse Learners

One major factor that contributes to the demand to hire 2.5 million new teachers over the next decade is largely due to growing student enrollments. This student growth is making a comeback from the decline in the 1970s and 1980s (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future [NCTAF], 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 2000b). For the fifth straight year, the 1999–2000 school year set an all-time high of educating 53 million elementary and secondary public and nonpublic school-age children. This alone is an increase of 239,000 students over the
previous school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2000b). A similar trend is seen in public schools alone. For example in public schools, 1st through 12th grade student enrollments also reached a record-high of 43.2 million and are expected to soar to 44.4 million students in 2006 (U.S. Department of Education, 2000b).

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2000b), increases in the population of young children, across the board, have a direct impact on enrollment since nearly all children under 16 years old are required by law to be enrolled in school. Therefore, the major student enrollment increase is seen with elementary-age students.

Other demographic reports show that African American and Hispanic students account for 17% and 15% of the public school enrollment, which is up 2 and 9 percentage points, respectively (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). The percentage of students from other racial groups also saw an increase from 1% in 1972 to 5% in 1998 (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). General projections for the next decade show an increasing number of Asian American, African American, and Hispanic student enrollments (Quality Counts, 2000: Who Should Teach?, 2000). French (1997) suggested that the students of today are a major part of a changing world and the demands placed on teachers are more complex.

The Urban Teacher Challenge (UTC) has identified 54 urban school districts that accommodate large student enrollments and has created the Great City School Districts (GCSD). The GCSD educate 40% to 50% low income students and serve 6.5 million students, of whom 40% are African American, 30% Hispanics, 21%
Anglo, 6.4% Asian Pacific Islander, and .6% Alaskan Native American (UTC, 2000). The demographic data also reveal that 60% of the GCSD students are eligible for free and reduced meals, 21% are English as second language (ESL) students, and 11.4% receive special education services (UTC, 2000). As the demand for new teachers increases, schools are challenged to educate a significant group of diverse learners in an increasingly complex-knowledge based technology-oriented society (Weiss & Weiss, 1999).

Clearly, new teachers are challenged to educate diverse learners under increasingly complex demands. Given the pressures placed on educators today, it should be no surprise when new teachers decide to throw in the towel (Richardson, 1994a). The more problems novice teachers encounter, the more likely they will drop out of the profession (Blair-Larsen, 1998).

New Teacher Turnover and Attrition

According to Ingersoll (2002), teacher turnover is the departure of teachers from their teaching jobs. For example, new teacher studies of the early 1980s show a 15% attrition rate compared to the normal turnover rate of 6% (Schlechty & Vance, 1983). In more recent studies, the findings revealed over 30%, or one third, new teachers drop out of teaching within their first 5 years, and the turnover can be greater in many urban and rural school districts (Halford, 1998; Ingersoll, 2001; Merseth, 1992; Sclan, 1993; U. S. Department of Education, 1999).
Although a normal turnover is expected, there is a watchful eye on the increasing number of baby-boomer age teachers, the largest population in America born between 1946 and 1964, who are now nearing retirement-age (Ingersoll, 2001; North Central Regional Educational Laboratory [NCREL], 2001; NEA, 2003b). Educators claim that as this group retires, one million newly hired teachers will be needed annually to fill K–12 classrooms across America (NEA, 2003b). The devastating number of qualified teachers who abandon their teaching careers, do so for reasons other than retirement and experts agree that new teacher attrition in America’s public schools is a growing problem (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ingersoll, 2001, 2002; Moore-Johnson et al., 2001).

Research also shows that some urban public schools have a new teacher attrition rate that soars as high as 50% (Claycomb, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Gold, 1996; Karge, 1993; Richardson, 1994b). Likewise, a *Quality Counts, 2000: Who Should Teach?* (2000) study reports that nearly one out of five college graduates completed an education degree in 1990. In the same report, by the 1993–94 school-year, 19% had left the classroom (*Quality Counts, 2000: Who Should Teach?,* 2000). Ingersoll (2001) reports that the attrition devastation continues with a 13% teacher turnover rate, and 55% of the new teachers, who drop out, actually leave the profession altogether.

Nationally, approximately half of all new teachers exit the profession during their first 5 years of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Gold, 1996; *Quality Counts, 2000: Who Should Teach?,* 2000). Similar reports suggest that the attrition rate for
beginning teachers, those with 3–5 years of experience, hovers at 20–30%, and can be as high as 50% in many urban school districts (Darling-Hammond, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reports that 25% of new teachers quit the profession within the first 5 years of teaching in order to pursue other careers, and 25% leave the profession because they are either no longer interested in teaching or are dissatisfied. Additionally, 40% of those who drop out say they would not teach again (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a).

Other studies show that within the first 7 years of teaching, 40–50% novice teachers leave the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Davis & Bloom, 1998; Haselkorn, 1990; Jambor, Patterson, & Jones, 1997; Karge, 1993; Merseth, 1992; Smith-Davis & Cohen, 1989). However, most new teacher-dropouts occur within the first 3 years in the profession (Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. [RNT], 1999). Whereas more than 20% of public school teachers leave their positions within the first 3 years, another 9.3% quit before finishing their first year in the classroom (RNT, 1999). Overall, 3 years in the classroom appear to be the magic number that often determines whether new teachers will sink or swim in their career choice (RNT, 1999).

The U. S. Department of Education Baccalaureate and Beyond Study, which surveyed 10,080 college graduates who had earned education degrees, made several key findings (Quality Counts, 2000: Who Should Teach?, 2000). For instance, after 4 years, only 49% of its survey participants were actually teaching in K–12 public
schools, while another 12% were teaching in private schools and prekindergarten classes (Quality Counts, 2000: Who Should Teach?, 2000). Of the teachers who did remain in teaching, only one out of five, or 19%, still held teaching jobs and were actually “Committed” to their career choice; and another 3% were “Somewhat Committed” to their career choice, but actually wanted to leave the teaching profession (Quality Counts, 2000: Who Should Teach?, 2000).

Clearly, the initial years in the classroom are important because early experiences serve to set the professional norms, attitudes, and standards that will guide instructional practice over the course of the teaching career (Merseth, 1992; Moir & Gless, 2001; Olebe, Jackson, & Danielson, 1998; RNT, 1999; U. S. Department of Education, 2000a). The first year of teaching is also considered the most critical one because it determines, to a significant degree, if a person will remain in teaching or not and what type of teacher that person will become (AFT, 2001; Breaux, 1999; Epseland, 1998; Hope, 1999). Consequently, when beginning teachers fail to make it through their first crucial years, attrition and turnover among new teachers continues to increase at alarming rates (Ingersoll, 2002; Karge, 1993; Smith-Davis & Cohen, 1989).

Statement of the Problem

There is no evidence that measures teacher commitment and retention strategies to help nurture and maintain a high level of commitment.
Purpose of the Study

In light of the serious national new teacher attrition rate, the findings of this research study adds to the knowledge base of new teacher attrition and new teacher support in the areas of (a) formal teacher support, (b) collegial support, and (c) administrative support. In addition, this research study of effective retention strategies for new teachers helps to dispel prevailing negative beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes, such as education is the profession that *eats its young* (Halford, 1998). Finally, this research study is informative to district and building leaders in designing and/or enhancing comprehensive support programs for beginners who are new to the teaching profession.

Research Questions

Although many public school districts practice some form of assisting its novice teachers, there continues to be a struggle to keep new teachers in the classroom (Ingersoll, 2002; Moore-Johnson et. al., 2001; Wong, 2001). Consequently, the tidal wave of new teachers needed to meet the predicted teacher shortage leads this researcher to develop three specific research questions regarding newly hired teachers in the nation's public schools:

1. Are new teachers committed to their chosen careers? Does career commitment vary by new teachers' gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level?

2. Do new teachers participate in the following retention strategies: (a) formal teacher support (FTS), (b) collegial support (COLL), and (c) administrative support
(ADM)? Does participation vary by new teachers’ gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level?

3. In America’s public schools, does a relationship exist between new teacher career commitment and new teacher retention strategies?

Significance of the Study

By 2010, educational forecasters predict that there will be over 2.5 million newly hired teachers needed in classrooms across America (Ingersoll, 1999a; NCTAF, 1996; Quality Counts, 2000: Who Should Teach?, 2000; Rasmussen, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1994; U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). Additionally, the challenges educators face in today’s public schools have never been greater and keeping qualified and highly competent new teachers in classrooms continues to be problematic (NEA, 2003a; Sclan, 1993). The enormous number of new teachers who leave the profession during their early years of service is testimony to the hardships they often endure (Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Scherer, 2000).

Experts claim that the needs of students are more complex today and teaching a growing diverse learner population is progressively more difficult (Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Halford, 1998; Rasmussen, 1999; Smith-Davis & Cohen, 1989). As the attrition rate among new teachers rises, a significant portion of the inexperienced teaching force is left to meet the complex demands of the nation’s public schools (Ingersoll et al., 1995; Quality Counts, 2000: Who Should Teach?, 2000; Weiss & Weiss, 1999). No matter how well prepared new teachers are in college theory classes

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
or in their practice teaching assignments, beginning teachers often report feeling overwhelmed by the scope of the job and decide to leave teaching prematurely (AFT, 2001; Brock & Grady, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 1984; Huling-Austin, 1992; Ingersoll, 2003; Richardson, 1994a; Scherer, 2000).

In spite of the quality of college training, first-year teachers need assistance from more experienced educators. Even under the best circumstances, teaching is difficult during the initial years in the profession. It is during the initial years that beginning teachers transition from learning to teach to teaching learners (APEC Education Forum, 1997). Experts claim that on-going formal and informal support in the form of teacher induction programs, mentoring, teacher-to-teacher interaction, and principal support and encouragement help new teachers transition more smoothly into their classroom duties and into the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond, 1984; Freiberg, 2002; Murnane, Singer, Willett, Kemple, & Olsen, 1991).

Supporting trained teachers prevents an early dropout in the profession and is a critical first step toward ameliorating the attrition problem, particularly in America’s public schools (Mills, Moore, & Keane, 2001; Scherer, 2000). The anticipated teacher shortage in the coming years and the revolving door of new teacher attrition and turnover becomes a financial burden. According to Wong and Asquith (2002), every teacher who leaves within 3 years costs taxpayers an estimated $50,000 per teacher. This is based on an industry standard of calculating 2.5 times the employee’s initial salary, recruitment, personal expenditures, and lost productivity. Overall, failure to
seriously pursue the needs of new teachers is costly for the novice teacher, his or her students, and the entire school community (Moir & Gless, 2001).

As more diverse students enter the classrooms so does the demand to hire, train, and retain a qualified, sensitive, and diverse teacher workforce (Kestner, 1994; UTC, 2000). However, it profits education reform little if qualified new teachers are hired (an arduous task in itself) only to have them leave at the very beginning of their careers—and then have to recruit, hire, and train a new cadre all over again (AFT, 2001). As a result, this study examines new teacher career commitment across three specific variables: gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level—from the beginner’s perspective. In addition, career commitment is studied in relation to three teacher retention strategies: formal teacher support, collegial support, and administrative support.

Operational Definitions

The definitions of the following terms facilitate a common language and establish a clear understanding of the ideas relevant to this research study.

*Classroom Teacher:* a certified staff member assigned to the professional activities of instructing pupils in self-contained classes or courses, or in classroom situations to deliver instruction to students (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a).

*New Teachers:* beginning classroom teachers within their initial 3 years of employment; also referred to in this study as beginners, novices, neophytes, newly hired, newcomers, and mentees (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a).
**Formal Teacher Induction:** a structured and systematic process or program that includes orienting, assimilating, acculturating, training, supporting, guiding, assisting, nurturing, and initiating new teachers into their new role as classroom teachers and into the teaching profession (American Federation of Teachers, 2001; “Current Developments in Teacher Induction Programs,” 1986; U.S. Department of Education, 2000a).

**Mentoring:** a complex multidimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing, nurturing, and supporting beginning teachers on a one-to-one basis (Blair-Larsen, 1998; Brennan, Roberts, & Thames, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 1996); a structured mentoring program provides counseling and support by trained, experienced classroom teachers (mentors) to less experienced classroom teachers (mentees); and trained mentors are often found in many formal induction programs (ASCD, 1999; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Recruiting New Teachers, 1999).

**Administrative Support:** the guidance, assistance, support, and encouragement that on-site building principals provide in meeting the individual, professional, and social needs of new teachers in their buildings (Allen, 2000; Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Ganser, 2001; Hope, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1995; Youngblood, 1994).

**Collegiality:** the socialization and extension of help in any form between and among teachers; formal and informal teacher-to-teacher interactions and support that encourages a culture of shared responsibility where all professionals take active roles in a new teacher’s acculturation and transition (ASCD, 1999; Moore-Johnson et. al., 2001; Rosenholtz, 1989; Walling, 1994).
**Attrition:** the abrupt or premature departure of teachers from their current teaching jobs, which includes new teachers moving from one school or district to another (movers) and new teachers who exit the teaching profession (leavers) (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a; NCREL, 2001; Schlechty & Vance, 1983; Shen, 1997).

**Conceptual Framework**

The factors attributed to the demand to hire over 2.0 million new teachers are significant to the study of career commitment and retention strategies. This research study incorporates what is known about support practices and examines new teacher career commitment across the following predictor variables: new teachers' gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level. SASS data are utilized to conduct this study and the research questions are answered from the perspective of teachers with 3 years or less experience. The conceptual framework, Figure 1, is utilized to study whether any relationships exist between new teacher career commitment and new teacher retention strategies and is outlined in the following research questions:

**RQ1:** Are new teachers committed to their career choices? Does career commitment vary by new teachers' gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level?

**RQ2:** Do new teachers participate in the following retention strategies: (a) formal teacher support (FTS); (b) collegial support (COLL); and (c) administrative support (ADM)? Does participation vary by new teachers' gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level?
RQ1 & 2: Remaining in Teaching

CAREER COMMITMENT:
by gender, race/ethnicity, instructional level

1. VERY COMMITTED
2. NOT SO or NOT COMMITTED

RQ3: Supporting New Teachers

RETENTION STRATEGIES:
by gender, race/ethnicity, instructional level

Formal New Teacher Support (FTS)
Collegial Support (COLL)
Administrative Support (ADM)

RQ4: In America’s public schools, does a relationship exist between new teacher career commitment and the following new teacher retention strategies: formal, collegial, and administrative support?

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.
RQ3: In America's public schools, does a relationship exist between new teacher career commitment and participation in the following retention strategies: formal, collegial, and administrative support?

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

One strength of this study was that a comprehensive nationally representative survey was utilized. The *Public School Questionnaire* of the 1999–2000 Schools and Staffing Survey enabled this researcher to draw rich conclusions relevant to new teacher support and career commitment (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). Another strength was that this is a timely study which uses current data, recently released to the public in the fall of 2002. Lastly, this study provided descriptive information relevant to current new teacher attrition issues.

Whereas there were strengths, there were likewise limitations of this research study. One limitation was a result of utilizing existing survey data. For example, rather than formulating the survey questions, this researcher had to extrapolate pre-written questionnaire items that were closely related to the focus of the study: career commitment and retention strategy.

Nominal responses that indicate either yes or no may limit the degree of the responses considerably. Likewise, SASS prohibited any follow-up questions in search of why new teachers responded as they did. Moreover, induction programs, according to the literature review, varied greatly from district-to-district in regard to program content, implementation, and assessment. Therefore, program participation was
measured but did not specifically program quality, which may or may not affect career commitment.

Lastly, although this study examined nine different new teacher support practices and activities, it did not examine the interaction of two or more types of participation. In retrospect, an examination of career commitment by multiple support measures across gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level may have provided different observations or more solid outcomes of this study.

Organization of the Study

This research study is presented in five chapters. Chapter I includes a background of study, which discussed the demands in education and the predicted teacher shortage due to the growing student enrollment, retirement, and new teacher turnover and attrition. Chapter I also discussed the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, operational definitions, and conceptual framework. Chapter II provides a review of the present literature regarding new teacher concerns as it relates to new teacher support in the following areas: (a) formal teacher support (FTS), (b) collegial support (COLL); and administrative support (ADM). Chapter III describes the methodology for the study in detail, which includes the research design, sample size, weighting, instrumentation, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. Chapter IV presents the research findings, and Chapter V offers a rich discussion of how the findings assist educators in retaining a competent, talented, and enthusiastic generation new
teachers. This dissertation concludes with suggestions that may be adopted by teacher preparation institutions, school districts, and school administrators for retaining competent, highly-trained, and enthusiastic new teachers for classrooms across our nation. A summary with conclusions of the study and recommendations for future research is also included.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a focused and comprehensive literature review and an examination of prior studies related to the new teacher attrition phenomenon and new teacher support strategies. In an overview, new teacher challenges as well as new teacher support are examined and attention is given to the complexities of today’s public school demands. This chapter also provides a review of three support strategies in light of new teacher retention. The literature review chapter is further organized into the following sections and subgroups: Formal Teacher Support (Induction and Mentoring Programs); Collegial Support (Collegiality, Teacher-to-Teacher Collaboration); and Administrative Support (Roles and Behaviors). Lastly, Remaining Challenges and a Literature Review Summary are presented.

New Teacher Overview

New Teachers’ Concerns/Challenges

New teachers, for the first time, are fully responsible for blending their educational insights with the realities of today’s classroom demands and for inspiring students on a day-to-day basis (Moir & Gless, 2001). For beginners, everything is new and without proper support everyday tasks can be problematic. For example, what to do on the first day, where to find supplies and put the desks, how to adapt to

These problems and other day-to-day issues can be categorized as instructional, curricular, procedural, and classroom management matters that often include effectively working with English as second language (ESL), learning disabled, and special needs students; assessing student work; designing lesson plans; and managing student discipline (Brock & Grady, 1998; Fideler & Haselkorn 1999; Gordon, 1991; RNT, 1999). Communicating with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators, and interpreting their principal's expectations are also complex tasks for beginning teachers (Brennan et al., 1999; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Gratch, 1998; Moore-Johnson et al., 2001; Neibrand, Horn, & Holmes, 1992; Palumbo, 1998).

To further illustrate this point, new teachers face other unique predicaments when they are assigned the most difficult-to-teach students with the least amount of collegial and administrative support (AFT, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Gordon, 1991; Gratch, 1998; NCTAF, 1997; RNT, 1991). In some circles, new teacher discipline-related school problems are often given as contributing factors to the rising new teacher attrition rate (Kavanaugh, 2001). For example, national studies indicate...
that 67% of recent college graduates who started teaching in schools that did not offer them student discipline support were not committed to their chosen career and did not expect to remain in the teaching profession more than 2 years ("Teacher Quality Viewed as Crucial," 2002). Overall, the more problems novice teachers are likely to encounter, the more likely they will drop out of the profession (Blair-Larsen, 1998).

New teachers report they want assistance from their supervisors and colleagues on effective ways to establish classroom control, maintain proper student behavior, and minimize insubordinate student behavior (Gratch, 1998; Palumbo, 1998). In a Little Rock, Arkansas School District task force report, the top concerns expressed by citizens, parents, teachers, and principals were safety and discipline (Sewell & Chamberlain, 1997). First Things First, a high-profile public opinion poll, lists school discipline as the number one educational concern for teachers and the general public ("Teacher Quality Viewed as Crucial," 2002). Likewise, the 2000 Phi Delta Kappan Gallup Poll study shows that 15% of the respondents say student discipline and lack of student control are evidence of problematic schools (Claycomb, 2000; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999).

The demands in education have never been greater. In addition, communities are demanding more from their school districts and this high-stakes accountability places tremendous pressures on educators, especially new teachers (Smith-Davis & Cohen, 1989). Local, state, and national studies suggest there are many different factors that contribute to the increasing national new teacher attrition rates. However,
the most often cited attrition factor for new teachers is lack of support (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Karge, 1993; U.S. Department of Education, 2000b). Disillusionment with the teaching profession is another recurring reason as to why new teachers abandon their teaching career dreams (Ingersoll, 1999a). Richardson (1994a) adds top contributing factors that also lead to new teachers’ quitting the teaching profession are lack of support from parents and administrators, low pay, and the serious social problems of students.

Another discipline-related perception most teachers have of their first year is that they are often assigned the most difficult students with the least collegial and administrative support (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ingersoll, 2003; NCTAF, 1996; Richardson, 1994b). The NCTAF (1996) suggests that the first few years are particularly difficult for new teachers when they are given the most challenging teaching assignments, in and out of the classroom (Charnock & Kiley, 1995; Freiberg, 2002). Overall, effective support strategies are critical to ameliorating devastating new teacher attrition rates.

**New Teacher Support and Retention Practices**

When faced with a multitude of problems, disillusionment, and lack of support, qualified new teachers fail to make it through their initial year in the classroom (Karge, 1993). On the other hand, research indicates that when there is support, there are fewer new teachers who leave the profession (AFT, 2001; NCREL, 2001; Olebe et al., 1999). *Quality Counts, 2000: Who Should Teach?*(2000) reports
that teachers who did not participate in an induction program in their school districts were twice as likely to leave the classroom (20%) as those who participated in such programs (11%). Similarly, Fideler and Haselkorn (1999) report that fewer teachers leave the profession when they participate in good induction programs.

In a Baltimore County Public School District study (Ganser, Marchione, & Fleischmann, 1993), new teachers were given an opportunity to identify their preferred type of support. In October, questionnaire surveys were sent to 244 beginning teachers. A hundred surveys were completed and returned, and at the end of the school year another survey was administered. The results of the first survey indicated that teachers preferred adequate preparation time and helpful evaluation, followed by support regarding classroom control and management, student discipline, and special learning problems. However, the top-ranking out-of-class concerns were physical and emotional stress, followed by learning how things are done by teachers in the school, locating resources, knowing when to use special services, and understanding union issues.

New teachers were also asked to indicate their preferred type of administrative support/assistance. New teachers reported that observing experienced colleagues teaching in the classroom was the most valuable and preferred type of administrative support. The study also depicts that new teachers prefer assigned mentors, increased resources, and workshops focused on beginner teacher concerns (Charnock & Kiley, 1995). Other experts concur that new teachers prefer assistance from experienced educators with effective ways to establish control, student behavior, and
insubordinate behavior (Palumbo, 1998; RNT, 1999). However, the range of needs that new teachers perceive reflects the individuality of the beginners and the uniqueness of specific schools (Brock & Grady, 1998).

School districts with organized new teacher support programs in place are headed in the right direction for retaining new teachers. For example, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) reports that a majority of the regional school districts that do provide some level of new teacher support boast that a 50% reduction to their attrition rates is due to their new teacher support efforts (NCREL, 2001). A support program for new teachers in a Birmingham, Alabama school district also significantly influenced the decline in its new teacher attrition rates. Ninety-six of the 100 new teachers in the First-Year Teacher Pilot Program (FYTPP) remained in teaching, while only 20 out of 100 non-FYTPP teachers remained in the teaching profession (Huling-Austin, Odell, Ishler, Edelfelt, & Kay, 1989). Similar outcomes were reported with the California New Teacher Project (CNTP) study, which demonstrated a seven-point higher retention rate for CNTP teachers over non-CNTP teachers. Findings from the same study also reported that minority teachers who participated in the CNTP remained in the teaching profession over their counterparts who did not participate in the new teacher support project (Olebe et al., 1999).

In another example, the Los Angeles Unified School District and California State University, Dominquez Hills new teacher program targeted two low-socioeconomic regions with a new teacher attrition rate that exceeded 50%. At the
conclusion of the first year, both regions reported 95% retention for the program participants. Consequently, California policymakers and educators were easily convinced that investing in teachers and assessing teaching is the path to new teacher retention (Olebe et al., 1999). The aforementioned research studies conclude that support programs for new teachers have a positive effect on retention, and the outcomes are astonishing.

Clearly, the research confirms what experience shows. Support, direction, guidance, and assistance to qualified and enthusiastic beginners during their few years in the profession produces teachers who are better equipped for the challenges of the classroom and who are more likely to remain in the teaching profession (American Federation of Teachers, 2001). Structured support for new teachers began during the education reform movements of the 1980s, and Florida is often credited with leading the reform ("Florida Begins Planning," 1982; Promising Practices, 1998).

As a result of educational reforms and state mandates in the 1980s, the induction movement gained momentum throughout the country (Blair-Larsen, 1998; Freiberg, 2002). Education reform, during this time, was significant to developing inclusive training schools for new teachers, such as professional development schools (Holmes Group, 1990), clinical schools, and professional practice schools (Darling-Hammond, 1994; French, 1997). Two decades later, there was a new challenge to offer aggressive approaches to meeting individual needs of the school districts. The demand to meet individual and unique needs of new teachers across the nation
produced a variety of hybrid new teacher support packages that focus on technology-related to utilizing valuable human resources—and everything in between.

Furthermore, there is no one single solution to help ameliorate the nation's new teacher attrition issues. However, formal and informal support strategies that help beginning teachers during the crucial years are conducive to retention (AFT, 2001; RNT, 1999). Research has suggested that new teacher support strategies such as formal induction and mentoring programs, collegiality, and administrative support help ameliorate America's high attrition rate among new teachers. According to current literature, there are particular support strategies that contribute to an increased new teacher retention rate; meet local and state mandates; provide professional and personal growth; and develop an acculturated population of talented, enthusiastic, and well-trained new teachers (ASCD, 1999; Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Davis & Bloom, 1998; Feiman-Nemser, Parker, & Zeichner, 1993; French, 1997; Huling-Austin et al., 1989; RNT, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 2000b; Wong, 2001).

**Formal Teacher Support (FTS)**

*Induction Programs*

One formal support practice is teacher induction, a comprehensive, multiyear process designed to train and acculturate new teachers in the district vision and academic standards. The difficult transition from student to new teacher is well documented and the literature strongly suggests the need for first-year teacher
support programs. Induction support programs include planned staff development for new teachers and for those who are new to the district (AFT, 2001; Clement, 2000; “Current Developments in Teacher Induction Programs,” 1986). Theoretically, an induction program is designed to take new teachers to the next level. Teacher induction is also considered the period that eases the transition from a student to a professional (American Federation of Teachers, 2001; Blair-Larsen, 1998).

Inducting beginning teachers is crucial to education for several reasons which include teacher retention, personal and psychological assistance to beginning teachers, assessment, reform, and academic curiosity. However, the literature indicated that the types of induction programs, induction program duration, and how the induction program is implemented vary, often times, from district-to-district and from school-to-school (AFT, 2001; Moir & Gless, 2001; RNT, 1999; Weiss & Weiss, 1999). There are no two induction programs that are exactly alike—each is designed to meet the individual culture and specific needs of its unique school or district. Nonetheless, the lack of consistency in program guidelines, expectations, and outcomes presents different set of problems.

The number of states that provide induction programs for new teachers has increased since the 1980s, from 15 to 33 states. However, an analysis conducted by the American Federation of Teachers (2001), suggested that of the 33 states with induction policies, only 22 mandate and fund the programs, whereas the remaining one third function only as good intention policies, which neither mandate or financially support the program. The report indicated that more than 34% of the
states, 17 in all, are silent on induction, and offer neither policy guidance nor funding (AFT, 2001). The analysis also reports that 29 states (89% of the total number of states with induction policies) require mentors to be a part of the induction programs, but only 21 states have established criteria for their mentors.

Over 20 years of research of formal induction programs prove to be beneficial to the education community. For example, induction improves teacher effectiveness through training in classroom management and effective teaching strategies; promotes the district’s culture—its philosophies, missions, policies, procedures, and goals; increases the retention rate for highly qualified teachers; reduces new teachers’ frustrations; and satisfies mandated requirements (Moir & Gless, 2001; Singleton, 1999; Wong, 2001). Overall, the goal of effective comprehensive induction programs provides new teachers with the necessary models and tools for beginning their teaching careers as well as the mentors and support groups to guide them through the process (Promising Practices, 1998).

A study (Wideen & McNally, 1992) in the province of British Columbia (Canada) examined school district practices. The objectives of the study were to determine whether induction programs existed, to identify the policies and practices that characterized the programs, and to observe how the reported policies and practices were actually being carried out in the districts. For this study, a model for beginning teacher induction involving four levels of teacher assistance was proposed and used as a rough template against which to view the practices in the districts (Wideen & McNally, 1992).
Wideen and McNally’s first level of teacher assistance is the “nuts and bolts” level, which includes assistance and orientation to the context of the workplace in which the beginning teacher will be employed. At the second level, beginning teachers receive psychological support. At the third level, programs address changes in teaching practice. The fourth level involves programs that focus on reflection and professional growth. Telephone interviews with district personnel in eight districts were used to obtain information on district policy and questionnaires were used to collect data from beginning teachers in two school districts about the kinds of assistance they actually received. Results based on 53 respondents to the questionnaire indicated that the districts appeared to be working primarily at the first level of the teacher assistance model. Whereas induction is widely talked about at the district level, it has not yet become a serious and integral part of most school districts; and the assistance that beginning teachers received was more a function of the school atmosphere and help from significant colleagues than any planned district programs (Wideen & McNally, 1992).

Brock and Grady (1998) describe an intense induction program where special attention is given to teachers in the beginning years of their career, which links their performance to high standards. Sometimes this includes a working relationship between universities and school districts, which collaborate to create clinical learning environments for beginning teachers. In this case, the relationship is seen as professional development for both teachers and faculty. Some induction programs satisfy licensure and certification requirements; it also provides assistance with
everyday problems and encourages new teachers to be reflective about their work. Induction programs often take place in an extended fifth-year of graduate study in which practice teaching is combined with seminars or course work designed around issues experienced in the classroom (Brock & Grady, 1998).

Wong (2004) hails Connecticut's induction program as an impressive statewide process. First, new teachers must complete a three-year induction process before they are fully certified. The process is called the Connecticut Beginning Teachers Support and Training (BEST) Program for new teachers. The state's commissioners of education were key persons in starting the program nearly 20 years ago. At the building level, BEST requires the district to provide teacher beginner with a mentor or a team of mentors for at least the first year of the program. During the second year of the program, beginners are responsible for completing a content-specific portfolio. These entries include a description of the instructional content, a set of lesson plans, two videotapes of instruction during the unit, samples of student work, and teacher commentaries for their planning, instruction, and assessment of student progress. In this case, new teachers must complete the program with a passing grade. If new teachers fail to pass, they are given a second chance. Teachers are denied a license and may no longer teach in Connecticut public schools. BEST is an effective reminder that consistent support for new teachers is effective (Wong, 2004).

Numerous studies have recommended that schools and districts that offer new teacher induction programs also see increase retention rates. For example, Harry
Wong (2004) reported that Lafourche Parish Schools in Louisiana lost 1 out of 46 hired; Islip Public Schools in New York lost 3 teachers out of 68 hired; Leyden High School in Illinois lost 4 out of 90 hired; Geneva Community Schools in New York lost 5 out of 67 hired; and Newport-Mesa School District in California lost 5 out of 148 hired (Wong, 2004).

The efficacy of induction programs can be measured by the capacity to help new teachers internalize the attitudes and values that are necessary to successfully perform in the school setting (Kutch, 1994). The American Federation of Teachers (AFT, 2001) analyzed numerous state mandates and statutes and found five common characteristics of effective induction programs: inclusion, adequate length of program, reduced teaching loads for participants, qualified trained mentors, and a summative review. The most promising programs are often tied to more stringent professional development standards and performance assessments that are both formative and summative, giving teachers access to support, information, and guidance prior to assessment (Tayman, 2000). Therefore, professional development is often embedded in teachers' work, designed with teachers' input, fostered with critical reflection and meaningful collaboration, and is intentionally coherent, rigorous, and sustained over time (Smylie & Conyers, 1991; Walling, 1994; Runyan, White, Hazel, & Hedges, 1998). Professional development is an integral part of current efforts to transform and revitalize new teacher support and new teacher induction programs can be a vital support (Dilworth & Imig, 1995; French, 1997).
Hennessy's (1997) qualitative study examined the perceptions of new teacher professional development through an innovative teacher evaluation process. The evaluation was the Collaborative Assessment Procedure (CAP) implemented in a large Midwestern urban school district. Beginning teachers were assigned a teacher consultant who observed the teacher and shared the observations in conferences. The research attempted to determine if a link existed between the new teacher performance evaluation process and the beginning teachers' sense of efficacy with respect to students and other teachers. Twenty-one teachers who had participated in this process were interviewed. Thirteen experienced affirmation in the process and thought that the CAP process nurtured their professional development.

Other participants experienced the CAP process as surveillance and were much less positive about its effects. Twenty of these teachers were convinced that they could significantly effect the lives of their students. Fifteen spoke of a strong link between their CAP experiences and their growing sense of personal efficacy. Two gave CAP only slight credit for their increased sense of efficacy, and only one did not report an enhanced sense of efficacy at the end of the CAP year. The process was acknowledged to recognize the varying levels of professional development of these beginning teachers. While the construct of teachers' sense of efficacy remains difficult to assess, the CAP approach appears to enhance it for beginning teachers (Hennessy, 1997).

In spite of what the skeptics contend, induction programs improve teacher performance, increase new teacher retention, promote the professional and personal
well-being of new teachers, reduce the problems they often encounter, satisfy mandated state requirements, and transmit system’s culture to new teachers (Stansbury, 2001). Overall, new teachers generally remain on the margins without induction, formal or informal, into the professional life of the school (Moore-Johnson et al., 2001).

**Mentoring Programs**

In addition to formal induction programs, many schools are turning to structured mentoring programs to help support new teachers in the classroom and convince them to stay (Recruiting New Teachers, 1999). The promise of mentoring goes beyond helping novices survive their first year of teaching. For example, mentoring functions as a critical strategy for reform, when it is linked to a vision of good teaching, guided by an understanding of teacher learning, and supported by a professional culture that favors collaboration and inquiry (Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Little, 1990).

In many successful induction programs, mentoring is the most publicized strategy in American public schools (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). Mentoring includes assigning the new teacher a trained mentor teacher (Brennan et al., 1999; Lucas, 1999). It is also a systematic support for new teacher, which has grown dramatically (Clement, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996).

Mentoring, in its most basic form, is typically defined as a relationship between an experienced and a less experienced person in which the mentor provides
guidance, support, and feedback to the protégé (Blair-Larsen, 1998; Haney, 1997; Little, 1990). Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. describes mentoring as the formal counseling and support for beginning teachers (RNT, 1999). Mentor teachers' responsibilities and tasks are differentiated according to the needs of the new teacher, program goals within the local educational context, and the situation (Koki, 1998). Mentoring programs are also different according to the new teachers they serve and according to their purpose. The terms mentoring, modeling, and coaching are often interchangeable by educators, though there are actually significant differences in concept.

For example, in California, mentors are considered support providers who give intensive individualized support and assistance to each beginning teacher (Davis & Bloom, 1998). In other support programs, a buddy teacher is assigned to the newly hired teacher to show him or her how to maneuver in the system and is available should the novice seek help (Podsen & Denmark, 2000). Mentors help new employees learn about organizational culture (Bierema, 1996), facilitate personal and career growth, and expand opportunities for those traditionally hampered by organizational barriers, such as women and minorities (Gunn, 1995). Mentoring support programs have grown at state and district levels nationwide (Halford, 1998; Little, 1990). In most mentoring programs, new teachers work with a mentor teacher for at least 1 year. However, the mentoring period varies according to individual state requirements. With Public Act 355, the Michigan State Board of Education (1993)
mandates school districts to implement a system for mentoring new teachers during the first 3 years of teaching (Michigan Department of Education, 1994).

Although many states and jurisdictions have created a mentoring component in the new teacher induction program, they lack the capacity to ensure all novices have expert mentors in the same field. Feiman-Nemser (1996) questions what mentors should do, what they actually do, and what novices learn as a result. In other studies, it is learned that few mentor teachers practice the kind of conceptually oriented, learner-oriented, learner-centered teaching advocated by education reform (Cohen, McLaughlin, & Talbert, 1993). Induction programs that offer mentoring vary from state-to-state and from district-to-district. Although most systemic teacher induction programs offer new teacher orientation, support, and mentoring during their beginning years in the profession, there still lacks consistency with nationwide program content (Clement, 2000). In Kentucky, the state mandate includes assistance with an internship program that has been in place since 1985 (Brennan et al., 1999). The same is true for the mentor selection process (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Little, 1990).

Critical reviews of teacher mentoring studies caution that these discrepancies in purpose, content, mentor selection and training make it difficult to accurately measure the effects of induction programs and other new teacher support programs and strategies. According to APEC (1997), mentors rarely receive more than minimal training; likewise programs vary widely and there is no common definition or standard set of mentoring activities. In structured mentoring programs, mentors are assigned
with specific responsibilities; and in informal programs, mentors may be assigned or self-selected and have no specific, prescribed responsibilities (APEC Education Forum, 1997).

Similarly, Wong and Wong (1998), authors of *First Days of School*, contend that the buzzword *mentoring* implies a standard cure-all for new teachers in the form of a mentor, support person, or facilitator and mentors are simply a safety net for new teachers (Wong, 2004), whereas the reality is that new teachers simply want experienced teachers to help them to successfully meet the challenges of the first crucial years in their new job as a classroom teacher and mentoring cannot do it all (Wong, 2001). The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission (1995, cited in Serpell & Bozeman, 1999) has similar concerns. This study showed that one out of four new teachers received either *poor* or *no support* from their mentors and concludes that simply assigning a mentor does little to remedy the frustrations many beginning teachers face. Many believe that mentoring cannot be isolated from other types of support (Serpell & Bozeman, 1999).

Nonetheless, most mentoring programs provide some orientation or training for members and common topics often include clinical supervision, research on effective teaching, beginning teacher concerns, and theories of adult learning (Galbraith & Cohen, 1995). Less common, but no less important, are opportunities for mentors to analyze their own beliefs about learning to teach and articulating their practical knowledge of teaching. According to Galbraith and Cohen (1995), mentoring provides two primary functions: career development, which benefits the
mentee's knowledge, contacts, support, and guidance; and psychosocial, which is collaborative with interpersonal dialogue.

The design and the expectations of a mentoring program must take into account the varying needs of the targeted new teachers. A study by the NASSP Practitioner ("Enhancing New Teacher Programs," 1999) reports that it is important to understand that the new teacher does not meet one specific prototype, and mentoring programs cannot be one-size-fits-all. This kind of thinking is a dangerous and an inaccurate approach to effective mentoring programs. For example, today's novice takes on a broader meaning. It may refer to a new teacher or perhaps an experienced teacher who has returned to work after several years of absence from the classroom, a teacher who has moved from one district to another, a teacher who has transferred from one school to another in the same district, a teacher who has been reassigned to a different grade level or a new content area, or a new guidance counselor or media specialist ("Enhancing New Teacher Programs," 1999).

Before 1990, the literature on mentoring consisted mainly of program descriptions, survey-based evaluations, definitions of mentoring, and general discussions of mentors' roles and responsibilities. The idea of learning is an interactive and evolving process between mentors and adult learners (Galbraith & Cohen, 1995). Pairing new teachers with mentors provides intensive observations, individualized support, and assistance to each new teacher; it is not a value judgment situation (Davis & Bloom, 1998). In a positive mentor–mentee pairing, the new teacher feels
comfortable when seeking advice on all aspects of the complicated job of teaching (Wong & Wong, 1998).

The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) reported that new teachers who receive some form of mentoring are more effective as classroom instructors because they are learning from guided practice rather than trial and error, and they leave the profession at much lower rates. Qualitative data were collected and studied regarding collaboration from the Kansas Goals 2000 Early Career Professional Development Program (ECPDP). The program, which is a joint effort among universities, the Southeast Education Service Center, and 68 school districts, helps to provide a seamless system of professional development for the beginning teachers in their first 3 years of experience. In this program, trained mentors offer continuous daily support to new teachers. The ECPDP results showed that the program is very effective. In addition, program participants are excited about the collaborative effort and expect it to serve as a model for future induction efforts by the state of Kansas (Runyan et al., 1998).

In Freemeyer’s study (1999), beginning teachers, mentors, principals, and district coordinators participated in a 2-day mentors’ training workshop and walked away with varying degrees of satisfaction. Nearly all participants were satisfied with the training, as well as the district-wide and school-level activities organized for professional development. In addition, 82% of the beginning teachers reported that they benefited from the induction process, about three quarters of the beginning teachers indicated that insufficient time created problems in the mentoring program,
and 30% said that different teaching assignments for mentors and partners caused problems. Their mentors also reported similar concerns, such as insufficient time and teaching assignment confusion. Lastly, although indirectly related to this particular study, it is noted that the principals and coordinators in this study complained about confusion over mentoring program funding issues ( Freemeyer, 1999).

Today, in education, mentoring is a complex, multidimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing, nurturing, and supporting new teachers and mentors must be more than veteran teachers assigned by a principal (ASCD, 1999; Blair-Larsen, 1998; Brennan et al., 1999; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Haney, 1997; RNT, 1999). Overall, teacher mentoring programs are designed to foster growth on the part of newcomers as a useful tool for meeting the challenges in public schools that help increase new teacher retention (Little, 1990; NCTAF, 1996).

Collegial Support (COLL)

Collegiality

Goals are often shattered, spirits diminished, and self-confidence destroyed when beginners become overwhelmed from the personal and professional demands and responsibilities of their new teaching assignment (Delgado, 1999). Isolation and lack of support are common threads and major complaints among new teachers. The effects of state and local education reform initiatives that promote induction and mentoring programs are limited if the school culture lacks collegiality. Lieberman and Miller (1990) stated that collegial isolation and lack of support often increases a lack
of commitment from teachers, experienced and inexperienced. During the initial years, new teachers need to simultaneously socialize into the teaching profession and into the specific school environment (Heidkamp & Shapiro, 1999; Ryan, 1986). When school-based orientations, designed to induct the inexperienced teacher to the school community, capitalize on collegial support, the benefits are noticed in the teaching profession (Hope, 1999). There are lasting benefits when new teachers frequently communicate with colleagues regarding lesson planning, teaching pedagogy, problem solving, and classroom management (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Walling, 1994).

Collegiality is also a powerful strategy (ASCD, 2000). Collegiality increases mutual support and responsibility for effective instruction (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Moore-Johnson et al., 2001). Collegial and supportive social organizational conditions encourage teachers to work together, support each other, and use and develop a common knowledge base (Moore-Johnson et al., 2001). Collegiality creates shared understanding and meaning from complex information (Louis et al., 1996). It is important for new teachers to build professional, collegial, and supportive relationships (Heidkamp & Shapiro, 1999). Activities such as common planning periods, team teaching, and regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers are effective retention strategies (Blair-Larsen, 1998). The novice teacher becomes an expert through a process of acculturation into the experts' world (Keefe & Jenkins, 1997). Collegiality has benefits beyond professionally developing new teachers, and the impact is an overall positive school culture (Walling, 1994).
How teachers enter the profession plays an important role in socializing new teachers into their new responsibilities (Kutch, 1994). New teachers begin their professional careers and join faculties and staff where friendships are already established, social groups formed, and the school culture, beliefs, norms, values, and traditions are already place (Podsen & Denmark, 2000). Another example of collegiality is in a North Carolina study (Gratch, 1998), which shows how informal collegial support affects new teachers’ autonomy. In this study, K–8 beginning and experienced teachers were interviewed five times throughout the school year. Through periodic feedback, it was also learned that new teachers developed successful long-term relationships with experienced teachers in their buildings and became more self-confident and self-reliant as the school progressed (Gratch, 1998). Collegiality serves as a strong support strategy for beginning teachers new to the school and the profession.

Teacher-to-Teacher Collaboration

Teacher-to-teacher interaction and collegial support are informal ways of socializing new teachers into their new role and inducting them into the school (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1993; Fullan, 1991). Collegiality is mutual collaboration and social interaction among colleagues (Walling, 1994). It is a collaborative and effective way of ameliorating new teacher attrition and new teacher isolation (DuFour, 2002). In terms of teacher-to-teacher relationships, professional communities foster shared expertise as faculty members call on each other to discuss and develop skills and
implement practices (ASCD, 1999; Little, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989). In several ways, experienced teachers can be lifesavers for novices simply by reaching out informally and being compassionate critics (Delgado, 1999). For example, research shows that novice teachers are eager to observe experienced teachers teaching and who will give them ideas for activities and lesson plans, as well as who will tell them what to do with students who challenge even the best in the field (Moore-Johnson et al., 2001).

Teacher-to-teacher support recognizes that a school’s most valuable resource in developing collegial support is found in its devoted and experienced classroom teachers (Heidkamp & Shapiro, 1999). This type of informal support acknowledges that veteran teachers do not have to be formally trained mentors in order to help their new colleagues (Delgado, 1999). Experienced teachers are able to assist inexperienced teachers by sharing teaching techniques and professional information (NCREL, 2001).

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, novice and experienced teachers perceive collaborative professional development as an effective support strategy for beginning teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). Collaborative work increases teachers’ sense of affiliation with each other and with the school (Moore-Johnson et al., 2001). Moore-Johnson and colleagues (2001) conducted a series of interviews and inquiries with new teachers and three different types of integrated professional cultures emerged.

First, there are veteran-oriented professional cultures, where the norms of professional practices are determined by and aimed to serve veteran faculty members;
typically collegial interactions were cordial in such settings and sometimes cold. This culture is not organized to engage new teachers or to acquaint them with expert practice. Next, there are novice-oriented professional cultures, where it is largely staffed with new recruits, such as a start-up charter school staff. In this environment, youth, inexperience, and idealism prevail. Although there is an abundance of energy and vigorous commitment, there is likely little professional guidance about how to teach. Lastly, there are integrated professional cultures, where ongoing professional exchanges across experienced and inexperienced levels of support are encouraged for all teachers. This culture does not endorse veteran or novice camps; rather, teamwork and camaraderie distinguishes this setting (Moore-Johnson et al., 2001).

It is also suggested that the stronger the culture, the more it resists influences, change, and new blood (Bierema, 1996). Without collegiality, a strong culture is sometimes difficult to penetrate (Moore-Johnson et al., 2001). However, when there are collaborative efforts in place, successful change is more likely (Fullan, 1991). New teachers want to feel welcomed, connected, and listened to, and isolation is ineffective (Heidkamp & Shapiro, 1999; Wong, 2001). For many beginners, social isolation is so overwhelming that they remain in teaching only to navigate a slow and painful learning curve in the process or they abandon their career in teaching completely (Podsen & Denmark, 2000).

In the Next Generation Project, the study's findings supported site-based, ongoing, teacher-rich collaboration across all experience levels for effective new teacher instruction (Moore-Johnson et al., 2001). The Harvard Project also revealed that the
ongoing support from teacher leaders is important to new teachers’ success in the classroom and teacher leaders play crucial roles (Moore-Johnson et al., 2001). In a culture of shared responsibility, all teaching professionals assumed active roles in the new teacher’s acculturation and transition (Davis & Bloom, 1998). In effective support programs, experienced teachers participated in school cultures where shared-responsibility and a shared-sense of duty ensure that high professional standards are maintained (Walling, 1994).

Overall, research supports the proposition that new teachers are more confident about professional skills and abilities when they have opportunities to learn from more experienced classroom teachers, and they are more likely to remain in the teaching profession. The benefits of new teacher support, collegiality, and collaboration are also observed in improved instruction, student achievement, and school climate (NCREL, 2001; Walling, 1994). No lessons are more important to a new teacher’s personal and professional growth and development than those that include collegiality, acculturation, teacher-to-teacher relationships, and collaboration during the beginning years in the classroom.

Administrative Support (ADM)

*Roles and Behaviors*

Although the leadership of the school may not have much influence over the reasons for entering teaching, principals are critical players in whether new teachers decide to stay with the profession or not (ASCD, 2000; Lieberman & Miller, 1994).
Likewise, new teachers often perceive lack of support from school administrators as a major concern and source of disillusionment (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996; Richardson, 1994b). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a), 16% of the teachers who said they left the profession listed inadequate support from administrators as the primary reason.

Similar findings are found in a North Carolina study of teacher supply and demand where almost two thirds (63%) of teachers who quit teaching said that a lack of administrative support was a major factor (Southern Regional Education Board, 2001). In a separate study (Allen, 2000), 914 new teachers with 5 years or less classroom experience were given the choice between a significantly higher salary and working in a school with administrators who were strongly supportive. Allen’s results showed that 82% of the new teachers preferred strong school leaders who would stand behind them and only 18% indicated they preferred a salary increase.

The perceptions new teachers have regarding what they need to be successful in the classroom is significant to the principal’s strategic plans. For instance, what the new teacher has to say matters and it provides specific advice to principals on what beginners preferred from their principals (Hope, 1999). In a University of South Florida study, the top-ranked administrator support behaviors by the 270 new teachers surveyed include: “Show up”—visit classrooms and use presence to show interest in the academic program and teacher’s work beyond formal observations; “Back me up”—be helpful in devising reasonable solutions and in implementing them.
regarding discipline matters, as well as be helpful in dealing with parents and district office administrators; "Lend a hand"—help teachers find resources, solve problems, and take advantage of continued growth opportunities; "Show appreciation"—provide informal recognition of good work or exceptional effort; "Let me in on things"—include new teachers in on what's going on in the school; "Respect my time"—avoid placing unnecessary noninstructional demands on the beginner; and "Maintain an orderly environment"—establish clear school routines and plan special events well in advance.

To provide appropriate support and direction to their new teachers, effective building administrators understand their role in helping beginners with problems (Sergiovanni, 1995). Davis and Bloom (1998) suggested that supportive principals remember what being a new teacher is all about, build assignments with new teachers in mind, provide new teachers with curriculum guidance and support, provide new teachers with systematic orientation, build a school culture that is collegial, support ongoing professional growth for new teachers, and are clear about expectations and perceptions.

Overall, new teachers wanted to know what is expected of them, in terms of classroom performance, participation in staff and extracurricular duties, and in every aspect of the job (Davis & Bloom, 1998). Knowing their principal's expectations, philosophy, and values for education; quality of teaching; and support practices in the area of student discipline decreased new teachers' disillusionment with the teaching
profession and helps to increase new teacher retention rates (U.S. Department of Education, 2000; Palumbo, 1998; Richardson, 1994b).

Regardless of a district's status on formal induction, the building administrator is ultimately responsible for supporting, socializing, and acculturating inexperienced teachers on a daily basis (Espeland, 1998). Principals can avoid setting beginning teachers up for failure by carefully considering the teaching schedules, and understanding and anticipating the typical realities of the beginners' needs (Halford, 1998). The function of leadership is to engage followers, not merely to activate them, to co-mingle needs and aspirations and goals in a common enterprise, and in the process make better citizens of both leaders and followers (Burns, 1978). The principal is responsible for creating, initiating, and facilitating a collective environment (Fullan, 2002) and connecting new teachers with peers and promoting relationships that are mutually beneficial (Hope, 1999).

Administrative principal support for collegial interactions is best achieved in the form of encouragement, resources, and time (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Ganser, 2001; Huling-Austin et al., 1989). Effective building principals must coordinate opportunities for regular contact between mentor and mentees, not just when needed or during a crisis (Allen, 2000). Likewise, strong leaders do whatever possible to help focus on supportive activities and to prevent mentors and mentees from getting lost in policies and procedures (Smylie & Conyers, 1991). Understanding, creating, and communicating a structure that allows experienced teachers to work with novice teachers strengthens the organization (Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986).
Outstanding administrators have a deep understanding of the teachers and students they lead. The organization is also influenced when the principal creates a school culture that is conducive to quality education (Bierema, 1996; Youngblood, 1994). Consequently, school culture can be extremely powerful for acculturating beginners in the profession. Culture influences everything that goes on in a school: how staff dress, what they talk about, their willingness to change, the instructional practices, and the emphasis given to student and faculty learning (Bierema, 1996; Moore-Johnson et al., 2001; Peterson & Deal, 1994).

Administrators are role models who instill a passion for learning in their teachers and they are active learners themselves. Developing a comprehensive in-house professional development program and allowing time for professional development and professional relationships are also included in the principals' list of things to do (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Huling-Austin & Resta, 2001; & Walling, 1994). Blase & Blase (2001) concur that principals create cultures of collaboration, inquiry, experimentation, and lifelong learning. Effective leaders encourage organizational structures that support continuous learning, information-sharing, collective inquiry, professional growth opportunities, and staff development that builds networking, acquiring new skills, involving teachers in educational change, and increasing teachers' self-esteem (DuFour, 2002; Hope, 1999).

School leaders are challenged to create learning organizations and current literature characterizes these leaders as learning leaders rather than instructional leaders (DuFour, 2002; Moore-Johnson et al., 2001). In this capacity, the role of the
principal moves from instructional leader with a focus on teaching to a leader of a professional community with a focus on learning (DuFour, 2002; Moore-Johnson et al., 2001; Moir & Gless, 2001). Because several major tasks surfaced from the literature research regarding effective administrative support, the role of the principal as instructional leader takes education only so far in the quest for continual school improvement (Fullan, 2002; Haney, 1997; Haselkorn, 1990; Peterson & Deal, 1994).

Meeting the needs of new teachers is no small task, and organizations cannot flourish, at least not for long, on the actions of the top leader alone (Fullan, 2002). Principals and other educational leaders have the largest roles to play in fostering sustained, school-based professional development (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). Today’s principals have the huge responsibility of bringing beginning teachers to professional maturity (Kaplan & Owings, 2004). What principals do or neglect to do with new teachers in school-based orientation/induction activities has implications for a district’s recruitment budget, and the efforts of a principal toward retaining new teachers may increase or decrease this expenditure (Hope, 1999). Some costs, however, could be borne through reallocation of time and people decisions, often made by building principals (Moir & Gless, 2001). The price of not supporting the next generation of teachers can be costly in human resources and dollars (Moir & Gless, 2001; Wong & Asquith, 2002).

Some turnover, of course, is expected, as individuals leave and retire, start families, or pursue other jobs (NCTAF, 1996). Moreover, teacher turnover can be positive when it brings new life to organizations, especially if those leaving have not
been effective teachers. But excessive teacher turnover and attrition, particularly in low-income urban and rural communities, has huge financial, institutional, and human costs. For example, a recent Texas analysis set the cost of annual, statewide teacher turnover at a conservative $329 million (NCTAF, 1996). Regardless of a seemingly major expense, experts conclude that it is still much better to train new teachers and risk losing them than not to train them and risk keeping a population of unqualified classroom teachers (Breaux, 1999).

Educational research provides a litany of advice, suggestions, and tasks for building principals and other educational stakeholders. Some theorists claim leadership is more of an art or belief, and a condition of the heart than a set of things to do (DePree, 1989). However, the principal's roles and behavior must be taken seriously because their attention and interventions on behalf of first-year teachers can counteract negative experiences beginners often face (Hope, 1999). Such tasks as teaching assignments and adequate time to work with colleagues and students is critical to a new teacher's success in the classroom (Berry, 2004). Effective administrative support can be a professional lifeline for new colleagues (Halford, 1998). The general agreement from research is that new teachers need support, support makes a difference, learning is reciprocal, collaboration produces professional development opportunities of reflection, and administrative support is crucial.
Remaining Challenges

Overall, new teacher support has been generally well received, but there are still concerns about the specifics. For instance, new teacher support programs are not evenly distributed across all types and sizes of school districts, and all beginners do not participate in programs available when mandates are not in place. In the NCREL (2001) report, urban and suburban districts are more likely to provide a support program than rural districts, and small districts are least likely to provide such programs. The quality of programs also varies. Wealthier schools or jurisdictions are able to supplement national and local resources and reach more new teachers than the less financially stable districts (APEC, 1997).

Inexperienced teachers need support and guidance, but there is a mismatch between what new teachers need and what new teachers actually receive (Moore-Johnson et al., 2001). On one hand, new teachers seek advice, but veteran teachers hesitate to give advice (Ganser, 1999). One example of this is when veteran teachers believe new teachers need to go through their rites of passage alone, just as they did in their first years (Ryan, 1986). Not all veteran teachers are in this camp and there are some who would like to assist new teachers, but feel their efforts would be viewed as interference; or they harbor the notion that the principal bears this responsibility single-handedly (Gordon & Maxey, 2000).

On the other hand, a closer examination of this phenomenon shows that social isolation for new teachers is not entirely the fault of experienced teachers (Gordon & Maxey, 2000). For some new teachers, the perception is that asking for help is an
admission of failure and incompetence (Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Neibrand et al., 1992). When novices hesitate to seek help, they contribute to their own sense of isolation. Regardless of the source, there is a high price to pay when new teachers are isolated from their colleagues (Rosenholtz, 1989).

Unfortunately, adequate funding and education reforms are often not on the same page. Furthermore, the financial resources for new teacher support strategies that require mentor-training, mentoring incentives and stipends, professional development, adequate staffing, and program implementation are usually among the first to be cut when funding is not available. The AFT analysis (2001) reported that one third of the total states in its study require mentors to receive stipends, generally from $500 to $1,000 per year. According to APEC (1997), some programs or strategies have been terminated due to budgetary constraints. Other support programs are being reduced, or school districts are trying to implement less expensive strategies as alternatives to effective induction strategies that are no longer available to them (APEC, 1997). Often times, financing induction programs largely depends upon whether or not participation is state-mandated. For some states, induction is required for teacher certification, but as of 2003, only 16 states required and financed new teacher support programs, such as induction ("Teacher Quality Viewed as Crucial," 2002).

School districts with high attrition rates are still accountable for retaining high-quality, well-trained, new teachers (Rasmussen, 1999). However, legislature such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) could possibly provide significant support
in the coming years. This is partly due to the NCLB requirements for students to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward state standards and mandates for “highly qualified” teachers in the core academic subjects (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Consequently, new teacher support in the form of induction is a visible component of NCLB.

Conducting support program evaluations is important when measuring the efficacy of new teacher support (Brock & Grady, 1998). To achieve that result, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) recommended that states across the country develop a statutory policy that reflects the importance of and commitment to inducting new teachers; strive for comprehensive induction programs; fund, at least partially, induction programs; consider induction policies as part of the teacher quality accountability loop that includes school districts and institutions of higher education; and network with other states (American Federation of Teachers, 2001).

Another challenge for new teacher support programs is that today’s generation of new teachers are jeopardized when a 20-year-old process is used to examine the effects of mentoring on quality teaching and retention (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Cohen et al., 1993; Feiman-Nemser et al, 1993; Wong, 2001). Even among the most supportive programs, assessment is not a significant component of teacher induction (APEC, 1997).
Literature Review Summary

The literature in this study supports how crucial it is to assist first-year teachers in classrooms in our nation's public schools. In this chapter, the complexities of real and perceived new teacher needs and concerns, as well as three specific retention strategies that support the novice teacher as he or she transitions from student to teacher are discussed.

The beginning years of teaching can be enormously challenging and stressful. For the first time, new teachers are in complete control of a classroom. Local, state, and national standards and mandates have increased the demands in education. Teachers, particularly new teachers, are often overwhelmed with meeting the environmental needs within the profession and from the conditions of the workplace. When faced with personal and professional demands, many talented, enthusiastic, and competent new teachers do not make it through their first year in the classroom.

The literature indicates that school districts often provide teacher induction and mentoring programs, but they vary widely in structure and implementation. Consequently, education reform critics complain that these support programs lack consistency in structure, design, content, and implementation. In addition, the lack of consistency among new teacher support activities and practices makes it difficult to effectively measure program effectiveness, and there is a clear demand to provide comparative studies.

In addition, the literature suggested that the collegial support emphasizes personal and professional socialization, and provides a positive impact and a solution
to new teachers' frustrations, isolation, and perceived lack of support. Experts say that whereas the building principal is not responsible for the new teacher’s decision to enter the teaching profession, school leaders play a significant role in new teacher career commitment. Overall, the strength of the induction process, degree of collegiality, and administrative support depends largely on the building principal.

New teacher literature validates the necessity of providing effective support for public school teachers, ameliorating the devastating new teacher attrition rates, and retaining competent particularly with support program funding and evaluating new teachers in America’s public school classrooms. Overall, there is widespread support for teacher induction and mentoring programs, collegiality, and administrative support as effective retention strategies—at least, conceptually.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between new teacher career commitment and new teacher retention strategies. This chapter describes the research design and instrumentation, validity and reliability, sample size, and data analysis procedures. Building on the literature, the research findings include descriptions and any uniqueness of new teacher career commitment across the three selected retention strategies for this study: (1) formal teacher support, (2) collegial support, and (c) administrative support.

Research Questions

1. Are new teachers committed to their chosen careers? Does the career commitment vary by new teachers’ gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level?

2. Do new teachers participate in the following retention strategies: formal teacher support (FTS); collegial support (COLL); and administrative (ADM) support? Does participation vary by new teachers’ gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level?

3. In America’s public schools, does a relationship exist between new teacher career commitment and participation in the following new teacher retention strategies: formal teacher support, collegial support, and administrative support?
Research Design and Instrumentation

In this study, the correlation of new teacher career commitment and new teacher retention strategies are examined. This study also investigates the multi-levels of career choice commitment and includes a thoughtful review of contemporary literature on new teacher support. In addition, this study examines career commitment as a sociological phenomenon and explores how it relates to new teacher gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level. The 1999–2000 Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS), conducted by the United States Bureau of Census and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and part of the U.S. Department of Education (2000a), supplies the data for this research study. SASS is the largest and most comprehensive data source available of K–12 public schools and the teachers and administrators who staff them.

From its inception, SASS has had four components: the School Questionnaire, the Teacher Questionnaire, the Principal Questionnaire, and the School District Questionnaire, which was known as the Teacher Demand and Shortage Questionnaire until the 1999–2000 SASS administration (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). These questionnaires were sent to their respective respondents in public, private, and Bureau of Indian Affairs/tribal schools, public school districts, and, beginning in 1999–2000, to charter schools as well (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). The SASS data enabled sectional comparative investigation, and in this research design, examined new teacher career commitment and new teacher
retention strategies. For this new teacher study, the most current SASS99-00 Public
School Teacher Questionnaire Survey is utilized.

There were 362 questionnaire items organized into nine sections that complete
the 1999–2000 SASS. This new teacher research study utilizes data from Section I:
General Information; Section II: Certification and Training Information; Section III:
Professional Development; Section IV: Class Organization; Section VII: Decision-
Making; and Section VIII: General Employment Information. Specific questionnaire
items were extrapolated to gather data regarding new teachers' gender, race/ethnicity,
and level of instruction. Questionnaire items are selected from the Teacher and
Attitudes & Perceptions Section for the data source.

Data Source

Surveys were utilized to collect data from informants and extrapolating the
responses to the population (Krathwohl, 1997). There were several characteristics of
a survey-based research design. For example, surveys are used for either quantitative
or qualitative studies and provide a clear understanding of the identified group of
people studied. Typically, survey respondents are a carefully chosen sample,
representative of some population. This methodology chapter detailed how the largest
national sample survey collected by the U.S. Bureau of Census and the U.S.
Department of Education National Center of Education (NCES) fits these
characteristics.
To date, four independent cycles of SASS have been completed. The first survey was administered in 1987–88, followed by two more in 1990–91 and 1993–94. However, due to inadequate funding, the survey was not conducted in 1996. The three-year cycle continued with the latest SASS in 1999–2000. SASS data were available for public use. However, at the time of this research, the most current data, SASS99–00 were not available. To complete this research study, an application was filed with the National Center of Education Statistics and permission was granted in March 2003 for use of the restricted-data. However, in May 2003, NCES notified all restricted-data users that errors were found in the original set and revised data were issued. A copy of the National Center for Education Statistics release letter is included in the Appendix of this research document.

Although the core objectives of SASS have remained constant since its first administration in 1987–88, the surveys have kept up with the emerging issues in K–12 education. Over the years, sections and categories have been changed, added, and adapted. For this new teacher research study, *Public School Teacher Questionnaire* items were drawn from the teacher training and attitudes and perceptions sections. The teachers were sampled from urban, suburban, and rural public schools. Data were collected on teacher demographics, education and training, teaching assignment, professional development, experience, certification, workload, perceptions and attitudes about job mobility, and workplace conditions; including topics related to career decisions and retention strategies used in schools across America (U.S. Department of Education, 2000b).
Descriptive research techniques provide qualitative and quantitative statistical analysis and also help to determine the extent of agreement and enacted (counted) new teacher career commitment and retention strategies. Research findings for this study include descriptions and any uniqueness across the selected new teacher support in the form of the three retention strategies identified for this study: (1) formal teacher support, (2) collegial support, and (3) administrative support.

Validity and Reliability

Experts say a valid instrument measures what it is intended to measure and is reliable if it produces consistent results (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). NCES staff has developed specific steps to produce valid and reliable SASS results for researchers. The national survey content is reviewed at each cycle for expanding, retaining, and deleting topics included in the previous survey. This approach makes it possible to address emerging topics in education effectively and it solidifies the survey’s ability to study trend analysis. The strengths of surveys are accuracy, convenience, and generalizationability (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Research surveys highlight appropriateness of the method to the problem studied, accuracy of measurement, generalization of the findings, administrative convenience, and avoidance of ethical or political difficulties in the research process (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). NCES is a unique source of reliable national statistics for various subgroups. The data for this research study are derived from the NCES Schools and Staffing Survey 1999–2000. The SASS99–00 design is a coordinated set
of parallel questionnaires for districts, schools, principals, teachers, school media centers, facilitating a collection of complementary data sets that provide policy makers, researchers, educators, and the general public with a broad range of information on the condition of schools and staff in this country. SASS links data provided by a random sample of public, private, and charter schools with their respective principals, teachers, library staff, and school districts. This allows researchers to study the complexities of K–12 schooling from multiple perspectives (U.S. Department of Education, 2000b). Although the core objectives of SASS have remained constant since its first administration in 1987–88, the surveys have kept up with the emerging issues in K–12 education. Over the years, sections and categories have been changed, added, and adapted.

For example, after the first SASS in 1987, initial problems were detected and addressed, and NCES made the necessary questionnaire revisions and obtained endorsement of the American Federation of Teachers. The revised version was field tested during 1989–90. The NCES staff conducted interviews of the field test respondents to further identify difficulties with the survey. Teachers were asked to verbalize their thoughts as they completed the survey. Changes were made between the SASS87–88 and 90–91 that may cause some overestimation of change between those school years (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Other field tests were conducted to test proposed changes for the 1993–94 and 1999–2000 surveys.
Another distinguishing characteristic of survey research is the care used in selecting the sample of respondents (Krathwohl, 1997). This research study provides a unique opportunity to examine new teachers' career commitment on five levels and how commitment relates to new teacher support practices and activities.

Data for this study were drawn from traditional public schools operated by an educational agency or school district, and a subset of all public schools in the United States, except charter schools. Traditional public schools are defined as institutions that provide educational services for at least one of grades 1–12 or comparable ungraded levels, one or more teachers to give instruction, one or more buildings, and public funding as its primary support; and include regular, special education, vocational/technical, and alternative schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). Once schools were selected, the public school districts associated with the selected traditional public schools were included in the sample. The large national sample of schools, principals, and teachers accommodates the simultaneous study of several factors, such as the types of communities schools serve, school level and size, district size, states or regions of the U.S., and private school affiliations or orientations. Each selected school provides a list of its teachers and teacher assignments, and these lists make up the teacher-sampling frame (U.S. Department of Education, 2000b).

A random sample of over 70,000 public school teachers from across the country participated in the Public School Teacher Questionnaire. A new teacher subsample was reduced from the original count and excluded incidents of
overlapping. This investigation is a collection of data responses from beginning teachers new to the classroom and to the teaching profession who have 3 years or less experience. Data were calculated from the record count \((N = 77,522)\), which was calculated to the final relative weight variable for the new teacher subgroup \((n = 6,650)\). The data sampling process for this research study was determined by the number of the incidents of characteristics in the target group, new teachers, and distributions (frequency) among several predictor new teacher and school-related variables.

The SASS data enable sectional comparative investigation, and in this research design, examine new teacher career commitment and new teacher retention strategies. Teachers are sampled from urban, suburban, and rural public schools and data are collected on teacher demographics, education and training, teaching assignment, professional development, experience, certification, workload, perceptions and attitudes about job mobility, and workplace conditions (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). Three federal laws protect the confidentiality of all individually identifiable information collected by NCES authorized surveys, of which SASS is one: the National Education Statistics Act of 1994, the Privacy Act of 1974, and the Computer Security Act of 1987.

New teacher data were extracted and collected for the following new teacher predictor variables: gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level. Data are reported in statistical summaries so that individual respondents are not identified. Descriptive comparative analysis includes disaggregated data from a select group of predictor
variables found among the new teacher study group. For instance, the growing
demand for gender and ethnic homogeneity in the teacher workforce adds to the bleak
picture of new teacher attrition and shortages and these data are significant for this
research purpose (Gitomer et al., 1999). However, there is also an overall demand for
gender homogeneity in the teacher workforce (Gitomer et al., 1999).

Race and Ethnicity

Specific information on each variable is described in categories and
classifications based on self-identification, as in data collected by the Bureau of the
Census, or on observer identification, as in data collected by the Office for Civil
Rights (U.S. Department of Education, 2000b). The race-ethnicity categories are
defined as follows: (a) American Indian/Alaskan Native (Aleut, Alaska Indian, Yupik,
Inupiat): a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and
maintaining cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition;
(b) Asian or Pacific Islander (Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Asian Indian,
Vietnamese, Hawaiian, Guamanian, Samoan, other Asian): a person having origins in
any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent,
or the Pacific Islands; (c) Black: A person having origins in any of the black racial
groups in Africa south of the Sahara, normally excludes persons of Hispanic origin
except for tabulations produced by the U.S. Bureau of the Census; (d) White: A
person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the
Middle East, normally excludes persons of Hispanic origin except for tabulations
produced by the U.S. Bureau of Census (U.S. Department of Education, 2000b); (e) Hispanic: A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race; and (f) Other: Any person that is not included in the above categories (White, Black, Hispanic, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and American Indian/Alaskan Native). This last classification is not included in this data collection or used in this study.

Educators predict that the majority of the newly hired teacher workforce will be assigned to the most needy students in schools with the least amount of resources (Davis & Bloom, 1998; Epseland, 1998; Fideler & Haskelkorn, 1999). More than one third of the new teachers will be hired in low-wealth urban and rural school districts, and the majority will be in inner city schools where there is a minority student population of at least 20% (Recruiting New Teachers, 1999). It is suggested that an ethnically diverse faculty is crucial to the multicultural environment, and all students need to see successful adults from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds represented on the school staff (Lankard, 1994; NCREL, 2001).

Consequently, the teacher shortage problem looms larger with the shrinking percentage of available, qualified minority teachers (Blaze, 1985; Urban Teacher Challenge, 2000). As public schools continue to see increasing linguistic and ethnic student diversity, the number of teacher diversity is expected to see a decrease (Lankard, 1994; NCREL, 2001; Torres-Guzman & Goodwin, 1995). Moreover, more than 30% is minority student enrollment, whereas there is a 13.5% minority teacher workforce (Lenhardt, 2000). While the ratio of minority students to teachers is
expected to grow even wider, there are fewer people of color and speakers of other bilingual languages who are entering the education field (Lankard, 1994; Torres-Guzman & Goodwin, 1995).

**Instructional Level**

The NCES SASS99–00 reports that within 3.0 million full-time equivalency K–12 teachers, there were only 9.7% new teachers with 3 years or less classroom experience. Within this group, 56.7% (1.7 million) are elementary school teachers, 35% (1.2 million) are secondary-age teachers, and the remaining make up prekindergarten, kindergarten, and teachers who teach nongraded classes or who are not assigned a specific grade (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). The NCES study (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a) shows no significant difference between elementary and secondary new teachers.

School program types are classified as traditional public school status institutions with unique purposes, but excluding charter schools. School program types help to define the new teacher’s working conditions with this additional variable and will provide valuable information to the depth of this study. Elementary and secondary levels are included in this research study. The elementary group includes 1st through 5th grades and the secondary group includes 6th through 12th grades.

The career path, encumbered with environmental risks both within the profession and from the conditions of the school workplace, contributes to more than
30% of the attrition rates for novice teachers (Chase, 1998). Consequently, gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level were also studied in this study.

Research Procedures and Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) is used for the statistical procedures and data analysis of this study. The SPSS data file was utilized to extract the new teacher factor from the 1999–2000 School and Staffing Survey (SASS) Public School Teacher Questionnaire. The questionnaire items and responses extracted were of direct relevance to the research topic and the concerns surrounding the relationship between new teacher career commitment and retention strategies: induction program, mentoring, seminars/classes, common planning time, scheduled formal collaboration, networking, supportive administrative communication, extra help, and observational visits. Data were disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level in the analysis. Finally, data were reported in statistical summaries so that individual respondents are not identified.

Research Procedures

New teacher survey responses are analyzed according to the study objectives. Chi-square and logistic regression tests were used according to the specific data gathered from various survey questionnaire items. Chi-square tests were used for Research Questions 1 and 2. The frequencies and percentages for each item of SASS were calculated, and the results obtained from the analysis of the data were presented.
in table form. A logistic regression was conducted for Research Question 3 to assess the relation between new teacher career commitment and the nine support activities and practices. The criterion (commitment) variable was dichotomous and the predictor variables (retention strategies) were dichotomous also.

Weighting and Relative Weighting

A relative sample weight, based on the SASS 99–00 final weight, was utilized to approximate the population and to adjust to the actual sample size of the study. According to Shen (1997), the findings may be generalized to the national population of public school new teacher respondents with relative weights. In this study, data are representative of the national population of new public school teachers with 3 years or less classroom experience (see Table 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Teacher Sample</th>
<th>Unweighted</th>
<th>Weighted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Teachers ≤ 3 years experience</td>
<td>6,650</td>
<td>70,872</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A cross-sectional analysis includes disaggregated data across specific levels of career commitment and supportive retention strategies. Distribution data for new teachers are presented according to gender (male and female); race/ethnicity includes Anglo (White, Caucasian), African American (Black), Hispanic, American Indian,
Aleut, Eskimo or Alaskan Native (AIAN), and Asian-Pacific Islander (API); and instructional level (elementary and secondary). An alpha of .05 is commonly used in studies of the behavioral sciences (Glass & Hopkins, 1996; Reynolds, 1984; Rudestam & Newton, 2001) and was used in this study to determine statistical significances.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1

Are new teachers committed to their chosen careers? Does career commitment vary by new teachers’ gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level?

To examine new teacher commitment, a SASS99–00 public school teacher questionnaire item was selected: How long do you plan to remain in teaching? Responses were reported on a 1–5 scale: (1) As long as I am able; (2) Until I am eligible for retirement; (3) Will probably continue unless something better comes along; (4) Definitely plan to leave teaching as soon as I can; and (5) Undecided at this time. For convenience and logic, the first two responses (#1 and #2) are grouped into a singular item and coded as “Very Committed to Teaching”; the third, fourth, and fifth responses are grouped into a singular item and coded as “Not So or Not Committed to Teaching” (see Table 2).

In the second part of Research Question 1, data are presented percentages according to new teachers’ career commitment and the selected predictor variables: gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level (see Tables 3–5).
Table 2

SASS New Teacher Career Commitment Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Survey Item</th>
<th>Response #1</th>
<th>Response #2</th>
<th>Response #3</th>
<th>Response #4</th>
<th>Response #5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long do you plan to remain in teaching? (Career Commitment)</td>
<td>As long as I am able.</td>
<td>Until I am eligible for retirement.</td>
<td>Will probably continue unless something better comes along.</td>
<td>Definitely plan to leave teaching as soon as I can.</td>
<td>Undecided at this time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Commitment (Re-coded)</th>
<th>COMMITTED TO TEACHING</th>
<th>NOT SO or NOT COMMITTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 3

SASS New Teacher Career Commitment by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Commitment</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VERY COMMITTED</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT SO or NOT COMMITTED</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

SASS Career Commitment by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Commitment</th>
<th>AIAN (%)</th>
<th>API (%)</th>
<th>Blk (%)</th>
<th>Wht (%)</th>
<th>Hisp (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VERY COMMITTED</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT SO or NOT COMMITTED</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

SASS New Teacher Career Commitment by Instructional Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Commitment</th>
<th>Elementary (%)</th>
<th>Secondary (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VERY COMMITTED</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT SO or NOT COMMITTED</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2

Do new teachers participate in the following retention strategies: formal teacher support, collegial support, and administrative support? Does participation vary by new teachers' gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level?

Nine questionnaire items were extracted from the public school teacher SASS 1999–2000 data collection, to examine the following new teacher retention support practices and activities: induction programs, mentoring, seminars/classes for beginners, common planning time, scheduled formal collaboration, networking, communication with administrators, extra help, and observational visits to other buildings, which were grouped into three retention strategies: (1) formal teacher support (FTS), (2) collegial support (COLL), and (3) administrative support (ADM).

The first set of questionnaire items examined formal new teacher support. Darling-Hammond (1997) and others suggest that formal teacher induction programs are often structured and new teachers are assigned a mentor or master teacher for the beginning years of teaching. To measure formal new teacher support, three SASS
public school teacher questionnaire items were extracted: (1) *During your first year, did you participate in a teacher induction program?* (2) *Did you work closely with a master or mentor teacher in your subject area?* (3) *Did you participate in seminars/classes for beginners?*

The second set of questionnaire items examines collegial support. The literature also suggests that supporting beginning teachers is not just the responsibility of a trained mentor teacher; it is a collaborative effort from all teachers who have varying degrees of classroom experience (Moore-Johnson et al., 2001). The following three collegial-related SASS questionnaire items support this pedagogy: (1) *Did you participate in common planning time with teachers in your subject?* (2) *Did you participate in regularly-scheduled collaboration with other teachers on issues of instruction?* (3) *Did you participate in a network of teachers (e.g., organized by an outside agency or Internet)?*

The third, and final, set of questionnaire items examine administrative support: (1) *Did you participate in regular supportive communication with your principal, other administrators, or department chair?* (2) *Did you receive extra help (i.e., teacher assistant, aide, etc.?* (3) *Did you participate in observational visits to other schools?*

All of the questions in each set are reported with *Yes* or *No* responses and measured in nominal data. The statistical outcomes are calculated and presented in tables to show distribution frequencies and percentages among the retention strategies.
The findings of new teachers' participation in the activities were summarized according to each support practice and activity and were presented in percentages for comparative purposes. Nominal data were calculated, reported in percentages, and illustrated in a new teacher participation summary (see Table 6).

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Induction Program #136</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTS Mentor/Master Teacher #147</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars for Beginners #140</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Planning #139</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLL Scheduled Collaboration #154</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Network #156</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Communication #142</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADM Extra Help #141</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Visits #152</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the second part of Research Question 2, data were presented in percentages according to new teachers participation in the retention strategies according to the selected predictor variables: gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level.
Gender

First, participation according to gender was calculated for male and female new teachers and were presented in table format (see Table 7).

Table 7
SASS New Teacher Support Participation by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female %</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>$p$ value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction Programs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars for Beginners</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Planning Time</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Collaboration</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Communication</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Help</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Visits</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race/Ethnicity

Second, participation was calculated by race/ethnicity across the five groups in the study: American Indian/Alaskan Native (AIAN), Asian Pacific Islanders (API), African American (Blk), Caucasian (Anglo), and Hispanic (Hisp). The findings on the
relationship between race/ethnicity and participation in support activities were presented in Table 8.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction Programs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Planning Time</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Collaboration</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Communication</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Help</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Visits</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 1 = AIAN; 2 = API; 3 = Blk; 4 = Anglo; 5 = Hispanic.

Instructional Level

Finally, the relationship between new teacher participation and instructional level was investigated. In this study, grades 1–6 represent elementary level new teachers and grades 7–12 represent secondary level new teachers (see Table 9).
Table 9
SASS New Teacher Support Participation by Instructional Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Elem. %</th>
<th>Second. %</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction Programs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars for Beginners</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Planning Time</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Collaboration</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Communication</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Help</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Visits</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 3

*In America's public schools, does a relationship exist between new teacher career commitment and new teacher retention strategies?*

For the final research question, a logistic regression design is utilized to assess the relation between career commitment and several predictor (new teacher support activities and practices) variables. The level of career commitment (dependent variable) is coded as “Very Committed”—As long as I am able and Until I am eligible for retirement, and “Not So or Not Committed”—Will probably continue...
unless something better comes along. Definitely plan to leave teaching as soon as I can, and Undecided at this time. The research findings for new teacher career commitment and retention strategies were calculated and presented in table format. The responses to the outcome measure (career commitment) were grouped and re-coded to indicate 1 for “Very Committed” and 0 for “Not So or Not Committed.” For the nine independent variables (retention strategies), 1 indicates “took part in the activity” and 0 indicates “did not take part in the activity” (see Table 10).

Table 10
SASS Logistical Regression Analysis Predicting New Teacher Career Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Planning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Help</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Visits</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.
Chapter Summary

This chapter described the research design and instrumentation, validity and reliability, sample size, and data analysis procedures for this new teacher study. The focus of the study was presented in three main research questions: Are new teachers committed to their chosen career? Do new teachers participate in the following retention strategies: formal teacher support (new teacher induction programs, master/mentor teachers, and classes/seminars for beginners); collegial support (common planning time, scheduled collaboration, and networking with an outside agency); and administrative support (supportive communication with administrators and department chairpersons, extra classroom help, and observational visits to other schools)? In America's public schools, does a relationship exist between new teacher career commitment and retention strategies?

Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were used for Research Questions 1 and 2, and a logistic regression was employed for Research Question 3. Assuming that there is a relationship in the sample, this research infers whether such a relationship holds for the population from which it was drawn.

For Questions 1 and 2, I described teachers' level of commitment to teaching and their participation in support retention strategies. I then inquired into, via chi-square tests, whether there was a relationship between career commitment and participation in support/retention strategies, on the one hand, and gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level on the other. For Question 3, I examined, via logistic regression, where there was a relationship between the level of career
commitment and whether or not teachers took part in the nine support/retention activities.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

As beginning teachers continue to vacate the teaching profession at a more disproportionate rate than their more experienced colleagues, research supporting new teachers in public schools across America proves to be a valid study. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the relationship between new teacher career commitment and new teacher retention strategies. The research findings are presented in this chapter based on data collected by the National Center for Educational Statistics for the 1999–2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). The latest national data were released in August 2002. The research items were extracted from the Public School Teacher Questionnaire of SASS for new teachers with 3 years or less classroom experience.

Building on the literature review, the research findings include descriptions and any uniqueness of new teacher career commitment and new teacher retention strategies across three predictor variables, which include gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level. All data are relatively weighted and the frequencies and percentages for each questionnaire item were organized, calculated, and analyzed according to the purpose of the study and a summary presented in this chapter. Descriptive statistics of the sample and other findings were also included in Chapter IV.
For the sake of clarity, the three research questions that guided this study are re-introduced here.

Research Questions

1. Are new teachers committed to their chosen careers? Does career commitment vary by new teachers’ gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level?

2. Do new teachers participate in the following retention strategies: (a) formal teacher support (FTS); (b) collegial support (COLL); and (c) administrative support (ADM)? Does participation vary by new teachers’ gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level?

3. In America’s public schools, does a relationship exist between new teacher career commitment and new teacher retention strategies?

Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

Over 75,000 public school teachers were randomly selected to participate in SASS1999–00. Relatively weighted measures were utilized in the study to achieve statistics representative of the national public school teacher population. There were 6,650 new teachers extracted from the original count (N = 77,522). The new teacher group was only 8.6% of the total public school teacher group.

Gender

Gender was measured on a 2-point nominal scale and respondents indicated male or female. The results revealed that among the 6,650 new teachers, there were
more female (66.7%) than male (33.3%) in this study. The gender distribution is illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution of New Teachers by Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public School Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6,650)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 2,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 4,434</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race/Ethnicity

Other descriptive statistical analyses among the public school teachers by race and/or ethnicity are presented. The findings from the five-part race/ethnicity group revealed that the majority of new teachers were Anglo (80.2%), and 20% made up four minority groups that include: African American (7.0%) and Hispanic (6.2%). The remaining minority groups were all less than 5%: Asian Pacific Islander (3.7%) and American Indian/Alaskan Native (2.9%). For reporting purposes, race and ethnicity were coded as AIAN = American Indian/Alaskan Native; API = Asian Pacific Islander; African American = Black; Anglo = White, Caucasian; and Hispanic = Mexican, Puerto Rico, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture origin (regardless of race) teachers (see Table 12).
Table 12
Distribution of New Teachers by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public School Teachers</th>
<th>≤ 3 Years of Experience (6,650)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIAN</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>API</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>5,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instructional Level

The next descriptive statistics provide new teacher information by grade configurations for the elementary level (1st through 6th grades) and secondary level (7th through 12th grades). There were more secondary (66.2%) than elementary level (33.8%) new teachers (see Table 13).

Research Question 1

*Are new teachers committed to their chosen careers? Does new teacher career commitment vary by gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level?*

The data revealed that there were differences in the level of career commitment among public school new teachers. The data also show that new
teachers’ initial commitment to their chosen career is congruent with the literature that claims today’s beginning teachers remain in the classroom and want to make a difference in the lives of their students (Gitomer et al., 1999; Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Halford, 1998). The dependent variable, career commitment, is reported on a 5-point scale and recoded to represent the new teacher’s strength of career commitment as “Very Committed” and “Not So or Not Committed” to the teaching profession. The results of the data analyses were calculated and reported in frequencies and percentages for the distribution of new teacher career commitment (see Table 14).

As illustrated in Table 14, most of the new teachers were “Very Committed” (62.3%) and the remaining new teachers reported that they were “Not So or Not Committed” (37.7%) to their chosen career in the teaching profession. Disaggregated data answer a host of questions regarding who is more committed in their chosen career, as well as investigate equity concerns. Career commitment was examined in greater depth with the second part of Research Question 1, according to new teacher gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level.
Table 14

Summary of New Teacher Career Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public School New Teachers (6,650)</th>
<th>New Teacher Career Commitment ≤ 3 Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERY COMMITTED</td>
<td>4,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT SO OR NOT COMMITTED</td>
<td>2,502</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender**

A chi-square test was conducted to analyze new teacher career commitment by gender. The results of the chi-square tests for the nominal items were summarized and reported in frequencies and percentages for male and female new teachers (see Table 15).

Sixty-four percent of new female teachers were very committed to teaching. The corresponding statistic was 60% for new male teachers. The difference is statistically significant ($X^2 = 67.7, p < .001$). The finding suggested that female new teachers are more likely to remain in teaching than their male counterparts.

**Race/Ethnicity**

As illustrated in Table 16, the data analyses revealed that the strongest career commitment in the race/ethnicity category included American Indian/Alaskan
(69.6%), Hispanic (64.2%), and Anglo (62.5%) new teachers. The weakest groups for career commitment included Asian Pacific Islander (58.4%) and African American (58.2%) new teachers.

Table 15
New Teacher Career Commitment by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Commitment</th>
<th>Males (2,216)</th>
<th>Females (4,434)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VERY COMMITTED (62.3%)</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT SO OR NOT COMMITTED (37.7%)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $X^2 (1) = 67.7; p < .001.$

Table 16
New Teacher Career Commitment by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Career Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AIAN (191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERY COMMITTED (62.3%)</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT SO OR NOT COMMITTED (37.7%)</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $X^2 (4) = 41.2; p < .001.$
Data from this study did not collaborate with past research that suggested White teachers are more likely to leave teaching than African American teachers (Murname et al., 1991). The findings of this study showed that the percentages for American Indian/Alaskan Native (69.6%), Hispanic (64.2%), and Anglo (62.5%) new teachers were above the new teacher commitment frequency percentage (62.3%). Clearly, American Indian/Alaskan Native beginning teachers are more likely to remain in the profession than other groups in this category. Out of five race/ethnic groups, African American teachers are least likely to remain in teaching, when compared to the other four race/ethnic groups in this category.

**Instructional Level**

The data analyses showed new teachers at the elementary level were slightly more committed to their chosen career than their counterparts at the secondary level, and there was a statistically significant difference between the instructional levels. Sixty-nine percent of new elementary teachers indicated that they were very committed to teaching; the corresponding statistics for new secondary teachers was 59.2% (see Table 17).

**Summary of Research Question 1**

Overall, the findings of this study suggested that a significant percentage of new teachers (62.3%) plan to remain in the teaching profession. In addition, novice teachers with 3 years or less classroom experience were very committed if (a) they
Table 17

New Teacher Career Commitment by Instructional Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Commitment</th>
<th>Instructional Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary (2,250)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary (4,400)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERY COMMITTED (62.3%)</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT SO OR NOT COMMITTED (37.7%)</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. X² (1) = 83.1; p < .001.

were female, (b) teaching in grades 1–6, and (c) American Indian/Alaskan Native, Anglo, or Hispanic. Because of the differences among various teacher groups, an examination of effective ways to keep highly qualified, competent, and enthusiastic new teachers in the classroom required further examination.

Research Question 2

Do new teachers participate in the following retention strategies: formal teacher support (FTS), collegial support (COLL), and administrative support (ADM)? Does participation vary by new teachers’ gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level?

Nine key new teacher retention and support indicators were selected based on the literature review. The retention support practices and activities were grouped into
three retention strategies (FTS, COLL, ADM). The results were calculated, recorded, and presented in frequencies and percentages. Statistics on new teachers’ participation in retention strategies were summarized and presented in Table 18.

Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Induction Program #136</td>
<td>6,368</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTS Mentor/Master Teacher #147</td>
<td>6,368</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars for Beginners #140</td>
<td>6,368</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Planning #139</td>
<td>6,368</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>61.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLL Scheduled Collaboration #154</td>
<td>6,650</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Network #156</td>
<td>6,650</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Communication #142</td>
<td>6,368</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADM Extra Help #141</td>
<td>6,368</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>73.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Visits #152</td>
<td>6,650</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>70.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Formal Teacher Support (FTS)*

According to the literature, first-year teachers benefit from formal structured support programs that often include mentoring programs and in-service for beginners (ASCD, 2000; Blair-Larsen, 1998; Breaux, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1994). Teacher induction programs, assigned mentor and master teachers, and seminars and classes
for beginners were examined in the formal teacher support strategy. Close to 60% of the new teachers participated in formal teacher support activities and practices. The findings revealed that during the first year in the classroom, the highest formal support participation was mentor or master teachers (59.8%) and the least support participation was for new teachers who attended seminars or classes for beginners (56.8%).

Collegial Support (COLL)

According to the research, collegiality is a powerful strategy that helps keep new teachers in education (ASCD, 2000). The data indicated that there were differences for participation in various retention strategies related to collegial support. For instance, the highest collegial support participation was scheduled formal collaboration (58.5%) and the least support in this category was teacher networking with outside agencies (21.1%).

Administrative Support (ADM)

Administrative support is best achieved in the form of encouragement, resources, and time (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Ganser, 1999; Huling-Austin et al., 1989). The highest administrative support participation was supportive communication with building principals, other administrators, and department chairpersons (77.0%), and the least participation was extra help in the form of classroom aides and assistants (26.1%).
In the aforementioned, results were reported in relation to the three retention strategies. Another way to examine the same data is to group the activities from the most participated to the least participated continuum. The results were organized into four percentage groups to show the level of the new teachers’ participation. The four quartiles, organized by percentage, were then coded as High Participation (High), Medium-High Participation (Med-High), Medium-Low Participation (Med-Low), and Low Participation (Low) (see Appendix C).

Low Participation

The bottom quartile included support activities with a range of new teacher participation of 1–25%. Only one of the nine support activities was in this group. From the findings, collegial support, in the form of teacher networking, showed the lowest new teacher participation (21.1%).

Low-Medium Participation

The second quartile ranged from 26%–50% and showed low-medium new teacher participation in three of the retention and support activities. According to the findings, common planning time with other teachers in subject area (38%), participated in observational visits to other schools (29%), and received extra help in the form of teacher aides or teacher assistants (26%) fell below 50 percentage points. There were two collegial support (COLL) and one administrative support (ADM)
activities that showed medium-low participation. Further examination placed the three support activities in two specific strategic areas, collegial and administrative support.

Medium Participation

The third quartile of 51%–74% represented medium participation. The data analyses indicated that four of the activities were within this range. As shown by the results, new teachers worked closely with mentor or master teachers (59.8%), engaged in formal scheduled collaboration regarding instructional practices (58.5%), participated in induction programs (58.1%), and attended classes and/or seminars specifically for beginners. Closer observations revealed that these activities represented collegial (COLL) and administrative (ADM) retention strategies, but did not include support activities in the formal new teacher support strategy (FTS).

Medium-High Participation

The 4th and top quartile of new teacher participation included a range between 76% and 99%. In this group, there was only one new teacher support activity. The findings showed 77% of the new teachers in the study participated in regular supportive communication with their principal, other administrators, or department chair. According to this study, this activity represents administrative support (ADM).

The second part of Research Question 2 also provided a more in-depth examination of new teacher participation, and interesting findings were revealed from
the disaggregated analysis of SASS99–00 for gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level. To show new teacher participation in nine retention activities according to the study’s three predictor variables, chi-square tests were utilized.

Support participation was examined in greater depth with the second part of Research Question 2, according to new teacher gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level.

**Gender**

The chi-square tests revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between new male and female teacher participation regarding the following support activities: seminars for beginners, common planning, scheduled collaboration, teacher networking, and observational visits. Statistically, male and female new teacher participation did differ significantly in four support activities. For example, new female teachers participated more frequently in mentoring and extra help than new male teachers. Conversely, new male teachers participated more frequently in induction programs and supportive administrative communication than new female teachers (see Table 19).

**Race/Ethnicity**

Chi-square tests were utilized to examine new teacher race/ethnicity retention strategy activity participation. The results indicated several key findings for new teacher differences among five race/ethnic categories: (1) AIAN = American Indian/
### Table 19

New Teacher Support Participation by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female %</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction Programs (58.1%)</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>25.105</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring (59.8%)</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>13.200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars for Beginners (56.8%)</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>3.191</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Planning Time (38.3%)</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>3.133</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Collaboration (58.5%)</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>1.734</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking (21.1%)</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Communication (77.0%)</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>11.055</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Help (26.1%)</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>15.110</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Visits (29.1%)</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.787</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alaskan Native; (2) API = Asian Pacific Islander; (3) Blk = African-American; (4) Anglo = Caucasian, White; and (5) Hispanic = Spanish speaking, regardless of race.

Chi-square tests revealed no difference in the race/ethnicity for induction programs, mentoring, networking, and supportive administrative communication.

There were significant differences at the .01 level in the race/ethnicity category in five
support activities. For example, novice Asian Pacific Islander teachers participated more frequently in *networking* and *observational visits* than their counterparts in the race/ethnicity group; new African American teachers participated more frequently in *common planning* and *scheduled collaboration* than their counterparts in the race/ethnicity group; and beginning Hispanic teachers participated more frequently in *seminars for beginners* than their respective counterparts (see Table 20).

**Instructional Level**

Chi-square tests revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between new elementary and secondary level teacher participation in the areas of *seminars for beginners*, teacher *networking*, and supportive administrative *communication*. Statistically, new elementary and secondary level teachers did differ significantly in six support practices and activities. For example, new teachers in 1st through 6th grades participated more frequently in *mentoring*, *common planning*, *scheduled collaboration*, *extra help*, and *observational visits* than their counterparts in the upper level grades. Conversely, new teachers in 7th through 12th grades participated more frequently in *induction programs* than their counterparts in the lower level grades (see Table 21).

**Research Question 2 Summary**

America's public schools provide novice teachers with opportunities to participate in some type of formal or informal new teacher retention strategy. Over
Table 20
New Teacher Support Participation by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>AIAN %</th>
<th>API %</th>
<th>African Am. %</th>
<th>Anglo (White) %</th>
<th>Hispanic %</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction Programs (58.1%)</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>3.992</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring (59.8%)</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>10.296</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars for Beginners (56.8%)</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>102.190</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Planning Time (38.3%)</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>37.187</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Collaboration (58.5%)</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>34.184</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking (21.1%)</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>11.426</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Communication (77.0%)</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>5.399</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Help (26.1%)</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>42.646</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Visits (29.1%)</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>17.202</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

half of the new teachers participated in supportive administrative communication (77.0%), mentoring (60%), formal scheduled collaboration (59%), induction programs (58%), and seminars/classes for beginners (57%). However, despite the
Table 21
New Teacher Support Participation by Instructional Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Elementary %</th>
<th>Secondary %</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction Programs (58.1%)</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>13.652</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring (59.8%)</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>7.653</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars for Beginners (56.8%)</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>3.492</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Planning Time (38.3%)</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>123.439</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Collaboration (58.5%)</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>70.091</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking (21.1%)</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>1.264</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Communication (77.0%)</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Help (26.1%)</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>203.849</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Visits (29.1%)</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>61.057</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

seemingly logical link between retention and support, there were some support activities that had significantly weak new teacher participation. Case in point, there were four activities with less than 50% participation: networking (21.1%), extra help (26.1%), observational visits (29.1%), and common planning time (38.3%).

An examination across three predictor variables, gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level, indicated that there were significant differences at the .01 or .05
levels. For example, new male and female teacher participation did differ in four support activities and practices. Females participated more frequently than their male counterparts in mentoring (62%) and extra help (28%). Conversely, males participated more frequently than females in induction programs (63%) and regular supportive communication from principals, other administrators, and department chairpersons (80%).

There were also differences in new teacher participation across the race/ethnicity category for five retention strategies. Case in point, new Asian Pacific Islander teachers participated more frequently in networking (26%), extra help (37%), and observational visits (35%) than their counterparts in the race/ethnicity category. New African American teachers participated more frequently in mentoring (65%), common planning (51%) time for instructional issues, and formal scheduled collaboration (67%) with colleagues than their respective counterparts in the race/ethnicity category. New Hispanic teachers participated more frequently in seminars and classes for beginners (72%) than their American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian Pacific Islanders, African Americans, and Anglo (White) counterparts.

Finally, in the instructional level category, new elementary teacher participated more frequently in mentoring (62%), common planning (48%), formal scheduled collaboration (66%), extra help (37%), and observational visits (35%) than their secondary level counterparts. Conversely, new secondary teachers participated more frequently in induction programs (60%) than elementary teachers.
The results related to Research Question 2 demonstrated that public schools across America offered a variety of new teacher support practices and activities to new teachers and participation varied according to the type of support and across the three predictor variables (gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level).

Research Question 3

_In America's public schools, does a relationship exist between new teacher career commitment and new teacher retention strategies?_

Logistic regression was conducted to predict new teachers' career commitment based on their involvement in nine retention strategies. The data were coded as follows. For the independent variable, 1 was for “Very Committed,” and 0 for “Not So or Not Committed.” For the nine independent variables, 1 was for “took part in the activity” and 0 “did not take part in the activity.”

The data fit the model reasonably well. With all the nine predictors entered at the same time, the improvement in the chi-square value, in comparison to the null model only containing the constant, was statistically significant ($X^2 = 102.1, df = 9, p < .001$). Sixty-two percent of the cases were correctly classified. The statistics for the logistic regression are displayed in Table 22. As we can see, four predictors were statistically significant at .05 or .01 levels. They include (a) common planning time with teachers in same subject; (b) regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers on issues of instruction; (c) regular supportive communication with principal, other administrators, and department chairpersons; and (d) extra help in the form of
classroom aides and assistants. The four support activities and practices represent two retention strategies: Collegial Support (COLL) and Administrative Support (ADM).

Table 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>-.073</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>1.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td>-.075</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Planning</td>
<td>.179*</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>1.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>.215**</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>1.239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>1.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.277**</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>1.319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Help</td>
<td>.256**</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>1.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Visits</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05. **p < .01.

A careful reading of the statistics in Table 22 revealed the following. For new teachers who took part in common planning, they are 19.6% more likely to be very committed to their chosen career than those who did not take part in common planning. New teachers who participated in regularly scheduled collaboration regarding instructional strategies were 23.9% more likely to be very committed to teaching than those who did not participate in regularly scheduled collaboration.
Beginners who reported that they had regular supportive administrative communication with their building principals, other administrators, and department chairs were 31.9% more likely to be very committed than those who did not have supportive administrative communication. Finally, novice teachers who were provided extra help in the form of classroom aides and assistants were 29.2% more likely to be very committed than those who did not receive extra help.

In the third research question, the author inquired into whether there is a relation between career commitment and participation in retention strategies. The results of logistic regression indicated that participation in (a) common planning time with teachers in same subject; (b) regularly scheduled formal collaboration with other teachers on instructional issues; (c) supportive administrative communication with principals, other administrators, and department chairs; and (d) extra help in the form of classroom aides and assistants, were related to new teachers being more committed to teaching.

Chapter Summary

Several key findings emerged from the initial examination of new teacher career commitment and support. First, for the most part, new teachers plan to remain in the teaching profession (62.3%). However, career commitment varied across new teachers’ gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level. Case in point: (a) more females than males were very committed to teaching, (b) African Americans (58.2%) and Asian Pacific Islanders (58.4%) were the least committed to teaching, and
elementary level teachers (68.6%) were more committed than their secondary level counterparts (59.2%).

Secondly, public schools and districts provided a variety of formal and informal support to beginning teachers, which included induction programs; mentoring; seminars and classes for beginners; common planning time with teachers in the same subject area; scheduled collaboration with colleagues regarding instructional issues; networking with outside agencies; supportive communication with principals, other administrators, and department chairs; extra help in the form of classroom aides and assistants; and observational visits to other buildings.

Third, the nine retention strategies ranked from low to medium-high on a least (weak) to most (strong) participation continuum. Strong participation included seminars for beginners (57%), induction programs (58%), scheduled collaboration (59%), mentoring (60%), and supportive communication (77%). Weak participation was observed for common planning (38%), observational visits (29%), extra help (26%), and teacher network (21%). Despite the seemingly logical link between retention strategies and career commitment, new teachers did not show strong participation in all of the support activities and practices.

Fourth, the support activities and retention strategies varied across new teacher gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level. For example, new female teachers participated more frequently in mentoring and extra help activities and practices than their male counterparts. Conversely, new male teachers participated more frequently in induction programs and supportive administrative communication...
than new female teachers. In the race/ethnicity category, Asian Pacific Islanders participated more frequently than their counterparts in networking, extra help, and observational visits; African Americans participated more frequently than their counterparts in mentoring, common planning, and scheduled collaboration; and Hispanics participated more frequently than their counterparts in seminars for beginners. Finally, novice elementary teachers participated more frequently in mentoring, common planning, scheduled collaboration, extra help, and observational visits than secondary teachers. Conversely, new secondary teachers participated more frequently in induction programs than their elementary level counterparts.

Finally, the results related to Research Question 3 indicated that some retention strategies are related on career commitment and some are not. For example, new teachers who took part in supportive administrative communication were 32% more likely to be fully committed to the teaching profession than those who did not participate in regular supportive administrative communication. The corresponding statistics were 29%, 24%, and 20%, respectively, than nonparticipants in these activities. Overall, the data in this study suggested that new teachers who had collegial and administrative support were more likely to be very committed to their chosen teaching careers than those who did not have assistance in these areas.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Far too many enthusiastic, well-trained, and competent new teachers are abandoning their dreams of a long career in teaching and are deciding to leave the profession. This study examined new teacher career commitment and new teacher retention strategies to determine whether a relationship existed between the two. Nine effective new teacher support practices and activities emerged from the literature review in Chapter II and were grouped into three retention strategies for further study: (1) Formal Teacher Support (FTS)—induction, mentoring, and seminars for beginners; (2) Collegial Support (COLL)—common planning time, scheduled collaboration, and networking; and (3) Administrative Support (ADM)—communication, extra help, and observational visits. This chapter also described any uniqueness of new teacher career commitment and retention strategy across three areas: gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level. Lastly, the implications of the findings and recommendations for future study were discussed in this final chapter.

Conclusions

New teachers enter the teaching profession with their eyes wide open to the challenges and demands facing educators today. Moreover, beginners with 3 years or less classroom experience plan to stay in teaching. Providing beginning teachers with
support, guidance, and direction appears to be the logical solution to the nation’s devastating attrition rate among new teachers. Regardless of how competent and enthusiastic new teachers are, any type of support during the crucial first year in the classroom has a positive effect on new teacher career commitment.

Second, public schools offer a variety of formal and informal support opportunities for new teacher participation, and the degree of participation varies depending on the activity. Third, some support practices and activities had an effect on new teacher career commitment and some did not. Consequently, there appears to be a logical link between new teacher support and new teacher career commitment, but the greater the support does not necessarily guarantee stronger career commitment. More importantly, the more new teachers are supported during their initial years in the classroom—the more likely claims such as “education is the profession that eats its young” (Halford, 1998) can be dismissed.

Discussion

New teachers are committed to their chosen careers in the teaching profession.

Typically, public schools across America struggle with rising new teacher attrition and turnover. However, conclusions from this study are both consistent with and challenge previous research regarding new teacher retention (career commitment). Slightly more than one third of the new teachers reported that they were undecided about their career choice in teaching or that they were planning to
leave as soon as possible, and this group represented beginners “not so or not committed” to the teaching profession. Moreover, 62.3% of the beginning teachers indicated they were “very committed” to teaching. These findings were encouraging, in that a significant percentage of new teachers plan to remain in teaching until retirement age and beyond. This finding is consistent with previous new teacher studies (Gitomer et al., 1999; Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Halford, 1998).

Research over the last several years suggests that a fast-growing, diverse linguistic, and ethnic student population places a huge demand for gender and ethnic homogeneity in the nation’s public school teacher workforce (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ingersoll, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2000a; Weiss & Weiss, 1999). In this study, 60% of the new male teachers and 64% of the new female teacher population reported that they were very committed to their chosen career. Consequently, these results indicate that there continues to be a dominant female presence in classrooms across America.

Experts in education suggest that public schools need an ethnically diverse faculty to meet the diverse needs of a fast-growing multicultural student population (Kestner, 1994; UTC, 2000). Moreover, it is also projected that over the next decade, there will be a significant increase in student enrollment for Asian American, African American, and Hispanic students (Quality Counts, 2000: Who Should Teach?, 2000). Although more than half of the new teachers in each race/ethnic group were very committed to teaching, African American (58.2%) and Asian Pacific Islander (58.4%) new teachers showed the least commitment when compared to their counterparts. On
the other hand, Hispanics (64.2%) were more committed than Anglo (62.5%), but were less committed than American Indian/Alaskan Native (69.6%) new teachers. It is further believed that career commitment will likely increase if effective support practices are in place for all race/ethnic groups.

Public schools across America are experiencing the effects of student growth, and the major increases are seen with elementary-age learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a). As a result, more elementary teachers are needed to meet these growing enrollment demands. In this study, teachers in grades 1 through 6 were more committed to the teaching profession than their counterparts in grades 7 through 12. There was no clear explanation for this difference, but the speculation is that a strong compassion and willingness to help young learners are key factors in teacher retention. Close to 70% of the elementary age teachers were very committed to their chosen careers in the classroom, and this is good news for our nation’s public schools.

Conclusively, a significant number of new teachers plan to remain in teaching until retirement age and beyond. Consequently, an examination of effective ways to retain these competent and enthusiastic beginning teachers in the classroom continues to be a critical concern.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AMERICA ARE SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS.

Overall, public schools provide a variety of formal and informal new teacher support opportunities. However, participation varies depending on the type of retention strategy and sometimes across three predictor variables: gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level. Drawing from the literature, there were several
Effective approaches of support for beginning teachers extracted for this study: induction programs, mentoring, seminars, common planning time, networking, supportive communication with administrators, extra help, and observational visits.

**Formal Teacher Support (FTS)**—Because of the difficult transition into the teaching profession, formal support is crucial to the beginning teacher's commitment. Experts suggest that the first year is the most important, as it determines, to a significant degree, whether or not teachers will stay in teaching and what kind of teacher they will become (AFT, 2001; Breaux, 1999; Epseland, 1998; Hope, 1999). In this study, formal support to new teachers includes formal induction programs, highly trained, content-specific assigned mentors, and comprehensive professional development in the form of seminars for beginners. Each support activity or practice provides novices with guidance and assistance during the first year in the teaching profession. In this study, there were more participants than nonparticipants in all three FTS activities: formal induction (58%), assigned mentors (60%), and seminars for beginners (60%). Clearly, in the area of formal support, there were effective support practices in place for the novice teacher during the initial year in the classroom.

New teacher participation in formal support activities and practices was also examined across gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level. There is no difference in formal participation for seminars/classes for beginners. There was more new male than female participation for induction programs (63%) and conversely more new female than male participation in mentoring (61%). There was no clear explanation for the gender differences for formal support.
Differences were found in the race/ethnicity category for formal teacher support in the three retention activities: induction programs, mentoring, and beginners seminars. For example, African Americans had the most participation in mentoring (65%) and Hispanics had the most participation in seminars for beginners (72%) when compared to their respective counterparts. However, there was no difference in induction programs across the race/ethnicity groups. Finally, in formal support, there was no difference between new elementary and secondary teachers for seminars for beginners. There was more new elementary teacher participation for assigned mentor/master teachers (62%) and conversely more new secondary level teacher participation in induction programs (60%).

**Collegial Support (COLL)**—New teachers often report isolation and lack of support as factors in their decision to throw in the towel (Richardson, 1994a). Previous studies also suggest that teacher-to-teacher interaction and collegial support are informal ways of socializing new teachers into their new career and into the profession (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1993; Fullan, 1991). In this study, collegial support included scheduled collaboration, common planning, and networking. All three collegial retention strategies provide new teachers with professional and social interaction. Differences in collegial participation across gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level were also examined. There were no significant differences between new male and female teacher participation in the three collegial retention activities: common planning time, scheduled collaboration, and networking. There were, however, significant differences across the race/ethnicity category. For example, there
was more new African American participation in *common planning* (51%) and *scheduled collaboration* (67%) than their counterparts. On the other hand, there was no statistically significant difference between new elementary and secondary level teachers in the area of collegial support for *networking*, with 20.3% and 21.5%, respectively. However, there was more beginning elementary than secondary level teacher participation in the remaining two collegial activities: *common planning* (48%) and *scheduled collaboration* (66%).

*Administrative Support (ADM)*—Administrators, particularly building principals, have a huge role in meeting the professional and social needs of new teachers. Unfortunately, new teachers who leave teaching often report little support from their administrators as contributing factors to why they drop out of teaching (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996; Richardson, 1994b). Whereas principals have no control over who enters education, they play a huge role on who decides to stay or leave the classroom and/or the profession (ASCD, 2000; Lieberman & Miller, 1994).

*Supportive communication, extra help* in the form of teacher aides and assistants, and opportunities for *observational visits* in other buildings are management decisions often made by building administrators. Regarding administrative support activities, there was no difference between new male and female teacher participation in observational visits to other buildings. However, there was more new male teacher than female teacher participation for *supportive communication* (80%). Conversely, there was more female than male participation for
extra help (28%). In the race/ethnicity category, there were no significant differences found for supportive administrative communication among new American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian Pacific Islander, African American, Anglo, and Hispanic teachers. There were, however, differences in the remaining two administrative support strategies. Case in point, there was more new Asian Pacific Islander teacher participation in extra help (37%) and observational visits (35%) than their counterparts.

With the significant growth in the Hispanic student population (U.S. Department of Education, 2000a), there also appears to be an increase in the Hispanic teacher workforce. Accordingly, school officials are offering more support opportunities to first-year teachers in minority groups. Within the administrative support category, there was more new elementary than secondary teacher participation in all three practices and activities. It could be concluded that the structure in the elementary level is more conducive to these particular support opportunities.

The rank order design clearly revealed that new teachers participated in all nine support activities and practices on a least to most participation continuum. For instance, there was low participation for teacher networking; low-medium participation for common planning time, observational visits, and extra help; medium participation for master/mentors, scheduled collaboration, induction programs, and beginners' classes/seminars; and medium-high participation for supportive
administrative communication. None of the support activities was less than 21% or more than 77% (see Appendix C).

Relationships do exist between new teacher support and new teacher career commitment.

Although the outcomes of this study suggest that public schools are offering a variety of new teacher support strategies, participation may or may not have an effect on career commitment (retention). Certain aspects, in particular, stood out as effective activities and practices in retaining newly hired teachers and four variables were significant. First, new teachers who had regular supportive communication with their principals, other administrators, and department chairs were 32% more likely to be fully committed to their chosen career in education. Second, beginning teachers who had extra help in the classroom in the form of aides and assistants were 29% more likely to remain in the teaching profession. Third, novices who participated in regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers on issues of instruction were 24% more likely to stay in classrooms across America’s public schools. Finally, participants in common planning time with teachers in the same subject were 20% more likely to be fully committed to the teaching profession.

Whereas there is a natural proclivity to link high participation with high career commitment, this is not necessarily the case. For example, participation was extremely low for extra help in the classroom (26%), but new teachers who took part in this support practice were 29% more likely than nonparticipants to be very committed. The same is true for scheduled collaboration, which had 38% new teacher
participation, but new teachers who were involved in formal scheduled collaboration with their colleagues were 24% more likely to be very committed than those who did not participate in collaborative opportunities. Clearly, when novice teachers were minimally supported, they decided to remain in the classroom.

Implications of the Study

In many studies, it is predicted how support and/or lack of support effect the new teacher attrition phenomenon. This study examined career commitment and support across the constructs of several strategies from the perspective of teachers with three years or less classroom experience. Any uniqueness was described across three areas: gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level. To this end, national data were utilized to enhance a rich and comprehensive study. Based on the literature review of new teacher support practices, nine activities were selected and grouped into the following three retention strategy categories: formal teacher support (FTS)—induction, mentoring, and seminars for beginners; collegial support (COLL)—common planning time, scheduled collaboration, and external teacher networking; and administrative support (ADM)—supportive communication, extra help, and observational visits.

First, the findings implied that despite the demands in our nation's public schools, perspective teachers want to make a difference in the lives of young learners. Moreover, new teachers who continue to choose the teaching profession are well aware of the challenges apparent in education today. For example, 62.3% of new
teachers were “very committed” and 37.7% of new teachers were “not so or not committed” to their chosen teaching career.

Secondly, new teachers participated in a variety of retention strategies, such as induction programs, mentoring, seminars for beginners, common planning time, scheduled collaboration, networking, supportive communication, extra help, and observational visits. Participation varied according to the type of retention activity or practice. There was strong and weak retention strategy participation. For instance, over 50% of the new teachers participated in supportive communication (77%), mentoring (60%), scheduled collaboration (59%), induction (58%), and seminars for beginners (57%). Less than 40% of the new teachers participated in networking (21%), extra help (26%), observational visits (29%), and common planning (38%). Moreover, new teacher support ranged from low (1–25%) to medium high (76%–99%) on a participation continuum. This implies that although public schools offer different forms of new teacher support, the distribution of participation varied greatly.

Third, participation in the nine retention strategies varied across new teacher gender, race/ethnicity, and instructional level. For instance regarding gender, there was no difference between male and female participation for seminars, common planning, scheduled collaboration, networking, or observational visits. There was more new male teacher participation for induction programs and supportive communication. Conversely, there was more new female teacher participation for mentoring and extra help.
Next, there were no significant differences across the race/ethnicity category for new teacher participation in *induction programs* and *supportive administrative communication*. There were differences across race/ethnicity participation for *mentoring, seminars, common planning, scheduled collaboration, networking, extra help, and observational visits*. For example, new African American teachers participated more frequently than their new counterparts in *mentoring* (65%), *common planning* (51%), and *scheduled collaboration* (67%). New Asian Pacific Islander teachers participated more frequently than their new counterparts in *networking* (26%), *extra help* (37%), and *observational visits* (35%). New Hispanic teachers participated more frequently than their new counterparts in *seminars* (72%) and *supportive communication* (80%). Clearly new teachers representing minority groups participated in a variety of supportive new teacher retention strategies.

Regarding instructional level, there was no significant difference in new teacher participation for seminars, networking, and supportive communication. New teachers in grades 1–6 and 7–12 did differ in the remaining six support activities. For instance, new elementary teachers participated more frequently in *mentoring* (62%), *common planning time* (48%), *scheduled collaboration* (66%), *extra help* (37%), and *observational visits* (35%). Conversely, new secondary level teachers participated more frequently in only one activity, *induction programs* (60%).

Fourth, a relationship existed between new teacher career commitment and new teacher participation in four retention strategies. For instance, new teachers indicated that were “very committed” to the teaching profession when they
participated in (a) common planning with teachers in the same subject; (b) formal scheduled collaboration with colleagues on instructional issues; (c) supportive communication with principals, other administrators, and department chairpersons; and (d) extra help in the form of classroom aides and assistants.

Depending on the activity, there was an obvious link between new teacher support and career commitment. However, the greater the support did not necessarily imply the greater the commitment. The strength of the relationship between new teacher support and new teacher commitment depended on which type of support the beginning teacher experienced. In some cases, new teachers who had fewer opportunities to engage in some of the activities showed more career commitment. This was especially true for the new African American teacher population, who had over 50% participation in three of the nine support activities and reported the least career commitment among the race/ethnic groups. Perhaps this is the result of African Americans who do not limit themselves to educational careers, but are entering a wider range of professions.

Finally, the results of new teacher support were also consistent with and challenged by current literature that suggests the popularity of induction programs, assigned mentors in the same subject area, and professional development for beginners (AFT, 2001; Brock & Grady, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; NCREL, 2001). For instance, new teachers who were assigned a mentor or master teacher were only 7.4% more likely to be “very committed” to teaching than nonparticipants in mentoring. However, new teachers who had
Supportive communication with principals, other administrators, and department chairs were 31.9% more likely to be “very committed” to teaching than those who did not have supportive administrative communication. Moreover, the types of support practices and activities offered in retention programs by public schools vary, as does their effect on career commitment.

Overall, this study has contributed to a developing body of information dedicated to improving and assisting the next generation of public school teachers. Perceptions of novice teachers regarding support participation and career commitment are likely to capture the attention of school districts, administrators, and other stakeholders responsible for effective new teacher support programs.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Whereas, the results of this study provided key findings regarding new teacher career commitment and new teacher retention strategies, the rising new teacher attrition forecast provides a basis for on-going study in this area. First, the data for the categories of school size and school districts were not examined. Further research in this area could help determine how many new teacher retention strategies and support activities are offered, if any, by school and district size. In addition, the effects of the participation on career commitment across urban, suburban, and rural locations could add to existing research. Moreover, an examination of career commitment from the perspective of the new teachers’ school/district size and location would be valuable to new teacher retention studies.
Second, it would be interesting to gather a deeper knowledge of new teacher support activities according to program content, implementation, duration, and assessment. This is particularly true for mentoring and induction programs, which tend to vary greatly. Further investigation in this area would help answer the question, *What does an effective formal induction program look like?*

Third, it would be ideal to study new teacher support practices and activities by cost-effectiveness because current studies in this area are limited. A study of this type could include effective scheduling and use of personnel to enhance new teacher support opportunities in the areas of collaborating, planning, networking, and visiting and observing effective classroom instruction. This type of approach could possibly identify support opportunities that could be relatively easy to replicate at minimal cost. In a time of limited funding, these results could also be beneficial to financially struggling school districts. Moreover, it would be interesting to replicate this study with future Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS), using the existing set of public school questionnaire items.

Lastly, this study does not examine how other factors such as politics, funding, and leadership styles effect new teacher participation across the nine new teacher support and retention strategies. For these reasons, as well as possibly other important issues, further research is needed.
Appendix A

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Letter of Approval
Date: February 14, 2003

To: Van Cooley, Principal Investigator
    Celeste Shelton-Harris, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Mary Lagerwey, Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 03-01-08

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled “The Relationship Between New Teacher Career Commitment and New Teacher Retention Strategies” has been approved under the exempt 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: February 14, 2004
Appendix B

Permission to Use the Schools and Staffing Survey
Celeste Shelton-Harris  
Assistant Principal  
Portage North Middle Public School  
5808 Oregon Street  
Portage, MI 49024

Dear Dr. Harris:

I am pleased to inform the Portage North Middle Public School that they have met the requirements for accessing the individually identifiable survey database entitled: “SASS: 1999-2000.”

The following items are enclosed for your use:

- One signed copy of the License Agreement, and one copy of the Affidavits of Non-Disclosure; and

Please keep the single copy of the Privacy Act of 1974, National Education Statistics Act of 1994, as amended, and the NCES Security Procedures, enclosed with your initial licensing application, with the executed license for reference by you and those project staff who will be accessing the data. Also retain a copy of the approved data Security Plan with the executed license. Violations of any of the licensing provisions by any member of your research project staff could result in cancellation.

These data are on loan to the Portage North Middle Public School for a period of 1 year commencing with the date of the NCES Commissioner’s signature on the license. You have been assigned license control number: 030306733. Please reference this number in all future correspondence.

If you have any questions, please call Cynthia L. Barton at (202) 502-7307.

Sincerely,

Marilyn M. Seastrom, Ph.D.  
Chief Statistician

Enclosures

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006--
Appendix C

New Teacher Participation Continuum
## Quartile Rank Order of New Teacher Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Teacher %</th>
<th>New Teacher Participation</th>
<th>3 Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium-High</strong> (75%-99%)</td>
<td>Supportive CMO (77.0%)</td>
<td>ADM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master/Mentors (59.8%)</td>
<td>FTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium</strong> (51%-74%)</td>
<td>Scheduled Collaboration (58.5%)</td>
<td>COLL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Induction Programs (58.1%)</td>
<td>FTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beginners’ Seminars/Classes (56.8%)</td>
<td>FTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low-Medium</strong> (26%-50%)</td>
<td>Common Planning (38.3%)</td>
<td>COLL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observational Visits (29.1%)</td>
<td>ADM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extra Help (26.1%)</td>
<td>ADM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low</strong> (1%-25%)</td>
<td>Teacher Networking (21.1%)</td>
<td>COLL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


