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Perceptions of Professional Supports and Early Career Teacher Attrition

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PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORTS AND
EARLY CAREER TEACHER ATTRITION

by

Thomas J. Kolbe

A DISSERTATION

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PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORTS AND
EARLY CAREER TEACHER ATTRITION

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University of Nebraska, 2014

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Early career teachers are moving within or from the profession at an alarming rate. The intent of moving schools, districts, or exiting the profession creates instability in the profession. This is costly to student learning, improvement efforts and financially. Teacher attrition tends to be higher in schools where the need for high quality teaching is the greatest: high-poverty and low-performing schools. Improving teachers' work environment and professional developments are more cost effective and influential in convincing teachers to remain.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions that K-12 early career teachers indicate for the intent of attrition from or within the profession and the relationship to the professional supports of the workplace. A sample of 353 K-12 teachers with two to four years of experience in a Midwestern state responded to a 47-item researcher designed Internet survey. The instrument gathered the participants' perceptions of workload, professional supports, and instability in the workplace as they relate to the intent to move schools, districts, or to exit the profession. Descriptive statistics and logistic regression were used to analyze these variables.

The intent for moving schools, districts and exiting the profession are related to multiple factors including an unmanageable workload and perceptions of position and workplace instability. The intent to move school districts is also related to the lack of professional supports from colleagues, school leadership, and the school climate. The results of the study confirm that multiple professional supports, including job-embedded professional development and a school climate of trust, influence the intent of early career teachers' career decisions.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1—Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose Statement.....	5
Research Questions.....	6
Definition of Terms.....	6
Assumptions.....	8
Methodology.....	9
Limitations	11
Significance of the Study	12
Chapter 2—Review of the Literature.....	13
Introduction.....	13
Teacher Attrition: Supply and Demand	20
Likelihood of Attrition.....	21
Individual Characteristics	21
Workplace Conditions	25
Professional Culture	29
The Nature of Early Career Teaching.....	36
Imbalance During the Early Years.....	38
Teacher Quality in the Early Years.....	42
School Culture as Professional Supports	45
Comprehensive Induction Practices.....	49
Mentoring as Professional Support.....	52
Principal as Professional Support	56

Colleagues as Professional Supports	58
Conclusion	61
Chapter 3—Methodology	64
Introduction.....	64
Research Design.....	65
Variables	70
Instrumentation	71
Study Participants	72
Data Collection Procedures.....	75
Data Analysis	77
Correlations.....	78
Reliability.....	78
Chapter 4—Results	79
Introduction.....	79
Research Questions.....	80
Sample Size.....	81
Participants Demographics	81
Teaching Experience.....	82
Gender, Age, and Ethnicity.....	83
Teacher Certification Program.....	85
Grade Levels	85
Stability in Early Years.....	86
Workload Balance and Imbalance	87
Sense of Imbalance and Workload	88

Prepared for Teaching.....	89
Emotional Demands.....	90
Physical Demands.....	91
Improved Stress Level	91
Manageable Workload.....	93
Workplace Support and Lack Thereof.....	93
Reliance on Colleagues.....	95
Access to Colleagues	95
Collaborative Conversations.....	95
Connecting with Colleagues	96
Willingness for Collegial Support	98
Practices of Comprehensive Induction	101
Regularly Scheduled Meetings	102
Mentors	102
Reliance on a Supportive Climate.....	106
Pressure for Results and Student Achievement	107
Innovative and Risk Taking Among Colleagues	108
Shared Work and Meeting Time.....	108
Recognition and Loyalty.....	109
Reliance on School Leadership	112
Self Reflective Leadership.....	112
Aware Leadership	113
Positive Change	114
Likelihood to Move/Exit and Workplace Instability	115

Positional Stability and Intent to Move or Exit	115
Moving on for Advancement.....	117
Reliance on Colleagues and School Leadership	118
Top Reason for Leaving Teaching.....	119
Teachers' Intent and Predicting Attrition	121
Staying On and Stable.....	123
Moving in the Near Future.....	123
Leavers.....	124
Inferential Analysis for the Intent to Move or Exit.....	125
Predictors for the Intent to Exit Teaching.....	126
Predictors for the Intent to Move Schools	128
Predictors for the Intent to Move Districts	129
Conclusion	130
Chapter 5—Conclusions and Recommendations.....	133
Introduction	133
Conclusions.....	135
Intent and Instability	135
Creating a Sense of Balance in the Early Years	136
Creating a Supportive Workplace.....	138
Creating a Stable Workplace	141
Recommendations.....	145
Recommendation 1	145
Recommendation 2	146
Recommendation 3	147

Recommendation 4	147
Recommendation 5	148
Conclusion	148
References.....	150
Appendices.....	160

List of Figure and Tables

Figure 2.1 Years of Experience and Percent for Attrition.....	23
Table 2.1 Summary of Individual Factors Influencing Attrition	25
Table 2.2 National Rates of Early Career Exit.....	28
Table 2.3 Summary of Workplace Conditions Influencing Attrition	29
Table 2.4 Summary of Professional Supports Influencing Attrition	35
Table 2.5 Summary of Early Career Teachers' Imbalance and Influence on Attrition.....	40
Table 2.6 Professional Culture and Early Career Teachers Moving or Leaving	48
Table 2.7 Leavers after the First Year and Number of Induction Supports.....	50
Table 2.8 Summary of Factors of Professional Supports Influencing Attrition.....	60
Table 3.1 Imbalance and Unsupportive Variables and Best Practices for Teacher Retention	73
Table 3.2 Likelihood Variable and Best Practices for Teacher Retention.....	74
Table 4.1 Amount of Certified Teaching Experience.....	83
Table 4.2 Gender.....	84
Table 4.3 Age Ranges	84
Table 4.4 Ethnicity/Race.....	85
Table 4.5 Institution Granting Teacher Certification.....	86
Table 4.6 Grade Level Mostly Taught In.....	87
Table 4.7 Taught at Same School for Whole Career	87
Table 4.8 Teacher Education Program Prepared Me for Teaching.....	90
Table 4.9 Up to the Emotional Demands of Teaching.....	91
Table 4.10 Up to the Physical Demands of Teaching.....	92

Table 4.11 Current Challenges of Teaching are Less Stressful	92
Table 4.12 Amount of Work is Manageable.....	93
Table 4.13 Colleague I Can Sit Down and Talk With	96
Table 4.14 Architectural Design Easy to Talk with Colleagues.....	96
Table 4.15 Colleagues That Take My Reality Seriously	97
Table 4.16 Colleagues Recognize When I am Out of Balance with Work and Life	98
Table 4.17 Reluctant to Talk with Colleagues about Teaching	99
Table 4.18 Colleagues Help Recognize Ways to Improve	100
Table 4.19 Colleagues Affirm My Efforts	100
Table 4.20 Receive Constructive Feedback from Colleagues	101
Table 4.21 Regularly Scheduled Meetings with Colleagues to Discuss Teaching.....	103
Table 4.22 Assigned Mentor with a Similar Assignment.....	104
Table 4.23 Networks of Teachers Outside of School	105
Table 4.24 Opportunity to Observe Other Teachers.....	106
Table 4.25 United in the Push for Student Achievement.....	107
Table 4.26 Feels Too Much Pressure for Results	108
Table 4.27 Teachers Afraid to Take Risks.....	109
Table 4.28 Teachers are Innovative	109
Table 4.29 Delegate Work when Necessary	110
Table 4.30 Not Enough Time to Meet Together.....	110
Table 4.31 Teachers are Recognized When They Exceed Expectations	111
Table 4.32 Teachers Loyal to School.....	111
Table 4.33 Leaders Model Self-Reflection	113

Table 4.34 Leaders Know What is Going On in Building.....	113
Table 4.35 Leaders Positively Nudge Change	114
Table 4.36 Plan Consider Leaving if Position Became Less Stable	116
Table 4.37 Consider Leaving Due to Disagreeable School Reforms	117
Table 4.38 Plan Consider Leaving if Colleagues Left.....	117
Table 4.39 Plan Consider Leaving if School Leadership Left.....	118
Table 4.40 Plan on a Different Position Within the Same District.....	118
Table 4.41 Plan for a Different Position at Current School in the Future.....	119
Table 4.42 Plan Consider Leaving if Quality of School Leadership Declined	120
Table 4.43 Consider Leaving if Quality of Other Teachers Declined	120
Table 4.44 Top Reason Why Teachers Leave the Profession.....	122
Table 4.45 Plan on Teaching at Current School Next Year.....	123
Table 4.46 Plan to Teach at Another School in Next 2-3 Years.....	124
Table 4.47 Plan to Teach at Another School District in Next 2-3 Years.....	124
Table 4.48 Plan on Leaving the Teaching Profession.....	125
Table 4.49 Predictors for Leaving Teaching.....	127
Table 4.50 Predictors for Staying	128
Table 4.51 Predictors for Moving Schools	129
Table 4.52 Predictors for Moving Districts	130

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Questionnaire: Instrument Abstract	160
Appendix B	Initial School Administration Contact	164
Appendix C	Initial Participant Contact	165
Appendix D	Final Participant Contact.....	166
Appendix E	Reliability and Correlation Tables of Independent Variables.....	167

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

At the start of the recent school year about 300,000 teachers in the United States led a classroom for the very first time (Moir, 2012). This may be an exciting start for these teachers who are just beginning the journey of becoming a master teacher. However, many of these teachers as they experience the realities of the workplace begin to lose their commitment and not reach this potential. New teachers leave their initial teaching assignments, and the classroom altogether, at an alarming rate. Recent data suggests that the profession loses nearly half of all teachers before they reach their fifth year and an equal number leave the schools in which they started. How can a profession aspire to excellence with such exodus? How can schools improve with such staff instability? Why do early career teachers entertain the idea that they should leave a career for which they invested a professional education?

Some school districts experience attrition rates as high as one-third of new teachers leave the profession within the first three years, and one half depart before the fifth year (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001). A result of high rates of teacher attrition and the increasing number of retiring veteran teachers means that the teaching workforce has a growing number of new, inexperienced teachers who need help and guidance as they transition from preparation programs to the responsibility of their own classroom. Currently the American teaching force has more inexperienced teachers than ever before (Ingersoll and Merrill, 2010).

Teacher attrition has costs in student learning, improvement efforts, and financing. The cost of recruiting, hiring, and training a replacement teacher ranges from \$4,000 to \$15,000, depending on the district (Barnes, Crowe & Schaefer, 2007). Annual recruitment expenses range near \$2.2 billion to \$4.9 billion nationally (Kersaint, 2005). School improvement efforts are thwarted as result of the instability created by attrition of teachers. Schools that experience the challenges of the revolving classroom door year after year have to deal with the loss of faculty and community cohesion. If not actually participating in attrition, some teachers stay but lose their commitment to students and improving practice. The intent to move within or exit from teaching results in instability in schools and the profession similar to actual attrition (Ladd, 2011).

The qualities of a school climate are not fixed and static but rather malleable and dynamic. Teacher quality grows within a rich professional context. Effective teaching can be enabled or constrained by the school workplace and the supports it offers (or fails to offer). Considering how much teachers improve during their early years, the goals of teacher retention also include developing the quality of teachers. Brill and McCartney (2008) assert improving teachers' work environment and professional development are more cost effective and influential in convincing teachers to remain.

Losing a good teacher who might be developing into a great teacher has its costs of student learning. The quality of an individual teacher may account for about 8.5 percent of the variation in students' test scores, a factor that can be affected by teacher retention and the quality of the early career teacher (Goldhaber, 2002). Excessive teacher turnover can be costly and detrimental to instructional cohesion. Highly effective teachers

make up 20 percent of all teachers. These highly skilled teachers increase student learning by five to six months compared to their lower quality colleagues. When one of these teachers leaves a low-achieving school, it can take eleven hires to find a teacher of comparable quality (New Teacher Project, 2012).

Disproportionately the teachers who leave the profession or move to another school or district are leaving higher minority populations, lower socioeconomic families and lower performing schools. Teacher turnover tends to be higher in schools where the need for high quality teaching is greatest: high-poverty and low-performing schools (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001).

Cochrane-Smith and colleagues (2012) warn of viewing teacher retention with a dichotomous split - staying or leaving. As even the intent rather than actual attrition displays the instability in the profession and within that school (Ladd, 2011). Researchers have documented teachers' perceptions of many professional working conditions that significantly influence the decision to move or leave. These working conditions include; administrative support, availability of materials, participation in decision-making, an orderly environment, increased professional development and collegial opportunities (Ingersoll, 2001; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005, Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007). This research suggests the decision to move or leave a teaching assignment is based on the contextual conditions of a school rather than the personal traits of the teacher.

A school may have some of the retention components but they exist in an

ineffective context or a toxic school culture (Kardos & Johnson, 2007). A number of studies have concluded that induction programs can reduce teacher turnover, improve practice, and lead to student success providing the programs are job-embedded and include multiple types of support (Smith & Ingersoll 2004; Wong, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2010). Long-term positive effects on teacher retention are unlikely impacted by an isolated component to teacher retention (Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007). Feiman-Nemser (2010) warns that even a well-resourced mentoring program cannot outweigh the damage of an unhealthy school culture.

Comprehensive teacher induction programs share common attributes that can be instructive for both veteran teachers and their newer colleagues with shared professional learning. Some components of comprehensive induction include extended internship programs beyond just a semester of student teaching, specially trained mentors, multiple year mentoring, comprehensive in-service training, reduced teaching assignments for beginning teachers and program goals that emphasize assistance rather than assessment of teacher quality (Feiman-Nemser, 2010).

According to Cherubini (2007) research also suggests that the successful induction of new teachers depends upon having a collegial and collaborative environment in the school (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Olebe, 2005; Wynn, Carboni & Patall, 2007). Teacher collaboration is characterized by increased collegial trust and collegial relationships as shared problem-solvers of practice (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Teachers view induction in these schools as a part of a continuum of professional learning rather

than a fight for survival. Induction becomes embedded in total school improvement and professional learning involving the entire school staff. The role of leadership and the professional culture in designing schools where teachers want to teach is paramount, (Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research was to examine the perceptions that K-12 early career teachers indicate for the intent to move within or exit from the profession and the relationship to the professional supports of the workplace. This was achieved by gathering the perceptions of the intent to move within or exit from teaching and the professional supports of the workplace as participants completed a self-reporting survey designed by the researcher. This knowledge contributes to the understanding of what professional supports are needed to enrich the professional context of K-12 schools to decrease the intent for early career teacher attrition.

The number of teachers new to the profession has increased by almost 50 percent within just a decade (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010). This large influx of early career teachers and the steep learning curve of becoming an effective teacher have created some high costs financially and in terms of student learning. Research dealing with separate questions about teacher retention, teacher quality, and effective teaching all point to a set of workplace conditions as potential levers for success.

Few schools—particularly those serving low income students—exemplify all or even most of the workplace conditions identified as the benchmarks teachers need to do their job well and stay in teaching (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, J., 2012). If public

education is to retain high-quality teachers in all schools and enable them to teach effectively, comprehensive and systematic efforts to ensure that all schools become good workplaces is critical.

Research Questions

Professional supports are indicators of a school's total professional culture that encourages teacher growth. Considering alternative explanations to understanding teacher retention, one hypothesis is that teachers who leave the profession or move schools are responding to their perceptions of the lack of professional supports and a weak professional culture. The results contribute to the understanding of the experiences of early career teachers and support effective practices that seek to reduce the intent for teacher attrition and early exit from the profession. The findings provide descriptive and inferential statistics analyzing:

- 1) What are early career teachers' perceptions of "imbalance" in their workload and how do these influence their intent to move within or exit the profession?
- 2) What are early career teachers' perceptions of workplace support and how do these influence their intent to move within or exit the profession?
- 3) What are early career teachers' perceptions of the relationship between workplace instability and their likelihood to move within or exit the profession?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in the study and warrant a definition. These terms used are consistent with the literature and throughout this study.

Early career teachers: Teachers who have taught in public K-12 schools with a range of

experience of more than one and less than five years total.

Teacher collaboration: Formal and informal shared planning and improvement of teaching practice. This is characterized by increased collegial trust and collegial relationships as shared problem solvers of practice (Bryk & Schneider, 2002)

Teacher attrition: The movement of teachers to new assignments between schools/districts or leaving the profession altogether, voluntarily or not (Ingersoll, 2001)

Induction programs: A systematic, organized plan for support and development of an early career teacher. The program can reduce teacher turnover, improve practice, and lead to student success providing the programs are job-embedded and may include multiple types of support. An assigned mentor for initial year teaching is common (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Comprehensive induction: A program that may include extended internship programs beyond just a semester of student teaching, specially trained mentors, multiple year mentoring, comprehensive in-service training, reduced teaching assignments for beginning teachers and program goals that emphasize assistance rather than assessment of teacher quality. (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Professional supports: Formal and informal collegial collaboration that support early career teachers in improving practice, confidence and connectedness to the school they are currently serving. The collaboration may be shared with school leadership, networks outside of their current assignment and with teaching colleagues the early career teacher currently works with (Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004).

Assumptions

In the design of this study there are some factors and shortcomings that are out of the control of the researcher. It is important to describe how these assumptions are considered as possible strengths and limitations to the study. The first assumption of this study is that early career teachers in the sample population expressed the intent to move schools/districts or exit the profession altogether by self-report. Third party recruitment by the participants' employer may have inflated the positive perceptions to the items on the survey that favor their school district or school. On the other hand third party recruitment gives an implied endorsement by the participants' employer, which may have encouraged greater participation than if the researcher recruited through direct contact.

This study assumes that the respondents answered all questions honestly and for themselves. Quartz et al. (2008) have suggested that teachers' careers are "in motion" over time. An assumption was that the survey captured just a snapshot of the teacher's career decisions. If a teacher indicated as leaving the profession or wanted to move schools/districts it may simply be their decision at the time they completed the survey. Their decision may change given time.

There is a further assumption that the instrument was clear to all participants and each person taking part in the study understood what each item was asking. The survey was designed as a social contract limiting the costs and providing benefits for the participants. Considering the assumed anonymity and aggregated data, no individual's responses can be identified. It is assumed that all participants indicated their honest perceptions. The survey instrument measures only the perceptions of the participants at

the time they completed the survey. Each of the factors that are identified on the survey by the participants may vary over time and importance to the intent to move schools/districts or exit the profession.

Methodology

To conduct the study on the perceptions of early career teachers the researcher used survey research. The goals of survey research are to capture a large valid number of responses to reliable items. Through data analysis of the respondents' perceptions generalized assumptions can be made about the sample population and the variables of the study. Survey research gathers perceptions of respondents at the time they complete the survey. These responses are used to describe patterns of the perceptions of the sample population to address the research questions. Other methodologies can offer longitudinal data from multiple sources of data to understanding the phenomena of the career decisions of teachers in a specific context.

The researcher contacted district officials at all the school districts in a Midwestern state that met the criteria of serving students with more than 3,000 in enrollment. Seven school districts ranging with student populations of 3,500 to 32,000 granted permission to conduct research. During this process school districts' approved the survey instrument, confidentiality and protocols for data gathering.

The total sample population selected from the seven participating school districts that met the criteria of an early career teacher was 841. According to Dillman, Smyth & Christian, (2009) to determine how large the sample size needed to be from a population size estimated at 800 with 95 percent confidence level of ± 5 percent with a 50/50 split

the sample needed to be 234; with a 80/20 split the sample needed to be 175. Thus the return rate needed to be 28%.

This study used quantitative descriptive and inferential statistics to address the research questions posed above. Logistic regression analysis was used to correlate the independent variables of sense of imbalance due to workload (*1 Imbalance*), unsupportive workplace (*2 Unsupportive*), and likelihood for attrition due to instability of the workplace (*3 Likelihood*) to the dependent outcome variable of intent for teacher attrition (*Intent*) or not. A 47 item self-reporting questionnaire created by the primary investigator was issued over the Internet to a selected sample of teachers with teaching experience ranging from 2 to 4 years. The data collected from the participating school districts was reported as aggregated data so the individual school districts were not identified.

The online survey software for the administration of the survey was *Qualtrics*. *Qualtrics* is licensed to the University of Nebraska and was used for the construction, distribution and data collection of the survey. The questionnaire (Appendix A) gathered participants' responses to demographic characteristics on 6 items. The participants' perceptions of the independent variables of imbalance due to workload (*1 Imbalance*), unsupportive workplace (*2 Unsupportive*), and likelihood for attrition due to instability of the workplace (*3 Likelihood*) was gathered by responses of a four-point scale on 37 items. Participants' gather the dependent variable of intent for attrition responses to a four-point scale on 4 items.

Participants had access to the survey from November through mid-December

2013. Access was provided to the participants from an Internet link sent by email from participating school district administrators. As a third-party recruiter to participants- the researcher did not directly contact the participants. The third-party recruitment came from two forwarded emails to participants from participating school district administrators.

Limitations

The study was limited to N= 353 participants from school districts of different sizes and other varying demographics. The first limitation of this study was the perceptions of the participants were just a “snapshot” of the time the survey was completed. Their perceptions may change overtime. Perhaps the personal mood or a recent experience of the participant at the time of taking the survey could influence the response. This was unknown to the researcher due to the questionnaire being on-line and the protected anonymity of the participant. Any self-reporting instrument limits the scope of the conclusions. Although full participation by teachers was anticipated, there may have been factors where the participants may disregard the benefits of the survey. The design of the survey included personal demographics and sensitive job-related topics, *i.e.* career decisions, perceptions of colleagues and school leadership. It was expected that even with assurance of anonymity that some potential participants may not have completed the survey. Another limitation is that these results are generalizable only to teachers similar to those in the study. Thus, schools that have dissimilar characteristics to the participating sample population should be cautious about generalizing the results of this study to themselves, their school or district.

Significance of the Study

School leaders and reformers who are committed to changing the impact of poverty on student learning are seeking ways to stop the higher rates of teacher attrition. There are many precipitating factors for teacher attrition, although most involve non-pecuniary rewards related dissatisfaction, such as poor leadership and administration within schools, and lack of shared decision-making (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004). Improving teachers' work environments and professional developments are cost effective and influential in convincing teachers to remain.

The literature supports that a professional culture that is sustainable, long-term, school-based, collaborative, focused on students' learning, and linked to curricula reduces teacher attrition. Therefore this study was designed to look at the perceptions of early career teachers as they distinguish the value of these components of professional development as it related to their intention to participate in attrition. This study intended to inform the practices of teacher induction and research on teacher retention.

The research on teacher retention stresses the role of school administration in establishing a school climate where teachers want to stay (Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007). By examining the perceptions of the social context of professional supports and the correlation with teacher attrition, this study provided insight on how school leadership and policy makers can support more effective practices. Implementation of these practices support schools in reducing the financial and learning costs of teacher attrition.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Over the last three decades a large and varied body of research literature has been devoted to understanding the factors that contribute to teacher attrition- moving schools/districts or leaving the profession. Research on attrition in the United States conceptually shifted from increasing the supply of teachers with recruitment to the retention of teachers, especially those who have taught for less than five years. Richard Ingersoll (2001) termed the high rates of early career teachers leaving high-poverty and high-minority school communities the “revolving door.” This pattern of teacher attrition from low-income to high-income schools is documented in both large quantitative and small qualitative studies (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001).

Multiple researchers have addressed teacher retention using large databases collected via surveys like the *Schools and Staffing Survey* (SASS) and *Teacher Follow-Up Survey* (TFS). These teachers are termed “movers,” who leave one school or district for another, as well as “leavers,” who exit the profession temporarily or permanently. These studies indicate that as many as 20 percent of new teachers may leave teaching after three years and that closer to 30 to 50 percent quit after five years. Teacher turnover is 50 percent higher in high-poverty schools than in more affluent ones (Ingersoll, 2001; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003), and new teachers in high-poverty districts exit or

transfer at twice the rates than their counterparts teaching in low-poverty schools. In addition, teachers quit schools serving low-performing students at much higher rates than they quit successful schools (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). As a result, inexperienced teachers who have not yet mastered their craft disproportionately serve students in high-poverty and low-performing schools. These students not only pay the price of the revolving door of new teachers but then the demographics of their school community are pointed to as the cause for the teachers constantly leaving.

Consistently, researchers, through analysis of large data sets, interpret teacher attrition patterns as evidence of teachers' discontent with certain workplace factors, including administrative support, availability of materials, participation in decision-making, an orderly environment, increased professional development, and collegial opportunities (Ingersoll, 2001; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005; Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007; Ladd, 2011; Cochrane-Smith et al., 2012). Darling-Hammond (2003) contends that improving workplace conditions are alterable issues that can slow the revolving door by changing policy and practice rather than addressing the belief that teachers prefer to serve white, middle-class, high-performing students. Researchers Susan Moore Johnson and colleagues (2012), building on Helen Ladd's work (2011), assert that it is the dysfunctional working conditions that plague these schools, not the school's demographics, as a cause for attrition. The authors argue for the need to examine the social context of professional learning in schools to untangle the context from easily measured school characteristics such as the racial, economic mix and testing achievement.

Johnson and her colleagues (2012) add to the large-scale quantitative studies with their analysis of a Massachusetts statewide survey on working conditions. Working conditions and career decisions are not limited to school facilities and the availability of curricular materials. The authors find that the social conditions—the school’s culture, the principal’s leadership, and relationships among colleagues— are the working conditions that matter most in terms of attrition. Again, teachers are not leaving because of the racial and economic conditions of their students; they are leaving the dysfunctional contexts that trouble these schools. For teachers, it is whom you work with and for that is more important than which school community you serve. (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Boyd et al., 2011; Ladd, 2011; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005).

Compounding the dysfunctional context of high turnover schools is the constant instability of staff. In order to create stability and the social conditions where teachers are satisfied and want to commit to staying, schools have to stop the turnover. The building of relational trust in the social context of the workplace takes time, which is not afforded if your colleague next door or a beloved principal might not be there the following year. The search for solutions to slow the tide of attrition has benefits for schools due to the many financial costs, loss of student learning, and the loss of school/community cohesiveness (Guin, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Goldhaber, 2002). The inconsistency of staff due to attrition makes it difficult for schools to maintain strong organizational structure and culture, which is essential for improvement.

Researchers differ on what factors to untangle in the complexity of teacher’s intent to move or leave as career decisions. Mary Kennedy (2010) asserts the

fundamental flaw of overestimating personal characteristics, such as credentials, licensure test scores, skills, and personal values, while examining teacher quality, “It is time to look beyond the teacher to the teaching situation itself: the school, the classroom, the teacher’s schedule, and the teacher’s resources” (p. 591). Kennedy (2010) advocates that research of overlooked aspects of teacher’s work that are outside their control, such as resources, planning time, and other aspects of the school infrastructure, might influence the quality of teaching practice. Johnson and colleagues (2012) classify the teacher’s workplace in two categories, from the concrete and transactional (*e.g.*, pay, workload, contractual responsibilities) to the social and transformative (*e.g.*, interactions with colleagues and administrators, organizational culture). Further, the authors recommend for a meaningful analysis for solutions studies must consider the full range and interdependence of these factors rather than just addressing any singular component.

Using data on teachers’ job satisfaction, career intentions, and the conditions of work, schools confirm that factors of the school environment explain the relationship between increased teacher satisfaction and commitment or discontent and the desire to move or leave. This evidence suggests that teacher turnover is driven by the conditions of not having a supportive professional climate. The “non pecuniary” conditions of the social context, whom teachers work with and how they work together, matter a great deal to their satisfaction. Teachers who are more satisfied plan to stay longer in schools that have a positive work context, independent of the school’s student demographic characteristics (Day & Gu, 2010; Ladd, 2011; Cochrane-Smith, et al., 2012).

Susan Moore Johnson (2012) suggests that finding solutions for teacher attrition

requires looking at the interdependence of factors and focusing on the more alterable conditions of the social context. Johnson et al., (2012) suggest decreasing the focus on attrition solutions that require manipulation of policy and collective bargaining such as pay, class size, decreasing non-teaching responsibilities, and increasing planning time. However, the components of the social and transformative context of schooling call for more than just policy. To change the social context of teachers' relationships with the school community, school leaders will need to be intentional with the building of relational trust. This requires a concerted effort to authentically connect with personal regard, respect, personal integrity, and competence as teachers are engaged with daily social exchanges between the multiple members in the school community.

The teacher's perceptions of trust, respect, and openness of that reduces vulnerability in their interactions and builds the prospect for increased satisfaction and commitment. These interactions are alterable solutions to retention through more skillful collegiality, design of professional development, and organizational structures that intentionally address this. Yet, these dynamics will vary greatly throughout the school year, from school to school and district to district (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Bryk et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2012).

The management of relational trust with their new colleagues, students, and school community are additional factors that can add stress to the early career's intense learning curve. Well documented are the beginning teachers' experiences of uncertainty and varied emotions due to the abrupt socialization into the profession (Ryan, 1984; Lortie, 1975; Veenman, 1984; Bullough, 1989; Huberman, 1989; Moir, 1999). Day and

Gu and colleagues (2006) discuss how the teacher's school contexts can be central moderating influences at all life phases on teacher effectiveness, commitment, and resilience. Again, this is dependent on the adult dynamics amongst colleagues and administrators.

Johnson and Kardos (2002) identified three dynamics of school contexts that might ease the early years or compound it with negative emotions and lack of collegiality. The *veterans*' culture is most likely to leave. It is categorized with isolation and cynicism- a place where everyone looks out just for them. The *novice* culture lacks guidance from more experienced teachers. In an *integrated* culture, mentoring shares purposeful collaboration and is mutually beneficial for cultures that help each other and share work across all levels of experience.

The dynamics of a school context and the number and types of teacher induction components are significant in decreasing attrition. A number of studies have explored the significance of teacher induction components. Richard Ingersoll has contributed to these and to many other seminal findings regarding the research on teacher attrition. From a review of 15 empirical studies, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) identified the most common induction support is an assigned mentor and discussions with a school administrator. The more components that are added to these common ones in a more comprehensive induction had a significant effect; the likelihood that beginners who received this package would leave at the end of their first year was less than half of those who participated in no induction activities.

The goals of induction are to improve the quality and increase the commitment of

the early career teacher. Brill and McCartney (2008) assert improving teachers' work environment and professional development is more cost effective and influential in convincing teachers to remain. Favorable conditions of work also predict students' academic growth, even when schools compared are serving demographically similar groups of students (Ladd, 2011; Johnson et al., 2012). School district leaders who value retaining effective teachers and want to enhance the positive school culture that keeps them particularly in schools that are traditionally hard to staff, should attend to the school culture as their early career teachers perceive it.

Researchers continue to attempt to untangle the multiple factors that contribute to teacher retention and improve teacher quality. Cochran-Smith and colleagues (2012), in the *Qualitative Case Studies*, find that higher quality teachers who have established the capital of being effective will move schools to find a school's culture and the collaborative support that comes with it. Further, Cochran-Smith cautions researchers and policy-makers that there are many configurations to support the many different contextual needs of teachers. Similarly, Huberman (1989), in his classic study of the professional stages of teachers, describes the development for early career teachers as a non-linear process filled with plateaus, discontinuities, regressions, spurts, and dead ends. These authors emphasize the needs of early career teacher development as practices that need to be ongoing and job-embedded in order to respond to the ever-changing contexts in which induction takes place in schools.

In the next sections of this chapter, teacher attrition studies and conditions that contributed to the shift towards teacher retention are reviewed. Highlighted key studies

that inform the concepts of the teachers' workplace conditions and the importance of the school culture for this study follow. Finally, the nature of early career teaching is described to emphasize the unique considerations of this time of professional development and how it connects to teacher induction practices and the roles of administrators and colleagues.

Teacher Attrition: Supply and Demand

Guarino and colleagues (2006), in a review of the empirical research on teacher retention, note that attrition in the 1980s has been conceptually framed as a problem of supply and demand. During this time, student enrollments swelled and the aging teaching force increasingly began to retire. This created concerns of having enough new recruits in the supply of teachers to fill classrooms in the United States which drove research on attrition. Research mostly focused on teacher recruitment rather than retention (Darling-Hammond, 1984; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987; Murnane & Olsen, 1990; National Academy of Sciences, 1987).

During this focus on recruitment, the goal of getting a teacher in every classroom also raised concerns of the quality of the new arrivals into the profession. Filling every classroom with a teacher, without regard of quality, created concerns of a less qualified teaching force and lower school performance. The literature at this time, along with policy initiatives such as fast tracked and alternative teacher certification like *Teach for America* (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2005), focused considerable attention on the supply problem of staffing classrooms (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003).

More recently attrition studies have moved away from the supply/demand framework towards the goals of identifying factors of individual characteristics or the conditions of schools as workplaces, that connect to the likelihood of a teacher moving from a school/district or leaving the profession altogether. Research goals became identifying factors of teachers, termed as *stayers*, *movers* or *leavers*, to influence policy and practices that increase the likelihood of not only retaining teachers but retaining effective teachers (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003)

This shift away from the supply side of recruitment came from the need to inform retention policies that develop long-term commitment to the profession and a higher quality of teachers (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005). The research goals of determining what factors contribute more to attrition include both workplace conditions of schools and individual characteristics of teachers. Both the individual and the context of the teacher's workplace determine satisfaction, success and career commitment.

Likelihood of Attrition

Individual characteristics. Mary Kennedy's (2010) criticism of the overestimation of individual characteristics in research on teacher quality results from what data is collected by states. Kennedy explains the irony of why researchers pursue these types of data, such as credentials, test scores, and college majors, is due to its availability. Researchers pursue the data that states gather on individual teachers rather than more difficult to define and less measurable variables such as complex workplace conditions. Kennedy asserts that, due to the availability of this type of data, "We study

teachers' credentials because we can" (p. 597).

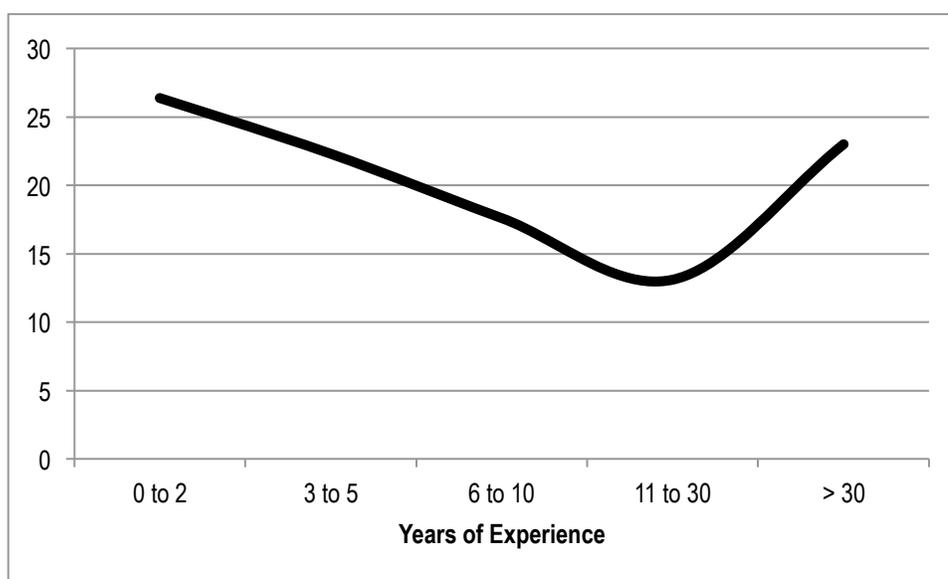
Personal characteristics of teachers, including their demographics and qualifications, are important predictors of teacher attrition. The odds of attrition are higher among teachers who are younger, female, and White. Borman and Dowling's (2008) analysis of 19 empirical studies suggests significantly ($z = -2369967.00, p < .01$) that women are 1.3 times more likely to leave the profession than men. Notably gender was found to be the most studied individual characteristic as it relates to attrition. The authors also found statistical significance of the effect size for teacher's race/ethnicity ($z = 917152.76, p < .01$), indicating that White teachers are 1.36 times more likely to leave teaching than Non-white minority teachers. The authors reviewed the age of leavers with a simple continuous measure, which revealed that older teachers were less likely to leave teaching than were younger teachers ($z = -8.06, p < .01$). The effect of a 1-year difference was slight, but the odds of attrition for a teacher 5 years younger than her or his older colleagues is 5.32 times greater (2008, p. 385). Younger teachers just beginning their careers and older veteran teachers close to retirement are more likely to leave the profession and not return. This creates a *u-shaped* distribution of ages of teachers likely to leave (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004, Ingersoll, 2001)(see Figure 2.1). The teaching workforce is also *u-shaped* by the "graying" of the population (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010).

Regarding teachers' qualifications, Borman and Dowling's (2008) analysis of 13 empirical studies suggests that significantly, the odds of attrition are slightly greater among those who have no graduate degree ($z = -672.12, p < .01$). Teachers that took the

more traditional or regular path of certification were less likely to leave ($z = -532.34$, $p < .01$). Teachers with no certificate had odds of leaving the profession 2.63 greater than certificated teachers (p. 387). Moreover, several studies have found a significant

Figure 2.1

Years of Experience and Percent for Attrition



correlation between a teacher's likelihood of retention and their scores on exams, such as the SAT. The best and the brightest among the newcomers appear to be those most likely to leave (Henke, Chen, & Geis, 2000; Murnan & Olson, 1990; Schlechy & Vance, 1981).

Darling-Hammond, et al., (2005) describe state certification policies as a vehicle for effective teacher induction and decreasing attrition rates. Graduates of teacher education programs felt significantly better prepared and more effective, as reported on the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data for 1999-2000. Two-thirds of early career

teachers who perceived their preparation program as strong intended to stay in teaching. Teachers who received strong training in selecting instructional materials, child psychology and learning theory, and who had practice teaching experience and received feedback on their teaching left the profession at rates half as great as those who did not have such preparation. Decreasing attrition may begin when early career teachers start with confidence of their skills acquired during their teacher education and certification programs.

Apart from personal demographics and qualifications is the teacher's own self-efficacy and their individual coping mechanisms of handling the workload and the stress related to the uncertain nature of the early years of teaching. Huberman (1989) describes a dichotomy of *easy* or *painful* beginnings as connected to the emotional nature of teaching. These individual abilities to cope with the stresses and often overwhelming emotions are discussed further in the "Nature of Early Career Teaching" section of this chapter. Recently, researchers Jones and Young (2012) explored the association between teachers' self-reporting emotions and the affect on their intent to remain in teaching and levels of burnout. The relationship between negative affect (mean) and the commitment to the school in the spring semester was found to be statistically significant ($p \leq .10$) with a standardized coefficient of -.16. A teacher's negative affect and overwhelming emotions of tiredness were identified as factors predicting attrition (see Table 2.1).

Teacher's relationships or lack thereof play a role in teacher satisfaction of the workplace as well (Kennedy, 2010). If teachers' perceptions of students create personal discomfort they may have a difficult time distinguishing between problems caused by

students and problems resulting from a dysfunctional work environment. Other teachers in the same school may not blame the students, but can identify the underlying problem

Table 2.1

Summary of Individual Factors Influencing Attrition

Factor
Younger, Female, White
No certification
No graduate degree
Perceived weak teacher certification program
Negative affect and overwhelming tiredness

in the broader context. The relationships with students clearly play a role in shaping teachers' daily experiences in school, but they are far from being the only factor that affects teachers' commitment (Johnson et al., 2012).

Workplace conditions. Both large and small sample sized studies have identified certain workplace factors that limit teacher attrition in schools to include: administrative support, availability of materials, participation in decision-making, an orderly environment, increased professional development, and collegial opportunities (Rosenholtz, 1989; Ingersoll, 2001; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005; Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007).

Susan Rosenholtz's (1989) work on the influence of school culture is a foundation for studies of teachers' professional communities. Rosenholtz classified school contexts as *high* and *low consensus* from 74 individual open-ended interviews and

teacher questionnaires about their personal background characteristics and perceptions of their work. In addition, school-level data such as test-scores, attendance, and demographic data were obtained. Rosenholtz found that students, parents, and particular school context could influence teachers' sense of efficacy, satisfaction, and commitment to teaching. The shared agreement in high consensus schools or the inconsistency of goals, priorities, and practices in low consensus schools mediate this influence. High consensus schools made progress in implementing reforms even when school demographic data was considered.

Authors Loeb, Darling-Hammond, and Luczak (2005) attempted to untangle workplace conditions from the school's student demographics. They found from the survey-collected data of 1,071 California teachers that the racial, ethnic, economic, and language composition of a school's student body influences not only turnover but also experience difficulties in hiring and have more beginning teachers, who are at greater risk for attrition. The authors found that the strongest predictors of attrition from teacher survey ratings of their school's conditions included items to attract high quality teachers (*e.g.*, salaries, ample resources) and pecuniary awards (the most negatively rated variable).

The quality of professional development in fast tracked teacher certification has received criticism for being quick fixes to supply teachers who are ready to be recruited by schools but lack quality. These short-term strategies received criticism as the deprofessionalizing of teaching and the lowering of teacher quality (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). Ingersoll (2003) notably warns about supply-side solutions, especially

recruitment strategies that involve lowering teacher standards, deflating salaries, and eroding work conditions. These strategies may not be a solution to attrition, but actually may make the revolving door of retention worse. Counter to these strategies, Ingersoll (2003) stresses the importance of addressing the complexity of teachers' career decisions and that requires improvement in the quality of the job of teaching itself. Sharon Feiman-Nemser (2003) supports the quality of professional development as a solution for retention, "Keeping new teachers in teaching is not the same as helping them become good teachers" (p. 23).

Richard Ingersoll (2001) is a notable contributor to the shift of research from recruitment towards focusing on the retention of teachers. Ingersoll's work was seminal in pointing out that attrition of beginning teachers was a major problem in the United States by finding that as many as 46 percent of new teachers left the profession within five years (Ingersoll, 2002). Ingersoll's work challenged that teacher shortages were due to an imbalance between supply and demand caused by an insufficient supply of new teachers. Instead, Ingersoll argued that the problem was teaching's "revolving door" through which many beginning teachers exited because of job dissatisfaction (2003, p. 11) (see Table 2.2).

Using national data from the *Teacher Follow-up Survey*, Ingersoll (2001) noted that roughly half of the attrition among teachers was due to teachers leaving the teaching profession altogether while the other half was associated with teachers moving from one school to another. Ingersoll (2001) focused the problem of attrition of early career

Table 2.2

National Rates of Early Career Exit

Factor	Percent
After the first year	14
Within three years	30
Within five years	40-50

teachers by finding that the number of retirees in any given year was smaller than the number of teachers leaving the profession for other reasons. Ingersoll's continual work suggests that the larger problem is related to non-retirement turnover and suggests that policy efforts be directed towards retaining the substantial number of teachers who are leaving the profession for other reasons.

Ingersoll's (2001) analysis of which workplace conditions influence teacher retention indicates the importance of salaries and ample instructional resources provided to teachers and other organizational attributes of schools. Also important are the students and the community of the school that are being served by the early career teacher. From the *Teacher Follow Up Survey* of teachers regarding reasons for teacher dissatisfaction, Ingersoll (2001) found that poor administrative support (60.1 percent) and lack of faculty influence (42.6 percent) were the leading factors for dissatisfaction in high-poverty urban schools. Conversely, poor salary was the leading factor for dissatisfaction in low-poverty suburban schools (61.1 percent) with administrative support (30.1 percent) and faculty influence (14.3 percent) proving less significant for suburban teachers than their urban counterparts. (see Table 2.3).

The research emphasizes the interdependence of many factors of the workplace that create teacher satisfaction and increased commitment to the school. A workplace that keeps and improves teachers is not as simple as having the right components or not.

Table 2.3

Summary of Workplace Conditions Influencing Attrition

Factor
Lack of administrative support.
Lack of availability of curricular materials.
Lack participation in decision-making.
Chaotic school environment.
Increased professional development and collegial opportunities.
Inequity between school districts in salaries and resources.
Poor salary in low-poverty schools.
Pressure from high stakes testing.
Labeled as “needing improvement.”
Test preparation, scripted curriculum, and public shaming.

Professional culture. Cochran-Smith et al., (2012) warns of the dichotomous framework of viewing workplace conditions as interventions for teacher attrition. The simple formula of having or not having some elements positively associated with retention may not address the complexity of the teachers’ professional career decisions to move or leave. Expanding on the research goals of workplace conditions, researchers have approached longitudinal views of differentiating the needs of early career teachers and their decisions to move or leave in more nuanced ways (Boyd et al., 2011; Day &

Gu, 2010; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teacher, 2004; Quartz et al., 2008).

Researchers have continued to look at career decisions of early career teachers in nuanced ways as suggested by Borman and Dowling (2008). The goals of these studies are to consider the individual characteristics and workplace conditions of movers and leavers, but also to identify the factors of the professional culture and teacher development experiences in schools that moderate attrition.

The settings in which teachers work are important moderators of attrition, include collaboration, teacher networking, and administrative support. These factors also moderate attrition in schools with high enrollments of poor, minority, and low-achieving students.

Recently building upon Ladd's (2011) analysis of student achievement and teacher quality, Johnson and colleagues (2012) found teachers are not leaving or moving based on the students or families in schools with substantial populations of low-income and minority students. The high teacher turnover rates are driven largely by teachers fleeing the dysfunctional and unsupportive work environments in the schools to which low-income and minority students are most likely to be assigned. Despite a strong commitment to serve the school communities of populations of low-income and minority students, a poor school culture will still send teachers looking for new employment.

Borman and Dowling's (2008) meta-analysis suggests monetary and material resources are important to increasing the demand to be a teacher through compensation. However the non-pecuniary rewards of teachers' working conditions have equal or

greater importance within the education labor market, such as perceptions of success and satisfaction that contribute to increased commitment to the profession. The weight of evidence suggesting that alterable characteristics of teachers' work environments play an important role in attrition underlines the critical need for well-designed interventions and evaluations of initiatives to help retain teachers.

Weiss (1999) used ordinal logistic regressions upon School and Staffing Surveys (SASS) 1987-88 and 1993-94 in analyzing over 2,400 first-year teachers' career plans. Weiss concludes from these findings that, afforded the opportunities to collaborate and judge their own work in the classroom, beginners will be equipped with the knowledge and the skills to develop a dynamic rather than a routine approach to teaching. Further defining this collaboration, Weiss stresses the interdependence of school leadership in autonomy and discretion, "The more collaborative and supportive the school leadership, the more involved the teachers appear to be" (p. 870). This interdependence is seminal to the level of morale, career choice commitment, and intention to stay in the profession. Weiss concludes that schools that have a systemic approach to changing the organizational patterns of decision making in schools will likely increase an early career teacher's sense of worth, contentment, and plans to stay with the profession. Administrative support was the main factor predicting high satisfaction from first year teachers' intent to remain in the classroom.

Among the attrition/retention studies, several by Susan Moore Johnson and colleagues (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004) shed light on classroom practice and career moves. Johnson and

colleagues use interview and survey data to reveal teachers' perceptions and experiences. Johnson and Birkeland (2003), in a descriptive analysis of longitudinal interview data collected in 1999, 2000, and 2001 from 50 teachers in their first and second years in Massachusetts public schools, found that those who left the profession within the 3-year period either saw their careers as short-term occupations or had experienced frustration or a sense of failure.

Johnson and Birkeland (2003) included support from colleagues as well as school administration to be greatly dependent on satisfaction as it connects to the career decision to stay, move, or leave. The new teachers desire opportunities to interact with other professionals and hone their skills. The availability of colleagues and administration for support with classroom management, student learning, reduced workload, and parent contact significantly and positively associated to higher satisfaction.

Building on Huberman's (1989) work, Day and colleagues (2006) conducted a mixed-methods study of a representative sample of 300 U.K. teachers to examine variations in teachers' lives, work, and effectiveness across the professional life span. They concluded that teachers' emotional identities and school contexts were central moderating influences at all life phases on teacher effectiveness, commitment, and resilience. The expression of commitment may fluctuate according to their ability and capacity to manage different work and life circumstances. Teachers have different aims and different dilemmas at various moments in their professional cycle, and their desires to reach out for more information, knowledge, expertise, and technical competence will vary.

A contribution to understanding the different aims and dilemmas of early career teachers is the influence of external policy initiatives, such as increased focus on state and federal testing and restructuring and sanctions policies *e.g. No Child Left Behind*. Smethen (2007) found that beginning teachers whose work intensified were negatively influenced in their intent to remain in the classroom from a two-year qualitative study of eighteen beginners who taught in Language Arts. Further, early career teachers reported increased work intensity while attempting to balance between demands of standards and the accountability movement with less professional support (Kaufman et al., 2002). Day and Gu (2010) find the negative impact on some teachers' satisfaction and commitment stems from the increased workload, both instructional and non-instructional, resulting from external policy initiatives and increased accountability. However, this negative impact can be mediated by a school's culture that promotes professional development and, through this, increases the teachers' sense of belonging, well-being, and achievement.

Cochran-Smith and colleagues (2012) directly linked quality of teaching practice with early career decisions, suggesting that there are many configurations to support the many different contextual needs of teachers for development and to inhibit attrition. Just as the dichotomy of staying or moving does not simply explain attrition, neither does stronger or weaker simply explain the quality of the teacher. The researchers found that initially stronger teachers may move or leave since they have the proven capital. These teachers have the luxury to find a school with a professional culture and administrative support that is a better fit for them. Furthermore, the added workload if professional

support is absent puts the stronger teachers at risk for burnout because of their strong commitment and their willingness to struggle by putting in more individual effort and determination in learning from and about teaching, despite lack of support. The individual teacher that shoulders this responsibility is admirable, but is not comprehensive or sustainable especially if that teacher decides to move or leave.

Cochran-Smith and colleagues conclude that teacher retention or quality is not isolated fixes for improving schools. For retention, the professional supports needed are described as, “Early career teachers need opportunities for ongoing and intensive professional development built into the work day, and schools and school districts should assume this responsibility” (Cochran-Smith, 2012, p. 35). Many studies identify the positive factors of professional supports in limiting teacher attrition. Influenced by expanded the concepts of attrition that go beyond the “leaving/staying” dichotomy (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004; Quartz et al., 2004). Cochran-Smith and colleagues (2012) caution the viewing of teachers’ career decisions as a dichotomous split - staying or leaving. Schools may have many components of professional supports, a collegial atmosphere, and strong leadership yet, teachers still want to move or leave.

Borman and Dowling’s meta-analysis (2008) suggests that when more formal organizational mechanisms are put in place to provide novice teachers with support networks and mentoring opportunities, these efforts are associated with decreased attrition rates. A number of studies have concluded that comprehensive induction programs can reduce teacher turnover, improve practice, and lead to student success,

providing the programs are job-embedded and include multiple types of support (Smith & Ingersoll 2004; Wong, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2010).

Long-term positive effect on teacher retention is unlikely impacted by an isolated component to teacher retention. Wynn and colleagues (2007) describe the complexity of professional learning communities and attrition as a mesh. This mesh includes effective mentoring, a positive school climate, and principal leadership all focused on school development, which involves teacher development, which in turn impacts retention. Even if there are certain workplace conditions and formal professional supports in the early years, these supports do not happen without influence of the culture of the school. (see Table 2.4).

Table 2.4

Summary of Professional Supports Influencing Attrition

Factor
Development of a routine approach to teaching rather than dynamic.
Haphazard approach to decision making in schools.
Unavailable colleagues and administration for support with classroom management, student learning, reduced workload, and parental contact.
Unresponsive to different aims and different dilemmas.
Lack of ongoing and intensive professional development built into the workday.
Lack of multiple types of support.
Lack of effective mentoring, a negative school climate, and principal leadership not focused on school development.

Feiman-Nemser (2003) warns that even well resourced mentoring programs cannot outweigh the damage of an unhealthy school culture. According to Cherubini (2007), research also suggests that the successful induction of new teachers depends upon having a collegial and collaborative environment in the school (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004; Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007). The professional climate and supports that result from it have a positive impact on limiting attrition. Many of these studies, as well as Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), stress that school administrators are key to the vision and leadership that builds professional capital of teachers. Not overly emphasized in these studies are roles of colleagues to attrition. Successful learning communities have a principal that shares power, authority, and decision-making in a democratic way with teachers despite their years of experience. Shared leadership, which includes colleagues and principals, are essential factors in determining whether a teacher wants to stay or leave a school (Johnson et al., 2012; Wynn, et al., 2007).

The Nature of Early Career Teaching

A majority of the research on teacher retention is on early career teachers, be it a first year beginner or a newly tenured teacher during their fourth year. These groups of teachers are experiencing a unique time of professional learning, when career commitment is unstable as they develop the skills and dispositions of mastery in teaching. Teacher attrition shapes a *U* population (Ingersoll, 2001) since the larger populations of teachers who are leaving or moving are early career teachers and those just before retirement eligibility. Ingersoll and Merrill (2010) describe the *greening* of the American

teaching force; more retiring teachers (*the graying*) and the increase of jobs (*the ballooning*) over the last decade have created the largest group of early career teachers in US classrooms than ever before. The US Census Bureau indicates that K-12 teaching has long been one of the largest, if not the largest, occupational groups in the nation. From the late 1980s to 2008, total K-12 student enrollment went up by 19 percent but the teaching force increased at over 2.5 times that rate, by 48 percent. In 2008, the largest groups of US teachers were early career teachers, with five years or less, making up a quarter of the US teaching force (Ingersoll, 2012). These early career teachers have steadily become more likely to quickly leave teaching or move schools.

As described earlier, some school districts have experienced attrition rates as high as one-third of new teachers leaving the profession within the first three years, and one half departing after five years (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Ingersoll, 2003). Findings from the 300 teacher interviews from the VITAE project (Day et al., 2006) showed that the 75 % of teachers in the first seven years of their professional lives remained highly committed and motivated. One in four found it difficult to cope with the social and cultural realities of teaching and were at risk of being lost to the profession. Additionally, more teachers in the first three years of teaching showed a negative commitment trajectory than their peers in the seven-year range.

The focus of research has been on keeping and improving the quality of early career teachers since attrition tends to be higher during the early stages of a teacher's career. This is because the teacher has accumulated less specific capital, or knowledge that is specific to the occupation and that is non-transferable. Teacher attrition tends to

diminish later in the career as a teacher builds a greater amount of specific capital. The early years of a teacher have been captured and described in many ways, both favorable and not. Sharon Feiman-Nemser (2001) describes this time with its unique learning as having two jobs that happen simultaneously— teaching and learning to teach.

Imbalance During the Early Years

Less favorable experiences of early career teachers have been described as *lost at sea, sink or swim*, and induction that *cannibalizes its young*, (Lortie, 1975; Kauffman, et al., 2002). The new teacher, who just months before was sitting in a college classroom, now faces the challenges of leading a classroom just like a tenured veteran. Lortie (1975) asserts that early career teachers do not have the kind of staged induction programs as many skilled blue-collar and white-collar occupations. Beginning teachers in the United States are typically given the most difficult assignments, are provided limited classroom resources compared to veteran teachers, receive little or no support, and are generally isolated behind classroom doors with little feedback or help. Compounding this isolation can be the egg-crate design of school building themselves. Critically, Little (1982) asserts that the only thing that teachers share in a building like this is the parking lot.

Well-documented are the beginning teachers' experiences of uncertainty and varied emotions due to the abrupt socialization into the profession (Ryan, 1984; Lortie, 1975; Veenman, 1984; Bullough, 1989; Huberman, 1989; Moir, 1999). Early career teachers' experiences are likely mixed based on the school's and/or the district's induction policies and practices or lack of a formal induction. Included in these descriptions are overwhelming emotions resulting from having the same responsibilities

as veteran teachers without a sense of professional support.

Michael Huberman (1989) describes, in his classic study of the professional lives of teachers, that career development is a non-linear process filled with plateaus, discontinuities, regressions, spurts, and dead ends. From this study, Huberman (1989, p. 194) suggests that, despite the varied experiences of early career teachers, there exists commonalities (easy or painful) in a career cycle that may inform an appropriate support structure.

Positively, many teachers begin their professional lives with a sense that their work is socially meaningful and will yield great satisfactions. The excitement of the first months of teaching is categorized as anticipation of having one's own classroom (Moir, 1999). After an exciting start, the inevitable difficulties of teaching challenge the new teacher. Two themes of *discovery* and *survival* (Huberman, 1989) characterize the gulf between "Am I up to this challenge?" and the initial enthusiasm of having a place in a school as a professional decision maker.

This is a time to discover the relationships with students, one's own classroom, teacher's manuals, and colleagues as peers. For some novice teachers the challenge of discovery can positively coexist with survival. Teachers who begin with uncertainty in their career choice or question their longevity as teachers are apt to not find this early enthusiasm for discovery in teaching (Huberman, 1989).

Teachers approach the balancing of survival and discovery in different manners. Huberman (1989) classifies this balance as *easy* or *painful* beginnings. As their careers continue, some teachers move towards affirmation and others moved towards the grind of

monotony and disenchantment. Easy beginnings build upon the initial excitement with a sense of discovery and enthusiasm. These beginners experience an openness, inventiveness, creativity, and good rapport with students. Teachers that experience painful beginnings cope with the exhaustion of struggling relationships with students and lesson planning. These two beginnings eventually can stabilize for the new teacher moving either into a phase of increasing commitment to teaching or increasing disillusionment with the profession (Huberman, 1989) (see Table 2.5).

Table 2.5

Summary of Early Career Teachers' Imbalance and Influence on Attrition

Factor
View their careers as short-term occupations.
Overwhelmed by challenges of leading a classroom just like a tenured veteran.
Overwhelmed by the increased workload, both instructional and non-instructional, of results of external policy initiatives and increased accountability.
Struggles to embrace the uncertainty and varied emotions due to the abrupt socialization.
Unable to handle the plateaus, discontinuities, regressions, spurts, and dead-ends of their learning.
More survival than the excitement of discovery.
Frustrations from learning in and from practice.

Early career teachers returning for their second or third year have a context and a few resolutions to do something different, perhaps adding to their beginning repertoire of an understanding of what students know, meeting diverse students needs, and ensuring everyone is learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). The beginners are asking more questions than they are finding answers in this time of *discovery*. With few exceptions, early career

teachers not only appreciate but also crave curricular support. From interviews of 50 first year teachers, Kauffman et al., (2002) found approximately 20 percent of study participants were not given any direction regarding curriculum. Over half of the respondents reported that they were told what had to be taught but were given no curricular materials or other types of guidance.

Left to their own devices of what and how to teach, early career teachers are influenced by the remembered experiences of their own K-12 education as a student. Lortie (1975) defines this as the *apprenticeship of observation*. Problematic to discovery, the *apprenticeship of observation* is not likely to instill a sense of problem solving from practice due to the limited vantage point of students about teaching. Students may see simplistically the work of teachers rather than the complexity of learning and teaching. What is believed as good practice can be just a nostalgic view from their own schooling rather than from the needs of the learners and context they are serving. Lortie (1975, p. 29) continues, “Teaching...is more likely to appeal to people who approve of prevailing practice than to those who are critical of it.”

Feiman-Nemser (2001) offers a continuum for key tasks in the early years that include: gaining local knowledge of students, curriculum, and school context, designing responsive curriculum and instruction, enacting a beginning repertoire in purposeful ways, creating a classroom learning community, developing a professional identity, and learning in and from practice. How an individual teacher takes on each of these key tasks is dependent on the teacher’s own self-efficacy, proactive stance towards learning the craft of teaching and commitment to the school (Day et al., 2006). These qualities can

ebb and flow, which Huberman (1989) describes as a nonlinear process.

Teacher Quality in the Early Years

In the VITAE (Day et al., 2006) research, three sub-groups were identified on the basis of teachers' levels of motivation in the profession and commitment to the school: *Growing, Coping and Managing*, and *Vulnerable/Declining*. *Growing* teachers had a strong sense of self-efficacy and their expected trajectories continued to develop strong agency, commitment, and achievement. *Coping and Managing* teachers had sustained a relatively moderate level of efficacy and commitment; they were most likely to continue to cope with or manage their work in their next professional life phase.

Vulnerable/Declining teachers felt that their efficacy and commitment were at risk because of workload and difficult life events and as a result may find their professional life trajectories vulnerable and see their efficacy and commitment decline. A lack of leadership and collegial support, the struggle to balance demands from both personal and professional lives, and dissatisfaction with educational policies and professional development opportunities were the major reasons for new teachers to experience diminishing efficacy and commitment.

Despite the challenges of the early years of teaching, most teachers improve. Some teachers even have a greater impact on student achievement in their early years than struggling veterans. The New Teacher Project (2012) identified teachers described as *Irreplaceables*. This group contains highly impactful teachers identified by reviewing over 90, 000 students in four diverse major urban geographic school districts and value-added results for approximately 20,000 of those teachers. From this study *Irreplaceables*,

make up about 20 percent of teachers who each year help students learn two to three additional months worth of math and reading compared with the average teacher, and five to six months more compared to low-performing teachers. Unfortunately, two thirds of these highly impactful teachers report that they were not asked to stay by their principals.

This study challenged the assumption that new teachers will almost always be less effective than experienced teachers. TNTP analysis shows that, “three out of four times, new teachers perform better in their first year than the low-performing teachers they replace, and they are more likely to improve over time,” (2012, p. 23). TNTP further suggests that even an average new teacher is likely to be a step up from the less effective veteran.

Christopher Day and colleagues (2006) use the following characteristics of analysis of teachers’ professional lives: cognitive, emotional, personal, and moral engagement in the profession. Teachers in the first three years of teaching, described in this study as *Beginning Teachers*, demonstrate primary concerns about their confidence, sense of efficacy, and feelings of being an effective teacher. Significant to these teachers’ growing sense of wellbeing, self-efficacy, and commitment is being engaged in more opportunities in their school, for promotion and responsibility have already begun to play a significant role in their sense of wellbeing, commitment, and self-efficacy.

In the *Qualitative Case Studies* project (QCS), Cochran-Smith and colleagues (2012) identified and tracked all career decisions from preparation to the first three to four years of practice. The decisions of 15 teachers included entering or leaving a preparation program, seeking or not seeking a teaching position after preparation, staying

at a school or moving to another school from one year to the next, and leaving the teaching profession. These career decisions were also connected to the quality of the teacher by the research team rating the teachers multiple times throughout their early career or “post-preparation years” on 5 dimensions of teaching. The collapsed overall average scores for the post-preparation years categorized the teachers in the study into three general characterizations of practice: *weak/poor practice*, *adequate practice* and *strong/very good practice*. From further analysis five configurations of teacher quality and career decisions were identified: *Going Strong and Staying On*, *Going Strong but Moving Along*, *Middling Then Moving*, *Falling Short but Hanging On*, and *Falling Short and Getting Out*.

Highlighted is each profile of the 5 configurations from the QCS (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012) with a qualifying trait of the teacher and the professional supports experienced. In *Going Strong and Staying On*, the beginning teacher viewed his craft as an ongoing improvement. His meaningful professional development was unique from any other profile in the frequent opportunities to collaborate with other teachers. *Going Strong but Moving Along* contained teachers whose sense of social justice did not match with her school’s reward/punish management system. Her misalignment with the school she moved to continued with her view of the administration’s lack of vision and support for teachers. *Middling, Then Moving* teachers struggled with ineffective practice and growing dissatisfaction. After moving schools they continued to try to find the adequate support that would help them improve. This highlights the importance of a school culture in improving instruction and teacher retention. In *Falling Short but Hanging On*, the

ineffective teacher was assigned to students who needed the highest quality. He masked his ineffectiveness thus not getting an opportunity in many schools to have the necessary collegial support to improve. His ineffectiveness was identified during teacher preparation but was not addressed. All of the teachers in the study dealt with disequilibrium at times. However the *Falling Short and Getting Out* teacher, instead of proactively seeking colleagues, turned inward. The school's architecture and an inattentive mentor compounded this isolation. The faculty and administration seemed to live by the creed "sink or swim." Defeated, this early career teacher with a stellar academic background and a desire to be a lifetime teacher left the profession crestfallen.

School Culture as Professional Supports

At the start of their vocation, early career teachers interact with uncertainty and disequilibrium of personal and professional issues and vulnerabilities. A school's professional culture places social pressure and values that support and/or further frustrate the newcomer. Cochran-Smith and colleagues conclude from the QCS (2012) that there is neither homogenous group nor a single formula to decrease teacher attrition. The reassessment of career decisions occur at multiple points in time, based on a multilayered phenomenon shaped by school culture, accountability contexts, labor markets, and professional supports.

Cochran-Smith (2012) consistently reminds researchers of the complexity of addressing career decisions with attempts to improve teacher quality. The school organization and school leadership are critical. Unlikely to succeed are policies aimed at improving teacher quality by manipulating singular policy levers. So heeding the advice

of this review, professional supports such as mentoring and other components of teacher induction must be conceptually framed by school culture specifically, the dynamics between colleagues and school administration.

The school culture is a complex web of norms, values, beliefs, assumptions, traditions, and rituals that has been built up over time as teachers, students, parents, and administrators work together, deal with challenges, and develop expectations, often unstated, for relating together for shared purposes (Deal & Peterson, 1994). The early career teacher is often abruptly privy to the expectations and norms that may have long been established before them. Quickly the newcomer jumps into what Deal and Peterson (1994) describe as an invisible, taken-for-granted flow of beliefs and assumptions that give meaning to what people say and do. Culture consists of the stable, underlying social meanings that shape beliefs and behavior over time (Deal and Peterson, 1994). Through these thousands of formal and informal interactions, both verbal and nonverbal, early career teachers navigate their new setting for learning to teach.

Regardless of the phase of their careers, teachers face challenges of combinations in a range of personal and professional school cultural influences. The focus of this review is of in- school support, both formally and informally, as being of particular importance in helping those early career teachers develop during what is probably the most stressful time in their careers (Kardos & Johnson, 2007; Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004). Expanding on Feiman-Nemser's (2003) description of the two tasks of early career teachers, to teach and to learn to teach, Day and colleagues (2010) describe the importance of support in developing their pedagogical

and classroom management skills, but as important is managing the emotional unpredictability of classroom teaching and learning. The availability and quality of this support are essential factors in keeping the teacher's satisfaction, success, and commitment to the school and to their decisions about remaining in the profession over the long term (Day, 2010).

The challenges of managing the emotional unpredictability do not come from the classroom alone. It also stems from both the interrelated realities of developing a sense of a professional self in their interactions with their colleagues, pupils, and parents, as well as the need to develop a sense of belonging during their socialization into the school community and the profession (Cherubini, 2007; Lortie, 1975). Along with the challenges of developing professional self and belonging can be the growing relationships to students and the school community that underpin the intrinsic motivation and emotional commitment to teach to their best and is associated with an ethic of care for the well-being of their students (Day, 2010). For many teachers their work is a vocation or calling, one replete with notions of moral and ethical commitments to their practice and the students and community with whom they serve.

These underpinnings of school culture can be precarious, serving both as challenges and supports. Early career teachers are situated in attempting to be proactive in their membership, yet their membership is contingent on the cultural gatekeepers of the school (Cherubini, 2007). Susan Moore Johnson and colleagues (2004), following 50 early career teachers in *The Next Generation of Teachers* project, classified three school cultures that dramatically affect the experiences of the teachers in this study and whether

they may leave the school. The three are *veteran*, *novice*, and *integrated*. These classifications are mostly defined by relationships of years of teaching experience. Also in this description the dynamics of professional collaboration are described.

The culture where teachers were most likely to leave is categorized with isolation and cynicism; the *veteran* dominated an unsupported culture where everyone's individual interests are the only cause for shared work. Teachers were more likely to leave due to exhaustion of kindred spirits with fellow *novices* and the lack of guidance from more experienced teachers. In an *integrated* culture, mentoring was not just a relationship but also, a purposeful collaboration and was mutually beneficial for cultures that help each other and share work across all levels of experience. *Integrated* cultures are those, which, nurture and keep teachers. In order to sustain their inner enthusiasm and energy, they provide early career teachers with opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. (see Table 2.6).

Table 2.6

Professional Culture and Early Career Teachers Moving or Leaving

School Culture	% Left Teaching	% Moved
Veteran-oriented	21	43
Novice-oriented	17	33
Integrated professional	12	18

Schools that help new teachers achieve success in the classroom and also provide them with opportunities to advance in the profession become keepers of their enthusiasm, commitment, and motivation (Kardos & Johnson, 2007, p. 2083). The research supports

that the quality of professional cultures in schools is, therefore, central in supporting and retaining able, enthusiastic, and committed new teachers, and plays a key mediating role in influencing their decision to leave or stay in the school or the profession. Just as manipulating one single lever of policy will be unsuccessful, no one component of teacher induction, such as having a mentor for the first year, is supportive enough to not only keep a teacher but to improve the quality of that teacher.

Comprehensive Induction Practices

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) report in 1991 that about 61,000 first year teachers participated in an induction or mentoring program; by 2008, this had increased almost three times, to about 179,000. As of the 2010-11 school year, 27 states required some kind of induction program for first year teachers. Most first year teachers now participate in some kind of formal induction program, however the kinds of support that schools/districts provide vary.

Ingersoll and Strong (2011), through a review of 15 empirical studies, evaluated the effects of teacher induction. The most common induction activity that beginners participated in was having regular supportive communication with their principal, other administrators, or their department chair (87 percent). Slightly fewer beginning teachers, about 80 percent, said they received ongoing guidance and feedback from a mentor teacher. Just over half of beginning teachers said they had common collaboration and planning time with other teachers in the same subject area. Fewer than 20 percent of beginning teachers reported receiving a reduced teaching load or schedule, a rare support for first year teachers who often receive the toughest teaching assignments.

Smith and Ingersoll (2004) analyzed 3,235 first year teachers' responses and data from the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey data and the 2000-2001 Teacher Follow-Up Survey. The authors found that collaboration/common planning had the largest lone impact, reducing the predicted probability of attrition by 43 percent. Importantly, the authors found that the increase in the number of increased induction supports decreased the predicted probability of attrition. New teachers with two induction components had a 39 percent predicted probability of turnover whereas those receiving 8 components had an estimated turnover probability of 18% (see Table 2.7).

Table 2.7

Leavers after the First Year and Number of Induction Supports

Induction Supports	% Left Teaching
No induction Support	41
Most Common of Just 2 Induction Supports	39
Moderate Induction with at Least 4 Supports	27
Comprehensive Induction with at Least 8 Supports	18

The most common induction supports consist of two basic components: working with a mentor and having regular supportive communication with one's principal, another administrator, or one's department chair (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). First year teachers receiving just these two supports had better retention than those who received no induction at all, but the difference was small. Importantly, as the number of components in the packages increased, both the number of teachers receiving the package and the likelihood of their turnover decreased. A more comprehensive package of induction

includes the common supports described above and additionally: participation in a seminar for first year teachers, common planning time with other teachers in the same subject, a reduced course load, and assistance from a classroom aide. Getting this comprehensive package had a very large effect; the likelihood that beginners who received this package would leave at the end of their first year was less than half that of those who participated in no induction activities. But only 5 percent of beginners received such a comprehensive package in 2007-08. Ingersoll, in the 2012 review, suggests that further research of the cost-effectiveness of each component of comprehensive induction would benefit budget stressed schools/districts.

Borman's and Dowling's (2008) meta-analysis of research on teacher attrition confirms that when more formal organizational mechanisms are put in place to provide early career teachers with support networks and mentoring opportunities, these efforts are associated with decreased attrition rates. From the evidence reviewed, it appears that initiatives that lessen the bureaucratic organization of schools and school systems, and strategies that promote more genuine administrative support from school leaders including senior teachers, and collegiality among teachers are strategies that may improve retention.

Teacher induction practices that increase commitment and capacity influence school improvement as well. Teacher induction is ideally not in isolation, an add-on, or haphazardly implemented as a part of total school improvement. Johnson and her colleagues (2004) found 50 percent of teachers had no additional induction support in their first year of teaching. Again, teacher induction can refer to a variety of different

types of activities and frequencies for first year teachers including orientation sessions, faculty collaborative periods, meetings with supervisors, developmental workshops, extra classroom assistance, reduced workloads, and especially mentoring (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found a link between beginning teachers' participation in induction programs and their retention. The strength of the effect depended on the types and number of supports that beginning teachers received which are varied throughout schools/districts. The factors with the strongest effect were having a mentor teacher from one's subject area and having common planning or collaboration time with other teachers in one's subject area. Only half of the first year teachers receive support that gives them a colleague who takes their daily dilemmas seriously but also directly connects them to the culture of the school. Depending on the culture of the school and the effectiveness of the mentor, that may be beneficial or not.

Mentoring as Professional Support

In the 1990s, US schools increased the practices of mentoring programs. Early career teachers complained of lack of support from mentors. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that mentoring has a positive effect on new teacher retention in the profession, provided the mentor teaches in the same field as the novice. The researchers found no significant impact of mentoring when the mentor does not teach in the same field or when the outcome is mobility rather than attrition from the profession. Ingersoll (2011) found that a teacher, who receives only the single component of mentoring, 39 percent, is almost just as susceptible to leaving after one year as a first year teacher who receives no

induction at all, 41 percent. Lack of feedback and shared learning with mentors can contribute to attrition.

Based on a random survey sample of 486 teachers with two or less years, Kardos and Johnson (2007) finds that mentoring, under certain conditions, is associated with teacher satisfaction. The authors found that 78 percent of the sample teachers had been assigned mentors, but that few novices had mentors who shared their grade and school or had frequent conversations about teaching. She did not find that mentoring, when tested alone, had significant effect on satisfaction among new teachers. However, she found that new teachers whose mentors teach the same grade, in the same school, and converse with them at least three times about classroom management are, on average, more satisfied with their jobs.

Johnson and her colleagues from the Project on the Next Generation of Teachers (2004) discuss the haphazard nature of mentoring pairing. Often the consideration of who becomes a mentor may only be a common plan time or other simple logistical reason rather than the needs of the early career teacher.

The early career teacher that is holding onto the belief the right mentor will rescue them and give them needed support might in reality rarely see a mentor let alone any quality feedback to improve. The intention of school districts to provide mentors, but lacked appropriate training for them, actually created even more stress for the beginners. Kerrie initially referred to her mentor as the “TORmentor” (Bullough, 1989). Wynn, Carboni, and Patall (2007) reported mentoring to have a negative impact when mentors attempt to impose pedagogy rather than mutually contribute to the learning. The total

absence or minimal interaction of mentors contributes to attrition as well. In a study of 217 first and second year teachers in a small urban school district, 69 % of the beginning teachers reported that their mentor had observed them zero to three hours over the course the school year, 85 percent reported that they observed their mentor teacher zero to three hours, and 55 percent reported they did not observe their mentor at all (Wynn, Carboni, & Patallo 2007).

Sharon Feiman-Nemser, in 2001, discussed the role of a school's culture in the quality of the mentor and its impact on improving practice of the first year teacher. Mentors may perpetuate standard teaching practices and reinforce norms of individualism rather than collaboration by not having the skills to interfere or the inquiry about improving practice. Key to mentors development is the support and preparation they receive and whether the culture of school reinforces their work of inquiry into practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

In 2001, Feiman-Nemser offers further insights from interview and observational data of the process of one exemplary mentor, Frazer, who offers an *educative mentoring* experience with fourteen first year teachers. Feiman-Nemser distinguishes the differences between Frazer's relationship of practice-centered, inquiry-oriented professional development and short-term conversations of other mentors that just emotionally supported early career teachers .

Mentors that emphasize situational adjustment, technical advice, and emotional support (Little, 1982) make novices feel comfortable and provide professional support that fosters a principled understanding of teaching. Little (1982) argues that the promise

of mentoring lies not in easing novices' entry into teaching, but in helping them confront difficult problems of practice and use their teaching as a site for learning. As a result, participating in a serious mentoring relationship may actually make the first years of teaching more strenuous in the short run while promoting greater rewards for teachers and students in the long run.

Frazer, whose role is defined as a *support teacher*, has two elements of support: helping novices find ways to express who they are in their work and helping novices develop a practice that is responsive to the community and reflects what we know about children and learning. Frazer's relationship with the first year teacher is as a *cothinker*, one who is not laissez-faire or oppositional. This skilled support teacher utilizes eight distinctive moves in his *cothinking* by cultivating a disposition of inquiry, focusing attention on student thinking and understanding, and fostering disciplined talk about problems of practice. These *moves* paralleled his wishes for how the first year teachers would treat their students. Through interactions like this, early career teachers develop a professional self and socialize to school culture through their interactions with their colleagues. This type of support seems to take more reflection from both mentor and the first year teacher and this may create resistance from an overwhelmed beginner.

There are varied results of how mentoring can curb beginning teachers' retention. Mentoring alone would not have changed teachers' minds about working conditions such as a negative school culture. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) share what early career teachers aspire to be a part of; "They also looked for schools where they could feel like professionals-sharing ideas and resources with colleagues and receiving respect and

guidance from the principal" (p. 21). Saphier, Freedman, and Ascheim, in 2001, discussed how the needs of teachers during induction are beyond mentoring alone. The needs of input and feedback in well-designed induction programs include specific roles for principals, superintendents, central office personnel, the teachers' union, parents, school board, and particularly the other staff members where the beginning teacher works.

Mostly, early career teachers hope to find support and guidance in their schools. The support that is sought is ideally from experienced colleagues who will take their daily dilemmas seriously, watch them teach and provide feedback, help them develop instructional strategies, model skilled teaching, and share insights about students' work and lives (Johnson, Kardos, Kauffman, Liu, & Donaldson, 2004). Lower levels of teacher attrition and migration have consistently been found in schools with more administrative support for teachers, fewer student discipline problems, and higher levels of faculty decision making, influence, and autonomy (Berry, Noblit, & Hare, 1985; Ingersoll, 2001). Principals' support for mentoring and induction programs, particularly those related to collegial support, play a prominent role in beginning teachers' decisions to quit or remain on the job.

Principal as Professional Support

Revisiting what might be cost effectiveness and alterable solutions to retention, Ladd (2011) examined the relationship between working conditions and student achievement in elementary schools, as evidenced by school-level value-added scores. School leadership emerged as the most salient predictor of achievement in mathematics

and reducing intentions of attrition.

Nurturing good teaching that results in successful learning is not something that can be left only to the accumulation of experience or just mere support of administration. It must be nurtured by sustained attention and deliberate acts of care by leaders whose job it is to establish and develop conditions for growth (Day & Gu, 2010). From case studies, Little (1982) connect teachers' dissatisfaction with the comprehensive school reform and roles to inadequate and inconsistent institutional support. The authors judge that "whole school congruence" and "innovation bubbles" relied on expanded teacher roles for the success of reforms.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) inform the central role of principals in developing and sustaining relational trust. They establish both respect and personal regard by intentionally acknowledging the vulnerabilities of others and actively listening to concerns. Effective principals couple these behaviors with a compelling school vision and actions that seek to advance the vision. The consistency between words and actions affirms personal integrity, competent management of daily school affairs, and an overall ethos focused on trust building. Relational trust is more than making teachers feel good about their workplace and colleagues. It may require a jump-start involving the decisive reshaping of a staff with new hires, making moves with staff that consistently practice the school's mission and values, and counseling out those who do not.

Effective leaders foster collaboration and create opportunities for teachers to learn from one another throughout their careers (Wong, 2004). Teachers leave because of the quality of the school's culture and its level of support. When early career teachers get

individual support, work in well-led, dynamic, strongly supported schools where there is a belief in student success, a knowledge of how to bring it about, and a willingness and eagerness for everyone to keep learning and improving they are more likely to stay at that school.

What is good for early career teachers is also good for their more experienced colleagues. Hiebert and colleagues (2007) state that professional development yields the best results when it is long-term, school-based, collaborative, focused on students' learning, and linked to curricula. Thus, the induction process must be systematic and sustained. Teachers learned more in teacher networks and study groups than with mentoring and that longer, sustained, and intensive professional development programs make a greater impact than shorter ones. Positive teaching conditions are predictors of student achievement and teacher retention. Higher retention rates in schools are related to the professional culture and climate as resulting from principal leadership.

Colleagues as Professional Supports

Little (1982) provides one of the earliest and most influential studies on collegial norms of teachers. Conducting a focused ethnography with semi-structured interviews with 105 teachers and 14 administrators from four urban schools with a range of involvement by teachers in staff development and a range of success on standardized achievement tests, Little characterized components of a collegial workplace as range, focus, inclusivity (actors and locations), reciprocity, relevance, concreteness, and frequency. These are, by teachers' accounts, interrelated, though the importance of one component is not determined to be more important than the other in successful schools.

The role of the early career teacher is expected to contain some awkwardness and likely some errors of tact as they adjust to the appropriate social skills of collegial work.

Little (1982) continues to describe successful collegial schools as those that focus on professional improvement, not as an individual enterprise to improvement but particularly as an organizational phenomenon. This includes shared expectations (norms) both for extensive collegial work and for analysis and evaluation of experimentation with their practices; continuous improvement is a shared undertaking in these schools. These are schools that collectively and consistently examine practice. The prevailing norms of analysis, evaluation, and experimentation are collegial norms that call for a stability and security which does not result from a school with high teacher turnover.

By design and conduct, not merely intention, these successful collegial interactions strengthen "critical practices" of teachers that build both knowledge and skills. This emphasizes the visionary role of school leadership both collegial and administrative. Little (1982) found these critical collegial practices to include the basis of specific professional support for discussion of classroom practice, mutual observation and critique, shared efforts to design and prepare curriculum, and shared participation in the business of improving instruction.

A school's principal does not define a professional culture solely. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) assert being surrounded by excellent colleagues who are well-prepared and qualified increase commitment to the profession. Day & Gu (2010) state that successful schools promote both collective and individual academic optimism, and that this results in an increased sense of individual and collective efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy

(2001) found that teachers with strong efficacy beliefs are likely to be more enthusiastic, more organized, and devote more time to planning their teaching. This is supported by the earlier description of an *integrated* school culture (Johnson, 2004) that it is not merely the principal who establishes a school culture that increases workplace satisfaction, teacher success, and commitment.

Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that those who experience such support are less likely to leave teaching or change schools. Having a mentor in the same field, having common planning time with other teachers in the same subject, having regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers, and being part of an external network of teachers are the types of induction support that have the strongest positive association with retention (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004) (see Table 2.8).

Table 2.8

Summary of Factors of Professional Supports Influencing Attrition

Factor
Mistrust of colleagues and/or school leadership due to dysfunction or instability.
Inconsistency of school improvement goals, priorities and practices.
Lack of professionals sharing ideas - little or no long-term school based development and study groups.
Lack of guidance from little or no shared planning time, modeling of skilled teaching, and observing each other teach.
Isolation due to school architecture or unique assignment.
Lack of shared decision-making with faculty and school leadership.
Lack of sustained conversations about improving teaching and meeting learning needs of students.

Capability and commitment are reciprocal in increasing professional capital in a school. A professional culture is dependent on high-quality peer interactions, “professional capital is being generated, circulated, and reinvested all the time because it is endemic to the culture of the profession and is embedded in the daily work of teachers (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 87). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) identify more variables of high-quality interaction with peers as time for colleagues to meet, framework for innovation and inquiry, ongoing diagnosis of student needs from timely data, stable leadership that galvanize the pursuit of a greater good, and opportunities to learn from colleagues in other classrooms, schools, and countries.

Conclusion

Successful induction programs are not add-ons, but are integrated into the professional practice of the school. They are conducted by a cadre of experienced classroom teachers, not just one-on-one mentors, and they depend on additional resources, both money and time—including release time for experienced teachers and staff developers and stipends to new teachers for additional training (Johnson, 2007).

What keeps good teachers are structured, sustained, intensive professional development programs that allow new teachers to observe others, to be observed by others, and to be part of networks or study groups where all teachers share together, grow together, and learn to respect each other's work (Wong, 2004). Johnson and The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers (2004, p. 117) summarizes that few early teachers that have the grit to stay teaching despite the lack of a professional culture, “Although a few brilliant and heroic teachers may triumph despite decrepit and dysfunctional settings,

most teachers must rely on their school as a place that makes steady, good work not only possible but likely.” The components of a professional culture are well documented in the literature and have a positive influence on teacher retention.

It stands to reason that the variables of a professional culture positively influence retaining teachers and support their career development. Assuming schools want to keep teachers at their school and desire to have a positive school culture - do schools know if they have the components to keep teachers? Do certain components of a professional culture have a greater or lesser influence on early career teachers and their intent to stay at the same school for multiple years? The design and implementation of induction programs are policies that researchers and reformers can improve. This study examines the relationship of these variables of supports and a professional school culture to inform the improvement of design and implementation of teacher induction policies and practices. The supports are part of a school’s total professional culture that encourages teacher growth. Considering alternative explanations to understanding teacher retention, one hypothesis is that teachers who leave the profession or move schools are responding to their perceptions of the lack of professional supports and a weak professional culture.

The varied qualitative and quantitative studies cited in this chapter are focused on teacher retention, the imbalance of early career teacher and professional supports related to retention. These factors that were reviewed from the literature were then used in the design of this study. Without exception, the literature reviewed for the purpose of this study indicated that there is a current attrition problem for early career teachers. The literature supports that approximately one-third to over one-half of all teachers will leave

the profession in their first few years of teaching. Teacher attrition rates are disproportionately higher in lower achieving schools serving high poverty and high minority communities.

There were numerous variables studied in the literature concerning retention of teachers, including individual characteristics and workplace conditions. The literature supports solutions to teacher attrition that include policies and practices in improving workplace conditions through collective bargaining and improving the professional supports within the social context of schools. The relevant variables identified in a variety of sample sizes of these professional supports include organizational structures such as comprehensive induction programs, ongoing job-embedded professional development, and the dynamics between colleagues and school leadership.

Overall, research concerning teachers' intent or actual attrition found that the lack of these professional supports and imbalance during the early years of teaching were predictors of teacher attrition - to move schools/districts or leave the profession. Finally, the literature supported that these factors of professional supports of comprehensive induction, ongoing job-embedded professional learning, and trusting dynamics within a school culture not only keep teachers at their schools but also improve the quality of these teachers. Thus, this study focused on a subset of these variables, namely those that connect the balance of early career teachers, professional supports, and the likelihood of attrition.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to examine the perceptions of professional supports that K-12 early career teachers experience and how they influence the intentions of attrition. In addition to exploring these correlations, the study attempts to identify other variables that may lead to overall teacher attrition. This was achieved by gathering the perceptions of professional supports and the intent to leave/move as participants completed a self-reporting survey designed by the researcher. This knowledge will contribute to our understanding of professional supports needed to improve teacher retention policies and practices in K-12 schools. The study asks:

- 1) What is the relationship between the perceptions of “imbalance” related to workload and early career teachers’ intent to move within the profession or exit altogether?
- 2) What are the perceptions of a supportive workplace including collegial, induction supports, school leadership, and climate that early career teachers identify that influence their intent to move within the profession or exit altogether?
- 3) What are the perceptions of stability in the workplace that are perceived by early career teachers that influence their likelihood to move within the profession or exit altogether?

Chapter three describes the research design, the subjects of the study, variables,

the instrument used, and data collection procedures used. The final section of this chapter is a detailed description of how the data was analyzed.

Research Design

Survey methodology is used to address the research questions of this study by gathering the perceptions of the sample population. Survey methods allows for gathering a large number of quantitative data responses of the participants' responses. This allows for inferential and descriptive analysis that may be interpreted by the researcher. The analysis allows for generalizations to a larger population if the predictors are found to be statistically significant by social sciences standards. Survey methods allow for widespread distribution of the instrument via email and online Internet surveys. Dillman, Smyth & Christian (2009) suggests that a research goal to design scientifically sound data collection systems for precise estimates of behaviors and attitudes has not changed over the last four decades. The challenges in the new survey environment for researchers to meet these goals require an understanding of the role of respondents in producing valid responses with the multiple modes of data collection. For this study the decision to use a researcher-designed questionnaire that was delivered electronically came from many considerations of the time and effort demands that early career teachers face. Another consideration came from the researcher's observation that the use of Internet surveys has become more widespread in schools as a part of school-based decisions from scheduling to staffing.

Dillman, Smyth & Christian (2009) describes the difficulties of Internet delivered surveys and respondent's mistrust of legitimacy of the survey due to absence of direct

human contact. To address these difficulties the researcher utilized the *tailored design*. The tailored design requires the consideration of human behavior with the design of multiple motivational and supportive features that create a positive social exchange between the participants and surveyor. This social exchange assumes that the likelihood of participant's responding accurately to a self-administered survey is greater when the participants trust that the expected rewards will outweigh the anticipated costs of responding (2009, p. 16).

A small pilot (N = 42) reliability study was performed on the questionnaire prior to data collection. The initial 39-question survey was proven to be reliable; Cronbach's Alpha was .8691. After the reliability study, eight additional items concerning the likelihood of teacher attrition were added to safeguard for low responses to the independent variables of self-reported intent for attrition. The established 47-item Internet questionnaire was used to collect data pertaining to the perceptions of the variables classified as imbalance of workload (*1 Imbalance*), unsupportive workplace (*2 Unsupportive*), likelihood of attrition due to instability of the workplace (*3 Likelihood*) as they relate to outcome variable of intent to move within or exit from teaching (*Intent*).

Initially, the instrument was emailed to the subjects using third party recruitment; the two participant contacts came from a forwarded email by a school district administrator or principal. There was no direct recruitment of participants by the researcher. There were seven Midwestern school districts that participated. Once the data was cleaned, the survey yielded N = 363 responses. Logistical regression was performed to analyze collective and separate effects of two or more independent variables on a

dichotomous outcome. The data was then subjected to logistical regression analysis due to the binary nature of the intent to participate in attrition or stay teaching at their current school/district (dichotomous outcome). Logistic regression and descriptive analysis attempt to explain the deciding factors that predicted teacher attrition with the independent variables of *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* in order to address the three research questions.

The following considerations of coverage, nonresponse, and measurement error were addressed in the following ways. Coverage error can occur when not all members of the sample population are provided access to the survey. This is especially true of Internet-delivered surveys to populations that do not have easy access to the Internet. However, the early career teachers for this study must all have email since their school district administrator forwarded the email to the potential participants as part of the third-party recruitment design. Coverage error might have occurred if the school district administrator didn't forward the email on.

Nonresponse error results from the occasions when those that responded to the survey may respond differently to the questionnaire than those that did not participate. This was addressed by the short time commitment; participant anonymity and assumed approval the school district broadened the appeal to participate. The two variables of *Intent* and *1 Imbalance* may have a nonresponse error due to the perception of added workload of completing the survey and the costs of admitting that they may be considering leaving the profession or moving to a school/district which may outweigh the protection of anonymity.

Measurement error results from inaccurate responses due to poor question wording and survey mode effects. Face validity was conducted by three informed observers of the teaching profession and a design review by the Nebraska Evaluation and Research Center (NEAR) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This process supported that accurate wording of the questions and consistency of the scales used would minimize the respondents' mistakes. The three education professionals who reviewed the instrument for validity included a director of Human Resources, an elementary principal, and a secondary principal. All 47 items were reviewed independently in a two-step process. Initially the reviewers tagged any items that need any wording changes due to not exactly measuring the construct or being misleading. Then the researcher rewrote these items, an example of this process is on item 37 (Appendix A). The construct that this item measures is collegial shared responsibility. Initially the item read, "The workload is shared between colleagues." The item was flagged a reviewer's comment was, "Workload is to general consider delegation of work." The item then was revised and approved to be, "We delegate work when necessary."

The *Qualtrics* software allowed for participants to review that they gave the desired response before submitting the final recorded response.

The leverage-saliency theories that respondents are differentially motivated to respond to different aspects of the survey and by how much emphasis is put on each aspect by the surveyor (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009). Some respondents' participation may be contingent on the promise of cash or other capital incentives. While other participants seek to contribute to the understanding of a certain topic or other

personal commitments to being involved (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009). For this study, no cash or equivalent incentives were used. The use of school district administrators for third-party recruitment possibly gave participants a sense of endorsement by their employer for their participation. This implied endorsement was intentional in the design of the study as it increased the perceived community involvement incentives for participation. However, the saliency of the endorsement of one's employer may have created nonresponse bias.

In summary, whether survey-based measures of the perceptions of the variables of *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* emerged, as predictors of intentions for early career teacher attrition were empirical questions. If they do not, then policy makers and practitioners need to be cautious about attributing teacher attrition to negative conditions of professional supports and school climate. If participants' perceptions of these variables emerged as important, then it would be useful to design and evaluate policies and practices to address teacher attrition. These policies and practices include addressing non-pecuniary supports and school climate within schools.

These factors that contributed to attrition can be compared to other retention pecuniary strategies to improve the working place conditions designed to offset attrition from schools that serve high poverty and minority populations, such as higher salaries. This comparison amongst strategies could have been based on random assignment of schools to treatment and control groups so as to isolate the causal impacts and cost-effectiveness. That was not possible with the observational data used in this study.

Variables

Variables in the study were measured using an instrument that is created by the researcher. The independent variables included: 1) The perceptions of imbalance as a result of increased workload (*1 Imbalance*), 2) The perceptions of an unsupportive workplace as it relates to colleagues, school leadership, induction supports, and school climate (*2 Unsupportive*), 3) Likelihood of attrition due to instability of the workplace (*3 Likelihood*). These independent variables are analyzed with logistic regression statistics to the dichotomous outcome of intent of to move within or exit from teaching (*Intent*).

Helen Ladd (2011, p. 255) suggests that the studies of intended rates of attrition should not be discounted over studies of actual long-term rates of attrition. Studies of intent for attrition may translate to teachers lack of satisfaction with the school and lower their commitment and quality. This is consistent with the literature reviewed in chapter two regarding the importance of stability in the social context of teachers in professional development and implementation of school reforms. Studying the actual attrition rates is more of an autopsy of the school culture that may contribute to the revolving door of attrition. The study of teachers' intentions for attrition using survey data provides a timely snapshot of the perceptions of teachers of their current school.

The sample population perceptions of the independent variables of *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* were measured with 37 items (#11-47) of the researcher-designed questionnaire (Appendix A). The outcome variable of *Intent* for attrition is measured by four items (#7- 10). The participants responded to these items on a four-point scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). The outcome variable

is a dichotomous measure of *Intent* for attrition was coded (1) or not (0). In addition to these variables, the demographic descriptors of the sample population were gathered with six items (# 1-6). These descriptors include: gender, age, number of semesters taught, ethnicity/race, grade level taught most, and where teacher certification was received.

Instrumentation

The researcher identified in the literature review the relevant factors for the independent variables of *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* as they are confirmed in a variety of studies to actual and expressed intent for teacher attrition. These relevant factors include organizational structures such as comprehensive induction programs, ongoing job-embedded professional development, and the dynamics between colleagues and school leadership.

Helen Ladd (2011) utilized the categories of best practice for teacher retention, identified by Susan Moore Johnson (2006), to sort out the overlapping concepts of school leadership, collaboration among teachers, and teacher empowerment. This researcher used a review of the literature in chapter two to identify the many factors of each independent variable as it related to the dependent variable *Intent* to create a 47 item questionnaire (Appendix A). Further, the researcher compared the best practices of teacher retention (Johnson, 2006) to the factors identified in the literature review for intent for attrition. Johnson (2006) asserts the best practices for retention and, in most cases, an opposite factor for teacher attrition as identified in the literature review in Chapter Two. These factors are also identified with the independent variables of this study (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2).

Study Participants

The population of this study was early career teachers with a range of experience from two to four years full-time teaching in a Midwestern state. These early career teachers served larger school districts in this Midwestern state. The total K-12 student populations from the seven participating public school districts ranged from about 6,000 to 35,000 students. None of the participating districts would be classified as rural schools due to the size of the student populations. Two of the school districts would be classified as suburban districts due to their proximity to a large metropolitan city (population greater than 420,000). Due to third-party recruitment, the exact number of participants who received the survey cannot be determined. However, an estimate from the Midwestern state education department's directory indicates that there is a sample size of 841 individuals that would qualify as early career teachers from the seven participating school districts. The 841 total population included teachers identified as having 2 to 4 years teaching experiences and classified as a teacher, special education co-teaching, and teaching core subjects.

According to Dillman and colleagues (2009), because Internet service providers are private rather than public providers, surveyors do not have assumed right to contact people like random phone and postal surveys. This study provided the preexisting

Table 3.1

Imbalance and Unsupportive Variables and Best Practices for Teacher Retention

Attrition Variables and Number of items on Researcher Designed Questionnaire.	Attrition Variables in Literature Review.	Categories in Susan Moore Johnson (2006) with indicators of best practice for retention.
<p><i>1 Imbalance</i> (5 items). Overwhelmed by workload including emotional and physical demands of teaching.</p>	<p>Overwhelmed by responsibilities and emotions of uncertainty. Teacher certification prepared for teaching.</p>	<p>Teaching assignments in areas of expertise and certification. Manageable workload and assignments.</p>
<p><i>2 Unsupportive</i> (23 items). Lack of job embedded structures of professional support with colleagues. Minimal induction supports. Lack of collegial efforts to discuss practice and provide constructive feedback. Lack of teacher recognition.</p>	<p>Unavailable colleagues and administration and mistrust. Isolation due to architecture and schedule.</p> <p>Lack of professional conversations - formal and informal. Lack of network outside of school. Lack of shared decision-making. Lack of leaders that positively nudge for change and model self-reflection. Intensification from high stakes testing.</p>	<p>Time and structure for professional development that is coherent, accessible job-embedded assistance.</p> <p>Interdependence of colleagues with varied experiences and career growth opportunities for expanding influence and career growth. Ongoing observation of, interaction with, and advice from experienced colleagues. Bundles of induction components. Safe and well equipped facilities. Sufficient resources and materials. Principal is an active broker of workplace conditions. Comprehensive student assessment strategy- standardized tests as one component. Coherent professional development with a combination of within-school and external strategies.</p>

Table 3.2

Likelihood Variable and Best Practices for Teacher Retention

Attrition Variables and Number of items on Researcher Designed Questionnaire.	Attrition Variables in Literature Review.	Categories in Susan Moore Johnson (2006) with indicators of best practice for retention.
<p>3 <i>Likelihood</i> (9 items) due to other workplace factors. Lack of recognition. Instability of position. Lower quality colleagues and leadership. Colleagues and leadership that move to other schools. Disagreeable reforms that were pushed.</p>	<p>Lack of administrative support. Lack of availability of curricular materials. Lack of participation in decision-making. Chaotic school environment. Lack of professional development and collegial opportunities. Inequity between school districts in salaries and resources. Poor salary in low-poverty schools. Pressure from high stakes testing. Labeled as “needing improvement.” Overwhelming test preparation, scripted curriculum, and public shaming.</p>	<p>Collaborative work among teachers can contribute to teacher satisfaction and increased teacher quality grows within a rich professional context. Effective teaching can be enabled or constrained by the school workplace and the supports it offers (or fails to offer).</p>

relationship with the implementation of prior school district approval and third-party recruitment. However these procedures make it impossible to calculate sample error because of the nonprobability nature of recruitment of participants. These procedures also increased the likelihood of nonresponse errors. The results of the survey cannot be generalized to the general population.

According to Dillman, Smyth and Christian (2009), to determine how large the sample size needed to be from a population size estimated at 800 with 95 percent confidence level of ± 5 percent with a 50/50 split the sample needed to be 234; with a 80/20 split the sample needed to be 175. This is consistent with the review of the sample size from the NEAR Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that an estimated 200 participants would assure sufficient power for this study.

A third-party recruiter contacted the sample of early career teachers, be it their building administrator or a school district administrator. There was no direct recruitment by the researcher to the participants. Due to third party recruitment, the only way to determine the sample size was on those surveys completed. There was no way to determine an exact number of surveys that were sent out. Thus, an accurate percentage of completion was not possible in this study. An estimated percentage of completion was determined by the number of early career teachers identified by the Midwestern state's department of education directory 841 and the number of completed surveys (N = 363).

Data Collection Procedures

During the first week of the month of September and last week October 2013, the researcher contacted all school district administrators who approve external research within their district. The school districts were the largest school districts in the Midwestern state. Seven school districts approved external research. Four of the school districts forwarded all recruitment emails from one main district administrator. The other three school districts had the researcher directly email building principals who then forward the recruitment emails to staff that meet the early career distinction of teaching more than one and less than five years. An example of the school district approval letter is in Appendix B. Using building and school district administrators as a third-party recruiter assumed that all 816 possible participants received the two recruitment emails. There was no tracking of the forwarded emails.

The two recruitment emails provided a web-link to the Internet survey. The window for the survey completion was about three weeks. Most of the participating

districts data collection started during November 2013. All the surveys were closed in December 2013. The initial email recruitment letter is available in Appendix C. The second and final email recruitment letter was sent about a week after the initial letter and provided a deadline for completion. This email also thanked teachers who had already participated (Appendix D). Web-based survey design allows for immediacy for the researcher and the participants.

This “snapshot” can be tailored to a certain population at a certain time. Intentionally the design and implementation was “tailored” to meet the needs of early career teachers. The survey asked teachers for about ten minutes of their time. The questions were reviewed for reliability and readability with a pilot study. The responses were kept consistent with a four-point scale for majority of the questions. Further, the use of third-party recruitment by a school district administrator gave the message a sense of endorsement by their employer.

The recruitment emails to teachers stressed the low costs of time and the contribution to the profession as the reward. Dillman and colleagues (2009) describe this as a social exchange between the researcher and participants that lowers the cost of taking the time to complete the survey and increasing the benefits. The tailored design maximized return rates from the sample population to avoid design errors like sampling, coverage, non-response, and measurement from poorly worded questions. Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009) also suggested using prenotification and small token incentives (such as a gift card for a cup of coffee) to be included in the recruitment letter. However, due to using email and third party recruitment, the perceived rewards of

contributing to the profession and school districts outweighed the costs of providing a small token of appreciation.

Data Analysis

In order to address the three research questions a series of data analytic steps were conducted. After data were collected, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was generated to analyze if the three independent variables, sense of imbalance from workload (*1 Imbalance*), unsupportive workplace (*2 Unsupportive*), and likelihood due to instability of workplace (*3 Likelihood*), were statistically significant for predicting the *Intent* to move within or exit from teaching altogether. Thus, a significant, positive correlation would indicate that the nature of the early career teacher's experiences and the professional supports are related to early career teacher attrition. The correlation did not explain the reasons why the independent variables are predictors, but simply that a relationship existed between the independent variables and the dichotomous outcome for teacher attrition.

A descriptive analysis was conducted to examine the frequency, percent, valid percent, cumulative percent, mean, and standard deviations for each of the items on the questionnaire. This analysis addressed delineation of the perceived factors that participants identified as contributing to attrition as related to the nature of early career teaching, the professional supports, and the likelihood of attrition

Next, logistic regression was used to investigate whether the three independent variables, *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood*, were correlated to the *Intent* to leave. *Intent* to leave was a dichotomous variable. The *Intent* to leave was measured by four items on the questionnaire. These items asked the participants to identify their *Intent* to move from their current school/district or exit the profession altogether in the next 2 to 3 years. The participants identified their intent to move or leave by choosing either agree or strongly agree from a four point scale. Additionally, the *Intent* to move or leave was

measured by the participants identifying their *Intent* for immediate attrition (next school year) or near future (two to three years). This was also measured by a four-point scale but determined if participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Initially the data were cleaned by being entered into an Excel spreadsheet that coded responses from the survey into the desired numerical values. Coded values were then copied and transferred into the statistical software package SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), version 22. SPSS 22.0 is a comprehensive system for analyzing data and was utilized for analysis to produce charts, tables, plots of distributions and trends, descriptive statistics, and complex statistical analyses.

Correlations

The correlations of the constructs of the variables *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* were conducted using Pearson Correlation Sig (2-tailed). Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Correlations with close to +/- (0.8) give evidence that a construct may measure the same as another. “Reliability and Correlation Tables of Independent Variables” (Appendix E) displays the correlations values for each construct.

Reliability

The reliability that the items measure the constructs of *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* was conducted. Cronbach’s Alpha values near 0.8 provide evidence that the items are reliable. There were four items that had values closer to zero. However these items were included in the analysis due to the low number of items in the constructs of the variables *1 Imbalance* (N = 5) and *3 Likelihood* (N = 9). “Reliability and Correlation Tables of Independent Variables” (Appendix E) displays the reliability values for each construct.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine if the perceived workload, the instability of colleagues, and other workplace factors are predictive of teacher attrition. This study attempted to determine the factors that contribute to the intentions of teachers, who have taught from two to four years, to move to a new school or district or to exit the profession altogether. Data were collected from an Internet questionnaire emailed to 841 participants using a third-party recruitment strategy through school district administrators. To determine if the independent variables of (1) a perceived *Imbalance* in teaching workload, (2) perceptions of an *Unsupportive* workplace, and (3) a reported *Likelihood* to leave schools or teaching due to perceived instability of workplace were individually or collectively predictive of the dichotomous dependent variable of early career teachers' *Intent* to move within or exit the profession, subjects completed a self-reporting forty-two item researcher-designed Internet questionnaire. The independent variables were determined from the literature review. The reviewed studies included methodology, number of subjects, and studies on actual attrition rather than intent for attrition. The intent to move or exit is an important variable since it is a measure of attrition and thus the stability in the teaching profession.

This chapter reports the results of the data analysis by the components of the questionnaire: demographic information and each of independent variables: *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood*. Data analysis includes the frequencies of variables,

percentage, valid and cumulative percentage, means, and standard deviations. Later in this chapter the results of a Pearson Correlation Coefficient are reported to determine if independent variables 1, 2, and 3 were validly and reliably predictive of the dependent variable *Intent* to move within or exit teaching.

Research Questions

Both the data analysis and logistic regression address the following questions:

- 1) What are early career teachers' perceptions of "imbalance" in their workload and how do these influence their intent to move within or exit the profession?
- 2) What are early career teachers' perceptions of workplace support and how do these influence their intent to move within or exit the profession?
- 3) What are early career teachers' perceptions of the relationship between workplace instability and their likelihood to move within or exit the profession?

The key findings in this study suggested that early career teachers rely on their workplaces for support during this unique time of their professional learning. Almost a third of the sample population experienced moving schools already in their career and a quarter are considering this again. The early career teachers are becoming more comfortable in their workplace yet some still find the workload to be unmanageable. The participants desired stability, quality of their colleagues, and school leadership yet some indicated that this did not supports them in improving their practice.

Sample Size

As discussed in chapter three, “Study Participants”, due to third-party recruitment there was no way to determine an exact number of surveys that were sent out. A total population was determined by the number of early career teachers identified by the Midwestern state’s department of education directory. The total population included teachers identified with two to four years teaching experience, special education co-teaching, and teaching core subjects from the seven participating school districts. The total population was determined to be 841 teachers. The number of returned completed surveys was 363, making the return rate 43%. The 363 completed surveys offered descriptive statistics. However, 353 of the completed surveys were used for inferential statistics due to a response error. All data were obtained from teachers’ responses to a validated researcher-created survey. The surveys were completed at the end of the 2013 Fall semester. The data were aggregated from participants currently teaching within 7 separate Midwestern school districts.

Participants Demographics

Indicators of actual teacher attrition relating to demographics support that White females are more likely to move within or leave the profession. Attrition rates typically decrease for every added year of teaching experience. The Midwestern early teachers recruited to participate were teaching during the 2013-2014 school year. The eventual 363 participants granted consent on the Internet survey entitled, “Professional Supports and Attrition Intentions for Early Career Teachers” (Appendix A).

The descriptive analysis of participant demographics was based on 358 subjects due to five missing responses. Each of the demographic factors were included to describe the nature of the entire sample. The following characteristics were found by seven items on the questionnaire and coded: total semesters of certified teaching experience, gender, age, level that the teacher mostly taught, ethnicity/race, institution granting teacher certification, and if they have been at the same school their entire teaching career. Tables 4.1 to 4.7 describe the demographics of the sample population.

The sample consisted mostly of females between the ages of 21 and 30 who identify themselves as White. Other general characteristics showed that the teachers represented in this sample show a close range in having two to four years of teaching experience across all grade levels K-12. Slightly over half of the participants received their teacher certification from the University of Nebraska system at the Lincoln, Omaha, or Kearney campuses. Finally, the participants reported initial instability in their career as a third of the sample had already moved schools with just 2 to 4 years of experience. Included in the results from this study are the connections of demographics to actual and the intent for teacher attrition.

Teaching experience. One of the first demographic factors captured was the amount of certified teaching experience including the current semester at the time the survey was completed. One hundred twenty-two (34.1%) of the valid questionnaires used for analysis were from second year teachers, 112 (31.2%) from third year teachers, and 124 (34.6%) from fourth year teachers. Table 4.1 displays the certified teaching

experience of the participants by semester. The literature reviewed suggests that actual attrition decreases as teachers gain years of experience.

Table 4.1

Amount of Certified Teaching Experience

Total Semesters	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
3	102	28.1	28.5	28.5
4	20	5.5	5.6	34.1
5	95	26.2	26.5	60.6
6	17	4.7	4.7	65.4
7	81	22.3	22.6	88.0
8	43	11.8	12.0	100.0
Total	358	98.6	100.0	

Gender, age, and ethnicity. In addition to the amount of certified teaching experience, participants were asked their gender in order to describe the sample with greater detail. Of the 358 responses used for the analysis, 271 (75.7%) were from females and 87 (24.3%) were from males. In 2011, females continued to grow as a majority (84%) of the total K- 12 teaching population (Feistritzer, 2011). The literature also confirms that younger White females are more likely to participate in actual attrition (see Table 4.2).

Participants were asked to enter their age on the questionnaire. The responses are placed into the age ranges of 23 to 56. The mean age of the participants is 29 years old.

This is consistent with the majority of the participants (76.3%) that were in the 21 to 30 year old age range (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.2

Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	271	74.7	75.7	75.7
Male	87	24.0	24.3	100.0
Total	358	98.6	100.0	

Table 4.3

Age Sorted in Ranges

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
21-30	273	75.5	76.3	76.3
31-40	61	16.7	17.0	93.3
41-50	18	4.7	5.0	98.3
51-60	6	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	358	98.6	100.0	

Participants were asked to identify their ethnicity/race from five classifications. The majority of the sample classified themselves as White (95.8%). The other classifications in order from greatest to least are: Two or more (1.7%), Hispanic (1.4%), Asian (.8%), and Black (.3%) (see Table 4.4).

Teacher certification program. The University of Nebraska system (Lincoln, Omaha, Kearney) provides multiple teacher certification routes including traditional 4 year and post-baccalaureate programs. Just over half of the sample (55.6%) received

Table 4.4

Ethnicity/Race

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
White	343	94.5	95.8	95.8
Black	1	0.3	0.3	96.1
Hispanic	5	1.4	1.4	97.5
Two or More	6	1.7	1.7	99.2
Asian	3	0.8	0.8	100.0
Total	358	98.6	100.0	

their teaching certificate from the University of Nebraska system. The other 159 (44.4%) participants chose “Other” as an option but were not provided the response to identify the institution that granted them their teacher certification. This indicates that the data is a representative sample of Nebraska-educated teachers. The participants’ perception of being well prepared during teacher certification is reported in the next section as related to the variable *I Imbalance* (see Table 4.5).

Grade levels. The actual attrition rates reported in the literature between elementary and secondary are similar. Participants were asked what level (grades) of school they have mostly taught: Elementary Primary (K-2), Elementary Intermediate (3-5), Middle (6-8), and High School (9-12). The 26.8% serving at the elementary level

of primary (N = 96) and the 26.3% at the intermediate grades (N = 94) is combined (53.1%). The data by grade level ranges displays a closer range of percent of teachers

Table 4.5

Institution Granting Teacher Certification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
UN-L	144	39.7	40.2	40.2
UN-O	41	11.3	11.5	51.7
UN-K	14	3.9	3.9	55.6
Other	159	43.8	44.4	100.0
Total	358	98.6	100.0	

across K-12 levels with slightly fewer secondary teachers participating. Middle level (6-8) had 89 with 24.9% and high school teachers had 79 teachers participate, making up 22.1%. The combined secondary teachers (6-12) that participated were 46.9% (see Table 4.6).

Stability in early years. Participants were asked to respond to the question, “I have taught at the same school for my whole career so far,” (Appendix A). This item was used to gather the final item in the demographic section—stability in the early years of their career. The respondents indicate having 2 to 4 years teaching experience; one third (33%) had already experienced some instability of moving to another school, while 240 (67%) of the teachers were still teaching at the same school that initially hired them (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.6

Grade Level Mostly Taught In

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
K-2	96	26.4	26.8	26.8
3-5	94	25.9	26.3	53.1
6-8	89	24.5	24.9	77.9
9-12	79	21.8	22.1	100.0
Total	358	98.6	100.0	

Table 4.7

Taught at Same School for Whole Career

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	240	66.1	67.0	67.0
No	118	32.5	33.0	100.0
Total	358	98.6	100.0	

The participants report initial instability in their career of teaching as a third of the sample had already moved schools with just 2 to 4 years of experience. These participants who have already experienced instability with changing schools, be it voluntary or not, may influence their expressed intent for attrition in this study.

Workload Balance and Imbalance

All of research questions for this study includes the outcome variable which is the expressed intent to move schools/districts or leave the profession altogether. Each of the three research questions also examines the intent to participate in attrition as it relates to

one of the independent variables. Question 1 includes the factors that precipitate a sense of imbalance by increasing and intensifying the workload for early career teachers (*1 Imbalance*). Question 2 includes the factors that early career teachers rely on for support including colleagues, induction supports, school leadership, and a positive school climate (*2 Unsupportive*). Question 3 includes the factors that convey to the early career teacher the perception of stability of the workplace; this includes positional stability, the stability, and the quality of colleagues and the school leadership (*3 Likelihood*). The frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of the independent variables of *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, *3 Likelihood*, and the dependent variable of intent to participate in attrition (*Intent*) are reported in this section. All of the Tables 4.8 to 4.48 displays the results of each item that measures these variables with frequencies of variables, percentages, valid, and cumulative percentages.

Sense of imbalance and workload. Research question 1 examined the factors that contribute to early career teachers sense of an imbalance of workload. These factors include the stresses and demands of learning to teach while teaching. The participants reported their perceptions of these factors to the independent variable of research question 1 (*1 Imbalance*) on 5 questionnaire items (Appendix A). As identified from the literature, the sense of imbalance in the early years of teaching results in being unprepared during teacher certification, increased emotional and physical demands of teaching, an unmanageable workload, and increase in the amounts of stress. These items were classified as the independent variable of *1 Imbalance*. The responses to the variable of *1 Imbalance* have a mean of 9.39 and standard deviation of 2.18. The factors that

construct the *I Imbalance* variable are significant predictors for the intent to move schools/districts and leave the profession in the near future. The specific results are shared in this chapter in the section, “Inferential Analysis for the Intent to Move or Leave.” The sample size for the items measuring the *I Imbalance* variable is N=347 due to 10 missing responses.

Generally the participants’ reported that they are experiencing less stress and are up to the physical and emotional demands of teaching. The teachers felt prepared from their teacher education programs (88.7%). An even larger group of 94.9% report that they are up to the emotional demands and the physical demands of teaching (98.3%). Almost a fifth of the participants (20.4%) expressed that their workload was unmanageable. Lastly, 96% of this sample expressed agreement that their current challenges of teaching are less stressful than their own first year or prior to this year of teaching. The participants expressed strongly (68%) that they have less stress now than in previous years teaching. The few participants who were experiencing imbalance due to workload may begin to consider attrition. Perhaps the thoughts of attrition may be compounded when early career teachers are experiencing imbalance due to workload and their peers are not. This may increase the sense of isolation from colleagues, as their perception of workload does not match with what their peers are experiencing.

Prepared for teaching. Teacher preparation programs provide experiences that introduce pre-service teachers to the realities of the classroom such as practicums and student teaching. However, early career teachers experience new challenges that often require quick decisions; despite preparation, they may be uncertain of what to do. These

experiences of learning to teach while teaching can pressures of workload. The sample population of this study indicated that that their experiences in teacher education prepared them for the realities in leading their own classroom. The early career teachers felt prepared to teach from their pre-service teacher education programs (88.7%). Only 40 (11.3%) felt underprepared for the realities of teaching and 5 respondents (1.4%) indicated that they strongly disagreed for being prepared in their teacher education program (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8

Teacher Education Program Prepared Me for Teaching

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	122	33.6	34.6	34.6
Agree	191	52.6	54.1	88.7
Disagree	35	9.6	9.9	98.6
Strongly Disagree	5	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total	353	97.2	100.0	

Emotional demands. The uncertainties of leading a classroom during the early years can intensify the workload due to the emotional range of balancing discovery and survival. The participants in this study indicated that they were up to the emotional demands of teaching (94.9%). Only 18 (5.1%) reported the strains of the emotional demands of teaching were too much. There was only one participant that expresses strongly their perception of being overwhelmed emotionally. This sample population

indicates that imbalance of workload is likely not related to the emotional demands of leading a classroom (see Table 4.9).

Physical demands. Being a classroom teacher does not require strenuous physical labor. Early career teacher reported fatigue and loss of sleep due to the increase of time demands while leading a classroom of their own. Experiencing the intensity of the pace of teaching and dealing with the new challenges can also intensify the workload. Similar to the emotional demands of teaching, the sample population of this study reported that

Table 4.9

Up to the Emotional Demands of Teaching

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	153	42.1	43.3	43.3
Agree	182	50.1	51.6	94.9
Disagree	17	4.7	4.8	99.7
Strongly Disagree	1	0.3	0.3	100.0
Total	353	97.2	100.0	

(98.3%) they were up to the physical demands of teaching. This confirms that, despite fatigue and the physical demands of teaching, the workload was mostly manageable (see Table 4.10).

Improved stress level. The literature supports that every year a teacher stays in the profession the attrition rate decreases. The last factor reported of the variable

Imbalance 1 asked teachers to share their perceptions on their “stress level” as they face their current challenges compared to earlier challenges. The sample expressed agreement

Table 4.10

Up to the Physical Demands of Teaching

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	192	52.9	54.4	54.4
Agree	155	42.7	43.9	98.3
Disagree	6	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	353	97.2	100.0	

(96%) to the question #14, “My current challenges of teaching are less stressful than they used to be.” The largest subset of 236 (68%) of the variable *Imbalance 1* expressed that they experience less stress than previously. Only fourteen (3.2%) disagreed and three (.9%) expressed that they strongly disagreed regarding an improved stress level (see Table 4.11).

Table 4.11

Current Challenges of Teaching are Less Stressful

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	54	14.9	15.6	15.6
Agree	132	36.4	38.0	53.6
Disagree	1201	33.1	34.6	88.2
Strongly Disagree	41	11.3	11.8	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

Manageable workload. Two hundred and thirty-one teachers (79.6%) in this study indicated that the amount of work in teaching was manageable. Only 50 (14.2%) of these teachers expressed this strongly. More of the teachers felt strongly about this item than other factors in this section, but that was only 11 of the participants (3.1%). This variable also had more “disagree” responses than other variables in this section with 61 (17.3%), suggesting that it is not likely the lack of preparation, the emotional and physical demands, and experiencing less stress that contributes to the perception of imbalance from a teacher’s workload. The researcher suggests that there are other factors that contributed to the sense of imbalance coming from an early career teachers’ workload. As Helen Ladd (2011) warns, it is difficult to untangle the overlapping influences of a teacher’s intent for attrition (see Table 4.12).

Table 4.12

Amount of Work is Manageable

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	50	13.8	14.2	14.2
Agree	231	63.6	65.4	79.6
Disagree	61	16.8	17.3	96.9
Strongly Disagree	11	3.0	3.1	100.0
Total	353	97.2	100.0	

Workplace Support and Lack Thereof

The second independent variable used to predict the outcome of *Intent* to move within or from teaching are the factors that construct the perceptions for variable 2

Unsupportive. These factors address question 2 that examines the supportive workplace including colleagues, induction supports, school leadership, and climate that influence their intent to move within the profession or leave altogether. These factors of variable 2 *Unsupportive* were found to be statistically significant predictor for the intent to move school districts. This question is addressed by the responses to 23 items on the survey instrument #16-38 (Appendix A) for the purposes of descriptive analysis. These items were also classified for the variable 2 *Unsupportive*. The factors identified in the literature that contribute to the perception of an unsupportive workplace include: lack of colleagues, lack of induction practices, a negative school climate, and lack of school leadership. The results of the variable 2 *Unsupportive* as significant are described later in this chapter in the section, “Inferential Analysis for Intent to Move or Exit.”

The participants’ responses for the independent variable 2 *Unsupportive* have a mean of 43.39 and a standard deviation of 7.52. Later in this chapter the independent variable 2 *Unsupportive* was analyzed in relationship with inferential statistics to the outcome variable of *Intent*. The descriptive statistics for the variable 2 *Unsupportive* are displayed in Tables 4.13 to 4.35 and described in this section. The sample size for the unsupportive variable for fifteen of the items is (N=347) due to sixteen missing responses and (N=346) due to seventeen missing responses for 8 items. The analysis of these factors are divided up in this order: “Reliance on Colleagues for Support, Practices of Comprehensive Induction, Reliance on a Supportive School Climate, and Reliance on School Leadership for Support.”

Reliance on colleagues. Generally the early career teachers in this study indicated that they are not reluctant to talk with colleagues. They reported that they share their realities and their colleagues affirm their efforts. This confirms the importance of colleagues in a supportive workplace that supports teacher retention. Fewer of the participants reported receiving constructive feedback and ways to improve their practice however. Early career teachers, who perceive their colleagues do not support them with purposeful collaboration, may consider this as an influence on their intent for attrition. Schools that provide job-embedded professional development and structures of purposeful collaboration may increase the perception of a supportive workplace.

Access to colleagues. Early career teachers must have access to colleagues if they are going to feel supported by them. The literature describes challenges to this access is assignment and location within the building. An unsupportive workplace may have a teacher with no colleagues that share their curriculum, materials, or common students. These unsupported teachers may be itinerant between multiple buildings or architecturally isolated from their teaching peers. The participants in this study reported ample access, where 96% express that they have a colleague that they can sit and talk with. Slightly more than three fourths (75.8%) of the sample expressed this strongly (see Table 4.13).

Collaborative conversations. Almost one fourth (24.2%) of the participants reported that the architectural design or location of their classroom inhibits conversation with colleagues. This may contribute to a sense of isolation and the perception of an unsupportive workplace. This lack of access to colleagues may contribute to not having

the opportunity to share ideas and easily co-plan with colleagues and in turn contribute to attrition (see Table 4.14).

Table 4.13

Colleague I Can Sit Down and Talk With

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	236	65.0	68.0	68.0
Agree	97	26.7	28.0	96.0
Disagree	11	3.0	3.2	99.1
Strongly Disagree	3	0.8	0.9	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

Table 4.14

Architectural Design Easy to Talk with Colleagues

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	66	18.2	19.0	19.0
Agree	197	54.3	56.8	75.8
Disagree	67	18.5	19.3	95.1
Strongly Disagree	17	4.7	4.9	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

Connecting with colleagues. Empathy shared between colleagues comes from trusting interactions where teachers perceive they are listened to and recognized for their ideas and experiences. Important to developing an emerging sense of professional identity for early career teacher is having colleagues who do not discount their realities.

Colleagues who minimize the developing beliefs and practices of early career teachers may give them a false sense of success or contribute to a sense of failure both of which make it more difficult for the early career teacher to form new ideas and habits. The participants in this study expressed this type of support in that they have colleagues who take their realities seriously (99.1%) (see Table 4.15).

Table 4.15

Colleagues That Take My Reality Seriously

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	129	35.5	37.2	37.2
Agree	215	59.2	62.0	99.1
Disagree	3	0.8	0.9	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

Further about four out of five teachers (79.5%) expressed that their colleagues recognize when they are out of balance with work and life. These teachers receive empathy from their colleagues who recognize that as an early career teacher they are developing a new identity. This new sense of self is not a just a cumulative persona of the teachers they have had in the past, as Lortie (1975) describes as the “apprenticeship of observation,” but truly developing an identity that is themselves personally and professionally.

This construct relates to the first independent variable *I Imbalance-* seeking both discovery and survival, early career teachers, unable to find structures of support in the

workplace, begin to seek to move or exit. The colleagues of early career teachers have an essential role in professional identity development. The early career teachers must see themselves as contributing to and learning from the professional culture of the school. Early career teachers may not have these structures and supports from colleagues where ideas and practices are shared with mutual benefit. As a result, they may consider attrition. (see Table 4.16).

Table 4.16

Colleagues Recognize When I am Out of Balance with Work and Life

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	61	16.8	17.6	17.6
Agree	215	59.2	62.0	79.5
Disagree	66	18.2	19.0	98.6
Strongly Disagree	5	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

Willingness for collegial support. Similarly, the early career teachers in this study (94.5%) conveyed that they are not reluctant to talk with their colleagues. This suggests that they desire the access to colleagues and the sharing of ideas and co-planning that is necessary to improve their practice. This collegiality supports teachers in gaining confidence in their skills and ideas of practice, which in turn increases their commitment to their colleagues at the school they are serving and the profession as a whole. Early career teachers who are connected to colleagues realize that they might not receive these conversations elsewhere, so they may not consider attrition (see Table 4.17).

Table 4.17

Reluctant to Talk with Colleagues about Teaching

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	3	0.8	0.9	0.9
Agree	16	4.4	4.6	5.5
Disagree	201	55.4	57.9	63.4
Strongly Disagree	127	35.0	36.6	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

The teachers in this study (88.5%) provided evidence that they have colleagues that help them improve their practice. Counter to this early career teachers that express the desire to have collaborative conversations with colleagues but do not find their current colleagues helpful in improving their practice may lessen their commitment. These teachers may go looking for the colleagues and school climate that support their development of ideas through shared practice. (see Table 4.18).

Similarly to early career teachers expressing the desire to have collegial support by not being reluctant to talk with colleagues (94.5%), in turn their colleagues are likely to affirm their efforts. The participants expressed that they (94.8%) have colleagues who affirm their efforts and almost a third (32.3%) expressed this strongly. This confirms that early career teachers seek out the supports of colleagues and that their colleagues likely are welcoming to these collegial conversations as well. However collegial the conversations might be, they also need to focus on improving practice (see Table 4.19).

Table 4.18

Colleagues Help Recognize Ways to Improve

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	61	16.8	17.6	17.6
Agree	246	67.8	70.9	88.5
Disagree	38	10.5	11.0	99.4
Strongly Disagree	2	0.6	0.6	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

Table 4.19

Colleagues Affirm My Efforts

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	112	30.9	32.3	32.3
Agree	217	59.8	62.5	94.8
Disagree	17	4.7	4.9	99.7
Strongly Disagree	1	0.3	.3	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

Again the early career teachers displayed the need for collegial conversations but also want to find these helpful in improving practice. Of the sample, 87.6% expressed that they received constructive feedback from colleagues with 20.7% who indicated that they “Strongly Agreed” to this (see Table 4.20).

Table 4.20

Receive Constructive Feedback from Colleagues

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	75	20.7	21.6	21.6
Agree	229	63.1	66.0	87.6
Disagree	42	11.6	12.1	99.7
Strongly Disagree	1	0.3	0.3	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

The early career teachers in this study indicated that they have access to colleagues through availability. The teachers indicate they have a colleague whom they can sit down and talk with (96%). The participants expressed the need for collaborative conversations and value being connected to their colleagues. Colleagues are validating early career teachers' ideas and experiences, as 99.1% of the teachers indicated their colleagues take their realities seriously. However, less of the sample expressed that these conversations offer constructive feedback (87.6%) or ways to improve their teaching (88.5%). All of this suggests that just having colleagues who validate and affirm early career teachers is important. However, this alone is not enough to confirm that a teacher will not look to move or leave the profession. Early career teachers need multiple professional supports, including critical feedback on ways to improve.

Practices of comprehensive induction. The literature supports the importance of multiple components of teacher induction, which, along with mentoring, may include opportunities to observe other teachers, regularly scheduled meetings to discuss teaching,

and professional networks of teachers outside of school. These job-embedded professional supports are continued beyond the first year. Described in this section are the responses for the second independent variable 2 *Unsupportive* that contributes to the *Intent* to move within or exit from teaching.

Regularly scheduled meetings. As described previously, it is difficult to untangle a single component of support from other components. The responses for reported regularly scheduled meetings with colleagues are an example of this. In this study, 87.9% of the early career teachers have regular, scheduled meetings to discuss teaching. This indicates that teachers are meeting with other teachers (see Table 4.21). This does not indicate that these meetings are a part of a supportive climate or even helpful in improving practice.

Mentors. Another important factor of induction supports is an assigned mentor that teaches the same school, grade level or subject matter. The literature both confirms the benefits of a mentor to teacher attrition but cautions that a mentor who is not specifically trained to support early career teachers may contribute to increased workload and strained relationships with colleagues. So the policies of assigned mentors should include specific training of the needs of early career teachers and a system to evaluate this support to assure that this relationship with a colleague does not become another stressor or burden to the early career teacher.

Table 4.21

Regularly Scheduled Meetings with Colleagues to Discuss Teaching

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	146	40.2	42.1	42.1
Agree	159	43.8	45.8	87.9
Disagree	35	9.6	10.1	98.0
Strongly Disagree	7	1.9	2.0	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

The respondents shared that only 45.8% have a mentor with a similar assignment. The participants all teach in a state where an assigned mentor is required only for the first year of teaching. This may contribute to the lower percentage, with this sample population having two to four years of experience. Again the quality of the mentorship cannot be determined by the responses (see Table 4.22).

Similar to the undefined support of a mentor are the professional supports of networks outside of school. This research question of how the perceptions of an unsupportive workplace may contribute to the intent of attrition literally crosses boundaries with networks outside of schools. If teachers do not find the climate and colleagues of their school supportive of their development, they may begin to look for this with other colleagues. Perhaps not being at the same school or connecting outside of school may provide a more trusting collaboration. These networks of teachers also may develop a way of reflecting about common practice without actually sharing either common curriculum or students. The early career

Table 4.22

Assigned Mentor with a Similar Assignment

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	66	18.2	19.0	19.0
Agree	93	25.6	26.8	45.8
Disagree	132	36.4	38.0	83.9
Strongly Disagree	56	15.4	16.1	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

teachers in this study reported that 68.9% have networks of teachers outside of school. It cannot be determined if they are given necessary critical feedback for their development or, like the colleagues described above, another venue for having their realities and ideas affirmed. Possibly the networks outside of school, be it online or face-to-face with colleagues, may contribute to attrition. If an early career does not find the support they need at their school, but they do find it with teachers at another school, their intent to move schools or districts may increase (see Table 4.23).

An induction support that was reported at 70.6% is the opportunity to observe others teach. This creates a supportive workplace of learning from practice through practice.

Colleagues can create a common language and reflection that provides mutual benefit. This support may provide more equal ground than a mentor relationship. This is dependent on the collaborative structures and trust between colleagues. If the professional

climate is more about indoctrinating towards certain practices rather than sharing inquiry

Table 4.23

Networks of Teachers Outside of School

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	67	18.5	19.3	19.3
Agree	172	47.4	49.6	68.9
Disagree	94	25.9	27.1	96.0
Strongly Disagree	14	3.9	4.0	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

into practice this may contribute to a potential loss of validation for the early career teachers' emerging ideas and practice. This connects to "silent exit" (Hirschman, 1970) when the voice of the teacher is silenced and then lowers the commitment to contributing to the workplace. These are the professional environments, driven by isolation and cynicism, which influence teachers towards thoughts of attrition (see Table 4.24).

Most of the participants reported induction supports including regularly scheduled meetings to discuss teaching (87.9%). Most of the teachers (68.9%) connect with networks of teachers outside of school. About as many (70.9%) had the opportunity to observe others teach. While just over half (52.8%) did not have an assigned mentor with a similar assignment. This suggests that the early career teachers in the study have multiple induction supports. What is not indicated is how these supports by themselves influence the intent of attrition. These factors along with school climate, school leadership, and collegiality make up the variable 2 *Unsupportive*. The results of this

variable as being statistically significant are reported later in this chapter in the “Inferential Analysis for Intent to Move or Exit” section.

Table 4.24

Opportunity to Observe Other Teachers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	64	17.6	18.4	18.4
Agree	181	49.9	52.2	70.6
Disagree	86	23.7	24.8	95.4
Strongly Disagree	16	4.4	4.6	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

Reliance on a supportive climate. The third focus of the literature that construct the second independent variable 2 *Unsupportive* include the factors of school climate. This section reports the results of these factors reported by the participants in the study including pressure for results, student achievement, time to meet, recognition, delegation of work, teacher innovation, risk taking, and school loyalty. The respondents indicated these school climate factors on 8 of the 23 items representing the independent variable 2 *Unsupportive*.

Generally the participants reported that their school faculty was united in the push for student achievement (93.4%), yet they felt too much pressure for results (60.2%). The teachers were split regarding how they felt about adequate meeting time 53.6% expressing that there was enough time to meet while 46.4% expressed not enough time. They expressed that their teaching peers were innovative (90.3%) and were loyal (93.9%)

to their school. They also felt when necessary work was delegated (87.3%). Teachers were recognized for exceeding expectations (72%); almost the same percentage believed they could take risks (70.3%). Tables 4.25 to 4.32 display how the early career teachers in this study perceived the school climate and the variable 2 *Unsupportive*. These percentages and the results for these items on school climate are shared more specifically below.

Pressure for results and student achievement. The teachers in this study felt united in the push for student achievement (93.4%). This confirms that teachers value the non-pecuniary rewards like student success and to enjoy learning (see Table 4.25).

Table 4.25

United in the Push for Student Achievement

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	152	41.9	43.9	43.9
Agree	171	47.1	49.4	93.4
Disagree	22	6.1	6.4	97.7
Strongly Disagree	1	0.3	0.3	100.0
Total	346	95.3	100.0	

Yet, 60.2% of the sample population indicated that they felt too much pressure for results. The source of this pressure cannot be determined from these responses. The increased pressure for student achievement on standardized testing is a contributing factor for the intent to move within teaching. This suggests that a school may be eroding

the rewards for teachers by overemphasizing the drive for results on standardized tests or otherwise (see Table 4.26).

Table 4.26

Feels Too Much Pressure for Results

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	66	18.2	19.0	19.0
Agree	143	39.4	41.2	60.2
Disagree	124	34.2	35.7	96.0
Strongly Disagree	14	3.9	4.0	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

Innovative and risk taking among colleagues. As an indicator of school climate, 90.5% of teachers in this study perceived their peers as innovative. Only 31 participants disagree and 2 strongly disagree with this. An essential part to stability in a school is longevity with colleagues who can innovate together and implement reforms for needed improvement (see Tables 4.27 and 4.28).

Shared work and meeting time. Shared workload was defined in the questionnaire by the item, “We delegate work when necessary.” Most of the teachers agreed (87.3%), including 49 (14.2%) who felt strongly about this. Delegation of work can influence a school climate by contributing to a shared purpose of benefitting students and serving a community. This would support the non-pecuniary rewards of the profession. Without this, delegation may be perceived as increasing the workload and intensifying the pressure on teachers. This suggests that a school climate that overtly shares work not just

Table 4.27

Teachers Afraid to Take Risks

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	21	5.8	6.1	6.1
Agree	82	22.6	23.6	29.7
Disagree	206	56.7	59.4	89.0
Strongly Disagree	38	10.5	11.0	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

Table 4.28

Teachers Are Innovative

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	85	23.4	24.6	24.6
Agree	228	62.8	65.9	90.5
Disagree	31	8.5	9.0	99.4
Strongly Disagree	2	0.6	0.6	100.0
Total	346	95.3	100.0	

for task completion but as shared responsibility towards serving the school community can positively influence of the work. (see Tables 4.29 and 4.30).

Recognition and loyalty. Almost three-fourths (72%) of the teachers in the study expressed that they and their teaching peers were recognized when they exceed expectations. Eighty-three respondents disagreed and fourteen strongly disagreed. A

school practice that recognizes individuals may support a positive school climate if this is connected to contributing to innovation and the shared responsibility to the community.

Table 4.29

Delegate Work When Necessary

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	49	13.5	14.2	14.2
Agree	253	69.7	73.1	87.3
Disagree	40	11.0	11.6	98.8
Strongly Disagree	4	1.1	1.2	100.0
Total	346	95.3	100.0	

Table 4.30

Not Enough Time to Meet Together

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	56	15.4	16.1	16.1
Agree	130	35.8	37.5	53.6
Disagree	141	38.8	40.6	94.2
Strongly Disagree	20	5.5	5.8	100.0
Total	347	95.6	100.0	

In a school that is negatively driven by competition- one driven by isolation and cynicism- recognition may further the divide between teachers (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). This suggests that recognition for teachers who exceed expectations may positively

influence the school climate as it connects to collective innovation and improvement (see Table 4.31).

Table 4.31

Teachers are Recognized When They Exceed Expectations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	55	15.2	15.9	15.9
Agree	194	53.4	56.1	72.0
Disagree	83	22.9	24.0	96.0
Strongly Disagree	14	3.9	4.0	100.0
Total	346	95.3	100.0	

Ninety-three percent (93.9%) of the sample indicates that their teacher peers are loyal to their school. Twenty disagree and only one strongly disagrees to their peers' loyalty to the school (see Table 4.32).

Table 4.32

Teachers Loyal to School

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	132	36.4	38.2	38.2
Agree	193	53.2	55.8	93.9
Disagree	20	5.5	5.8	99.7
Strongly Disagree	1	0.3	0.3	100.0
Total	346	95.3	100.0	

Reliance on school leadership. The fourth focus from the literature that constructs the variable *2 Unsupportive* is the impact of school leadership. The participants may interpret leadership as their building administrators. However, in a shared leadership school, this can be interpreted more collectively than by just a position such as a principal. This may be a leader of professional development, department head, grade level team leader, or a teacher on the School Improvement Team. This was the researcher's intent in the design of these items for the questionnaire, as shared leadership is important to teacher retention. The respondents indicated these school climate factors on 3 items in the questionnaire. These factors are included as part of the 23 items of the independent variable *2 Unsupportive*. The results of this variable as being significant for the intent for attrition is reported later in the section, "Inferential Analysis for the Intent to Move or Exit." Generally, the early career teachers (86.4%) felt as if their leaders know what is going on in their school; they modeled self-reflection (87.9%), and positively nudge for change. Tables 4.33 to 4.35 display the perceptions of early career teachers and the factors of school leadership related to the variable *2 Unsupportive*.

Self reflective leadership. A school climate that is supportive involves the perception of shared responsibility to the community. This includes school leadership modeling self-reflective practices, being overt about their own professional growth, and how that growth connects to the support of early career teachers. In this study the school leadership was perceived to be self-reflective as 87.9% of the sample indicated agreement (see Table 43.3).

Aware leadership. Important to a positive school climate is that school leadership is visible and they know what the realities are for early career teachers. The struggles and successes early career teachers have can be supported only if they are known. Most

Table 43.3

Leaders Model Self-Reflection

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	99	27.3	28.6	28.6
Agree	205	56.5	59.2	87.9
Disagree	35	9.6	10.1	98.0
Strongly Disagree	7	1.9	2.0	100.0
Total	346	95.3	100.0	

of the teachers (86.4%) in the study share that school leadership is aware of what is going on at their school. Thirty-five disagreed with this and twelve strongly disagreed (see Table 4.34).

Table 4.34

Leaders Know What is Going On in Building

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	110	30.3	31.8	31.8
Agree	189	52.1	54.6	86.4
Disagree	35	9.6	10.1	96.5
Strongly Disagree	12	3.3	3.5	100.0
Total	346	95.3	100.0	

Positive change. The instability of a staff due to the actual or intent of attrition inhibits school reform. A stable school climate can build upon the trust and innovation of each other to positively change and implement reforms. Consistently, the majority of participants' viewed school leadership favorably; including 87.9% who shared agreement that their school leaders nudge positively for change, as well as 23.7% of this group who felt strongly about this. Thirty-four disagreed and eight strongly disagreed (see Table 4.35).

Table 4.35

Leaders Positively Nudge Change

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	82	22.6	23.7	23.7
Agree	222	61.2	64.2	87.9
Disagree	34	9.4	9.8	97.7
Strongly Disagree	8	2.2	2.3	100.0
Total	346	95.3	100.0	

The importance of school leadership to attrition is well documented in the literature. Throughout the three perceived factors of school leadership described, about 10% of the sample disagreed that their school leadership modeled self-reflection, knows what is going on in their buildings, and positively nudges for change. This suggests about 10% of the sample considered their school leadership to be a factor in an unsupportive workplace. School leadership, school climate, induction supports, and colleagues are included in the variable of an unsupportive workplace.

Likelihood to Move/Exit and Workplace Instability

The third research question of this study examined the perceptions of the stability in the workplace that influence the intent to move within or exit from teaching altogether. The factors identified in the literature include the perceptions of quality of colleagues and school leadership, stability of colleagues and school leadership, and stability in their position. The factors constructed the variable *3 Likelihood* that was a significant predictor for the *Intent* to move schools/districts and exit teaching in the near future. Nine items gather the perceptions of the respondents for the independent variable *3 Likelihood*. These items are numbers 39 to 47 on the questionnaire (Appendix A).

Described in this section are the descriptive statistics for these factors (Tables 4.36 to 4.44). The percentages and frequencies for the variable *3 Likelihood* are shared in the subsections of “Stability, Advancement, Quality of Coworkers and School Leaders, and the Top Reason for Leaving.” The items for this variable of *3 Likelihood* have a mean of 25.22 and a standard deviation of 4.43. In the section “Inferential Analysis for Intent to Move or Leave” are the results of the third independent variable *3 Likelihood* as it relates to the outcome variable of *Intent* to move within or exit from teaching. Item 47 on the questionnaire (Appendix) is not included in means, standard deviation and the inferential statistics due to a response error. This is described further in the section “Top Reason to Leave.”

Positional stability and intent to move or exit. Described earlier in the “Demographics” section (see Table 4.7), a third of early career teachers had already experienced some instability. The early career teachers in this study (68.4%) would

consider leaving the profession or their current assignment if their position became less stable (see Table 4.36).

Table 4.36

Plan Consider Leaving if Position Became Less Stable

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	38	10.5	11.1	11.1
Agree	196	54.0	57.3	68.4
Disagree	94	25.9	27.5	95.9
Strongly Disagree	14	3.9	4.1	100.0
Total	342	94.2	100.0	

Positional stability is not the only factor that influences the perception of stability in the workplace. Almost the same percentage of participants reported considering leaving due to positional stability (68%) would consider leaving due to disagreeable school reforms (67%). Disagreeable school reforms are described in the literature as sweeping policies of relentless test preparation, scripted curriculum, and public shaming (Santoro & Morehouse, 2011)(See Table 4.37).

School reform policies that demand forced attrition of teachers and principals of consistently low performing schools add to the instability of these schools. Considering that, the sample reported that they would consider leaving if their colleagues left (40.1%) (see Table 4.38).

Table 4.37

Consider Leaving Due to Disagreeable School Reforms

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	18	5.0	5.3	5.3
Agree	211	58.1	61.7	67.0
Disagree	108	29.8	31.6	98.5
Strongly Disagree	5	1.4	1.5	100.0
Total	342	94.2	100.0	

Table 4.38

Plan Consider Leaving if School Colleagues Left

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	23	6.3	6.71	6.7
Agree	114	31.4	33.3	40.1
Disagree	182	50.1	53.2	93.3
Strongly Disagree	23	6.3	6.7	100.0
Total	342	94.2	100.0	

As forced attrition may compound further attrition, the participants identified that they were more likely to leave if their colleagues left (40.1%) than their school leadership left (25.8%) (see Table 4.39). This suggests that the perception of a school's stability is more dependent on who teaches with you than who may lead you.

Moving on for advancement. Teacher attrition may include opportunities for advancement be it positional or in a leadership role. As colleagues and school leadership

leave or move to a new position that can also contribute to further teacher attrition as well. The early career teachers in this study reported that when considering new positions it is more likely to be within their current district (40.9%) than their current school building (24%)(see Tables 4.40 and 4.41).

Table 4.39

Plan Consider Leaving if School Leadership Left

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	21	5.8	6.1	6.1
Agree	67	18.5	19.6	25.7
Disagree	221	60.9	64.6	90.4
Strongly Disagree	33	9.1	9.6	100.0
Total	342	94.2	100.0	

Table 4.40

Plan on a Different Position Within the Same District

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	42	11.6	12.3	12.3
Agree	98	27.0	28.7	40.9
Disagree	163	44.9	47.7	88.6
Strongly Disagree	39	10.7	11.4	100.0
Total	342	94.2	100.0	

Reliance on colleagues and school leadership. The likelihood of attrition is influenced by the perceived quality of colleagues and school leadership. The respondents

indicated (78.4%) an expressed interest in leaving if the quality of the school leadership declined. Fifty-six participants felt strongly about this and only 8 strongly disagreed. The teachers in this study considered leaving due to the perceptions of lower quality of school leadership (78.4%) than of colleagues (66.7%). These are higher percentages than considering leaving based on if colleagues left (40.1%) or school leadership (25.7%) (see Tables 4.42 and 4.43).

Table 4.41

Plan for a Different Position at Current School in the Future

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	12	3.3	3.5	3.5
Agree	70	19.3	20.5	24.0
Disagree	208	57.3	60.8	84.8
Strongly Disagree	52	14.3	15.2	100.0
Total	342	94.2	100.0	

The perceived quality of the school leadership influenced attrition almost three times more than if the school leadership actually left. The perceived quality of colleagues was also important but slightly less than the quality of school leadership. This suggests how early career teachers perceive the quality of who they work with as important, not only in their professional support but their intent to stay at their school and profession.

Top reason for leaving teaching. Item 47 on the questionnaire (Appendix A) asked participants to identify the “Top reason why a teacher would leave the profession.” However only the frequency is reported in Table 4.44 due to a response error that enabled

the participants to indicate more than one reason. As a result of this the frequency for item 47 is N=501 while the total sample size was N=353. Thus item 47 is included for the variable of 3 *Likelihood* item but only the frequency is reported. Item 47 was not included in the inferential statistics for this variable as a predictor for the *Intent* of attrition either.

Table 4.42

Plan Consider Leaving if Quality of School Leadership Declined

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	56	15.4	16.4	16.4
Agree	212	58.4	62.0	78.4
Disagree	66	18.2	19.3	97.7
Strongly Disagree	8	2.2	2.3	100.0
Total	342	94.2	100.0	

Table 4.43

Consider Leaving if Quality of Other Teachers Declined

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	43	11.8	12.6	12.6
Agree	185	51.0	54.1	66.7
Disagree	105	28.9	30.7	97.4
Strongly Disagree	9	2.5	2.6	100.0
Total	342	94.2	100.0	

However, this adds to the results of the study because this is the one item on the questionnaire where respondents can indicate multiple views on their perceptions of what contributes to teacher attrition.

Consistently throughout the responses of this study, the importance of school leadership to early career teachers was confirmed. Including by the, “lack of support from school administrators” with the highest frequencies of 115. The impact of both “increased workload of teaching duties” (N= 109) and the intensified workload due to “pressure from testing” (N= 64) was also consistent with other results from other variables described in this study. The responses with the highest frequencies suggest that the lack of non-pecuniary rewards that retain teachers, such as the perceptions of quality of who they work with, influence the likelihood for attrition. There are multiple reasons for teachers to consider leaving which are not isolated from the school climate, such as their colleagues with whom they build trusting relationships in order to better serve the students in their school community. These are the malleable factors in a school climate, which can make the workload lighter and improve the impact of professional supports for early career teachers (see Table 4.44).

Teachers’ Intent and Predicting Attrition

All three of the research questions for this study examine the perceptions of the factors that construct each of the independent variables of *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* to the dependent variable of the *Intent* to move within or exit from teaching. In this section the 4 items of the questionnaire that gather the participants’ responses for *Intent* variable are described with the frequencies and percentages. Later in

this chapter the dependent variable of *Intent* is reported with inferential statistics as it relates to the independent variables of *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* in the next section, “The Inferential Analysis for Intent to Move or Exit.” The descriptive statistics for the variable *Intent* are displayed in Tables 4.45 to 4.48. The sample size for the *Intent* variable was (N=353) because of ten missing responses.

Table 4.44

Top Reason Why Teachers Leave the Profession

Reason	N
Lack of support from administrators	115
Increased workload of teaching duties	109
Pressure from testing	64
Increased workload of unrelated teaching duties	59
Low salary	54
Student misbehavior	40
Teachers not valued by society	31
Problems with parents	13
Lack of professional development	10
Lack of materials	6
Total	501

The intent to move within or exit from teaching was gathered at the time the sample population completed the survey. The expressed *Intent* may change as the early career teachers’ professional life and experiences in the workplace change throughout the school year.

Staying on and stable. Participants were initially asked to indicate their intent for attrition with the item, “I plan on teaching at my current school next year.” This item gathered the intent for immediate attrition. The respondents indicate that twenty two (6.2%) of the sample population intends to participate in attrition immediately. Counter to this, 93.8% indicated that they intended to stay on at their current school the next year. This finding suggests that this population of early career teachers is stable. (see Table 4.45).

Table 4.45

Plan on Teaching at Current School Next Year

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	238	65.6	67.4	67.4
Agree	93	25.6	26.3	93.8
Disagree	20	5.5	5.7	99.4
Strongly Disagree	2	0.6	0.6	99.4
Total	353	97.3	100.0	

Moving in the near future. The variable for intent for attrition in the near future by moving schools had more than twice the rate (24.4%) of those participants considering moving to a new district (11.9%) in the near future. Seven of the participants expressed strong intent in leaving their school district, while 88.1% participants plan on staying with their school districts in the near future and almost half expressed this strongly (48.2%). This suggests that the early career teachers in this study are more committed to

their school district than their individual schools when considering attrition (see Tables 4.46 and 4.47).

Leavers. Only 27 (7.6%) of the participants expressed intent for leaving the profession of teaching altogether in the near future. Five (1.4%) of the participants expressed strong beliefs about changing their profession from teaching while the majority of their counterparts are planning on staying with teaching (92.3%)

Table 4.46

Plan to Teach at Another School in Next 2-3 Years

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	23	6.3	6.5	6.5
Agree	63	17.4	17.8	24.4
Disagree	159	43.8	45.0	69.4
Strongly Disagree	108	29.8	30.6	100.0
Total	353	97.3	100.0	

Table 4.47

Plan to Teach at Another School District in Next 2-3 Years

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	7	1.9	2.0	2.0
Agree	35	9.6	9.9	11.9
Disagree	141	38.8	39.9	51.8
Strongly Disagree	170	46.8	48.2	100.0
Total	353	97.3	100.0	

and 60.9% expressed a strong commitment to the profession. This suggests that this sample population is stable in the profession (see Table 4.48).

The early career teachers in this study are stable since only 6.2% indicated that they were considering immediate attrition. Almost equal were those considering to leaving teaching altogether (7.6%). The largest percentage (24.4%) of the sample indicates the intent to move schools within the same district in the near future. The intent to move school districts within the next two to three years decreased to 11.9%. This suggests that the early career teachers in this sample are stable within the profession and the immediate future. When considering attrition it is most likely to be from school to school rather than from their current district.

Table 4.48

Plan on Leaving the Teaching Profession

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	5	1.4	1.4	1.4
Agree	22	6.1	6.2	7.6
Disagree	111	30.6	31.4	39.1
Strongly Disagree	215	59.2	60.9	100.0
Total	353	97.3	100.0	

Inferential Analysis for the Intent to Move Within or Exit From Teaching

The research questions of this study were addressed with both descriptive and inferential statistics. In this section the results of the binomial regression of the dependent variable is analyzed as only two possible outcomes, the indication for the intent of

attrition or not. Logistic regression was used to predict the odds that an early career teacher will participate in attrition according to the values of the independent variables *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood*.

A model building approach was taken to determine the best model to identify how the constructs of the variables *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* are related to the outcome of *Intent* for move within or exit teaching. Initially all of these independent variables and their interactions were in an iterative process where all non-statistically significant relations were removed. Analysis was performed using R. Model fit was evaluated using chi squared deviance test. This tested whether the model had significantly less difference than the null/intercept only model. After deletion of twenty-one missing values, data from N = 353 Midwestern early career teachers were available for analysis. Tables 4.49 to 4.52 below display the logistic regression results as they address the three research questions of this study.

Predictors for the intent to exit from teaching. From the valid sample population, twenty-seven (7.6%) of the participants express intent for leaving the profession of teaching altogether in the near future of two to three years. Table 4.49 shows regression coefficients, Wald statistics, odds ratios, and inverse odds ratios, at 95 percent confidence intervals for the predictors of two independent variables *1 Imbalance* and *3 Likelihood* as significant predictors of teachers' intent to leave the profession, χ^2 (df=2, N= 353) = 17.8, $p < .05$, indicating that the variables *1 Imbalance* and *3 Likelihood* are predictors of teacher attrition for leaving since the calculated odds ratio or inverse is

greater than or equal to the critical value of 1.0 (see Table 4.49).

This finding is an indication that practices and policies that address teacher attrition may consider the factors of the variables *1 Imbalance* and *3 Likelihood*. The factors of variable *1 Imbalance* include lack of preparation, and the emotional and physical demands that contribute to the workload of early career teachers. The factors of variable *3 Likelihood* including future positional advancement, as well as the instability and decline in the quality of colleagues and school leadership, are also predictors for the variable *Intent* for early career exit from teaching.

Table 4.49

Predictors for Leaving Teaching

	Estimate	Standard Error	z value	Pr(> z)	Odds Ratio	Inverse Odds Ratio
Intercept	-2.8128	1.69656	-1.658	0.0973	0.0600383	16.656048
Imbalance	0.29681	0.09510	3.121	0.0018	1.3455632	0.7431832
Likelihood	-0.10903	0.05232	-2.084	0.0372	0.8967042	1.1151950

From the valid sample population 22 early career teachers indicated their intent to not return to their current school the next year. Table 4.50 shows regression coefficients, Wald statistics, odds ratios and inverse odds ratios, and 95% confidence intervals for the that all three variables *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* as not significant predictors of the dependent variable *Intent* to move within or exit from teaching, χ^2 (df = 1, N = 353) = 2.68, $p < .05$. Indicating that the variables *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* are not predictors of immediate attrition since the calculated odds ratio or inverse is not greater than or equal to the critical value of 1.0. This indicates that the

items on the questionnaire that construct all three of the independent variables *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* are not predictors for intent to move within or exit from teaching the following year. The intercept variable is based on chance of staying at the same school based without the observed independent variables (see Table 4.50).

Table 4.50

Predictors for Staying

	Estimate	Standard Error	z value	Pr(> z)
Intercept	-0.73926	1.30282	-0.567	0.570
Likelihood	-0.08096	0.05368	-1.508	0.131

Predictors for the intent to move schools. From the valid sample population, eighty-six early career teachers indicated the *Intent* to move from their current school in the near future of 2 to 3 years. Table 4.51 shows regression coefficients, Wald statistics, odds ratios and inverse odds ratios, and 95% confidence intervals for 2 variables *1 Imbalance* and *3 Likelihood* as statistically significant predictors of the variable *Intent* to move schools in the near future, χ^2 (df=2, N= 353) = 29.08, $p < .05$, indicating that the variables *1 Imbalance* and *3 Likelihood* are predictors of the *Intent* to move schools since the calculated odds ratio or inverse is greater than or equal to the critical value of 1.0 (see Table 4.51).

This finding means that practices and policies that address teacher attrition may consider the factors of that construct the two independent variables *1 Imbalance* and *3*

Likelihood. The factors of the *1 Imbalance* variable include lack of preparation, and emotional and physical demands that contribute to the workload of early career teachers. Also, the factors of the variable *3 Likelihood* include future positional advancement, and the instability and decline in the quality of colleagues and school leadership.

Table 4.51

Predictors for Moving Schools

	Estimate	Standard Error	z value	Pr(> z)	Odds Ratio	Inverse Odds Ratio
Intercept	-1.5840	1.25241	-1.265	0.205944	0.2051440	4.8746253
Support	0.06708	0.01920	3.494	0.000475	1.0693856	0.9351164
Likelihood	-0.1039	0.03332	-3.119	0.001815	0.9013008	1.1095075

Predictors for intent to move districts. From the valid sample population, forty-two early career teachers indicated their intent to move from their current school district in the near future of the next 2 to 3 years. Table 4.52 shows regression coefficients, Wald statistics, odds ratios, and inverse odds ratios, and 95% confidence intervals for all three variables of *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* as significant predictors of teacher's intent to move school districts in the near future, χ^2 (df=3, N= 353) = 21.22, $p < .05$, indicating that the variables of *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* are predictors of teachers moving school districts since the calculated odds ratio or inverse is greater than or equal to the critical value of 1.0 (see Table 4.52).

Table 4.52

Predictors for Moving Districts

	Estimate	Standard Error	z value	Pr(> z)	Odds Ratio	Inverse Odds Ratio
Intercept	-4.08012	1.73851	-2.347	0.0189	0.0169054	59.152810
Imbalance	0.15201	0.08214	1.851	0.0642	1.1641711	0.8589803
Unsupportive	0.05960	0.02521	2.364	0.0181	1.0614071	0.9421456
Likelihood	0.08632	0.04344	-1.987	0.0469	0.9173035	1.0901518

This finding means that practices and policies that address teacher attrition may consider the factors of the variables *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* variables. The factors of the *1 Imbalance* variable include lack of preparation, and emotional and physical demands that contribute to the workload of early career teachers. The factors of the independent variable *2 Unsupportive* including professional supports from colleagues, teacher induction, school leadership, and the school climate are also predictors of the *Intent* to move school districts. Also, the factors of the independent variable *3 Likelihood* include future positional advancement, the instability, and decline in the quality of colleagues and school leadership are also predictors for the *Intent* to move school districts.

Conclusion

In this study, the majority of the sample population was not considering moving schools/districts or exiting the profession. Almost a quarter of the early career teachers expressed the intent for moving schools in the near future. A third of the participants

were currently not teaching at the same school that they begin their career in. This indicates there has been some actual attrition and the expressed intent suggests there was some instability in the population especially considering moving from school to school within the same district.

The factors that make up the sense of an imbalanced workload were found to be significant predictors for the intent to move schools/districts and exit the profession in the near future. The early career teachers indicate that they are up to the stress, physical, and emotional demands of teaching. However 20% still find the workload to be unmanageable. Early career teachers attempt to balance the stresses of survival learning to the engagement of discovery learning, which impacts student success. Workplaces that offer these supports not only keep teachers, they improve teachers.

Early career teachers rely on the workplace to support their learning formally and informally. These supports come directly from colleagues, school leadership, school climate, and comprehensive teacher induction. The factors that make up these professional supports were found to be a significant factor for the intent to move school districts. The population is willing to speak with colleagues, have regular scheduled meetings, and have their realities as an early career teacher affirmed. About 90% of the population express that their colleagues help them to improve their practice. This suggests that it matters to the population not only whom they work with and for but also how they support each other in improving their practice.

The factors of a stable workplace, included the quality and stability of colleagues and school leadership, were found to be significant as predictors for the intent to move schools/districts or exit teaching in the near future. A stable position and required school reforms matter to the participants as almost two-thirds of them express that they consider participating in attrition due to this. The population considered moving almost twice as much if colleagues leave than if school leadership leaves. However the sample population relies on the quality of school leadership more than their colleagues. This confirms the importance of both colleagues and school leadership in creating the professional supports that keep teachers in a school. The implications of the findings in this study are detailed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to determine if a relationship existed between the perceptions of teachers' intent to move within or exit from teaching and the professional supports of the workplaces of Midwestern K-12 teachers with 2 to 4 years of experience. Studies on teacher attrition and the professional supports for early career teachers have been varied in scale and methodology. For decades, researchers have been attempting to untangle individual and workplace conditions that lever success in improving teacher quality and reducing attrition.

This study describes the perceptions of early career teachers' intent for attrition within and from the profession. The intent to move schools/districts or exit teaching altogether is statistically significant to the factors that construct the two independent variables *1 Imbalance* and *3 Likelihood*. The factors of all three independent variables *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* are significant for the intent to move school districts. Consistent with these factors for teacher attrition that construct these variables were the attrition factors identified in the literature. In the literature researchers have attempted to untangle individual factors to act as levers to reduce teacher attrition. As Cochran- Smith (2012, p. 873) summarizes "there are multiple configurations of teaching practice and career decisions, which suggests that different teachers need different forms of support both to improve their teaching and enhance the likelihood of remaining at particular schools."

These factors were meant to be generalized and inform the practices that define a rich professional culture and workplace that improves the quality and attrition of teachers. Taken together, this context attends to how early career teachers gain confidence in their practice from collaborative conversations with colleagues who benefit mutually on ways to improve practice. This context also attends to improving the quality of school leadership and their colleagues alike through multiple job-embedded professional supports. Lastly, the context attends to the trusting professional relationships that allow risk taking and innovation rather than intensifying the workload with increased pressure of results. Thus, overall, the early career teachers of this study were stable and committed to the profession. Stability was important to this sample as 68.4% indicated that they would leave if their position became less stable. Finally, in rich professional contexts, teachers connect to the non-pecuniary rewards of collective responsibility for improving practice and positive impact on student learning. However, of the sample, 67% would consider leaving if they perceive their school pushed reforms disagreeable to them.

Professional supports were indicators of a school's total professional culture that encourages teacher growth. Considering alternative explanations to understanding teacher retention, one hypothesis is that teachers who leave the profession or move schools are responding to their perceptions of the lack of professional supports and a weak professional culture. The results contribute to the understanding of the experiences of early career teachers and support effective practices that seek to reduce teacher attrition and early professional exit. The findings provided descriptive and inferential statistics analyzing the relationship between the perceptions of imbalance related to workload, a

supportive, and the stability of a workplace to the intent to move schools/districts or exit teaching altogether.

Conclusions

Intent and instability. This study confirmed that early career teachers who expressed the intent to move within or exit from teaching were related to certain workplace factors. These factors included the sense of imbalance from the workload as early career teachers continue to improve practice from practice, an unsupportive workplace from which they rely to learn with and from, and the instability of the workplace resulting from the instability and quality of colleagues and school leadership. Just one teacher in a school can contribute to a sense of instability with colleagues, school leadership, and the profession as a whole by expressing with voice or silently (Hirschman, 1970) the intent to move within or exit the profession. This instability is costly both financially and towards student learning who deserve the highest quality of teachers. Instability created by the intent or actual attrition from schools can be made stable by considering the factors that this study has identified as important to early career teachers. This study confirmed that these factors were important and how early career teachers perceived different types of attrition.

Teacher attrition has a definite impact on effective schooling. The revolving door of new staff breaks cohesiveness and increases variability in teaching practices. Even the expressed intent displays a decrease in the commitment of the teacher and the function of the workplace climate. In addition, the increase of early career teachers in the American

teaching force contributes to the immediate need for schools and teacher development to adapt policies and practices of job-embedded professional development.

This study contributed to the understanding of teacher attrition by identifying the workplace factors that early career teachers perceive as important and how they relate to the intent for attrition. The independent variables of *1 Imbalance* and *3 Likelihood* were significant predictors to the variables for *Intent* for to move schools/districts and exit teaching. The conclusions described for these variables are focused on the practices at the school level. All three of the independent variables of *1 Imbalance*, *2 Unsupportive*, and *3 Likelihood* are significant predictors of teachers' intent to move school districts. The conclusions for the *Intent* variable to move school districts are described at the policy level. This section shares the conclusions of the researcher based on the findings presented in chapter four.

Creating a sense balance in the early years. The factors that construct the variable *1 Imbalance* were found significant to the intent of three types of teacher attrition - move schools/districts and exit teaching. The early career years are a unique phase in the professional development continuum of teacher learning. While gaining confidence due to the lessening of uncertainty and intensity of the first year, these teachers are still establishing how to implement best practices, gain confidence in their emerging professional identity, and establish their role in the school's culture. Sharon Feiman-Nemser (2001) describes this vulnerable position that these teachers find themselves in due to the increased expectations and reminders that they still have much to

learn while they face the uncertainties and dilemmas of teaching. Generally the participants in this study reported their early career years were balanced with the regard to the demands of teaching.

The teachers in this study displayed that teaching gets better after the first year. Ninety-six percent of this sample expresses agreement that their current challenges of teaching are less stressful than what they used to be. The early career teachers felt prepared from their teacher education programs (88.7%). An even larger percentage of the sample (94.9%) reported that they were up to the emotional and physical (98.3%) demands of teaching. However, a fifth of the participants (20.4%) expressed that their workload was unmanageable. This is consistent with the participants identifying increased workload of teaching duties (N= 109) as the second highest response for reasons to leave teaching. This would suggest that early career teachers' sense of imbalance comes from increased workload and contributes to the intent to move within or exit from teaching.

This researcher describes this as a paradox between balance of workload and professional supports. Early career teachers rely on the workplace to improve their practice. This requires more meetings, connecting with colleagues on improving practice, and planning together. These may all be beneficial opportunities for professional learning but may increase and intensify the workload. Combined with the increased expectations for results and accountability, this may create the need to consider ways to lessen the workload and the teaching assignments for early career teachers.

Creating a supportive workplace. Early career teachers rely on their colleagues and school leadership to support their professional growth and improve their practice. The early career teachers in this study were not reluctant to talk with their colleagues, as 94.5 percent agreed to this. Their colleagues take their reality seriously (99.1%), whereas Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that only half of the beginning teachers had a mentor that took their realities seriously. However, about a fifth (20.5%) of the teachers expressed that their colleagues did not recognize when they are out of balance with work and life. Lower percentages express this if they are getting out of balance with life and work. A suggestion for school leaders from this is to model balance and directly teach colleagues of new teachers to look for signs of imbalance and ways to support these teachers through this. This is an opportunity to build a trusting school climate where vulnerability with each other actually builds trust between colleagues rather than feelings of isolation (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

However, having colleagues that build trust with you is important. Equally as important are trusted colleagues who can improve each other's practice. The results of this study would support that administrators and professional development coordinators should have policies and practices of professional supports that are continuous beyond the first year of teaching. The majority of the teachers (88.5%) provided evidence that they had colleagues who help them improve their practice. Slightly less of the sample (87.6%) expresses that they receive constructive feedback from colleagues.

This result suggested the importance of establishing collaborative structures where teachers study their practice with colleagues. This may include observing others, action research, and shared data and problem solving. This builds the case for job-embedded professional development. Susan Moore Johnson (2004) describes this professional climate of an “integrated” school culture as purposeful collaboration and mutually beneficial for colleagues that help each other out and share work across all levels of experience.

Minimally most induction practices included assigned mentors, specific in-service, and meetings for new teachers. Beyond that, first year comprehensive induction programs should include time to observe others, collaborative lesson studies, continued structured mentoring for multiple years, and other job-embedded professional developments. The researcher understands that there are increased financial costs, however, teacher induction practices within an integrated professional culture are inclusive as a part of total school improvement.

In this study the practices of comprehensive induction were found in a majority of school districts. Almost three-fourths of the teachers also accessed professional supports through networks outside of school. About as many (70.9%) had the opportunity to observe others teach. While just over half (52.8%) did not have an assigned mentor with a similar assignment. There is not a multiple year mentor policy in this Midwestern state. After the first year there is no policy that assures the early career teacher may continue to develop. Only during the first year must a mentor be assigned, but even then the mentor

may not have a common assignment. An assigned mentor alone does not assure the dynamic between this assigned colleague is valuable and meets the professional development needs of the early career teachers.

The intent to move schools within the same school district in the next two to three years was reported the highest in this study by 24.4% of the participants. Second was the intent to move school districts in the next two to three years with 11.9%. In this study only 7.6% of the participants expressed intent for leaving the teaching profession in the next two to three years. The teachers' intent in this study compares to national percentages of actual attrition of public school teachers; 84.5% remained at the same school, 7.6% moved to a different school, and 8.0% left the profession during the following year from 2007-2008 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). The lower rates of intent for attrition show that this sample has a high commitment to the profession followed by their school district then by their current school. This researcher asserts that policy and practice improvement aimed at reducing attrition should focus on the examination of the workplace climate at the school level rather than at the profession as a whole. The success of these interventions is dependent on the early career's balance of the intense experiences of learning to teach while teaching and the school climate. A school's professional workplace environment is not static; it is a dynamic that is malleable by school leadership, colleagues' interactions, and structures that support quality feedback and trust.

Creating a stable workplace. Results from this study indicated that there was a significant relationship between the *Intent* to move schools/districts or exit from teaching in 2 to 3 years to the independent variables of *1 Imbalance* and *3 Likelihood*. Two factors emerged as important to teachers who are considering attrition due to the quality and stability of their colleagues and school leadership. First, the stability of a teacher's job matters according to more than two thirds of the sample (68.4%). Only a third of the teachers in this study (31.6%) would stay despite this instability. Already in their careers a third of the participants have already moved schools. Stability matters perhaps due to already moving schools they are now stabilizing as they begin to experience connectedness after just moving schools. Alternatively, these participants who have already experienced instability might be more susceptible for continual attrition since their careers are still in flux.

This researcher connects these concerns of instability to the policies and sanctions that demand the forced attrition of school administrators and staff of schools who are deemed to be low achieving. School reforms require stability and cohesiveness of a staff (Ingersoll, 2001). Policies that force attrition likely compound the issue of school improvement by forcing out the colleagues and school leadership that teachers rely on to improve.

Second, almost two-thirds (67%) of the sample would consider leaving if disagreeable school reforms were pushed on them. School reform implementation impact teachers' intent to move within or exit from the profession. Hirschman (1970) provides a

framework to understand exit with voice or silenced. Dissent and disagreement with the intent to exit that is voiced can create dissent that provides growth for an adaptive school. However the intent for exit that is silenced creates less of a commitment and more instability. How schools take on improvement matters to teachers and their commitment to the school.

The results found a significant relationship with the intent for attrition and the stability and quality of their colleagues and school leadership. More of the sample would consider leaving if their colleagues left (40.1%) than their school leadership (25.8%). It appears that who teachers work with matters more than who is in the principal's office. However, the teachers in this study depend on the quality of the school leadership more than those of their colleagues. The teachers in this study considered leaving due to lower quality school leadership (78.4%) than colleagues (66.7%).

In this study the two responses received the highest number of responses of why a teacher would leave were lack of administrative supportive (N=115) and increased workload of teaching duties (N= 109). Again this researcher connects this to the policies of forced attrition. If a school that needs improvement has to undergo restructuring this may result in the replacement of the school leadership and the increased instability in which colleagues flee or are forced to other schools. In schools that need stability in order to improve, a situation is created by these policies that compound instability. This study supports that the stability of a school staff is dependent on the school leadership and colleagues' interactions that build trust and structures that improve practice.

School leadership has been identified in the literature and confirmed in this study

as having a large influence on attrition and the school climate that keeps teachers. A school climate where it is safe for innovation and risk taking is key in engaging teachers in professionalism. Day (2010) describes this climate of successful schools that promote both collective and individual academic optimism, and that this results in an increased sense of individual and collective efficacy. A school climate that lacks innovation and risk taking inhibits professional growth and school improvement. An early career teacher who needs a climate of shared discovery to improve their developing skills may leave to find a school climate that meets his/her needs. Thus, this instability may compound the school culture that resists innovation and risk taking.

Those leavers who do not find the school climate adapting to their needs may open up the door for teachers who desire to look elsewhere. In the Qualitative Case Studies project (QCS), Cochran-Smith and colleagues (2012) identified these teachers as *Going Strong but Moving On*, which again contributes to the self-fulfilling climate of instability. These schools may have the structures of induction supports but not the workplace climate that makes these structures work with connectedness to colleagues and trust. Additionally, the schools that need innovation and the most improvement are likely the schools with students who do not perform well on high stakes tests. These are schools that need to hold on to the strongest teachers.

However, the external pressures of increased accountability have an influence on the school's efficacy. Out of the entire study, two of the strongest responses about school climate are 70.3 percent of the teachers who feel like they can take risks and 60.2 percent who experience too much pressure for results. These concerns of school climate are

confirmed in the literature on the impact of high stakes testing. Increased pressure does not necessarily increase the workload but it intensifies the workload (Smethem, 2007). As shared previously almost the same amount (67%) would consider leaving due to disagreeable school reforms. This too is supported in the literature where even high quality veteran teachers are leaving as *conscientious objectors* to what are perceived as Draconian reforms (Santoro & Morehouse, 2011). Building and district school leadership can influence the external pressures by clear communication of shared responsibility for results and professional development that teachers find purposeful for student achievement.

Finally, the last variable of an unsupportive workplace was the lack of recognition. The literature confirms that teachers value the non-pecuniary rewards over the salary and incentives. Mostly teachers are motivated intrinsically. However, recognition creates a school culture that increases the expectations for teacher quality. Almost three-fourths (72%) of the teachers in the study express that they and their teaching peers are recognized when they exceed expectations. Educational leaders need to express gratitude and help teachers to connect how exceeding expectations for student learning directly relates to the professionalism of the school.

Even with almost a quarter of the early career teachers who participated in this study expressed intent to move schools- most of the population seems to be stable. School districts report actual attrition rates that are two times higher than the reported intentions for teacher attrition of this study. This study contributes to the scholarship of understanding what workplace factors contribute to the intent for teacher attrition.

Teachers rely on a rich professional culture to develop them in the early years and establish professional habits of improving student learning. Future studies that provide reliable and valid data in identifying what factors contribute to the intent for teacher attrition inform preventative policies and practices that dually keeps and improves early career teachers.

Recommendations

The conclusions from this study have implications for local policy and practice for teacher preparation programs, and professional development practices at the district and school level. School leaders who are making attempts to become preventative towards the costs of teacher attrition can make improvements in specific ways in a school culture. There is a need to reevaluate hiring processes, professional collaborative structures, and procedures to safeguard a school climate from instability created by attrition. The following five recommendations connect to the conclusions of this study.

Recommendation 1. School leaders should consider the results from this research study, especially considering the transfer policies within the same school district. The results of this study show that teachers are almost twice as likely to move from school to school within their current school district (24%) than from district to district (11%). Schools that need the highest quality teachers due to higher rates of attrition serve high poverty, high minority populations, and lower achieving schools (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001). Thus these are the schools that will have more openings and more likely attract first year teachers as new hires than veterans from

other schools. These schools that are constantly hiring further risk becoming “novice cultures” (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). So the problem of not having more experienced teachers to provide professional guidance in these schools gets compounded by not being able to attract veterans to transfer from other schools.

Transfer policies require collective bargaining; incentives for positive mobility to these schools may include unique professional development supports, a strong school leadership, reduced workload, and monetarily rewarding longevity of master teachers who stay. School districts may also consider teacher evaluating school transfer policies and how that may create a “novice culture” in a school or potentially build an “integrated professional culture.” Specifically, school districts may place first year teachers into schools that have an already developed professional culture and require a cycle of high quality veteran teachers into hard to staff schools to develop the schools culture and share the expertise.

Recommendation 2. The teachers in this study rely on their workplace to improve their teaching from practice. Comprehensive induction programs include multiple components of professional supports that are continued beyond the first year teaching (Ingersoll, 2011). As this study found, it is not the structures themselves but the climate of the school that supports innovation and risk taking as part of a shared discovery of ways to improve practice (Hargraeves & Fullan, 2012). Starting with teacher preparation, collaborative structures for sharing data and problem solving from practice should begin developing these essential professional habits (Feiman-Nemser, 2012).

School leaders have a responsibility to create deliberate structures and attend to the trusting climate that fosters the sustained critical conversations that improve practice from practice.

Recommendation 3. School cultures that safeguard against attrition have school leaders and colleagues who contribute to trust building (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). These school leaders are concerned with the environment of their building and create opportunities daily to build staff efficacy and professional climates of innovation that are safe for risk taking (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). This takes a broader commitment on the part of policy makers and educational leaders at all levels including teacher education programs to advocate for these qualities of innovation and instructional development. Policy makers need to consider the impact of forced attrition on the stability of the teachers who are to implement reforms. Include visions for good teaching and working with students from the teachers who staff these schools rather than forced reforms that may cause more instability.

Recommendation 4. Helen Ladd (2011) asserts that intent for attrition creates instability in schools. Future studies involving the intent of attrition as indicators of instability that put schools/districts at risk for attrition may include different geographic sample populations and the size of school districts (rural and larger urban schools) in order to see consistencies between independent and outcome variables. Huberman (1989) discusses how, around their third year, teachers experience the first “taste of monotony.” This would be a more specific sample population and perhaps a mixed methods approach

to relate the experience of monotony to the intent of attrition. This study using a researcher-based survey investigated the intent of attrition rather than actual attrition. These indicators of intent may support future studies of the instability of schools with different methodology and longitudinally. In turn, a common scale or measurement of the instability of schools based on the variables used in this study of attrition may support further research to create preventative measures to safeguard against attrition.

Recommendation 5. Teacher attrition rates are highest in schools that serve higher minority, lower social economical, and lower achieving schools teacher. As Johnson, Kraft, & Papay (2012) suggests teachers are not necessarily leaving these populations they are leaving and moving from the poorer working conditions that plagued these populations. Teacher preparation programs have a responsibility to guide pre-service learners in understanding these school contexts. Teacher preparation programs may not be able to impact the workplace conditions in these schools. Teacher preparation programs can impact as a part of the continuum of professional learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2012) the development of skills of inquiry and habits of critical collegueship that support the navigation of poorer working conditions.

Conclusion

Almost all jobs in the education field begin with the experience of being a classroom teacher. The early years become the foundation of a professional career, be it continuing in a classroom or not. Currently there are more inexperienced teachers leading classrooms than ever before. Early career teachers rely on the workplace for support and

to improve with and from their colleagues and school leadership. The early years, as Huberman (1995) describes, are filled with plateaus, discontinuities, regressions, spurts, and dead ends. For some early career teachers the uncertainty of their learning builds a commitment to student learning and development of a strong repertoire while for many it brings increased doubt in their abilities and in teaching itself.

Teacher attrition creates instability in schools and can erode the essential school cohesiveness necessary for improving teacher quality and student learning. Multiple studies have examined the early years of teaching in attempts to disentangle the contexts that contribute to teacher attrition. Helen Ladd (2011) asserts that the intent for attrition contributes to the instability of the profession as well as actual teacher attrition. This informed the design of this study to examine what factors can be disentangled from the context of the workplace that contribute to the intent of early career teachers to consider moving within or exit from the profession. Examining the intent for teacher attrition contributes to the understanding of what factors may be malleable in a school context that increases the commitment to the school, to teaching and develops career long habits of improving their practice.

The recommendations from the findings of this study suggests policy and practices that address the concerns of early career teachers' weakening commitment indicated by the intent to move within or exit from the profession. Schools can create supports that are preventative of the stresses of survival learning during the early years and a climate that instills increased commitment to staying at schools and improving student learning.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire: Instrument Abstract

INSTRUMENT ABSTRACT

“Professional Supports and Attrition Intentions for Early Career Teachers.

Variable	Question
Demographics (Independent)	1. How many semesters have you taught? Round up and include your current semester. To be a participant in this study your experience needs to be greater than two semesters and less than nine (Between one and four years of experience). (3,4,5,6,7,8)
	2. What is your gender? (Female/ Male)
	3. What level have you mostly taught in? (Elementary- Primary Grades K-2, Elementary-Intermediate Grades 3-5, Middle Grades 6-8, High School Grades 9-12).
	4. What is your ethnicity/race? (American Indian/ Alaskan Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Hispanic, Two or More Races)
	5. What is your age? (ENTER)
	6. I have taught at the same school for my whole career so far. (Yes or No)
Intent to Move or Leave (Outcome) Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree	7. I plan on teaching at my current school next year.
	8. In the next 2-3 years I would like to teach at another school.
	9. In the next 2-3 years I would like to teach at another school district.
	10. I plan on leaving the teaching profession.

Imbalance (Independent) Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree	11. My teacher education program that I graduated from prepared me for teaching.
	12. I am up to the emotional demands of teaching.
	13. I am up to the physical demands of teaching.
	14. The amount of work I have is manageable.
	15. My current challenges of teaching are less stressful than they use to be.
Unsupportive Workplace (Independent) Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree	16. I have a colleague I can sit down and talk with.
	17. I have regularly scheduled meetings with colleagues to discuss teaching.
	18. I have an assigned mentor with a similar teaching assignment as me.
	19. I connect to networks of teachers outside of my school.
	20. The architectural design of our school building makes it easy for me to talk face to face with colleagues.
	21. I have colleagues that take my reality seriously.
	22. I have colleagues who recognize when I am out of balance with work and my life.
	23. I am reluctant to talk with colleagues about teaching.
	24. I have taken the opportunity to observe other teachers at my school.
	25. My colleagues help me recognize ways to improve my teaching.
	26. My colleagues affirm my efforts.

	27. I get constructive feedback from colleagues.
	28. Our building feels too much pressure for results.
	29. We don't have enough time to meet with each other.
	30. Teachers at my school are afraid to take risks.
	31. Teachers at my school are innovative.
	32. Our building is united in the push for student achievement.
	33. Teachers are loyal to this school.
	34. Our leaders know what is going on in our building.
	35. Our leaders model self-reflection.
	36. Our leaders positively "nudge" for change.
	37. We delegate work when necessary.
	38. Teachers are recognized when they exceed expectations.
Likelihood (Independent)	39. If my position became less stable I would consider leaving the school.
	40. If my school pushed reforms that I disagreed with I would consider leaving the school.
	41. If our school leadership left then I would consider leaving the school too.
	42. If my colleagues left my school then I would consider leaving the school too.
	43. I plan on a different position in my school district in the future.

	44. I plan on a different position at my school in the future.
	45. If the quality of the leadership at my school would decline I would consider leaving the school.
	46. If the quality of other teachers at my school would decline I would consider leaving the school.
	47. Choose the top professional reasons why a teacher would choose to leave teaching. (Lack of support from colleagues, lack of support from administrators, lack of materials, student misbehavior, pressure from testing, lack of professional development, problems with parents, low salary, increased workload of teaching duties, increased workload of unrelated teaching duties, teaching is not valued by society)

APPENDIX B

Initial School Administration Contact

Dear [name]:

I am conducting a research study on the retention of early career teachers. In the next few days, I will be sending you an email with a survey web-link. I am asking that you forward this email to your certified staff that has two to four years teaching experience.

Participation for these teachers will take about ten minutes, which they will complete on their own time. I assure you this study has been approved prior by [name of school district] and UN-L Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval includes all safeguards of informed consent, participant anonymity and disaggregated data by school district only. No results can be traced back to your school or to individual teachers. There are no known risks involved in this research.

Thank you for encouraging participation in this study. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Tom Kolbe

Dr. Steve Swidler

APPENDIX C

Initial Participant Contact

Recruitment Email: Initial Teacher Contact

Hello:

I am conducting a research study on the retention of early career teachers. Your participation will take about ten minutes to complete an online survey. Your building principal has forwarded this email to you since you have taught for more than one year and less than five. If you are interested simply click on the weblink below. Please complete the survey on your own time away from any teaching/professional duties. Other than this short reflection time there is no other compensation. There are no known risks involved in this research. Your responses are strictly anonymous and cannot be traced back to you or your school.

Thanks in advance,

Tom Kolbe

[Qualtrics weblink]

If you have any questions, please let us know.

APPENDIX D

Final Participant Contact

Hello:

Thank you to everyone that has completed the survey already. This is my last request for your participation.

I am conducting a research study on the retention of early career teachers. Your participation will take about ten minutes to complete an online survey. Your building principal has forwarded this email to you since you have taught for more than one year and less than five. If you are interested simply click on the weblink below. Please complete the survey on your own time away from any teaching/professional duties. Other than this short reflection time there is no other compensation. There are no known risks involved in this research. Your responses are strictly anonymous and cannot be traced back to you or your school. **The survey closes on [Date] please click below!**

Thanks in advance,

Tom Kolbe

[Qualtrics weblink]

If you have any questions, please let us know.

APPENDIX E

Reliability and Correlation Tables of Independent Variables

Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	N=
1 Imbalance	.622	5
2 Unsupportive	.859	22
3 Likelihood	.643	9

Correlations: Pearson Sig. Two- Tailed

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

	Imbalance	Unsupportive	Likelihood
1 Imbalance	1	.384**	-.248
2 Unsupportive	.3846	0.05368	-.265**
3 Likelihood	-.248**	-.265**	1