

REASONS FOR SELECTING A TEACHING CAREER AND REMAINING  
IN THE PROFESSION: A CONVERSATION WITH 10  
AFRICAN AMERICAN ROANOKE CITY TEACHERS

by

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(ABSTRACT)

An acute shortage of African American teachers is well recognized. This shortage poses a problem as school systems attempt to employ a representative number of African American teachers commensurate to their diverse student population. The purpose of this study was to examine why 10 African American teachers in Roanoke City selected teaching and remain in the profession and how those reasons were influenced by two motivational variables (academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy). Factors further affecting this relationship, such as environmental influences (i.e., home, school, and community) and institutional influences (i.e., experiences in the workplace, job satisfaction, and school climate), also were examined.

The research design was a single explanatory case study. Yin (1994) contends that "how" and "why" questions

(as used in this study) are explanatory in nature and suitable for a case-study design. Two sources of data were used: an initial survey instrument on environmental factors and a second survey on institutional factors. Two separate interviews were conducted with both instruments. Both sources were intended to capture participants' perceptions relevant to their experiences. A purposive sample of 10 local African American teachers was selected.

Pattern matching and explanation building were the dominant modes of analysis. A conversational style with narratives written was used to reflect the richness of language used by the participants to describe their experiences.

Findings revealed that home environmental experiences and preparation for teaching were positive overall because of practices used by parents and family members to socialize the the participants for success in school. Both direct assistance with school work and verbal encouragement enhanced academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy for success in school and in teaching.

School experiences before and during college were found rewarding and challenging. However, both types of experiences enhanced self-concept of ability and self-efficacy in attaining a teaching career as well as

succeeding and remaining in the profession. Overall, rewarding experiences outweighed challenging ones. High expectations, assistance with school work, and teacher role models were typical examples of such experiences.

Two major community influences played a significant role in interest and retention in teacher-education programs: (a) involvement in church activities and (b) sponsorship for teacher-education programs through partnerships with business and industry. The former reinforced self-concept in ability, and the latter afforded some participants an opportunity to attend college and enter a teacher-education program. Results on institutional factors and teacher retention were associated with experiences as classroom teachers, interactions with colleagues, relationships with building principals, and perceptions of the school system as a whole.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband and lifelong partner, S.E. Stuart, who always believed in me and provided encouragement to complete this task. Also, I have been especially blessed with wonderful parents. My mother, Augusta Barr, and my father, John Barr, now deceased, stressed with all their children the value of education and determination in the process. Long before I was familiar with the terminology "academic self-concept of ability" and "self-efficacy," my parents reared their children by those standards. To my oldest sister, Claudette, I say thanks for being a great role model. To my younger sister, Melva, I will continue to be there for you as you work to complete your dissertation. To my brother, Alton, a special thanks for your suggested readings. To my daughter, Monica, and son, Aaron, I hope that I have been and will continue to be a source of inspiration for you as you continue your educational growth. Finally, I have been truly blessed by all who supported me in this venture.

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## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Historically, African Americans have considered teaching an attractive career. Teaching provided upward mobility when racial barriers excluded African Americans from other professions (Walton, 1996). Noted leaders also entered and remained in the field for a variety of other reasons. Green (1990) illustrated through examples of historic African American educators that they chose and stayed with teaching because of their respect and love for the profession, their commitment to inspire and mentor others, and their personal belief in ability to prepare others to succeed academically.

Current reports suggest that many African Americans cite the same reasons for choosing teaching as did earlier educators. They also express a continued need for African American teachers in today's classrooms -- especially because of the influence they might have on African American students. In support of this contention, Foster (1993) asserts that "Black teachers, despite overwhelming odds, have challenged the status quo by encouraging African American students to achieve well academically" (p. 371). Loehr (1988) comments that African American teachers provide positive role modeling and characterization needed for

ensuring commitment of minority youngsters to schooling. Loehr further contends that many minority youths are encouraged to pursue careers in education because of those role models. Obiakor, Algozzine, and Ford (1993) concur with Loehr and add that African American administrators as well as teachers who serve in the capacity of leaders, role models, and potential mentors are important to the teaching and learning process for African American students. However, Bradshaw (1995) cautions that a caring and nurturing attitude on the part of teachers in general is important regardless of race and gender.

Shaw (1996) states that "African American teachers may be advantaged in the classroom by virtue of their 'ability to know' and communicate in more than one culture" (p. 238). Irvine (1989) indicates that the instructional style of African American teachers is positively related to the academic achievement of African American students. Ladson-Billings (1994) supports this contention and adds that Black teachers may be more apt to employ pedagogic practices that are culturally relevant to African American students. Witty (1982) argues that majority students also benefit from the cross-cultural exposure that African American teachers provide. He adds, "Further, the composition of the teaching force should reflect America's cultural pluralism, for the

absence of a representative number of minority teachers and administrators in a pluralistic society is damaging because it distorts social reality for children" (p. 8).

The scarcity of African American teachers in the nation's classrooms is a serious problem that adversely affects those who would serve as mentors, role models, or cultural transmitters for African American students. Blanch (1993) indicates that "The loss of Black educators has become so drastic that some scholars have referred to Black teachers and educators as an 'endangered species'" (p. 45). Reasons for this shortage include: (a) licensure requirements, (b) limited number of African Americans entering and completing college, (c) career commitment and job satisfaction, (d) career opportunities in other fields, and (e) lack of financial resources (Clark & Crawford, 1992; Lam, Foong, & Moo, 1995; Posey & Sullivan, 1990; Smith, 1993). Haberman (1987) commented on the acute problem urban school districts would face in educating a significant number of African American students. Haberman predicted that by the year 2000, ethnic minority groups would account for 50% of all urban school children but only 5% of all college students.

### Statement of the Problem

Roanoke City Public Schools has a shortage of African American teachers. It is important we understand why this shortage exists. Learning more about the reasons people give for selecting teaching as a career and remaining in the profession as well as the motivation underlying those reasons will help broaden our understanding of the shortage.

As a result of the scarcity of African American teachers, the local school system is experiencing difficulty maintaining a diverse teaching staff reflective of the city's population. The goal is to have at least 20% African American teachers. That statistical figure is known as a representative sampling. For example, out of approximately 100,000, Roanoke City residents, the African American population is about 20%. Therefore, a minimum representation of teachers should be 20%. Data supporting that assertion are represented in Tables 1 and 2.

Information depicted in Table 1 (p. 5) for Roanoke City Public Schools indicates a slow but steady increase in the percentage of African American students. That increase is most apparent from 1993 to 1998. Data on the teaching staff in Table 1 show that African Americans were included in the category of Other, which contains a small percentage of American Indians/ Alaskans, Asian Pacific Islanders, and

Hispanics. Of the group, the African American population is the largest. Data from Table 1 show that during the period of 1993 to 1998, the percentage of African American teachers decreased. If the present trend continues, Roanoke City Schools will find it increasingly difficult to provide a teaching faculty with the diversity characteristics of its student population.

<b>Table I.</b>						
<b>Percentage of Students and Teachers by Ethnicity in Roanoke City Schools</b>						
<b>Student Numbers and Percentages</b>						
Ethnicity:	Year					
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
African American	5,004= 39.2%	5,096= 39.4%	5,344= 40.4%	5,488= 41.0%	5,673= 42.0%	5,752= 42.6%
Caucasian	7,432= 58.1%	7,648= 59.2%	7,540= 57.0%	7,504= 56.0%	7,470= 55.3%	7,394= 54.7%
Other	344 = 2.7%	181 = 1.4%	335 = 2.6%	330 = 3.0%	371 = 2.7%	365 = 2.7%
<b>Teacher Numbers and Percentages</b>						
Ethnicity:	Year					
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Other	143 = 16.0%	143 = 15.4%	146 = 15.1%	148 = 14.7%	145 = 14.4%	153 = 14.8%
Caucasian	749 = 84.0%	786 = 84.6%	824 = 84.9%	860 = 85.3%	860 = 85.6%	881 = 85.2%

Source: Roanoke City Membership Report, 1993-98

<b>Table II.</b>				
<b>Comparison of Public School Employment to Total Population in Roanoke</b>				
<b>Number and Percentage of Classroom Teachers by Ethnicity</b>				
Year	Classroom Teachers	White / Percent	Black / Percent	Other
1992-93	1,862,000	1,565,000 = 84.1	202,000 = 10.8	95,000 = 5.1
1994-95	1,948,000	1,637,000 = 84.0	205,000 = 10.5	106,000 = 5.5
<b>Number and Percentage of Total Population for U.S. by Ethnicity</b>				
Year	Classroom Teachers	White / Percent	Black / Percent	Other
1990	271,073,000	208,710,000=77.0	30,486,000=11.2	31,877,000=11.8

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States, National Data Book: 115th Edition (1995) p. 166 & 116th Edition (1996) p. 14, 168.

Table 2 provides data on the number and percentage of public school teachers nationwide by ethnic groups. African Americans are listed under the category of Black, reflecting an average of 10.7% of the nation's teachers as compared to 84% White classroom teachers over the same time period. Table 2 shows statistics taken from the 1990 census and lists the Black population as 11.2% and the White population as 77%.

From this data it seems reasonable to conclude that nationally the percentage of African American teachers is commensurate with the population. However, Roanoke City's situation is unique in that the percentage of African American teachers is significantly lower than the percentage of African American students. It appears that Roanoke City fails to attract and retain a representative number of

African American teachers as compared to the African American student population.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine and describe the reasons African American teachers give for selecting teaching as a career and the motivation behind those reasons. The self-motivational theory served as one of the explanatory frames for this study. Two motivational constructs from the self theory, academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy, were investigated. According to contemporary researchers, (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Graham, 1994; Pajares, 1997) those constructs relate to an individual's belief in his or her ability to perform a task successfully and the effort the individual exerts. Conditions influencing academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy also were examined to determine the source of motivation. Those conditions were environmental factors (e.g., home, school, and community) and institutional factors (e.g., school climate and experiences in the workplace).

Several guiding questions helped focus the study. Those questions were:

### Research Questions

1. How do environmental factors influence the academic self-concept of ability to select and attain a career in teaching for 10 African American Roanoke City teachers?
2. How do environmental factors influence the self-efficacy to select and attain a career in teaching for 10 African American Roanoke City teachers?
3. How do institutional factors influence the academic self-concept of ability to continue teaching for 10 African American Roanoke City teachers?
4. How do institutional factors influence the self-efficacy to continue teaching for 10 African American Roanoke City teachers?

### Need for the Study

Statistical data continue to reflect the nationwide shortage of African American teachers. Similarly, the shortage has affected Roanoke City's efforts to provide a diverse teaching staff proportionate to its student population. Two motivational constructs, academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy, have been identified as closely affecting an individual's interest in and choice of a teaching career as well as plans to remain in teaching. Both of these motivational constructs are self variables,

which can be affected positively or negatively by both environmental and institutional factors.

A better understanding by Roanoke City Administrators of why African American teachers choose teaching as a career should assist both in the recruitment and career paths for this group.

In support of this contention, Graham's (1994) listing of areas needing future research includes the self variable (see first principle below) and how it relates to belief in ability and persistence in achieving career goals. Also included in her list are additional principles of interest in studies of motivation in African Americans. They are:

- . A motivational psychology for African Americans must explicitly be concerned with the self.
- . A motivational psychology for African Americans must incorporate a range of cognitive and affective determinants of behavior.
- . A motivational psychology for African Americans must be particularly sensitive to the dynamics of of failure.
- . A motivational psychology for African Americans must acknowledge relations between race and social class in this society.
- . A motivational psychology for African Americans

should address the socialization (child rearing) antecedents of achievement strivings. (pp. 104-108)

This study will examine career motivation through the lens of the self construct cited in the first principle. Graham (1994) notes a decline of published research on African Americans in educational psychology and mainstream psychology as a whole. She further comments that motivation is important in understanding achievement strivings of minority populations and that this is a good time for researchers to focus on motivational processes among African Americans. She writes:

If there is one prevalent theme in psychological research on African Americans, that theme is the construct of self, whether defined as general self-esteem, self-perceived ability, racial self-esteem, personal identity, or any number of related concepts. For decades, researchers seem to have been driven by the need to know whether or not African Americans appreciate themselves and their inherent worth. In the motivation literature, this need has been operationalized in the study of self-concept of ability and its relationship to academic performance (p. 104).

Understanding the reasons African Americans select and

remain in teaching will enable policy makers such as local politicians, business/industry representatives, school administrators, guidance personnel and college deans of education to design better procedures for attracting and retaining African American teachers.

#### Theoretical Framework

Interest in the theory of self construct reflects a relatively long history. Purkey (1970) notes that psychological theories have always had a strong influence on education. He states "Through the years teachers have followed the prescriptions of psychologists, from Sigmund Freud whose early 1900s work focused on unconscious motivations to William James with his emphasis on the self" (p. 4).

With a few exceptions, emphasis on the self declined as a concern of American psychology and education during the early part of the century. However, Mead (1934) is credited with reviving interest in the self by making it a major part of his theoretical writings. Mead's work described in detail how the self is developed through transactions with the environment. He emphasized that personality, rather than being anchored on biological variables, was determined by social-psychological factors (impacted by one's culture).

After studying more than 1,000 seventh-grade White

students in an urban school system to determine each child's concept of his or her own ability, Brookover, Patterson, and Thomas (1964) found that self-concept of academic ability was strongly associated with academic achievement.

In a study of African American students, Caplin (1966) found that children who professed more positive self-concepts tended to have higher academic achievement. His research stressed that the influence of self has no racial boundaries and that students who question their abilities rarely succeed in school, regardless of their color.

Contemporary research has ushered in a renewed interest in the role self plays in the educational arena. Graham (1994) states:

Far too many Black students are thought to perform poorly in school and thus short-circuit options, not because they lack the basic intellectual competencies or learning skills, but because they deny the importance of individual effort during goal pursuit and tend to give up too easily when encountering obstacles. (p. 55)

Two specific motivational variables are of great significance in studying African Americans and goal-directed behavior (e.g., the pursuit and attainment of a teaching career and the degree of perseverance that one exerts to

continue in teaching). Those variables are academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy. Both can be influenced positively or negatively by environmental factors as well as institutional factors in an individual's motivation to pursue a teaching career and remain in the profession.

#### Home Environmental Factors

Family influences play a vital role in addressing academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy in African Americans and their motivation for teaching. This may be especially true in the early developmental years. Prom-Jackson, Johnson, and Wallace (1987) highlight the salience of academic socialization practices, such as a belief in the education ethic and parental support for education, despite widespread evidence of discrimination. When addressing home or family influence, Kunjufo (1984) found that a child's self-concept is learned and that children react positively or negatively according to messages from the people around them. Children experience those messages in other settings as well, including school community activities. Slaughter (1987) stated that despite years of study into academic achievement of African American youth, researchers fail to understand why so many students fail and others are resilient in the face of adversity. Luster and McAdoo (1991) acknowledge the likelihood that

children reared in more stable socio-economic environments had better cognitive and social outcomes because of stronger financial resources and a heightened awareness of the value of an education. However, Rosier and Corsaro (1993) stress that some African American parents in abject circumstances successfully foster the academic achievement of their children successfully despite any number of obstacles.

#### School Environmental Factors

As indicated earlier, influences may positively or negatively shape an individual's academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy. Likewise, school experiences influence personal motivation for teaching. In exploring various reasons for selecting a teaching career, Gordon (1993) studied the motivations of 140 minority teachers. Results revealed that one third of the group experienced negative comments from teachers and counselors about their academic potential. Gordon contends that despite discouragement, those individuals were determined to be successful. Such persistence equates to what Pajares (1996) describes as personal self-efficacy. Conversely, Gordon found that approximately two thirds of the group entered teaching because of positive influences from teachers. Those experiences likely served as a means of self-enhancement and a booster for academic self-concept of ability.

Negative experiences encountered by students parallel with research on teacher expectations and student achievement. Gerardi (1990) contends that high teacher expectations are important to student achievement. Teachers displaying high expectations tend to play a supportive role in helping students succeed.

#### Community Environmental Factors

Community influences encompass a variety of organizations or individuals who display a vested interest in the academic growth and aspirations of young African Americans. Decker and Decker (1988) indicate that a growing number of minority students stand to benefit from mentoring and financial assistance from individuals and organizations who take an interest in their career aspirations. The researchers contend that effectively meeting the variety of educational needs requires more resources than any agency or organization can provide. Decker and Decker cite the need for partnership programs in areas such as career awareness, literacy and academic assistance, and mentoring for at-risk and minority youth.

In addressing family and personal academic development, Hidalgo, Siu, Bright, Swap, and Epstein (1995) contend that an individual's self-concept may be influenced positively by involvement in church activities. Their findings indicate

that participation in church-related activities enhanced self-esteem and provided a sense of control and overall personal well-being.

#### Institutional Factors and Classroom Issues

Factors related to general classroom experiences, interactions with students, and school climate are known to be institutional in nature and associated with job satisfaction and career commitment. Lobosco and Newman (1992) report that the level of job satisfaction expressed by teachers has been linked to their perceptions of their students. Kottkamp, Provenzo, and Cohn (1986) emphasize that teachers have strong preferences about the types of students they like to teach. Their findings reveal that nearly half of the individuals surveyed indicated a preference for "nice students" from "average" homes. The group surveyed also stated a preference for students who were "hardworking" and "respectful." Plax (1986) contends that teacher satisfaction is a function of effective student-management ability. Gersten, Walker, and Darch (1988) cite mainstreaming of special-education students as adversely affecting some teachers' level of satisfaction. According to Gersten et al., challenges that special education brings (e.g., problems with learning and sometimes

behavior) affect the overall level of job satisfaction for some teachers.

### Institutional Factors and Building-Related Experiences

Similar to general classroom experiences and interactions with students, building-related experiences also affect job satisfaction and career commitment. Particularly notable is the issue of school climate and its effect on morale and teacher retention.

Sutherland (1994) concluded that morale was high and academic and social growth were continuous in schools where both students and staff respected, cared for, and trusted each other. Butler (1995) supported this contention and identified collegiality (i.e., shared authority among colleagues) as affecting various types of interactions within the workplace. According to Butler, valuing collegiality and collaboration is an important feature of a wholesome school climate, which in turn is linked to productivity and career commitment.

Guiding this study are findings on environmental and institutional factors that might affect positively or negatively the self motivations (i.e., academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy) of African Americans to be attracted to and remain in teaching. Related findings in those areas will provide valuable information for improving

procedural matters and policy development by individuals in the Roanoke City Schools interested in increasing and retaining the number of African Americans in teaching.

Definition of Terms

1. Academic Self-Concept of Ability -- An individual's sense of self, which can be affected by various experiences influencing personal capability to select teaching and remain in or withdraw from the profession.
2. Self-efficacy -- An individual's beliefs and sense of self, which can be affected by various experiences in his or her ability and willingness to employ personal persistence to succeed in teaching or to leave the profession.
3. School Climate -- An individual's perception of the prevailing tone of inclusion and promotion of self-worth and positive interactions with others, as found within the school's working/learning environment.
4. Collective Efficacy -- A group's shared beliefs about their capacity to have a positive impact on students' learning and their own ability to teach in an effective manner.

5. Minority/Others-Refers to African Americans when they comprise the largest percentage of the minority group.
6. Motivational Construct/Motivational Variable -- Used synonymously to show construct as a main entity subject to change dependent upon various conditions.

#### Delimitations

The scope of this investigation is limited in three fundamental ways. First, the results of this study can be extrapolated only to school districts that are similar to Roanoke City Public Schools in size, demographics, and geographical location. Second, findings from this study represent a small sampling of individuals. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to reflect a vast number of African Americans. Finally, this study examined two variables: (a) academic self-concept of ability and (b) self-efficacy. Both variables belong to the perception/attitude class of motivations and can be influenced positively or negatively by environmental and institutional factors in an individual's motivation to pursue, attain, and remain in the teaching profession. Bowditch and Buono (1997) describe this class of motivation by writing:

One of the major determinants of how and why an individual initiates and sustains certain behaviors is based on the concepts of sensations and perception. This process is termed perception and refers to the ways in which we interpret messages from our senses to provide some order to our environment. Some people can view the same situation in disparate ways in their interpretation of the meaning of a particular event and this determines how these individuals will react to it. (p. 60)

#### Limitation

The limitation of this study is that self-reports reveal an individual's feelings, overall level of satisfaction, and opportunities for growth. However, it is important to mention that people may not reveal the truth. As early as 1950s and the 1960s, researchers supported the use of self-reports as valid and reasonable in learning in-depth information about the construct of self and an individual's perception of an experience. Purkey (1970) contends that even though it is impossible to climb into another person's skin to see the construct of self, it can be inferred in other ways. Purkey notes that much can be learned about individuals when using self-report measures, but he cautions researchers to consider personal biases and

limitations when making inferences about the self. Purkey provides two examples: (a) self-reports, which can be inferred from a person's statements about himself, and (b) observations, which can be inferred from an individual's behavior. Sarbin and Rosenberg (1955) conclude that their use of self-report instruments was beneficial in learning more about self-attributes in a timely manner. Strong and Feder (1961) note that "Every evaluative statement that a person makes concerning himself can be considered a sample of his self-concept, from which inferences may then be made about the various properties of that self-concept" (p. 170).

Conversely, it may be commonly thought that individuals have an incentive to distort information given in self-reports if they feel that the organization might use that information in some sort of personal evaluation. Thus, one could argue that people will give information they feel the researcher wants to hear. However, the incentive to distort information is removed if the supplier of information is assured of confidentiality and that the information will be used in a non-evaluative manner (Lawler, 1977).

This issue is of special concern for the researcher because I am the director of human resources for the Roanoke City Public Schools. Consequently, individuals involved in

the study were assured confidentiality and that the information will be used in a non-evaluative manner.

## CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of literature related to the impact of academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy on the motivation of African Americans to select, attain, and remain in the teaching profession. Environmental factors (e.g., home, school, and community) and institutional factors (experiences in the workplace school climate) also are addressed in this literature review. Although there appears to be a dearth of literature specifically addressing the aforementioned variables and their relationship to African Americans in teaching, much has been written about the role that self plays in the motivational process in goal pursuit and attainment. Graham (1994) states that "Motivational psychologists have long held at least an implicit concern with the self because of the assumed relationship between self-appraisals and achievement strivings" (pp. 95-98).

This literature review is organized into the following sections: (a) Overview for Self-Concept of Ability, (b) Overview of Self-Efficacy, (c) Home Factors and Academic Development for Teaching, (d) School Factors and Academic Development for Teaching, (e) Community Factors and Development for Teaching, and (f) Factors Affecting Career Commitment and Retention.

### Overview for Self-Concept and Ability

To better acquaint readers with terminology that might be used when discussing the self variable, an overview of self-concept of ability is presented in this section.

Hamachek's (1995) investigation of the relationship between general self-concept and academic self-concept revealed that general self-concept and achievement are directly related and that a positive change in one facilitates a similar change in the other. Hamachek contends that academic self-concept is more highly correlated with academic achievement than is general self-concept. He states that students with a high self-concept tend to approach school-related tasks with confidence. Brookover, Patterson, and Thomas (1964) maintain that self-concept is based on past judgments, feedback and perceptions from significant others (parents, teachers, and friends). Brookover et al. also maintain that self-concept is related to the individual's perception of personal ability to learn suitable types of academic behavior and performance in terms of achievement in school. In a later study, Brookover, LaPere, Hamachek, Thomas, and Erickson (1965) conclude that academic self-concept of ability relates to behavior that a person indicates either publicly or privately regarding the ability to achieve in academic tasks when compared with others engaged in the same task.

According to Purkey (1970), many of the failures and

successes individuals experience in many areas of life are closely related to the ways they have learned to view themselves and their relationships. Purkey argues that self-concept is learned and can be shaped through repeated perceived experiences, particularly with significant others.

Combs and Snyggs (1959) refer to another dimension of self-concept known as global self-concept. They define it as an overall view of self and a critical factor in determining behavior. Sears and Sherman (1994) note that global self-concept equates with motivation because of the significant role it plays in initiating and guiding behavior, which likely impacts academic self-concept. Their findings account for variations in human behavior that span a wide range of performance situations by attributing them to individual differences in global self-concept. Powell's (1979) study disputes the assumption of a significant relationship between global self-concept and academic achievement, especially as it pertains to inner-city minority youth. Powell invites readers to consider that major environmental stressors may account for variations in academic performance.

Powell (1979) also differentiates between self-esteem and global self-concept by stating that self-esteem is a subset of global self-concept, which is composed of attitudes and ideas that are part of the process of self-

evaluation. Powell further states that self-esteem comprises two interrelated aspects: (a) a sense of personal worth and (b) a sense of personal efficacy.

In summary, findings suggest a strong relationship (either positive or negative) between self-concept and achievement. Also quite distinguishable is the relationship between general self-concept/achievement and academic self-concept/achievement with the latter more strongly associated with achievement than the former. It appears that additional dimensions of self (e.g., self-esteem and global self-concept) directly impact both self-concept and academic self-concept, and consequently, positively or negatively affect achievement. Findings also support the contention that environmental influences such as feedback from significant others may affect one's self-perception, thereby influencing personal motivation to enter and subsequently remain in teaching.

#### Overview of Self-Efficacy

This section addresses an overview of self-efficacy because of its close connection to academic self-concept and the role it plays in guiding and sustaining behavior needed for task interest and completion such as in teaching. According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy refers to belief in personal capabilities to master situations that may include novel, unpredictable, or stressful elements. Pajares

(1996) indicates that in contrast to other expectancy beliefs, such as perceptions of how well a person may perform in a particular academic subject, self-efficacy beliefs are more task-and situation-specific. Examples include self-efficacy for writing skills, teaching, and self-regulated learning. In contrast, Bong's (1997) investigation demonstrates that academic self-efficacy judgments prevail beyond the boundaries of specific tasks as well as school subjects, albeit to a lesser degree.

Bandura, Yates, and Thorndike-Christ (1995) refer to Bandura's definition by citing an additional dimension of self-efficacy known as perceived self-efficacy. They state:

Perceived self-efficacy relates to people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance. Past performance, cues and messages from relevant others (such as parents, teachers, and peers), and levels of emotional arousal all contribute to judgments about one's efficacy. Those who form perceptions of themselves as inefficacious tend to give up easily; dwell on their perceived deficiencies, thus detracting their attention from the task at hand; suffer from anxiety and stress; and

attribute their success to external factors.

(p. 612)

In educational research, self-efficacy beliefs have received increasing attention, especially in studies of academic motivation and of self-regulation (Pintrich & Schunk, (1995). In academic settings, studies on self-efficacy have primarily concentrated on three major areas.

First, efficacy beliefs are linked to career choices and college majors, especially in the areas of mathematics and science (Bores-Rangel, Church, Szendre, & Reeves, 1990; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1986). Findings indicate that the mathematics self-efficacy of college undergraduates was more predictive of their choice and interest in math-related courses and majors than previous math achievement (Lent, Lopez, & Bieschke, 1991). Some self-efficacy researchers such as Hackett and Betz (1989) suggest that teachers should pay close attention to students' self-perceptions of competence because perceptions may more accurately predict students' motivation and future career choices. Pajares (1996) states that in addition to helping schools improve student skills, researchers must show schools how to identify inaccurate perceptions that students may entertain about their ability. Pajares also asserts that schools must aid in designing and implementing appropriate interventions to alter those inaccurate perceptions.

Research in the second area further suggests that efficacy beliefs of teachers correlate highly to their instructional practices and to various student outcomes (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Findings by Gibson and Dembo (1984), report that in an assessment of the effectiveness of the School Preferred Reading Program in Los Angeles, the greater the teacher's efficacy, the more students improved in their reading achievement. Brookover, Schweitzer, Schneider, Beady, Flood and Wisenbaker (1978) examined school climate variables impacting students' achievement. Their study indicates that teachers in high-achieving schools demonstrated greater concern and dedication to their students' achievement and spent longer periods of time on instruction. Haberman (1995) alludes to characteristics of teachers with high self-efficacy by describing certain behaviors of effective teachers. Haberman notes that with high efficacy tend to display persistence in finding ways to engage students in the learning process, fail to make excuses for students not learning, believe problems are a part of their job, and in general, view obstacles as opportunities to challenge students to do their best.

The final area relates to the popularity of self-efficacy in studies establishing a connection with other motivational constructs and with students' performances and achievement. Constructs of special interest in these studies

have included self-regulation, reward contingencies, attributions, strategy training, goal setting, modeling, test and domain-specific anxiety, other expectancy beliefs and constructs, problem solving, and varied academic performances across domains (Pajares, 1996).

Bandura (1986) contends that efficacy beliefs mediate the effect of skills or other self-beliefs on subsequent performance by influencing effort. Bandura also cites four sources of self-efficacy beliefs. The first refers to mastery experiences, which according to Bandura are the most potent sources of self-efficacy information. These experiences relate to success in course work. Those experiences have significant implications for the self-enhancement model of academic achievement. The self-enhancement model contends that in order to increase student achievement in school, educational efforts should center on altering students' beliefs about their competence and beliefs of self-worth.

A second source of efficacy information are vicarious experiences, which relate to the effects of actions by others on the individual. Schunk (1981, 1983, 1987) cites role models as an example. According to Schunk, a significant role model in an individual's life can instill self-beliefs that will have a positive impact on future directions and aspirations. Part of a person's vicarious

experiences also relates to social comparisons made with other individuals. Schunk (1983) contends that these comparisons, along with peer modeling, can greatly influence self-perceptions of competence.

A third source of self-efficacy is identified as verbal persuasions that an individual receives from others. These persuasions appear to be a weaker source of efficacy information than vicarious or mastery experiences. Nonetheless, persuaders can play an important role in the development of a person's self-beliefs (Zeldin & Pajares, 1997). Persuasions of a positive nature serve to empower and encourage while persuasions of a negative manner tend to weaken self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1986).

The fourth and final source of self-efficacy refers to physiological states such as stress, anxiety, fatigue, and moods, which also can provide information about efficacy beliefs. Bandura (1997) identifies the forces associated with stress as factors having an adverse effect on self-confidence and self-efficacy. However, Bandura notes that typical anxiety experienced before an important event is not necessarily associated with low self-efficacy. However, strong emotional reactions to a task may provide clues about the anticipated failure or success of the outcome.

This review of self-efficacy presents a brief overall view of the motivational construct and particularly

highlights its saliency to matters pertaining to education and career choices. Also related to the self-efficacy construct are experiences encountered in the learning environment and the individual's own sense of persistence in addressing new and perhaps challenging circumstances. Findings also imply that the positive impact of role models on an individual's life may likely serve to enhance belief in self and personal self-efficacy. These findings carry strong implications for the combined forces of home, school, and community and the role they likely play in the nurturance of self.

#### Home Factors and Academic Development for Teaching

The role that family and the home environment play in the academic development of African American youth remains a topic of significant interest. The family unit and family dynamics shape the earlier growth and development of personal academic self-concept and self-efficacy for those who select the teaching profession. Examples of four strong factors associated with interest in higher education and the subsequent attainment of a teaching career relate to socialization for achievement and parental attitudes toward education, family financial matters, beliefs in personal ability as conveyed by family members, and family role models.

Graham (1994) issues a challenge for future researchers

to investigate the role family plays in the academic preparation of African Americans (refer to p. 9, principle 5). Graham notes that in light of the alleged inadequate performance of some African American youth, much still remains to be learned about their socialization for achievement. Dauber and Epstein (1993) identify parental behaviors associated with children's academic achievement. They include: (a) parenting styles, (b) verbal interaction, (c) book reading, (d) helping with homework, and (e) school involvement. Entwisle and Alexander (1990) agree with the behaviors listed by Dauber and Epstein but contend that much of the research listing these behaviors was conducted on children just entering school. Scott-Jones (1987) focused on maternal teaching styles in the homes of high- and low-income first graders. Findings reveal that in high-readiness homes, teaching and school-related activities were integrated into the flow of pleasant play activities and seemed incidental rather than formal or intentional. Hidalgo et al.(1995) addressed the importance of supportive parental figures in adolescents, citing responses of high achievers who identified one or both parents as being instrumental in influencing them to excel in school. Clark (1983) finds that a home environment supportive of academic achievement is an influential factor related to school success. He notes that students recalled literacy-enhancing activities (i.e.,

reading, writing, word games, and hobbies) in their earlier years as reflective of their family's support and encouragement.

Academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy are further enhanced by parental attitudes and conveyance of beliefs in a child's academic potential. Ames and Archer (1987) and Bempechat and Wells (1989) report that although the influence of parental beliefs on student achievement may appear to be very subtle, it can be a powerful predictor of academic success. These researchers found a vast amount of evidence showing that parents' expectancies, attitudes, and beliefs about schooling and learning serve to guide their behavior with children. Consequently, Bempechat and Wells report that parental behavior has a direct influence on childrens' development of behavior and achievement attitudes. Pollard (1989) finds that successful students also were more likely than unsuccessful students to possess a higher self-perception of ability and report more support for educational endeavors from extended family, parents, and others.

Some researchers attribute the lack of adequate performance of African American students to the scarcity of financial resources needed to provide equal access to higher learning opportunities (e.g., Huston, 1994; Kantor & Lowe, 1995). In light of this allegation, Edelman (1987) and Zill,

Collins, West, and Hausken (1995) state that socioeconomic class continues to be an influential predictor of academic success for African American children. Due to these constraints, Halle, Kurtz-Costos, and Mahoney (1997) assert that for African Americans, the probability of encountering obstacles to academic success is high. While this may be true to some extent, Hidalgo et al. (1995) argue that a low socioeconomic status for African Americans does not uniformly predict family functioning, especially achievement socialization. Both Clark (1983) and Scott-Jones (1987) assert that family processes are more predictive of student achievement than family income or structure.

Family role models and general influence of family also have been cited as enhancers for general self-concept and the development of academic self-concept for teaching. In an investigation of 140 individuals who chose a teaching career, Gordon (1993) reports that over half of the teachers attributed their entrance into teaching to having come from a strong family. According to Gordon, strength in this sense indicated families who pulled together during hard times and possessed a strong religious orientation and affiliation with community issues. One third of the teachers also credited a family role model or models as a reason for entering teaching. Presmeg, Hill, and Skelly (1995) also linked family role models with career motivations for

selecting mathematics as a major for African Americans. According to them, some individuals who had family members in the area of mathematics tended to display a keen interest in becoming mathematics teachers. Perhaps, this tendency might equate to what Bandura (1986) describes as vicarious experiences, which are a source of self-efficacy beliefs (refer to pp. 28 and 29 for review).

Hidalgo et al.(1995) report that experiences of African American children and families have been poorly represented. According to them, past literature has been characterized by an overwhelming emphasis on achievement failures rather than successes of African American children. Also overlooked have been the complexities related to school success or failure as well as the diversity of lifestyles found in African American families. Wilson (1989) contends that many African Americans have been reared by extended families such as uncles, aunts, grandparents, etc. Wilson further notes that family includes the availability and proximity of kin, frequency of kin contact, and functionality of kinships. Anderson and Allen (1984) find that African Americans are twice as likely as Whites to have grandmothers living with them.

It appears the African American family composition may be composed of a variety of members. Perhaps of greater importance is the role family members play in the

socialization for achievement of youngsters who aspire to become teachers. Although a lower socioeconomic status might have an adverse affect on family style, it does not necessarily have to adversely affect family functioning and support for achievement of youngsters. As indicated by Clark (1983) and Scott-Jones (1987), the role family plays in nurturing achievement is more predictive of student achievement than family structure or income. This premise is consistent with Bandura's (1997) and Pajares' (1996) contention that self-efficacy plays an important role in the personal motivation and individual commitment to exercise determination to overcome obstacles.

Also noteworthy is the identification of a family role model or models as being influential in an individual's interest in and selection of a teaching career. Those who aspire to become teachers may view family members in the teaching profession as displaying confidence and showing evidence of success in the profession, thereby providing positive reinforcement for an individual's concept of self. Still, other family role models not in the profession may likely serve as enhancers for the development of personal self-efficacy and academic self-concept by providing the encouragement needed to overcome hurdles. Of even greater interest in this study is the possible lack of positive role models and encouragement for subjects involved in this area

of interest and the role that self plays in the absence of such support.

School Factors and Academic Development for Teaching  
Teacher Beliefs and Interactions With Students

In addition to family influences, school experiences are cited as another environmental factor affecting sense of self and career motivation. Experiences encountered in the classroom can have either a positive or negative effect on students' self-perceptions. For students interested in a teaching career, low expectations could empower them to take more responsibility for their own learning or encourage them to withdraw from learning because of self doubt. Teachers' beliefs and their interactions with students have a direct affect on an individual's academic self-concept of ability and personal efficacy. A typical example relates to teacher expectations and student achievement. Since the publication of "Pygmalion in the Classroom" (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968), an extensive amount of research has been developed to indicate how teachers' expectations can influence the performance of students. Chaikin, Sigler, and Derlega (1974) contend that teachers who believe they are instructing bright students tend to smile and give more nods of approval than when interacting with slow students. Bamburg (1994) connects low teacher expectations for students with low personal teacher efficacy. Bamburg notes that one

significant contributing factor to low teacher expectations for students is the level of expectations that teachers have for their own performance. Cotton and Wikelund (1997) state that teachers with high expectations for students' learning tend to communicate these expectations to students through their encouragement and support, by providing assistance when needed and by holding students responsible for completing assignments and participating in class. Arnold (1985) examined the ways in which teachers develop expectations and views about "bad" and "good" students. According to Arnold, lower expectations for students was detrimental to the lives of students taught. A positive outcome of teachers who convey high expectations for their students is best reflected in students' later recollections of teachers most remembered. Traina (1999) explored the autobiographies of 125 prominent 19th and 20th century Americans. She found that fond memories of teachers related to their genuine display of concern for students' overall well-being and efforts made to employ personal recognition techniques. Foster (1993) reports that 18 African American teachers recalled the positive effect of high expectations conveyed by previous teachers as having a profound and positive impact on their lives.

Alderman (1990) addressed teacher responsibility and sense of efficacy by stating that effective teachers in

urban settings see themselves as responsible for students' learning and virtually believe in their capability to reach and teach all students successfully. Alderman further contends that effective teachers do not perceive learning difficulties of students as products of their personal background, but as indicators for adaptations in their own personal teaching styles.

Positive behaviors and tactics such as those cited above serve as examples of ways in which classroom teachers through their teaching practices and high expectations can nurture early interest and aspiration for teaching. Conversely, teachers who utilize strategies and execute behaviors associated with low expectations for students may likely serve to damage students' self-perceptions of their ability to obtain a teaching career. However, low teacher expectations for student achievement could serve to motivate students interested in teaching to work harder and to develop a sense of efficacy needed to obtain a career goal.

#### School Counselors and Impact on Interest in Teaching

Effective teachers who demonstrate high expectations for students and their learning are of prime importance. Those teachers tend to expose students to more challenging course work and provide the support needed to help them succeed in academic tasks. However, the combined efforts of teachers and school counselors are equally important in

helping students acquire a strong sense of academic self-concept of ability needed to motivate and attract them to a teaching career. One way this could be done is to make students more aware of advantages in choosing teaching as a career. Plevin's (1988) findings on teaching as a changing profession serve as background information about ways in which teachers and counselors can highlight issues that are being addressed to make teaching more attractive. Plevin cites the following as evidence reflective of changes in the teaching profession:

1. The isolation and lack of contact with each other that many teachers have noted in past years are being addressed.
2. Task forces and committees, commissioned by federal, state, and local governments, have recognized the urgency of implementing reforms that will improve teachers' working conditions and the learning process.
3. Improved financial rewards and increased opportunities to interact with colleagues and to have a voice in instructional decisions are some of the changes being discussed and implemented. (p. 26)

Staley and Carey (1997) state that counselors should use in-service opportunities and personal contact with

teachers to help them make connections between career choices of African American girls and boys. These researchers state that the top choice of a career for African American boys in first through sixth grade was professional athlete. Conversely, a larger percentage of African American girls in grades first through sixth selected teaching as their popular choice. One conclusion that could be drawn from this finding is the need for both classroom teachers and guidance counselors to lessen the stereotyping of teaching being mostly a profession for women. This stereotyping likely contributes not only to the overall shortage of African American teachers in general, but particularly to the shortage of African American male teachers as a whole.

Teachers, and especially counselors, should continue to make African Americans aware of the availability of financial assistance for higher education and provide assistance needed in completion of forms. In a race-comparative study, Valadez (1998) examined school support in completing college forms for White and Non-White students.

Valadez comments:

While the effect of race cannot be identified as a significant predictor in the full applied to model, it points to the complexity of the issue in understanding the processes at work in

shaping students' decisions concerning college. Understanding the issue requires a deeper look into how different racial and ethnic groups use the resources embedded within families, schools, and communities. (p. 18)

Findings on the role that both school counselors and teachers play in attracting African Americans to teaching tend to stress the importance of early exposure to opportunities in teaching. This could be done by planning school-based teaching fairs starting in the elementary and intermediate grades and continuing through the high school years. Also of great importance is the role that teachers and counselors play in making students aware of available financial resources, which might be needed by some students who express an interest in teaching. In light of the apparent shortage of African American male teachers, schools and counselors also have an obligation to design and implement strategies to interest more African American males in selecting teaching as a career.

#### Colleges' and Universities' Commitment to Prospective African American Teachers

Colleges and universities play a critical role in entertaining ways to offer the support needed to help prospective African American teachers adjust to the college environment and experience success in academic work. For

some students, college life can be a challenging experience. Posey and Sullivan (1990) refer to a study conducted by Dr. Walter Allen, director of the National Study of Black College Students and associate professor of African American studies at the University of Michigan. The project involved a study of 4,000 African American undergraduate and graduate students and professionals on 16 college campuses - eight predominantly African American campuses and eight predominantly White. The study revealed that African Americans on White campuses are exposed to more material wealth (i.e., more extensive programs and better facilities). However, they also feel more alienated from their White peers and professors and are sometimes the targets of racism. His conclusions also revealed that, conversely, African American colleges and universities are more committed to taking African American students from where they are and moving them forward. Hence, African American colleges convince students that they are capable of competing. Posey and Sullivan also contend that graduates of historically African American colleges and universities must accept the challenge to support these institutions and be dedicated to save historically African American colleges. According to Posey and Sullivan, one way this can be done is through financial support and diligence in recruiting more students for the teaching profession.

Colleges and universities must continue to explore outreach efforts and special projects as a means to interest more minorities in teaching. Padak, Stadulis, Barton, Meadows, and Padak (1994) cite, as an example, urban teaching mentoring. In this instance, Kent State University sought and secured a three-year federal grant, known as the Urban Teachers Project (UTP). The goal of the project was to increase the numbers and promote the readiness of minority teachers interested in urban education. A significant component of the grant was to match prospective minority teachers with minorities currently in the teaching profession. This project represented a partnership among school personnel (e.g., guidance counselors), university personnel (e.g., teacher educators), and project staff (e.g., instructional support staff and administrative staff). Cheng and Brown (1992) indicate that mentors can serve as personalized support systems for learning about the realities of teaching in urban schools. Haberman (1987) also supports this contention when discussing teacher efficacy. Haberman notes that a teacher's sense of efficacy is of vital importance in urban teaching. Because of the potential for stress and the great demands of meeting the academic needs of students in urban settings, Haberman cites the need for colleges of education to better prepare students to deal with the realities of teaching in urban settings. According

to a survey conducted by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (1990), minorities chose not to enter teaching because of the alleged low standing of the profession, inadequate pay, low student motivation, and discipline problems.

Partnerships between local schools and teacher-preparatory institutions also are effective in attracting and retaining minorities in teaching. One such example is cited by Doston and Bolden (1993) and is known as "Tomorrows' School." According to this approach, institutions of higher education develop a professional collaborative relationship with schools that have a high percentage of minority students to provide resources needed to interest more minorities in teaching. Similarly, Stanley and Gusby-McCauley (1993) refer to the "Pro Team Program," which was established by the state of South Carolina with a mission and commitment to attract more minorities to the teaching profession.

It is reasonable to conclude that colleges and universities play a significant role in attracting and retaining African Americans to the teaching profession as well as serving to enhance personal sense of self. Initiatives such as partnerships between colleges and universities and special funding secured from grants are examples of resources that appear to be helpful in

interesting African Americans in teaching. Because academic self-concept of ability is specific to task and domain (i.e., for teaching) as indicated by Pajares (1996), mentorships likely serve to help potential teachers acquire first-hand experiences needed to address the realities of teaching. Although factors such as racism and feelings of isolation on college campuses are noteworthy barriers that need to be addressed, individual effort as proposed by Graham (1994) and persistence as advocated by Bandura (1993) and Pajares (1996) are important motivational constructs to be considered by African Americans. For students attending historically African American colleges and universities as well as those attending predominantly White institutions, a personal sense of responsibility must be assumed by the individual to take full advantage of all available educational opportunities and to seek assistance needed to become a successful teacher. In a complementary manner, the challenge remains for colleges and universities to administer the support needed to retain teacher candidates.

#### Community Factors and Development for Teaching

Positive community affiliations seem to be instrumental in shaping academic beliefs and career interests in teaching for some African Americans. Factors such as church involvement, mentoring, and support from business and industry representatives are cited as influential examples

in that they provide the academic nurturance and financial assistance needed to achieve a teaching career. Community factors such as church affiliation, mentoring, and participation in special programs are further examples of experiences cited as having a positive impact on self and career aspirations.

Hidalgo et al. (1995) cite a strong correlation between church attendance and academic achievement in low-income African American fifth-grade children. Farrell (1994) addressed the growth of self in adolescents and indicated that affiliation with church and church activities helped individuals acquire more knowledge about the world, bond with friends, and acquire a stronger sense of confidence needed to deal with worldly issues. Farrell's concept of self is best described by what he defines as the affiliating self in which young people engage themselves in church-related functions such as church programs, church conferences, and other leadership-enhancing initiatives promoted by various churches. By doing so, individuals may likely acquire a positive self-concept needed to confirm and enhance their ability to meet rigorous academic standards for a teaching career. Likewise, Pinkney (1996) includes church affiliation and community role models as having a profound impact on academic development. Similarly, Griggs (1992) studied factors that influenced the academic and

vocational development of African American and Latino youth. Findings show that community and church programs had a positive affect on career interest and selection.

Mentoring, support from community groups, and initiatives sponsored and funded by representatives from the business sector also have been indicated as having a strong impact on the educational aspirations of young people. Brown (1996) provides the following definition for mentoring:

Mentoring is a sustained relationship between a youth and an adult {in which, through} continued involvement, the adult offers support, guidance, and assistance as the younger person goes through a difficult period, faces new challenges, or works to correct earlier problems. (p. 2)

Baron (1992) states that enhancement of self-esteem and self-confidence is an evident goal of mentoring. Brown (1996) reports that the Pepsi-Cola Company established a pilot program in inner-city schools in Dallas and Detroit to encourage students to complete a high school education. As part of the program, Pepsi-Cola also provided funding for a teacher mentor program. Brown refers to an additional venture begun in Atlanta, known as "100 Black Men of Atlanta." As a community service organization, this group targeted a high school in Atlanta with a high dropout rate.

Funding was provided if youngsters stayed in school and pursued a college education. Members of the organization also tutored students and served as mentors. Cheng and Brown (1992) refer to a program for new elementary teachers that had as its goal the continuation of mentors in teaching beyond a two-year period. This program addressed the high turnover rate of teachers new to the profession.

A variety of findings tend to support the premise that community influence and involvement in educational activities are noteworthy environmental factors for some youngsters who aspire to further their education and later select the teaching profession. Activities such as participation in church-related functions, mentorships, and special community ventures intended to nurture teacher interest serve as examples. Those factors have been identified as having a strong influence on career interest and the subsequent attainment of a goal because of the impact they have on self and the motivational process. Conversely, it also is highly possible that some individuals may remain unaffected by community influences and choose not to participate in special programs or activities designed to promote academic self-concept. Perhaps those individuals already possess a keen and focused sense of self and feel confident in their ability to compete successfully on the academic level. Such individuals also may possess the

tenacity needed to overcome obstacles that might be encountered during the pursuit of a teaching career. It also is probable that the individuals were more positively affected by previously mentioned environmental factors (e.g., home) and that experiences in other settings were effective in helping them acquire a strong sense of self.

Factors Affecting Career Commitment and Retention in Teaching

An individual's motivations to remain in teaching tend to be related to overall job satisfaction and experiences in the workplace. Such influences are known as institutional in that they are noteworthy when it comes to policy and procedural changes. A study conducted by Derlin and Schneider (1994) concluded that management, leadership, and motivational strategies concerning differences in job satisfaction based on educational settings and employment responsibility are more appropriate than are unilateral policies. Derlin and Schneider's study also indicated that job satisfaction for urban teachers was more affected by matters pertaining to school climate and work environment than it was for suburban teachers. Holdaway (1978) found that intrinsic facets (e.g., career orientation, achievement, recognition, and work accomplishment stimulation) were closely related to overall job satisfaction. Earlier works of Herzberg, Mausner, and

Snyderman (1959) focused on a two-factor theory of job satisfaction. According to this theory, one set of rewards contributes to job satisfaction and a separate set to job dissatisfaction. The "satisfiers" are known as motivators and include factors such as recognition, achievement, responsibility, and work itself. Conversely, "dissatisfiers" have been called "hygienes" and include interpersonal relations with peers and subordinates, personal life, and policy and working conditions.

Lam, Foong, and Moo (1995) identify three major factors linked to withdrawal cognition and teacher turnover. They are career commitment, job satisfaction, and quality of work-life factors. According to Lam et al., job satisfaction is associated with feelings of positive affect in the work environment and the work itself. Career commitment is defined as the employee's desire to remain as an employee in the organization as well as the employee's willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization. Quality of work-life factors relate to conditions encountered in the overall school climate. Culver, Wolfe, and Cross (1990) indicate demographic variables such as age, gender, and organizational tenure relate to turnover and employment satisfaction in the profession. Their study shows that job satisfaction for older and more experienced teachers tended to be higher

than for those in earlier stages of their career.

### Experiences in the Classroom

Experiences in the classroom directly impact self-efficacy. Positive experiences and a strong sense of self likely lead to job satisfaction and career commitment, thereby influencing a decision to remain in teaching or at least in the field of education. Self-efficacy has been identified as strongly impacting one's tenacity in addressing difficult situations. A number of educational researchers have identified teachers' beliefs in their ability to instruct students as powerful variables in studies of instructional effectiveness (see i.e., Guskey, 1989). A teacher's belief in personal ability to motivate students and to make a positive impact on students' learning plays an important part in determining educational outcomes, perhaps affecting academic achievement more strongly and directly than student characteristics (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Teachers with a low sense of self-efficacy tend to hold a pessimistic view of students' motivation, employ rigid control of classroom behavior, and rely on negative sanctions and extrinsic inducements to get students to study (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Low efficacy teachers are often doubtful of their effectiveness and less likely to persist when working with difficult students. In many instances, teachers with low efficacy tend to have higher referral

rates of students to special-education classes (Podell & Soodak, 1993). Teachers with high efficacy use mastery experiences for their students, whereas teachers with low instructional efficacy undermine students' perception and judgment of their capabilities as well as cognitive development. Newman, Rutter, and Smith (1989) contend that teachers need to devote special attention to their interactions with students and the messages they might convey to them. That special attention tends to lead to a greater sense of teacher efficacy because it shows a personal belief that one can motivate and increase the academic performance of students regardless of adverse home conditions.

### Student Discipline

Matters pertaining to the maintenance of an effective learning environment relate to student discipline and may contribute to teacher burnout and stress. Likewise, those conditions affect an individual's satisfaction and commitment to teaching. Cichon and Koff (1980) maintain that teacher burnout and stress are associated with general dissatisfaction about teaching and with teacher turnover. Issues relating to student discipline may cause teachers to consider withdrawing from the profession. Teachers who feel inadequate or unwilling to deal with the realities of teaching (e.g., maintaining an orderly learning environment)

may fail to utilize the self-reflection needed to help them adopt a suitable classroom management style (Albert, 1996). In Shaw's (1996) investigation of why few African Americans choose to go into teaching, findings indicate that 53.3% of prospective Black teachers cite discipline problems and 75% of Black teachers already in the profession indicated discipline problems as a major concern.

### School Climate

The working environment is likely to enhance or impede a teacher's sense of competence and efficacy because of the individual's perception of the quality of work-life factors. An environment characterized by strong leadership, having a shared mission for student improvement, and valuing collaboration and collegiality is likely to be viewed by teachers as an "enabler" for teacher efficacy. An enabling environment recognizes and encourages empowerment of teachers. Teachers who feel empowered tend to be creative and are apt to try new methods to benefit students' learning. As examples affecting teacher commitment, Riehl and Sipple (1996) report numerous studies on organizational conditions such as autonomy regarding participation in school-wide decision making, opportunities to collaborate with other teachers, and opportunities to learn. Thus, teachers who perceive the working environment as an enabling one may tend to experience more job satisfaction and view

teaching as a lifelong profession.

Conversely, a school environment lacking the aforementioned qualities could be perceived by some teachers as a "disabler" for teacher efficacy. In a disabling school environment, teacher input is probably not highly valued or encouraged and teachers likely experience isolation. Such feelings could stifle creativity, promote complacency, or cause the individual to become dissatisfied with teaching and seek employment outside the teaching profession.

Peterson (1997) lists the following qualities characteristic of a positive school climate: (a) high expectations, (b) a strong sense of student identity and belonging, (c) continuous recognition of personal academic excellence, (d) a strong sense of academic mission, and (e) a high level of professional collegiality among staff (P.36).

Because of the relationship between school climate and teacher efficacy, Peterson (1997) identifies collegiality as an element influencing school climate. She defines collegiality as a shared authority among colleagues involving various types of interactions within the workplace. Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) maintain that a strong socio-collegial environment pertaining to both social and business interactions appears to be influential in the development of teacher efficacy. According to Hoy and

Woolfolk, school climate affects the sense of efficacy, and efficacy affects the perception of school climate. Winter and Sweeney (1994) identify the principal as being instrumental in promoting a wholesome school climate by providing opportunities for interactions between teachers and administrators. Similarly, Benton and Bulach's (1995) study of an elementary school and its process of improving school climate cites the principal as the facilitator for a positive school climate.

#### Collective Efficacy

It seems highly probable that a relationship exists between teacher efficacy, school climate, and collective efficacy. Unlike teacher efficacy and school climate, collective efficacy implies that teacher efficacy has a broader context. In this instance, a teacher's satisfaction in the profession may be derived as a result of the teacher's perception of inclusion in educational policy-making decisions at the division level or higher.

Bandura (1986) defines collective self-efficacy as a group's shared belief in its capability to attain goals and accomplish desired tasks. Pajares (1997) states that collective systems such as teams of classroom teachers, schools, and school districts are part of collective efficacy. Pajares contends that schools develop collective beliefs about the capability of their students' learning

potential, of their teachers' ability to teach and willingness to enhance the lives of students, and of policy-makers and administrators to foster environments conducive to those tasks. In regards to the academic achievement of students in middle school, Bandura (1993) argues that collective efficacy mediates the influence of students' economic status, prior achievement, and teachers' longevity. Fuller and Izu (1986) contend that the personal efficacy of teachers and satisfaction with the school administration can be associated with collective efficacy and thus, career choices concerning the decision to remain in the profession.

Conclusions on the relationship between teacher efficacy and the personal willingness to remain in teaching appear to be associated with a variety of institutional factors. While several other factors may explain in greater detail matters pertaining to job satisfaction and experiences in the workplace, this review has focused on a few of those findings. Factors such as experiences in the classroom, student discipline, the general school climate, and collective efficacy all relate to the broad areas of career commitment, job satisfaction and experiences in the workplace and quality of work-life factors.

Issues such as experiences in the classroom tend to relate to the amount of self-efficacy possessed by a teacher and the teacher's willingness to exert the effort needed to

motivate all learners. Student discipline problems have been associated with personal dissatisfaction for teaching and a possible cause for withdrawal from teaching. Factors such as stress and burnout are cited as side effects. Yet, other factors such as longevity in the profession, personal stamina, positive feelings about teaching, and belief in ability to make a difference are noteworthy in this area.

School climate is listed as another strong factor when it comes to overall job satisfaction, career commitment, and an individual's perception of quality of work-life factors. Provisions for interactions with colleagues, the role that the principal plays in facilitating a positive work environment, and general feelings of being valued and included in decision making are examples characteristic of a positive work climate. Likewise, as part of a team, collective efficacy enhances self-efficacy as well as academic self-concept because of the broader context it has in allowing individuals to participate in policy and decision making at a higher level. Positive experiences in all of these areas likely contribute to teacher retention.

## CHAPTER III

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The research design of this study is known as an explanatory case study. Yin (1994) contends that questions dealing with how and why are explanatory in nature and suitable for the case-study approach. Yin also notes that the case-study approach is the preferred strategy when the investigator has little control over the events or when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.

The real-life context of this study is provided by a small group of African American teachers who are currently working in Roanoke City Public Schools. The teachers are of particular interest because they are members of a racial minority group. In addition, this study is relevant because of the need to learn more about the "self" construct and the role it plays in motivating African Americans to select a teaching career and remain with it. Of special interest to the researcher is the extent to which academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy help us understand the teachers' motivations to select teaching and to remain in the profession. Intervening variables that influence this relationship are environmental influences (i.e., home, school, and community factors) and institutional influences (i.e., experiences in the workplace and school climate),

which affect job satisfaction and career commitment.

#### Single Case Study

This is a single case study. Patton (1990) notes that case studies can be individuals, programs, institutions, or special groups of individuals. Miles and Huberman (1994) agree with Patton and state that a single case study may be that of an organization, small group, community, or nation. Yin (1994) notes that a single case study is appropriate when an investigator has the opportunity to analyze and observe a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation. Yin also states that an additional rationale for a single case study is when it represents a critical case in examining a well formulated theory that has a specified set of propositions along with circumstances within which the suggestions are believed to be true. In that instance, a single case study proposes the likelihood that a relationship exists between the independent and dependent variables and that the relationship may be influenced positively or negatively by environmental and institutional factors in an individual's personal choice of teaching and willingness to remain in the profession.

#### Participants In Study

Ten African Americans participated in this study. That purposefully selected group was diverse, representing both genders and different ages, numbers of years in teaching,

occupations prior to teaching and current teaching assignments. Those surveyed included native and non-native Roanokers, participants and non-participants in a teacher-preparatory program, and graduates of predominantly White or historically African American institutions.

Miles and Huberman (1994) state that, "Qualitative samples tend to be purposive rather than random and that this tendency is partly because social processes have a logic and coherence that random sampling can reduce to uninterpretable sawdust" (p. 27). Likewise, Patton (1990) reports that purposeful sampling is used for information-rich cases in which one could learn a great deal about issues of genuine importance. According to Patton, purposeful sampling allows the researcher to focus in-depth on understanding the needs, interests, and incentives of a small group of carefully selected subjects.

Two males participated in this study. The first individual is approximately 25 years old and was recruited (along with his wife, who also is a participant in this study) from a Midwestern state after having taught for two years. That individual is presently a non-tenured middle school teacher for all sixth-grade subjects. He is a non-native of the area, graduated from a predominantly White university and has no experience in a teacher-preparatory program.

The second male participant is 33 and has been a Roanoke City teacher for nine years at the high school level. His first assignment was as an EMD (educable mentally disabled) teacher for four years. The remaining years were spent teaching health and physical education. The individual is a tenured teacher, whose hometown is outside the state of Virginia. He graduated from a predominantly White university and did not participate in a teacher-preparatory program.

Eight females participated in this study. Two were full participants (e.g., freshman to senior years) in a special teacher-preparatory program, which was designed to attract minorities to teaching. Both are 27 and will soon begin their sixth year in teaching. One individual is teaching Spanish at a middle school, and the other participant is a fifth-grade elementary teacher. Both teachers are graduates of predominantly White universities, native Roanokers, and tenured teachers. One of the teachers previously taught in a different middle school, while the other has been teaching at the same elementary school and the same grade level since graduating from college.

Profile characteristics of an additional teacher indicate that this female also is in the same age category (approximately 28). She has been teaching for five years in the primary grades and was once cited by her principal as being an exceptional teacher with potential for leadership.

Similar to those mentioned previously, another individual is approximately 29 and has achieved tenure. She is a graduate of a historically African American university, a non-native of the area and had some experience in a teacher-preparatory program.

The final participant in this category is 25 and along with her husband was recruited from a Midwestern state. She served as an elementary teacher for one year prior to her arrival in the Roanoke Valley and teaches fourth grade. This participant has not yet received tenure, graduated from a predominantly White university, and did not participate in a teacher-preparatory program.

The remaining four female participants provide a noteworthy dimension to this study because of longevity in the teaching profession. Together these individuals represent teaching experiences ranging from 12 to 25 years. The age range for this group is mid-30s to 50. All are tenured teachers, with the exception of one who is probationary because she is from outside Virginia and has only one year of experience teaching in the Roanoke City Schools. Two of the individuals in this group are EMD teachers, with one at the elementary level and the other at the secondary. The elementary teacher is a native Roanoker, graduate of a historically African American university with no experience in a teacher-preparatory program. The

secondary EMD teacher is a non-native, graduate of a predominantly White institution with no experience in a teacher-preparatory program. This individual came to the area because she needed a change in her life.

Of the two remaining participants, one is a resource teacher (i.e., works with small groups of students, conducts workshops for colleagues, recommends and orders instructional materials for staff use) and the other is a high-school teacher with department chairperson responsibilities (e.g., administrative duties). Neither are originally from the area and were not participants in a teacher-preparatory program. The two individuals graduated from predominantly White universities.

#### Qualitative Case Study

The research design used a qualitative approach in the collection and analysis of data. Maykurt and Morehouse (1996) contend that a qualitative approach allows the researcher to provide readers with a rich description of the phenomenon under study through language used by the participants. In clarifying the term phenomenon, which is often associated with qualitative inquiry, Patton (1990) defines phenomenology as the study of how individuals describe things through their senses. He contends people can know only what they experience by attending to perceptions and meanings that awaken their conscious awareness. Patton

further notes that initially all understanding comes from sensory experience of phenomena but that experience must be explicated, described, and interpreted. Miles and Huberman (1994) note that qualitative data place an emphasis on people's experiences and are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the processes, events, and structures of their lives.

Yin (1994) refers to four tests as criteria for judging the quality of research designs for case studies. The four tests relate to various phases of research in which the tactics occur. They are:

- . Construct validity -- as part of data collection, uses multiple sources of evidence, establishes chain of evidence, and allows key informants to review draft of case study report
- . Internal validity -- as part of the analysis of data, employs tactics such as pattern-matching, explanation building, and time-series analysis
- . External validity -- as part of the research design, uses replication logic (determining whether a study's findings are generalized beyond the immediate case study)
- . Reliability -- as part of data collection,

employs tactics to ensure data collection procedures can be repeated with the same results

#### Data Collection

Yin (1994) contends that some case studies may be of poor quality and the results questionable simply because an inattentive researcher fails to address conscientiously matters related to validity and reliability. Each concern requires a specific plan to ensure that data obtained are credible and confirmable. Yin asserts that reliability is obtained by taking steps to ensure that a later investigator could follow the same procedure and reach similar conclusions. Therefore, the need to document procedures is of prime importance. To increase reliability in this case study, the researcher utilized the following procedures:

- . An introductory letter containing background information about the project, anticipated time for beginning the study, and intended use of results was mailed to key administrative school personnel.  
(see Appendix A).
- . A letter requesting participation in the study with information about anticipated timelines and assurance of confidentiality was mailed to each participant (see Appendix B).

- . A checklist for preparing introductory statements was developed by the researcher and used with each participant. This technique assured standardization in the interview process (see Appendix C).
- . A review of the draft document was distributed to participants prior to the final copy. This step assures validity and reliability of data gathered.

Reliability is enhanced further when the researcher has full grasp of the issues being studied. This was achieved by a thorough review and understanding of related literature on the topic. Yin (1994) emphasizes the importance of a case study investigator understanding the theoretical or policy issues in order to make judgments during the data collection and interpretation phase.

Two sources of data were collected for this study. Both were survey instruments with focused interviews conducted at different times. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) list four characteristics of focused interviews. They are:

1. Takes place with respondents known to have been involved in a particular experience.
2. Refers to situations that have been analyzed prior to the interview.
3. Proceeds on the basis of an interview guide specifying topics related to the

research hypothesis.

4. Focuses on the subjects' experiences regarding the situation under study.

Likewise, Yin (1994) supports focused interviews and adds that they also may be open-ended and still assume a conversational tone. As a result of the questions asked, this study utilized a conversational format using narratives to capture the richness of the individuals' language.

Using more than one source of data addresses construct validity in that different sources of evidence essentially provide a variety of measure of the same phenomenon (Yin, 1994). Patton (1990) advocates the use of different sources of data because it promotes triangulation. According to Patton, "One way to strengthen a study design is through triangulation, or the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena or programs" (p. 187).

#### Interview Site

Frey and Oishi (1995) address key essential behaviors of an interviewer that are needed to increase validity and reliability during the interview process. One behavior relates to an appropriate site for the interview. Initially, participants were asked to identify a suitable location and time for interviews to be conducted. This procedure afforded individuals privacy and enhanced the quality of their responses by establishing a comfort level.

### Introductory Statement

Frey and Oishi (1995) cite another key essential behavior of an interviewer that relates to the need for an introductory statement. This behavior also increases validity and reliability during the interview process. Therefore, prior to each interview the researcher used an introductory statement to focus the participants on the questions. Frey and Oishi stress the importance of the introductory statement by saying:

The introductory statement, as short as it may be and with constraints of interviewer appearance or voice, has the major responsibility of building immediate rapport and trust with the respondent. A great deal of attention must be paid to the formulation of the introductory message. (p. 44)

The introductory statement used by the researcher addressed matters such as purpose of the study, conditions of the interview, clarification of terminology used, confidentiality, need for candid responses, and permission to use a tape recorder (see Appendix C).

Following the introductory statement, interviews proceeded with the exact wording used for each statement or question. Techniques such as clarification and probing were used as needed. Clarification was used when participants

failed to understand clearly the essence of the question being asked. Probing was used to have the participants address the how and why in their responses. Patton (1990) stated that probes are used to increase the quality of the data being obtained and to enrich the response to a question. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) cited two major functions of probes: They help focus the conversation on the specific topic of the interview, and they motivate the respondent to clarify an answer. (see Appendix D for survey instruments).

#### First Interview and Survey Instrument

Initially, participants responded to a series of statements related to environmental influences found to have some significance on their development of academic self-concept of ability, self-efficacy, and motivation for teaching. Factors such as home, school, and community are cited in the Review of Literature as influencing personal motivation for career interest in teaching and retention in teaching. As a result of findings in this area, statements found on the first survey instrument were composed by the researcher based on the literature review (see Appendix D). Yin (1994) supports the use of the survey instrument by equating it with a type of interview with more structured questions. He contends that such an instrument can be designed as part of a case study and can be used in

conjunction with interviews to capture subjects' perceptions of matters pertaining to them. Consequently, the purpose of the first survey instrument was to trigger the participants' perceptions about environmental influences and how those influences affected personal academic development and motivation for teaching. In this case, perceptions are important because of four main reasons. First, they are derived from "realistic" experiences and can be powerful from the standpoint of implications they might have for policy making and procedures that may be adopted by local school personnel. Secondly, an understanding of realistic experiences offers opportunities for the development of policies and procedures that might be effective in attracting and retaining African American teachers in Roanoke City. Third, the participants' perceptions are important because of the implications they might have for Roanoke City school personnel to establish an even closer relationship with area colleges and universities in which African American prospective teachers are enrolled. Finally, they also are significant because of implications they might have for Roanoke City school officials seeking assistance involving partnerships with local politicians interested in school matters.

The first survey instrument utilized a Likert Scale to capture the participants' perceptions of matters related to

home, school, and community influences. Likert Scaling is a method used to measure attitudes. It usually has a five-point continuum of values 1,2,3,4,5 or 5,4,3,2,1 (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). Examples of expressions are: (a) Strongly agree, (b) Agree, (c) Uncertain, (d) Disagree, and (e) Strongly disagree.

Prior to responding, participants were assured confidentiality with all data gathered. Each statement was placed on a separate index card with the rating scale underneath. During the interview, participants read the statements silently and selected an appropriate rating. Oral probes followed to explore the individuals reasoning and to elaborate about their rating. Maykurt and Morehouse (1996) indicate that the use of probes enriches the data gathered and increases the understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Prior to the final document, participants were encouraged to read the report to ensure that all information was recorded and interpreted in an unbiased and accurate manner. Again, that procedure adds reliability and credibility of data gathered.

#### Second Interview and Survey Instrument

Similar to the first interview, the second interview also was focused in nature but was intended to capture participants' perceptions about institutional influences,

which were found to have some effect on academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy and the motivation to remain in teaching. As the literature suggests, factors such as experiences in the workplace and school climate are associated with job satisfaction and career commitment. Therefore, statements developed for the second interview also were formulated and based on literature findings in that area.

Standard techniques such as the use of probing and clarification when necessary were used again to allow participants the opportunity to elaborate on their responses. Unlike the first interview, the second did not use the Likert Scale rating format. The second interview was intended to allow participants the opportunity to converse in a free-style manner (e.g., respond to statements and questions without having to rate each response).

As with the first interview, an introductory statement preceded the second set of statements and questions. Again, the exact wording for each was used in all instances. As anticipated, respondents conversed with ease and at times addressed other topics which were included in other statements and questions. Consequently, when that occurred, the researcher exercised flexibility by moving to more appropriate statements, thereby interrupting the sequence of statements and questions as printed (refer to Appendix D).

### Data Analysis

According to Yin (1994), the analysis of data consists of strategies such as tabulating, examining, categorizing, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions indicated in the study. This study proposes a relationship between academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy in career selection and retention in teaching and that this relationship is further affected by environmental and institutional factors. Questions of how and why have been posed to enable the researcher to discover and better understand those relationships. Yin states, "Theoretical propositions about causal relations answers to 'how' and 'why' questions can be very useful in guiding case study analysis in this manner" (p. 104).

The dominant modes of analysis for this study used pattern-matching techniques and explanation building. Miles and Huberman (1994) contend that the pattern-matching technique allows the researcher to gain meaning from the phenomena by studying the patterns that seem to emerge from the findings.

Initially, survey questions and statements were developed based upon the Literature Review. Responses to those questions and statements were taped-recorded and later transcribed. A large matrix was developed by the researcher (see Appendix E). That matrix was used to record relevant

text from conversations with the participants. Codes were developed and used to assist the researcher in locating key material needed for explanation building. Some of the codes used are: (a) SPF -- single-parent family, (b) GPWU -- graduate of predominantly White institution, (c) PTPP -- participant in teacher-preparatory program, (d) PPE -- positive principal experience, and (e) Likert Scale Ratings -- 5,4,3,2,1, and 1,2,3,4,5. Those codes helped the researcher locate key material when drawing conclusions. As Miles and Huberman (1994) note, drawing conclusions from matrix data uses basic tactics such as noting patterns and themes, making contrasts and comparisons, clustering, and counting. Consequently, conclusions were drawn from data using those tactics, which helped support text used by the participants to describe their experiences.

Narratives were edited to remove words or phrases that could reveal the identity of individual participants. That was done to safeguard information provided by the participants and to ensure confidentiality of information.

## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to examine how academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy, influence 10 African Americans to select and attain a teaching career as well as remain in the profession. This study also examined the effect of intervening variables such as environmental factors (i.e., home, school, and community influences) and institutional factors (i.e., experiences in the workplace, school climate and overall job satisfaction) on that relationship.

Data obtained from the 10 participants focused on their experiences while growing up and attending school in areas such as: (a) North Carolina, (b) Louisiana, (c) West Virginia, and (d) Virginia. With the exception of one individual who is a North Carolina native and completed college in Virginia, the remaining participants attended and completed college in their home state.

Research Questions Guiding Results

This chapter describes how participants' experiences influenced their motivation to select a teaching career and remain in the profession. The following research questions were used to guide the collection and analysis of data:

1. How do environmental factors influence the academic self-concept of ability to select and attain a career in teaching for 10 African American Roanoke City teachers?
2. How do environmental factors influence the self-efficacy to select and attain a career in teaching for 10 African American Roanoke City teachers?
3. How do institutional factors influence the academic self-concept of ability to continue teaching for 10 African American Roanoke City teachers?
4. How do institutional factors influence the self-efficacy to continue teaching for 10 African American Roanoke City teachers?

#### Instrumentation

To address the proposed questions, this section contains qualitative data obtained from two survey instruments developed by the researcher and based on the Review of Literature. Data were gathered through two interviews that used the survey instruments on environmental and institutional factors affecting the self-motivational construct for teaching (see Appendices C and E.)

Conversations reflect the participants' perceptions of

experiences and are written in narrative to depict the richness of language. In some instances, the researcher listed comments from each individual when responses appeared to be different. At other times when comments appeared the same for the area of inquiry, examples of comments were provided.

### Home Environment and Preparation for Teaching

#### Family Background Information

Participants spoke at length about how family experiences influenced their early academic development and sense of self. Common themes emerged: (a) family practices and behaviors towards education, (b) influence of family role models on earlier academic growth, (c) circumstances affecting choice of teaching, and (d) personal efficacy in adjusting to challenging and rewarding family experiences.

When recalling family experiences, the tone of the conversation for all participants reflected a tremendous amount of personal pride as well as self-determination in confronting circumstances that at times were less than desirable. Family, as described by the participants and supported by Wilson (1989), consisted of a variety of compositions, educational levels, and economic status. Six of the individuals were reared by both biological parents. Two were reared by single-parent mothers, and two by mother

and stepfather. Regarding parental influence on the participants' early academic development, three individuals included extended family members (e.g., cousins, aunts, and uncles).

Only one participant referred to a parent as being a college graduate. Another individual reported that one parent (mother) had some college experience. The educational background for parents of the remaining participants ranged from finishing third grade to high school graduation.

When addressing family financial matters, five stated that college would not have been a reality for them were it not for financial assistance. Four disagreed and credited either hard work and thrifty spending by parents, their own strong will to seek and attain the financial assistance, or scholarships earned from sports or academics.

#### Family Practices and Behaviors Towards Education

Findings on family influence and early academic development show that nine of the participants cited favorable experiences related to positive support for education from family members as well as effective parental behaviors fostering socialization for achievement. That evidence of strong support for education appeared paramount regardless of family circumstances or income. One participant assigned a rating of 3 (uncertain) because of

his interpretation of the term, parent. For him, parents included older siblings who assisted with literacy-enhancing activities such as the promotion of leisure reading and completion of homework. Interestingly, two individuals also assigned a rating of strongly agree and included siblings as having a major influence on their academic development.

Family support and behaviors toward education appeared to take a variety of forms (Dauber & Eptstein, 1993). In the recollections of participants, support ranged from direct assistance such as one-on-one help from parents to assistance from older siblings. A more subtle form of assistance was encouragement. Typical remarks about family influence and the promotion of literacy-enhancing activities include:

Participant Nine

Oh absolutely! My parents were very supportive and helpful to me in everything I did. Why, I remember one night my father stayed up with me practically all night to help me write slogans for a school campaign issue.

Participant Four

Oh, there was a strong emphasis on literacy. One such example was book reading. I've been reading since three or four years old. Although

I can't recall a formal thing like my parents checking my homework, mom just expected us to do our work. My dad only went to third grade, and mom finished high school, but you had to do your work. I was an A/B student all the way, so it was expected. Plus, if you didn't, the teachers would see your parents in church, and you didn't want that.

#### Participant Two

Well, I'm one of six children with three sisters being 15 years older than I am. When you say family, I would have to say my earlier academic development was a priority because of the influence of my four sisters and older brother. You see, my parents didn't go to high school. So, I would have to say uncertain on that {question 1}.

#### Participant Eight

When I was young, like in grade school, my mom helped me with homework and made sure it was done first before anything else. When I got older and she was unable to help me, she got a tutor. Also, one of my mom's friends was a teacher. When she would recommend things, my mom would go and get it.

#### Participant Six

In my family, there were three others, and we just all helped each other. My parents never really checked our homework on a frequent basis, but they would look at it sometimes. Like I said, we checked each others'.

#### Participant Five

I did a lot of reading. I love reading. My mother worked different shifts at a nursing home and didn't get to go much to school functions. But I had two older sisters. My oldest was a very good influence on me. We bonded a lot, and she helped me with my homework and other things.

#### Parental Perceptions of Ability

In relation to parental behaviors and attitudes toward education, some participants perceived a lack of pressure for high grades. That perception appeared germane to those individuals who also indicated that the lack of adequate finances often posed great difficulties on family functioning. Yet, this lack of pressure for high grades could be attributed to parents' strong belief in their child's potential for academic success as well as differences in parenting styles. According to four of the participants:

Participant One

My mom finished 12th grade. She really didn't do very well but was a big supporter for me. Particularly in middle school and high school, my mom and I would share novels. I really can't remember earlier things, but I guess she did have high expectations for me because I really love reading today. I mostly just did things myself.

Participant Nine

Even when I did not do so well in a particular class or on a certain paper, my parents would say, 'Hey, don't worry about it. You'll do better the next time. You always have.'

Participant Two

I grew up in a low-income area, and my parents were working folks. I would look at certain people in my community--folks hanging out, in and out of jail, and always looking to work a scheme on somebody. So I pretty much decided to make the best grades I could.

Participant Three

My mom was very inspirational for me. If you brought home a C or D--not that she didn't care--but she would stress if you've done your best,

then you've accomplished your goal. That played a good part, and you don't feel all stressed out. You feel good about yourself. You really do. She would also say, 'If you've pleased yourself, then you've pleased me.' A lot of kids got to make all As to please whom? To please their parents, that's who.

#### Student Self-efficacy

Also of great significance was the amount of self-efficacy displayed by the participants through willingness to take responsibility for their own learning. That sense of responsibility was exhibited as early as grade school and seemed to last throughout college. Personal display of acquired self-efficacy appeared to transcend factors such as gender, age, family background, and financial status and was evident in participants' recollections. In three cases, self-efficacy resulted from family strife or discord. Three of the participants commented:

#### Participant Eight

I had to do better with my life than my mom did with hers.

#### Participant Three

My mother really didn't think I was going to college. She really didn't. I told her I was

going to college with or without her. All I needed was transportation, and I arranged that. I got my sister's boyfriend {now my brother in law} to take me. Oh, I was determined I was going.

#### Participant One

Well, self-concept was and still is at times a big problem for me. It is due to the fact that my family did certain things. I was always successful in everything I did. But my surrounding family was always critical of me and made fun of me. So I think my family influenced me negatively. As a result, everything I did, I made sure I did it well.

#### Family and Motivation for Teaching

As the conversation on family influences continued, the focus centered on family role models and their effect on the participants' motivations to select teaching as their career. When asked for a rating and comments on those factors, six chose strongly agree and agree for family role models having a positive influence. Of the six, four individuals spoke of family members who were educators (i.e., mother, cousins, uncles, and aunts). On that same issue, two participants chose strongly disagree and disagree, indicating that there were no family role models.

Or, in some instances, those role models were not educators but nonetheless served to inspire them to do their best (Gordon, 1993). The remaining individual cited uncertain because of her perception that it was just expected that she would become a teacher. She explained that her earlier behaviors (e.g., initiating play-school activities) were observed by friends and neighbors as being a strong indication for a future teacher.

As for those who gave high ratings for family role models who were educators, common traits related to family members who valued continuing education, possessed a commitment to the teaching profession, and offered financial and moral support in academic endeavors. The participants who cited strongly disagree and disagree provided clarification by stating that even though they had no family members who were educators, their role models were family members who provided encouragement and moral support.

Typical comments made by the participants were:

Participant Five

My aunt was really a good teacher. After I was approached about the idea of teaching, I thought about my aunt and said, 'I can be like her.'

Participant Six

A majority of my family members both on my mother's and father's side finished college, and some were in education. One of my dad's brothers graduated from ... college with a degree in engineering. He was a strong influence. Also, my aunt ... was really nice. She would offer financial support for family members who wanted to go to college. Of course, she liked it even more if you wanted to go into education. She and others in my family were definitely an inspiration to me.

Participant Seven

My mom played a significant role in my educational endeavors and interest in teaching. I was always proud of her.

Participant Ten

I came from a long line of educators. In fact, my aunt was one of my teachers. My mom also was a teacher for over 25 years.

Participant Two

When you talk about family role models, it wasn't so much to become a teacher, but parents and everybody in the neighborhood were role models

from the standpoint of their encouragement to grow up and become somebody.

#### Additional Factors Affecting Choice of Teaching

As for whether their motivation for teaching was self derived, five selected strongly agree or agree; three chose uncertain; and two stated disagree. The three who selected uncertain provided reasons such as the opportunity to participate in a teacher-preparatory program, choice of teaching because of illness in the family that inspired them to help others, and personal willingness to become role models for others. A more experienced individual spoke of her desire to become a teacher because of the perception of teaching being an appealing career for African Americans during her youth. Walton, (1996) also found this to be true.

A significant number of participants, seven were initially attracted to careers outside of teaching such as: (a) accounting, (b) professional basketball, (c) communications, (d) law, (e) physics/focus on thermodynamics, (f) engineering, and (g) business. In some instances, reasons for considering those careers related to family influences for choosing more lucrative positions. Examples of responses were:

#### Participant Five

I guess my motivation for teaching was largely

due to an opportunity to participate in a teacher-preparatory program, which financed my college education. I'm glad I went into teaching. I try to inspire others on a daily basis, especially African Americans.

#### Participant Six

At first my interest was in physics, but during my first year of college, my sister was diagnosed with a brain tumor. When I came home, I had lots of time to think. I would look at the kids in the neighborhood, and I saw such a great need for African American teachers as role models and decided to switch my major.

#### Participant Nine

Engineering was my first choice. Then, I decided I didn't want to crunch numbers all day. Plus, with nine out of ten marriages ending in divorce, someone has got to be there for the kids. When I first approached my dad about teaching, he warned me by saying I wasn't going to make much money.

#### Participant Eight

I'm going back to the sixties, late sixties, {when} for minorities, teaching was the key position. If you were a teacher, everyone looked

up to you. You were held in high esteem, and my mother always said, 'Look at the lives you can touch and the difference you can make.' I can't say that my motivation for teaching was wholly self-derived because there were community folk, like this lady in my neighborhood who always helped others who were less fortunate. She was instrumental in helping my mother do a lot of things. So, it wasn't that much self-derived as it was the influence of other people.

#### Participant Three

Oh, I've always wanted to become a teacher even since elementary school. I remember all those great ladies who touched my life. I recall so much about them and their influence on me.

#### School Environment and Preparation for Teaching Profile of Group and School Experiences

When discussing school experiences, nine participants completed elementary and high school in an integrated setting. Of the nine, eight attended and completed mid-to large-sized predominantly White universities. Two individuals attended and completed college at a historically African American university. Four participants completed certification or received post-graduate degrees at

predominantly White institutions. Participants spoke at length about elementary experiences, high school experiences, and campus life in the college setting. Most noteworthy were their recollections of how those experiences influenced their academic self-concept of ability, sense of self-efficacy, as well as their motivation to obtain teaching credentials. Conversations generated the following dominant themes: (a) influence of classroom teachers and other support school personnel, (b) addressing obstacles and meeting academic challenges in the classroom setting, (c) social adjustment in the college setting, and (d) personal determination to succeed.

#### Teacher Influence and Personal Motivation

Again, positive teacher role models were a significant factor in inspiring the participants to enter the teaching profession (Loehr, 1988 & Bradshaw, 1995). This was true according to eight individuals. In five cases, the influence of role models was recalled as early as elementary school and later in high school and college. Although three participants made a special reference to African American teachers who greatly influenced them, four referred to White teachers who rendered special assistance and represented to them an "ideal teacher." Typically recalled were teachers who displayed knowledge in their area of expertise,

possessed the ability to inspire students to do their best, and were well organized. Likewise, high expectations as conveyed by teachers through verbal encouragement, rigorous course work and special academic assistance appeared to be strong factors in shaping personal belief in academic capability. That sentiment was voiced by eight participants who selected strongly agree and agree for their responses. When addressing the influence of teacher expectations and their achievement, eight individuals selected strongly agree and agree for elementary teachers, high school teachers, and college instructors who exhibited high expectations for them (Cotton & Wikelund, 1997). Typical experiences were:

Participant One

I had some really great models, and I've always had a mixture of both African American and White teachers. In class just the other day, I was thinking about something I said to the kids. I thought, 'Oh, that's how I know this math stuff because my teachers really taught me.'

Participant Two

There were three people whom I really admired and hoped to be like. First, my high school social studies teacher and my high school guidance counselor. Both had a lot of belief in me.

My guidance counselor was the first Black counselor in the school. She inspired me and would push me. My history teacher, who by the way was White, really was tough on me. I was going to class, but really not doing the work. He challenged me to do better.

Participant Six

I had several role models. Even back in second grade, I remember Ms....., a very stern lady and a good disciplinarian. Also, there was Ms....., Ms....., and, Ms..... I remember all those great ladies who seemed to enjoy their jobs and the children. In high school, there was Mr.... who had high expectations for everyone who walked through that door. He was demanding but fair and made you believe in yourself.

Participant Six

I had a few in high school who boosted my self confidence. Mr....., I still talk about him today to my friends. He was a big factor in inspiring me to go into teaching. I liked the way he related to students. Although he was a teacher model, he acted more like a friend. I felt comfortable in talking with him. He made the class

challenging and made me feel I could do the work. In college I had so many, but I especially remember one professor who was the best one could have to prepare you for teaching. He made time to talk with you.

#### Influence of Guidance Counselors in Career Selection

As indicated earlier, more than half (seven) of the participants were initially interested in other careers. Of the seven, none could recall specific instances when counselors suggested teaching. Recollections of the participants' views and experiences with high school counselors included the following memories: (a) counselors who were unavailable for assistance, (b) counselors who were rarely visible, and (c) in one instance, a counselor's failure to provide the assistance needed as requested by the student.

Despite these experiences and views of the participants, common traits reflect a great deal of self determination and belief in their own ability to seek the resources needed to enter college. When asked to address whether assistance or encouragement from high school counselors was beneficial in inspiring them to become a teacher, seven chose a rating of strongly disagree. Examples of comments were:

Participant One

I didn't have any help from my counselor to select either teaching or accounting. I really don't think I had strong guidance counselors.

Participant Four

I don't even think I went to my guidance counselor's office. Plus, she was rarely seen. I'm still trying to remember her name.

Participant Six

I had little contact with my guidance counselor. Most of my decisions, I made myself. I basically knew what I wanted to do. I arranged everything myself and would check with her every now and then.

Participant Eight

My guidance counselor offered no help or encouragement. She tried to push me to a blue-collar job. She once told me if I could get into typing or the textile industry, that would be a good job for people of color.

Participant Ten

I didn't get much help from my guidance counselor. She was always too busy.

Conversely, three individuals spoke highly of their counselors and their assistance in helping them gain entry

into college. Included in the group of three were two individuals who were selected to participate in a program designed to attract minorities to the teaching profession. Examples of their comments about counselors included:

Participant Three

My guidance counselor was really great. I got help in completing forms and, plus, follow-up assistance needed to complete the process.

Participant Seven

I had a counselor who really wanted me to become a teacher. She wanted me to start off in teaching and then get my master's in guidance. I still keep in contact with her today. She tried to dispel the myth that there was no money in teaching.

Participant Five

I had one counselor who was very good. Although she wasn't my assigned counselor, I sought her support and she was most helpful in assisting me with completing the necessary paperwork for college.

Academic Experiences in the College Setting

Following the discussion on role models, teacher expectations, and influence of guidance counselors, the participants talked more about their experiences on college

campuses. The researcher was interested to see how a variety of experiences might affect one's sense of self-efficacy in acquiring the knowledge needed to become a teacher. Also of great interest to the researcher were experiences encountered while engaged in college teacher-preparatory programs. In particular, participants discussed academic feedback from college professors and overall interactions with them.

In an earlier discussion on role models and teacher expectations, two of the participants chose favorable ratings (i.e., agree and strongly agree) for having had a teacher convey high expectations for their achievement. According to those participants, positive experiences were recalled in high school and elementary school. However, college experiences with one or two instructors appeared to be less favorable, but most vivid in their memory. Interestingly, both individuals were the oldest of the 10 participants (e.g., 46 and 49 years of age) and for the most part, had some experiences in predominantly African American high schools. College experiences for both occurred in predominantly White institutions. Nonetheless, both individuals indicated that negative experiences only strengthened their commitment to succeed. Those individuals commented:

Participant Eight

I had two instances, but one I remember well. I had spent a lot of time writing this paper, and one professor wrote on my paper, 'This is a 'Mickey Mouse' answer.' I asked him did that mean I had passed or failed, and he stated. 'I'm going to pass you with at least a D just because you are here,' I remember at graduation I strolled across that stage to take that extra picture. See, I was the ninth Black graduate in the college's history so when I shook his hand, I made sure I shook it the hardest. I was trying to tell him, 'See, I made it anyhow, even if you did put those stumbling blocks in my way.'

Participant Ten

I remember this one instructor who really gave me a hard time. On one instance, I had written a paper, and I guess he didn't believe I had written it because he asked me if I did. He really tried to tear my paper down. So I took it to another instructor, and she made only a few suggestions for improvement. She told me if I took that same paper back to him and he still rated it low, then he would have to see her. She

said, 'I know what the problem is, and you know, too.'

For the most part, the majority of the participants cited agree and strongly agree for having had positive experiences on college campuses while engaged in teacher-education programs. Those experiences were noted both for individuals who attended historically African American colleges as well as mid-sized and large White institutions. According to eight participants, positive experiences revolved around: (a) viewing criticism from college professors as a growth opportunity, (b) personal willingness to work harder in order to improve, (c) feelings of confidence in academic capability, (d) academic adjustment to college life, and (e) perceptions that college personnel displayed a vested interest in helping participants succeed. Typical responses were:

Participant Three

As you know, I attended a historically African American college. When my instructors gave me negative feedback about my work, I didn't take it as being negative, but I took it as them wanting us to go beyond. They had high expectations for you.

Participant Four

In college I had an English teacher who was

something else. Judging from her comments, she obviously showed me I could be a better writer. Then there was another professor in graduate school who really gave me a fit. But, he treated everyone that same way. I was always a sincere worker and took the challenge to be the best I could be.

#### Participant Nine

In preparing for a teaching career and when given feedback about my performance, I never took it the wrong way, nor did I ever doubt myself. I just took the information and worked to improve. I always knew I could do it. Plus, whenever I went to my college instructors for help, they would encourage me and provide the help I needed.

#### Participant Seven

I was in a special program designed to attract African Americans to teaching. It was a little rough going for me at first {getting adjusted academically} because I was used to a smaller environment where I was in honors classes. I attended a large predominantly White university. When you're in a large setting where there might be 300 people in a class, it's hard to take

anything personally. You're just another number. When I had negative feedback, I didn't take it personally. I always knew I was capable of doing the work. In that program, we had all the help and support we needed. They {college professors} wanted us to be successful. Programs like that are really a strong support mechanism for minorities interested in teaching.

#### Social Experiences in the College Setting

Positive academic experiences as well as appropriate social experiences on college campuses may have a positive influence on retention in teacher-education programs. It also is probable that the relationship between these two experiences (i.e., academic and social) is further influenced by an individual's belief in his or her ability to meet academic requirements and personal self-efficacy to address challenges.

Findings about the social aspect show that the participants were able to recall a variety of experiences that tended to relate to (a) membership in social and civic organizations, (b) academic activities (e.g., study sessions), (c) informal gatherings for leisure activities, (d) invitations to join organizations, and (e) feelings of isolation and rejection.

It also is noteworthy that six participants lived on campus or in housing adjacent to the campus. The remaining six individuals described their residence as off campus for at least a year or two. As mentioned earlier, two participants completed teacher-education programs in historically African American universities, and the remaining eight in predominantly White universities.

The majority (eight) individuals chose agree or strongly agree when asked to comment on the college environment being conducive to their overall social adjustment. Responses related to social experiences were:

Participant One

I became really close with a lot of different people from around the world, so I felt like I was able to fit in really well. I never was a person to dwell on the Black versus White issue.

Participant Two

I did a lot of my socializing through sports. I had White friends, and we would drive around and chat together. You see, I was in a situation where I had to adapt. So that really didn't bother me that much. I was even asked to join a White fraternity.

Participant Three

I guess you have to learn how to deal with a lot of different people. My interest in the social part revolved around my sorority. Plus, I joined the English Honors Society, where I was president. Then too, I was a member of the NAACP {National Association for Advancement of Colored People} as well as a band member.

Participant Four

My school was very large, but it seemed like all of the Black students were housed in the same area. However, it worked to our advantage because we got the chance to socialize together. Also, I was involved in the Black Gospel Choir, Black Student Organization, worked on a newspaper publication, and was even a residential advisor.

Participant Five

As part of the special teacher-preparatory program that I was involved in, we had a summer transition experience. That really did a lot because it gives you a chance to feel a part of the university and get a feel for

the college environment. I made friends through that experience.

Participant Six

At my college we had lots of study sessions where we helped each other. We took responsibility for each other and would say, 'No partying until study sessions are over.' So it was like we socialized through studying.

Participant Nine

I guess my college environment was conducive to my social adjustment. I had no problems and didn't see racism as an issue for me. I didn't stay on campus. Maybe if I had stayed on campus, I could have addressed {question} it more in-depth. I would just go to class and do my work. I didn't participate in dances and clubs.

Participant Ten

There were few minorities at my college and no Black sororities and fraternities. I was asked to join a White sorority, but I didn't. I don't think it was prejudice on my part, I just didn't desire to do so. I did join the university chorale because I liked

to sing.

Conversely, two participants recalled less than desirable experiences related to socialization. Those individuals chose ratings of strongly disagree and disagree when asked to address their perceptions of experiences.

Comments were:

Participant Seven

I strongly disagree. I was one of the three African Americans on my hall. It was difficult to meet people and easy to get lost. The thing that helped me was the program I was in {special teacher-preparatory program}. There were five people I came in with so I had already established a relationship with them. There was a problem not knowing African American students at all. As for organizations, I didn't pledge a sorority until later. I had to join the NAACP to meet people so I wouldn't feel alienated.

Participant Eight

There was no socialization for people of color at my college. When I did social things, I went to a nearby Black college. That's where I became a member in my present sorority.

### Community Influences and Interest in Teaching

The final portion on environmental factors and interest in teaching centered on community influences and the role they play in enhancement of self, career choice, and academic success. Questions posed to the participants focused their attention on influences such as: (a) church affiliation and academic success in school, (b) involvement of business/industry in teacher-preparatory programs, and (c) community role models and interest in teaching. As a result of those factors, participants related the following experiences:

#### Influence of Church on Self-Development

Initially, individuals were asked to respond to matters related to church attendance, involvement in church-related activities, and the effect of those factors on academic success. That type of question was posed by the researcher to ascertain perceptions about whether affiliation with church served to enhance self-confidence needed to deal with worldly issues (i.e., handling challenges encountered in school) as contended by Farrell (1994) and Hidalgo et al. (1995). According to seven participants, church attendance and participation in church-related activities had a positive influence on their academic success. Regarding that question, six individuals selected ratings of

strongly agree and one indicated agree.

Influential experiences seemed to relate to: (a) conformity to family tradition as well as community expectations for church attendance; (b) perception of church affiliation as a means to develop spirituality, reinforce morals, and acquire an increased sense of self; (c) view of church activities as being an extension of skills stressed in the classroom (e.g., oral recitations, plays, singing, and reading, and (d) personal conferences with clergy personnel, which served to reinforce self-efficacy to remain in school. Examples of comments were:

Participant Four

My religion and church positively influenced my life. So, it had a dual effect in influencing my academic success. I can't give you anything specific, but it {church} embellished my spirituality and enhanced my sense of self and direction. I also took leadership parts in church programs because I was a good reader. All sorts of activities provided by my church just enhanced my total growth and affected who I am today.

Participant Two

Church was a place where I got to participate in

things like scouting, singing in the choir, and being a youth usher. When you get involved in church things, you tend to have a strong image of yourself and learn right from wrong.

#### Participant Five

Particularly when I was younger, I was very involved in ushering and Bible reading, and other youth activities. Involvement made me realize that this too was a learning process just like in school. I think, too, things like that relate to why I wanted to do well in school.

On the other hand, the remaining three participants indicated ratings such as disagree and uncertain. Reasons for the ratings were not related to practices of agnosticism, but rather to personal choices made by family regarding churchgoing and differences in religious customs.

#### Other Community Support for Interest in Teaching

Perceptions related to other community involvement and support (i.e., special funding from business/industry and other community agencies for teacher-education programs) reflected an array of experiences. Two participants chose the rating strongly agree and cited direct involvement from the business and industrial sector through program sponsorship for individuals interested in teaching. As a

result, those participants graduated from a teacher-preparatory program debt-free, but with a requirement to return to their school system as teachers.

Their comments were:

Participant Five

More programs like that {teacher-preparatory programs} are desperately needed to increase the minority teaching pool.

Participant Seven

I strongly agree because of the experiences I had in my teacher-preparatory program. We were provided computers, special help when, or if, needed, and just about any other support you can imagine. It was also good to know that a local bank supported this venture and wanted to turn out {support} good teachers for the area.

Four participants selected ratings of disagree. Of the four, three were unable to recall or were unaware of initiatives by business and industry for teacher support. One individual recalled participating in two teacher-internship programs, which were initiated by school personnel. The first intern experience occurred in a nearby school system, and the second in the individual's present school system. The intent of both intern experiences was

twofold. First, the experiences were a means to acquaint prospective minority teachers to the area. Invitations were extended to select individuals during their junior and senior year of college to work as summer school assistants. Second, successful completion of program requirements resulted in an offer of full-time employment following graduation from teacher-education programs.

One individual chose the rating strongly disagree. The reason for her rating related to her perception of economic needs of the area as taking precedence over higher learning for students and the attainment of a degree. Her response was:

Participant Eight

I strongly disagree on that issue {support and involvement from community and the business and industry sector}. I grew up in an area which was the ... {area known by industry}. People were more interested in just getting kids out of high school. Or even if they {students} dropped out, just to get them into the ... {name of plant or factory}. That's all they were interested in. For females, the main objective was to have them work in a local store.

The final three participants cited ratings of uncertain

Of that group, one individual recalled participation in a community-sponsored activity (e.g, oratorical contest) as a positive experience for her. Another referred to her involvement in a community venture, which was sponsored by a nonprofit organization and recalled her participation in various functions. Although not teacher-interest related, both recalled experiences that were beneficial in enhancing self-confidence and overall personal academic growth by simply affiliating with community activities. A typical response was:

Participant Four

I'm selecting uncertain because of things I was involved in. I can't really say they helped me to become a teacher, but it helped me in my ability to stand before people. For example, I was a contestant in an activity similar to a beauty pageant. However, this contest did not stress physical beauty, but concentrated on oral presentation skills.

The third and final individual simply stated that he really didn't have any interactions with community agencies such as business and industry or partnership ventures. That individual failed to converse with detailed descriptions about his rating, but did cite influential role models as a

source of inspiration as indicated by Loehr (1988).

Overview of Institutional Factors and Experiences in the  
Workplace

It seems reasonable to conclude that teachers who are well prepared academically possess a sense of confidence in their subject area knowledge. However, for some individuals, additional factors associated with successful execution of the task (teaching) could adversely affect the self-efficacy needed to meet the demands of teaching. Those factors are: (a) increased demands for accountability, (b) discipline problems, (c) collegiality and interactions with colleagues, (d) feelings of loneliness and isolation, and (e) perceived lack of recognition and support from school administrators. Such factors could result in teacher withdrawal from the profession (Shaw, 1996; Peterson, 1997; Winter & Sweeny, 1994).

It is equally important to remember that this examination of institutional factors represents a small sampling of 10 individuals and their perceptions on those issues. A broader sampling could yield different results. Also for consideration is the issue of experiences in the workplace (school). Novice teachers (beginners with a minimum of one to five years of service) versus more experienced teachers (with 6 to 20-plus plus years of

service) and variations of teaching assignments (classroom teachers of regular education, special education, and accelerated students as well as resource/support teachers) might result in different perceptions about the broad area of job satisfaction and teaching in general.

Therefore, motivational variables such as academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy in teaching could be affected by additional factors including class size and the responsibility it brings in meeting the needs of a large number of students. In describing their teaching assignment and class size, participants in this study cited daily responsibilities for instructing a minimum of 20 students to slightly over 100 students daily.

#### College Course Work and Readiness for Teaching

Colleges and universities are charged with the responsibility of providing the best teacher-preparatory experiences possible for those who wish to enter the profession. A sound academic background is needed for teachers to feel competent in their ability to provide quality instruction so students are able to perform at an acceptable academic level. Also, as cited by Haberman (1987), proper preparation for teaching, and especially in urban settings may play a significant factor in helping individuals address challenges encountered in job

performance.

In light of this assertion, it is highly probable that personal perceptions about college course work and preparation for teaching may be further affected by time and changes in what the job entails. For example, more experienced teachers may be unable to recall specific and timely examples because of the number of years past. It also is possible that earlier course work may not have included necessary preparation for the present job demands. Interestingly, one participant spoke specifically to this issue in her comment on college preparation for teaching.

Participant Eight

I guess my college prepared me pretty well for what was going on at the time. Remember, I'm talking about 1968-1971. For what it was then and the needs of the population at the time with materials and stuff, I'd say it was very good. Plus my endorsement and extra classes helped to prepare me for work for these past 12 years.

In general, all 10 participants spoke highly of their college experience and preparation for teaching. However, four female novice teachers linked their compliments with areas they perceived to be needs in helping them feel more comfortable in meeting job demands. Opinions and suggestions

centered on the need for more experiences in meeting the realities associated with teaching (e.g., discipline problems, daily class routines, and lesson planning). These areas also were cited by Haberman, (1987). Comments by those four participants were:

Participant Five

I didn't have as much time in the classroom that I'd liked to have had. I really felt the need for that. Also, I needed more preparation on how to address discipline issues.

Participant Three

I feel I was pretty much prepared in theory. However, in stepping into the real situation, you need a lot more preparation. Colleges should allow students to be in the classroom a little longer. In that way, you could have the opportunity to learn more about the behavior styles of kids.

Participant One

I had good academic course preparation. But, my suggestion would be to lengthen the observation period and allow for more participation in the classroom setting. Student teachers need to see what goes on daily and

learn more about classroom routines.

Participant Seven

One thing I felt like I needed was more help in lesson-plan writing. We didn't spend much time on planning. I'd recommend that prospective teachers spend more time on how to write the different elements of an effective lesson.

The four more experienced female teachers also spoke highly of their college preparatory experiences. However, two individuals' perceptions differed because they were not involved the entire time in a college teacher-education program. Both entered the profession after experiences in occupations other than teaching. They took courses for certification while employed as teachers.

Comments included:

Participant Ten

My preparatory experiences were a little different. My Bachelor of Science degree was in social work, and I went back to school to get my certification as a ... teacher. I've always done ... {special assignment}, so my actual classroom experience was more like when I would teach summer school or when I did student teaching. I took 3 or 4 ... courses and would go to

the professor to set up a contract with him. Then the only thing I had to do was turn the work in.

Participant Six

I think it's important for college teacher-preparatory experiences not only to include a strong academic preparation, but also an atmosphere of freedom, whereby students feel at ease to communicate with professors on questions related to their major and things they will encounter in teaching. At my college, those things {open communication} did occur so I was pretty well prepared. For me, self-efficacy means you've been taught well and are able to handle an assortment of challenges.

Both male teachers (i.e., one novice and one experienced) also cited favorable experiences in their college academic preparation for teaching. In addition, they displayed equal amounts of optimism in being able to handle classroom challenges. According to the novice teacher, techniques that engaged the learner in the learning process proved helpful in minimizing the potential for discipline problems. He commented:

Participant Nine

I had some really good teachers in college. One of my professors was more like a constructivist.

He led students to discover their knowledge. That's a great way to help students learn and retain knowledge. Learning by doing is what it's all about. I use that technique a lot with my students.

#### Experiences As Classroom Teachers

Although some participants alluded earlier to phases of experiences in the classroom, the researcher had them focus in greater detail on their actual teaching experience. This portion of the interview was intended to learn more about how individual self-efficacy may be affected by situations that could be both rewarding and challenging as contested by Bandura, (1986). In addition, the researcher was eager to learn more about the participants' self-concept of their ability to bring about desired changes associated with students' academic, social, and emotional growth.

As a result of the question asked and probes used, participants presented their viewpoints on a variety of experiences. The following broad categories served to guide their attention to matters related to:

- . Successes, rewards, and challenges in teaching
- . Perceptions of personal ability to improve learner outcomes
- . Role of home, school, community and student

adjustment in the academic setting

- . Student discipline
- . Observed changes in the role of teaching.

### Successes, Rewards, and Challenges in Teaching

The consensus of the group appeared to support the premise that feelings of success in teaching center on students' achievement and the role teachers play in bringing about the desired change. According to the participants, successes and rewards were equally balanced by challenges encountered in the process. A major challenge particularly for novice teachers is maintaining proper student discipline. That finding was not surprising to the researcher because concerns about discipline surfaced in the conversation. Typical responses were:

#### Participant Five

I feel really good when my former students come back to show me how well they are doing in middle school {e.g., with their report cards}. That lets me know I must have done a good job with them. Challenges are learning to work with so many different personalities {e.g. colleagues} and of course, discipline.

#### Participant Three

Rewards? Mine come from getting my first-graders

to read and seeing the progress they'd made by the end of the year.

Participant One

I really love teaching math. That's one of my favorite things to do. When I get to see that learning is really taking place with my kids, it motivates me to keep raising the standards for them.

One of my major challenges was trying to learn how to relate to one of my students who had been sexually molested. That was really hard knowing what to say to her and how to say it.

Participant Nine

As a sixth-grade teacher, success was not having to reprimand these kids {students in his class}. I noticed that when it came to discipline, the kids didn't feel vengeful. They understood I wasn't picking on them. We had a good working environment.

In talking about challenges, I worried some about {parents of} other races and how they would respond to a Black male teacher. Because at times, you might feel like they might look down on you and maybe might be thinking, 'What can he teach my kid?'

Oh, by the way, that's something they {college personnel} didn't prepare you for {laughs}. When that does happen, it hurts your feelings because you really want to help the kids. Of course, that's the real world, and you just have to deal with it.

#### Participant Seven

My rewards come from the love of my subject area. However, my first year of teaching was a little rough. I inherited a classroom full of kids who had been passed on from ... to ..., and they really shouldn't have been. So I had to deal with the challenge of having to take them back to... {previous grade level work} and do lots of remediation. That really upset some parents, but I had to deal with it because I wanted students to be strong academically.

Another challenge was the lack of support like you'd get from a mentor. You're pretty much told, 'Well, good luck!' A lot of times, I found that people in ... {hometown} are not willing to help. It would have been nice if I were permitted to observe other teachers, but that wasn't granted.

#### Participant Eight

I deem success to be ways in which I've been able

to perceive needs of children and bring about desired change. Also, I take little opportunities that could result in being a discipline problem and look for ways to turn them into a learning experience.

#### Participant Ten

I feel successful when I get letters and notes of appreciation from students. I keep them all. It helps me experience a sense of gratitude when when kids tell you how much you mean to them.

I really don't have big discipline problems like you might hear teachers talking about.

A lot of teachers try to be the kids' friend.

That's well and good, but first you have to be the authority figure. I'm tough on them, but with a loving and caring attitude.

#### Efficacy for Effecting Positive Change in Students

For the most part, feelings of confidence in academic self-concept of ability appeared to help participants cope with challenges and frustrations associated with being a classroom teacher. It also is noteworthy that adverse circumstances such as challenges and frustrations did not appear to negatively affect the participants' teaching performance. Thus, teachers believed in their ability and

worked to improve students' performance (Guskey, 1989). This was evident by one of the probes, which called for the individuals to rate their perception of efficacy to effect positive changes in students. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, all in the group chose ratings ranging from 7 to 10.

#### Respect for Academic Capability

Evaluation ratings from immediate supervisors (principals) support the contention that regardless of the years in teaching, all 10 individuals were perceived effective to superior. That means novice teachers as well as experienced teachers were regarded by their principals as being very good teachers.

In the area of leadership and opportunities for leadership, none indicated that they volunteered or were endorsed by colleagues for leadership roles. Four participants stated that they were selected by their building principal for leadership roles, while five individuals reported they did not seek or desire such positions. Roles of leadership for the four participants included: (a) team leader for colleagues, (b) presenter for division-wide reading workshop, (c) supervisor for student teacher, and (d) high school hall principal.

### Concerns and Perceptions About School System

An equal balance of concerns and accolades are healthy for any organization interested in growth and change. That appears especially true for school systems that want to recruit and retain a quality teaching force. Concerns generate opportunities for change and betterment, while accolades imply notions for maintenance and refinement. With this thought in mind, the researcher asked participants to address their concerns as well as their perceptions about the school system in which they teach. Concerns centered on broad areas such as:

- . Overload of paperwork
- . Frequent meetings
- . Limited number of African American teachers
- . Education as being too political
- . High number of African Americans in special education.

Interestingly, of the four individuals who shared concerns, two were novice teachers and two were more experienced teachers. Concerns coming from the more experienced teachers related more to students and their well-being (e.g., curriculum/instructional issues and student placement). Conversely, concerns expressed by novice teachers related more to adjusting to the school system and

the working environment. Examples of typical comments were:

Participant Six

There are a drastic number of Black kids in special education, and no one wants to address this issue. Some feel like if they speak out, they will be dealt with in a harsh manner. They {other colleagues} are looking at saving their jobs instead of speaking out and being an advocate. I've brought this issue up myself.

Participant Five

One thing that continues to concern me is the small number of African American teachers. I noticed that when I first started teaching five years ago, and it's still basically the same today. I was fortunate to be in a program to interest African Americans in teaching, but I understand that the program is no more. That's a shame because it was a very good program.

Participant Four

My concern is that things are too political. It's entirely too much paperwork trying to document those state standards. People keep wanting you to do more and more without taking away some of the responsibilities you already

have. If you keep saying, 'Do more,' the quality of the work will go down. As much as I love teaching today, I'm not sure I would advise anyone to go into it. If it comes to spending more times with the kids, or documentation, I'll let the paperwork go.

#### Participant Seven

My concern is that in ... {hometown}, everything is so political. It's about who you know and not what you know. I don't know if I felt fortunate in that I was able to come back home and teach or not. There were people who didn't want to hear my opinion on certain issues because the perception was I was inexperienced and young. I got that treatment from some parents and administrators.

The remaining participants offered different opinions about their perceptions of the area in which they teach. Their observations on issues such as friendliness of people encountered, innovative programs, and an appealing working environment seemed foremost in their minds. Examples of comments were:

#### Participant One

In my interview, I was really impressed hearing

about the school system, and I remain impressed with all the technology. Everyone seems to have a good grip {firm understanding} with what's going on.

#### Participant Nine

A recruiter from my present school system sold the area to me {made a good impression}. We {wife and myself} visited the area and even had dinner at her house. Everyone seemed so nice and friendly.

Plus, I wasn't expecting the area to be so well prepared. There are lots of innovative things here. The superintendent is a really nice guy. That makes the schools and working environment so enjoyable.

#### Participant Eight

I found everyone to be so friendly and helpful to me. Another thing, I was amazed that people actually remembered your name. If I needed any help, someone was right there to help.

#### Participant Three

I was impressed with the school system and especially my building administrator. She's really great.

Observed Changes in the Teaching Profession

Experienced teachers' observations of changes in the profession could be affected by longevity in the career and, therefore, differ somewhat from those of novice teachers. Experienced teachers' views are likely historical in nature and reflective of changes observed over several years. In contrast, novice teachers lack a substantial number of years in teaching and, therefore, are likely to base their perception of observed changes over a smaller period of time. Realizing the variations between the two groups, the researcher asked both experienced and novice teachers to comment on changes observed, according to their years in teaching. Two novice teachers chose not to comment in this area because of the short amount of time in teaching (e.g., two years).

Responses from the remaining novice teachers related more to increased accountability in teaching. Experienced teachers also addressed the issue of accountability but included other areas such as: (a) increased paperwork, (b) changes in family support for educational matters, and (c) an observed increase in students coming from home environments of substance abusers. Typical examples of comments from novice teachers were:

Participant Five

I've observed over a period of time more accountability because of testing. Even though teachers have always been held accountable, it's more so now since six years ago. Then too, I guess you hear more about it also from the perspective of the media.

Participant Three

From when I first started, certainly we have more standards. Of course I guess you can say we've always had standards, but the accountability piece was not there then as it exists now. We have to use check sheets, and that takes up so much time. We don't have time to do other things with the kids. It seems like you just teach the standards, and that's it.

Examples of comments made by experienced teachers are:

Participant Ten

I'm seeing more dysfunctional families. I didn't see that so much when I first started teaching. But then again, I guess they were probably there then, too. It just seems like more now. Also, there appears to be less

parent involvement. Parents seem to be younger and younger. There appears to be more and more drug use, and parents are not taking time with the children.

#### Participant Four

Perhaps one of the major changes I've seen over the years is an increased number of unwed mothers who are busy doing other stuff and don't take the time to spend with their children. I'm seeing parents who need parenting skills.

#### Participant Two

I've noticed a number of kids who just don't seem to want to try to be a good student. Without the help of parents, that makes a teacher's job really tough in trying to motivate them.

#### Perceptions About Role of Home, School, and Community

Following the discussion on the participants' observations of changes in the teaching profession, further probes were used to capture views on the role that home, school, and community play in student success in school. Personal views on those factors are particularly significant because they may relate to a teacher's motivation to nurture students' early interest in teaching. In addition, personal views could reflect the amount of self-efficacy an

individual is willing to exert in job performance.

During earlier conversations, individuals involved in this study spoke at length about their own experiences dealing with home, school, and community influences. Therefore, the researcher was curious to see if there might be a relationship between their own personal experiences and their present views on the roles that those influences play in the lives of their students. With this idea in mind, three key questions surfaced:

- . How will views expressed relate to the the participants' own background experiences and personal willingness to bring about changes in students they instruct?
- . What role does personal self-efficacy play in addressing areas related to home, school, and community?
- . Do views contain implications for policy and procedural development?

Six individuals prefaced their remarks by stating that home, school, and community should not be viewed as separate entities. They said those three factors are interrelated, with each playing mutual roles needed for student success. Although the remaining four participants failed to mention a relationship between home, school, and community, their

conversations flowed smoothly from one topic to the other. Two individuals did not comment on the role of the community because they had no specific examples to offer.

Of the entire group, both experienced and novice teachers shared common thoughts related to the influence of home. The tone of participants' conversation about home influence was not derogatory or blameful in nature, but intermingled with areas in need of improvement. In general, perceptions about the role of home in their students' academic growth centered on a need for more: (a) parent involvement in attending school functions and checking homework, (b) parental insistence and support for proper student behavior in school, (c) strong parent role models, and (d) parents spending more time talking with and listening to their children. These general areas of support were also cited by Dauber and Eptstein (1993) and Gordon, (1993).

As for school influence, all 10 teachers referred to their self-efficacy in working harder to improve the academic performance of their students. Two secondary teachers referred to large class sizes as having a negative effect on meeting specific needs of students. One individual specifically mentioned the need for teachers to continue exploring students' interests, involving them more in lesson

delivery, and teaching to learning modalities (auditory, visual, kinesthetic/tactile).

In the discussion of specific roles the community could play, the seven participants who responded to this question spoke of the need for increased support from community organizations and the community at large in the education of young people. Specifically mentioned were sororities and fraternities, senior citizens, and parents volunteering their service for school functions. The general area of support was mentoring as stressed by Decker and Decker, (1988). Typical examples in the discussion of the role of home, school, and community were:

(Home Influence)

Participant Five

The home plays a big part. I have kids whose parents don't even insist they do their homework. There's a need for parents to supervise their children's work.

Participant Four

Home is big. There are always exceptions, but in actual cases if there are two people {parents} in the home, and at least one comes for conferences or calls, that helps.

Participant Ten

I know some parents are working, but they need to seek ways to spend quality time with their children. Also, I'm seeing more drug use in parents and older siblings.

Participant Three

The role of home is to connect with school initiatives and to support things schools are trying to do to help their children. It's all interconnected {home, school, community}.

Participant Seven

Parents need to take a more active role and insist that their child behaves properly. They also could lend more support to the teacher in disciplinary matters.

(School Influence)

Participant Five

Schools could do things to try and bring in more parents. We've started home visits. Maybe that might help some.

Participant Four

Schools need to make extra efforts to capture the child's interest. Teach to address different learning modalities {visual, auditory,

kinesthetic/tactile}. Don't just lecture.

Participant Ten

I think the role of the school is to have teachers do a self-evaluation of their perceptions of students and expectations for them. We need to stress TESA {Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement}.

Participant Seven

The role of the school is to try to provide more intense help for students. Class sizes really play a major part in that. Reducing class size in middle school would really help you better meet students' needs.

(Community Influence)

Participant Four

We {high school teachers} can get more involved in the community. Now, at the same time, the community's responsibility is to be present in mass numbers. Instead of having conferences at school, hold them in strategic places in the community. For example, hold events in a community center or some other place in the community. Look for different ways to connect more with parents. Also, community organizations such

as sororities, fraternities, social, and civic organizations could provide mentors for our students.

#### Participant Three

The community has to play its part by having the resources for kids. Community centers could correlate their resources more with school-based learning initiatives.

#### Participant Seven

If we had places in the neighborhoods like tutoring centers where parents could take their children, that would help.

#### School Climate, Job Satisfaction, and Teacher Retention

It may appear reasonable to conclude that a positive relationship exists between a wholesome school climate and teacher retention. A wholesome school climate is likely characterized as one that values and recognizes good teaching and commitment to improved student performance. In a wholesome environment, teachers typically experience a sense of collegiality, feel a part of the decision-making process, and are respected for their own teaching style. Findings by Winter and Sweeney (1994) support the premise that the principal is a key player in establishing and maintaining a wholesome school.

However, despite positive experiences in the workplace,

additional factors could lead to teacher withdrawal. They include: (a) personal motivation to explore opportunities in educational administration, and (b) feelings of confidence in one's ability to succeed in careers outside teaching. Those factors relate to one's academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy and can have a positive or negative influence on teacher retention.

Final conversations with each participant centered on the broad area of school climate. Specific areas thought to influence teacher retention are: (a) level of autonomy for preferred teaching style, (b) general matters pertaining to overall job satisfaction, (c) interactions with colleagues, (d) satisfaction as a classroom teacher, (e) future plans, and (f) suggestions for the local school system and colleges.

#### Level of Autonomy for Preferred Teaching Style

As perceived by the participants, level of autonomy for preferred teaching style simply means freedom to teach a preferred curriculum using one's chosen methodology (e.g., grouping, selection of materials, lesson format, awareness of learners' modalities, etc.) Seven individuals gave an immediate response that their principals supported their teaching styles. Two participants also responded in the affirmative but indicated that state testing requirements

such as SOLs (Standards of Learning) sometimes affected their freedom to be creative.

#### Interactions With Colleagues

As supported by Hoy and Woolfolk (1993), both professional and social interactions with colleagues are important because they serve to build collegiality, promote comradeship, and help individuals acquire a greater knowledge base for effective teaching. In particular, professional interactions also could be social in nature and lead to an exchange of ideas related to the use of appropriate materials and different instructional techniques to improve student performance. Consequently, a broader knowledge about suitable materials and different instructional techniques likely enhances academic self-concept of ability to improve student performance.

Understanding this possibility, participants were asked to talk about their interactions with colleagues both socially and professionally. Initially, participants addressed professional affiliations in the workplace (school). Eight cited positive interactions with colleagues in the school setting. Positive experiences tended to revolve around feelings of being respected by others for knowledge and possessing an optimistic view of personal leadership qualities. Comments made by two individuals best

summarized key points stressed by the group of eight.

They were:

#### Professional Affiliations

##### Participant Three

Presently, I am viewed by colleagues as a leader and, I guess, a spokesperson for teachers. At my school, I am the Team Leader and frequently asked to present key areas of concern to my principal.

##### Participant Four

I've always had a good relationship with my colleagues. But I'll tell you this much, perhaps one of the hardest things to do is to become principal at a school where you once taught. That happened to me earlier. I had to achieve that balance of letting my colleagues view me as their leader instead of a co-worker. Fortunately, I'd always carried myself well and was always professional in my actions and dealings with people.

According to one individual, her physical location (e.g., in a trailer/modular unit) hampered her opportunity to socialize with co-workers. She commented:

##### Participant Five

Sometimes I feel so isolated. I would welcome

the opportunity to chat and exchange ideas with others. The only person I sometimes see on a daily basis is my male co-worker, who teaches next door.

The remaining individual in the group of 10 expressed a different view about both social and professional affiliations with co-workers. This individual indicated a general distrust of some co-workers and stated she didn't socialize because of her perception of the school's environment as being too "political." Her comments were:

Participant Four

You have to be careful whom you socialize with because some people who are trying to move up will try to make themselves look good by saying things about you. It's not about what you know. It's about who you know.

Social Affiliations

Seven participants indicated little or no desire to socialize outside the school setting. This sentiment pertained more to experienced teachers than novice teachers. Reasons given did not relate to antisocial characteristics but tended to be personal in nature. The following reasons were given:

- . Family responsibilities

- . Traveling distance from workplace to home
- . Previous commitments

Examples of comments were:

Participant Four

I live quite a distance from school, and it makes it hard to remain for social gatherings.

Participant Six

I'm very busy and have a family. Right now my two children are my priority.

Participant Ten

I've been extended invitations, but I'm satisfied and don't feel the need to socialize.

Participant Eight

A lot of times, I have previous engagements, and it's difficult for me to break them. Once, I did attend a cookout, and it was nice.

Conversely, two novice teachers spoke of social gatherings as beneficial in helping them bond with colleagues and get to know them better. Their responses were:

Participant Nine

Socially, we all go out periodically to eat. It's like we're one big family. We share each others' joys and concerns.

### Participant Three

We often go out just to socialize. It helps you to better understand your colleagues.

### Principal as Facilitator for School Climate

Among the many responsibilities a principal has is establishing and maintaining a positive, but effective, school climate (Riehl & Sipple, 1996). Feelings and perceptions about the principals' influence and roles they play in matters pertaining to school climate ranged from extremely positive to undesirable. Positive perceptions reflected views of principals who: (a) utilized shared decision-making strategies, (b) conveyed respect for academic capability of teachers, and (c) were willing to listen and open to change. Conversely, undesirable experiences related to principals who utilized the reverse of the aforementioned strategies. Five participants cited extremely positive experiences. Four indicated less than desirable experiences, and one stated that her opinion was mixed because of serving different schools. Recollections of positive experiences were:

#### Comment One

My principal is really a motivator. She comes in our classes often and provides verbal feedback on a frequent basis. On one occasion,

she came through and remarked, 'Our school's teacher of the Year!' Comments like that really motivate you.

Comment Two

One of my principals is very open and frequently calls on me to seek my opinions on certain reading initiatives. It's more like he values and respects my knowledge and expertise.

Comment Three

She {principal} lets everyone's opinions come up. That can be positive or negative. A lot of times and in many cases it's negative in our school. Many times we get confused, and we're like chickens with their heads cut off.

Comment Four

Our school climate really could be improved. It would be better if our principal really worked to have key concerns addressed and include teachers in the decision-making process. I feel confident in my ability, and I'm seriously considering other careers outside of education.

Comment Five

Things could be better as far as the principal accepting different opinions and accepting

differences in a positive manner. I haven't had any problems, but I know there are problems, and no one wants to be picked on or alienated.

However, it seems to be happening and has been going on for two years now.

#### Rating for Job Satisfaction and Future Plans

At the conclusion of the discussion on school climate, participants were asked to reflect on their experiences related to institutional factors and teacher retention or withdrawal from the profession. Five questions were of interest to the researcher. Those questions were:

1. Despite challenges associated with teaching, how would the participants rate their overall level of satisfaction in the profession?
2. What might be some reasons for their ratings?
3. What future plans do the participants have?
4. Do plans include remaining in teaching or seeking careers outside of teaching? Why?
5. What recommendations for teacher retention might the participants offer?

#### Level of Satisfaction and Reasons for Rating

Again, individuals were asked to use a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, to rate their level of satisfaction in teaching. Participants also were asked to

comment on their reason(s) for the assigned rating. Next, individuals were asked to discuss their plans. Finally, the researcher asked for any suggestions the participants might have for attracting and retaining teachers for the school system under study.

The group commented on job satisfaction in response to the researcher's questions about interests. In general, findings were positive supporting the premise that participants liked their job. Group findings were:

#### Summary Ratings for Job Satisfaction

1. The highest group rating ranged from 9 to 10 was reported by four teachers.
2. Four teachers reported an 8 to 9.
3. Two teachers reported a 7 to 8 rating.

#### Summary of Reasons Job Satisfaction

1. Friendships and collegiality formed by positive professional and social experiences
2. Feelings of personal efficacy and self-concept of ability to have a positive influence on student achievement
3. General satisfaction with job despite challenges and adversities encountered
4. Love and concern for children
5. Concern about an over-emphasis on testing

(e.g., Standards of Learning)

6. Perception that school and the school system fail to address areas of concern related to a need for more shared decision-making practices

#### Future Plans

1. Six of the 10 participants indicated plans to remain in teaching and in the area. Reasons related to love of the area, role models for students, and closeness to retirement.

2. Two of the 10 plan to remain in the area, but aspire to become administrators. Reasons given were: (a) desire to make more money, and (b) perception of ability to effect change on a broader basis for students' well-being.

3. The remaining two of the 10 individuals indicated uncertain. Reasons given related to the perception that teaching had become mostly instructing students for a test and being at the 'crossroads of life' (wanting to remain, yet having a desire to explore other options).

#### SUMMARY

Findings in Chapter IV presented a variety of unique perceptions and experiences as recalled by participants in this study. Factors such as home, school, and community

influences are described as environmental in nature. Consequently, those factors were found to have both a positive and negative influence on academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy for interest in teaching. Positive experiences were reinforcers, fostering belief in academic ability and self-efficacy to pursue a career in teaching. Conversely, for some participants negative experiences also strengthened the two motivational constructs.

Additional influences, described as institutional factors (e.g., teaching experiences in the workplace, working relationships with administrators and colleagues, recognition and appreciation for job performance, and feelings of inclusion in decision making), were found significant causes associated with job satisfaction. Those factors also were found to affect positively or negatively academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy to remain in the teaching profession. Questions related to the "how" and "why" will be addressed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER V

## DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The interviews in this study provided in-depth information about the reasons 10 African American teachers in Roanoke City provided for selecting and remaining in teaching. Of particular interest were the sources of motivation supporting those reasons. The self-motivational construct was the theoretical basis in examining this phenomenon.

This study was qualitative and utilized an interview format to provide insight into African Americans' reasons for selecting and remaining in teaching or planning to leave the profession. That information has implications for change or refinement for individuals responsible for the following: (a) preparing African Americans to enter teaching, (b) retaining them in teacher-education programs, and (c) recruiting and retaining them in the local school system.

A summary of the analysis for data relating to each research question reflect the "how" and "why" as characteristic of this explanatory case study. Questions one and two will be addressed simultaneously. The same applies for questions three and four. The rationale for addressing those questions in a combined manner is that findings support that they are tightly linked (i.e., having a mutual

effect on each other).

**Research Question One:** How do environmental factors influence academic self-concept of ability to select and attain a career in teaching for 10 African American Roanoke City teachers?

**Research Question Two:** How do environmental factors influence the self-efficacy to select and attain a career in teaching for 10 African American Roanoke City teachers?

#### Home Influence

In general, nearly all the participants (nine) indicated that their families were supportive of their academic endeavors. Conversations indicated that both direct support for education and verbal encouragement helped in attaining a teaching career. Participants reported assistance in the form of direct help (e.g., checking or supervising homework, seeking needed resources, and providing verbal encouragement). That finding agrees with Dauber and Epstein (1993) and Clark (1983), who also identified those behaviors as influential factors for academic success. However, in two cases, participants did not cite direct forms of assistance for academic undertakings. Those individuals referred to verbal encouragement from family members to do well in school as being a strong factor. Although subtle in nature, Ames and

Archer (1987) and Bempechat and Wells (1989) referred to those behaviors as a viable form of support. Nonetheless, those who lacked direct support displayed a sense of self-efficacy to succeed despite minimal parental support. Therefore, results indicate that both forms of parental support for academic achievement are needed to help students acquire a stronger sense of self in order to be successful in school work.

Findings also show that the personal attribute such as determination (e.g., self-efficacy) to succeed in school despite family challenges were strong factors that emerged in this study. That was especially paramount as three of the participants cited obstacles such as financial constraints and, in one instance, lack of encouragement to pursue the knowledge needed to become a teacher. This strong display of effort and belief in ability to master stressful elements by being self-regulated (taking responsibility) equates to findings on self-efficacy in studies conducted by Bandura (1986); Pintrich and Schunk (1995) and Pajares (1996). As reflected in the participants' conversations, the combined qualities such as persistence and belief in ability to do well were motivating factors for school success.

The influence and support of siblings for academic development was an interesting dimension in this study. This

was recalled in three cases and speaks well for unity in African American families. Consequently, siblings who rendered support for academic endeavors were cited by participants as an additional form of home support for school-related tasks.

Significant findings included the influence of family role models and in one instance community role models and support from college instructors both prior to college attendance and while engaged in teacher-preparatory programs. Those forms of support influenced the participants' reasons for selecting teaching and later attending college. The significance of influence was recalled by six of the participants and supported Gordon's (1993) contention of the need for African American role models in attracting individuals to the teaching profession. Therefore, according to the participants, family role models, community role models, and in some instances colleges instructors were family support and motivated participants to pursue higher learning.

Four participants reported a lack of perceived pressure from parents to achieve high grades, caution should be exercised in accepting this parental behavior as being effective for all children. As Graham (1994) indicated, African American parents should be cognizant of the

importance they play in the socialization for achievement of their children. Prom-Jackson, Johnson, and Wallace (1987) also supported this contention by indicating that parenting styles should include a display of support for education and work ethic.

#### School Influence

According to the participants, school influences on the development of academic self-concept of ability and interest in teaching were strengthened in four ways. First and foremost was the role teachers played. As indicated by eight individuals, teachers who conveyed high expectations both through their actions and teaching methodology made a lasting impression on the participants' perception of their ability. That premise is consistent with Cotton and Wikelund (1991), who also identified those behaviors of teachers as a motivator for student achievement. Also, participants spoke of teachers who believed in their potential and took time to render academic assistance and guidance when needed. That helped the participants produce excellent work. Similarly, Alderman (1990) referred to this behavior of teachers as individuals with high efficacy. The influence of a teacher or teachers of this nature was cited by individuals both before college and while engaged in a teacher-preparatory program.

Secondly, self-efficacy for attaining a teaching career was strengthened further by the individuals' tenacity in meeting failure and disappointment in course work. All 10 participants recalled instances in school, when they received suggestions for improvement concerning their work. According to group members, suggestions and negative feedback motivated them to work harder to improve.

Finally, participants conversed about their adjustment to college life and sense of efficacy to do well academically and to complete their college course work. All 10 individuals displayed a sense of self-efficacy by successfully completing their college course work. Even though feelings of isolation might be experienced by students regardless of institution attended, two of the six individuals who attended predominantly White institutions reported experiencing a personal test of self-efficacy related to feelings of loneliness on college campuses. Supporting this experience as cited by two individuals are findings by Posey and Sullivan (1990), who reported that African Americans on White campuses are exposed to more material wealth but often experience feelings of loneliness.

#### Community Influence

Qualitative data addressing the "how" and "why" as it pertained to community influence and development of self

show that more than half of the teachers in this study (seven) cited church involvement as a positive influence in their lives. According to them, both motivational constructs (i.e., academic self concept of ability and self-efficacy) were enhanced by involvement in church-related functions. Attending church served as a source of strength to deal with worldly issues encountered on the job. Participation in church programs (e.g., plays, choir, and other speaking opportunities) tended to positively affect feelings of academic capability to take leading roles and assume responsibility in job expectations. That finding supports Farrell's (1994) assertion that church attendance reinforces motivation and the total development of self.

For the most part, conversations with participants indicated that academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy for teaching were less influenced by initiatives for teacher preparation sponsored by the business and industry sector. However, three individuals who had experience in special teacher-preparatory programs said this source of support affected their lives in a positive manner. This was especially true for two participants whose entire college career was financed by this venture. Support for teacher preparation from the business and industry sector related to findings by Doston and Bolden (1993), who

advocated such partnerships as an effective way to attract minorities to teaching. As a result of that type of support, two participants spoke of their determination to succeed and complete program requirements.

**Research Question Three:** How do institutional factors influence the academic self-concept of ability to continue teaching for 10 African American Roanoke City teachers?

**Research Question Four:** How do institutional factors influence the self-efficacy to continue teaching for 10 African American Roanoke City teachers?

#### Experiences in the Teaching Environment

The gratitude expressed to teachers by students for positive influences made on their lives reinforced personal belief in the participants' ability and willingness to remain in teaching. This was especially true as it related to satisfactory ratings assigned by participants for career commitment (e.g., ratings from 7 to 10).

In support of career commitment, individuals spoke at length about rewards and challenges. All 10 participants spoke affectionately of their subject area and determination to make a difference in the lives of students they instructed. As contended by Traina (1999), teachers with a genuine concern for students' overall well being tend to employ persistence in their actions. Such was the case for

all 10 teachers in their discussion of students' academic needs and overall well-being in school.

In two cases, individuals mentioned experiences with their own teachers and the behaviors those teachers employed to make them better students. Also, three of the participants recalled as personal successes incidents when students returned to show gratitude for progress or when the teachers noted tremendous progress at the end of the school year.

Participants noted that successes were equally balanced with challenges. Areas such as student discipline, the need for mentorships for new teachers, and dealing with the realities of teaching (e.g., paperwork) were cited as examples of needs by four individuals who were novice teachers. That finding supports Haberman's (1987) contention that college students who plan to teach in urban settings need extra experience in meeting demands associated with teaching. Conversely, six individuals did not cite this as an area of need and appeared more confident in their ability to address these challenges.

However, despite challenges, participants were perceived by their principals as being effective or better teachers. This was evidenced by evaluation ratings assigned by principals and, according to the individuals, served to

boost their feelings of academic capability. Consequently, all 10 spoke of their self-efficacy to remain good teachers.

#### Interactions With Colleagues

As Peterson (1997) asserts, collegiality is an element influencing school climate. According to eight participants, collegial relationships were basically congenial. Two individuals spoke of professional relationships that involved leadership assignments. One participant referred to an assignment as "Team Leader," which allowed her to act as a spokesperson for colleagues. Another individual cited an assignment as hall principal, which called for her to supervise colleagues. Those two examples indicated that colleagues respected them for their knowledge as well as leadership ability.

On a social basis, seven of the individuals indicated no desire to socialize with colleagues. Reasons given related to personal responsibilities after school. Nonetheless, the individuals spoke favorably about their relationships with colleagues. That supports Butler's (1995) findings, which stressed that collegiality and collaboration are important features of a wholesome school climate.

#### Principal and School Climate

As Winter and Sweeney (1994) contend, the role principals play in setting the tone for a positive school

climate is of utmost importance. The issue of school climate is vital because of its relationship to job satisfaction and teacher retention. One half of the participants reported favorable perceptions about positive school climatic issues. Positive experiences such as commendations from principals and an open attitude to address issues of concern enhanced academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy in the working environment.

Areas of concern, as cited by four participants, related to perceptions of principals behaving in a manner opposite of that described above. Consequently, one individual cited areas of concern as a reason for possibly withdrawing from the profession.

#### Job Satisfaction and Career Commitment

Results show that despite challenges associated with job performance, principal relationships, and collegial relationships, the majority of participants indicated an overall satisfaction with the teaching profession. This was evident by ratings assigned about the level of satisfaction. On a scale of 1 to 10, ratings ranged from 7 to 10.

In support of the assigned ratings, participants described their career plans. Those plans indicated that seven without hesitation, intend to remain in teaching. Of the seven, two participants discussed plans to perhaps

pursue positions in administration. Plans to remain in teaching were supported by reasons such as: (a) friendships formed with colleagues, (b) feelings of self-concept of ability and self-efficacy to have a positive effect on students, and (c) love of the profession and commitment to the job. The remaining individuals referred to their plans as uncertain because of a desire to explore other career options. These findings show that job satisfaction is associated with feelings of positive affect in the work environment and the work itself.

#### Conclusions

In many instances, an analysis of data gathered from this study reinforced previous research. Findings presented different viewpoints from a variety of researchers. Among the many findings were Graham's (1994) thorough review of empirical data on the motivation of African Americans. Her research stressed the need for future investigations to examine the role that self plays in the motivational process to succeed. Therefore, Graham's work provided a strong rationale for this study. Likewise, Pajares (1996) and Bandura (1993) are examples of researchers whose work added contemporary information about academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy. Those motivational constructs were used to examine their influence on interest and

retention in teaching for 10 African American teachers in Roanoke City Public Schools. Examples of additional researchers such as Haberman (1987), Foster (1993), Blanch (1993), and Walton (1996) addressed the shortage of African American teachers by examining some of the causal factors.

Conclusions on environmental and institutional factors affecting interest and retention in teaching are listed below. They are:

#### Environmental Factors

##### Home Influences

Early growth of self and success in school is influenced by the role that African American families play in the socialization of achievement for African American youth. Parental behaviors that consisted of both direct assistance (e.g., helping with homework and supporting school initiatives) and verbal encouragement were cited by the majority of participants as motivating factors that enhanced their academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy to master school course work.

That finding is consistent with Clark (1983), who also cited parental behaviors consisting of help with homework and involvement in school-related activities as forms of direct support for school achievement. A less direct form of family support for success in school found in this study was

verbal encouragement. That form of socialization for achievement is similar to what Ames and Archer (1987) described as subtle in nature but still a powerful predictor for academic success.

Also, family involvement and support for education included a variety of members who served as sources of motivation for the participants to achieve at an optimal level. In particular, extended family members such as aunts, uncles, and cousins served as sources of motivation to do well in school. Some resided in the home and some outside the home. Siblings also played an important role by providing assistance with school assignments. In three cases, the combination of extended family members and siblings' support for education was a strong factor in influencing participants to select the teaching profession. The active role assumed by family members supports Wilson's (1989) contention that the African American family household may be composed of a variety of members. However, as found in this study, the role that family plays in the socialization for achievement for African American children and young adults is of prime significance.

An interesting point in this study was the resourcefulness of some parents when they were no longer able to render assistance with academic tasks. Help consisted

of parents seeking tutors or older siblings to assist with academic assignments. That form of socialization for achievement speaks well for some African American families and their sense of unity and purpose in helping boost the academic self-concept of ability for future teachers. In five cases where family financial constraints were cited by the participants, findings support the assertion of Hidalgo's et al. (1995) that a low socioeconomic status for African Americans does not uniformly predict family functioning, especially achievement socialization.

Although two individuals referred to their own self-determination to succeed despite strong family support for higher level learning, caution should be exercised in minimizing the value of parents in helping students feel academically capable to master school assignments. A combination of parental behaviors supportive of school achievement and an individual's sense of self-determination are strong motivational factors for career success.

In summary and in support of Graham's (1994) call for research to examine the role that self plays in academic strivings, this study found that home environmental influences are important in students' school success. In particular, parental behaviors and support from other family members who provide both verbal encouragement and active

forms of socialization for achievement are instrumental in helping students acquire a strong sense of academic self-concept of ability to succeed in school. That motivational construct (academic self-concept of ability) also can strengthen personal self-efficacy to overcome hurdles in attaining a career goal such as teaching.

#### School Influences

Academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy for teaching are influenced by a number of school-related experiences both prior to college and while enrolled in teacher-education programs. Factors such as (a) teachers' high expectations for achievement, (b) critical but supportive feedback about course work, (c) teachers as role models, (d) students' persistence in producing quality work, and (e) personal adjustment to the academic and social learning environment influence the participants' reasons for selecting teaching and wanting to succeed in the field.

Similarly, some of those factors were cited as influencing the participants' reasons to remain in the profession. In particular, past school-related experiences such as the influence of instructors and their display of commitment and belief in the participants' ability to do well in school served as personal motivation to bring about desired changes in their own students. That belief was

matched with teaching practices reflective of critical, but supportive feedback about school work. Those results agree with past findings about the effect of high teacher expectations and their influence on the development of self. Both Arnold (1985) and Bamburg (1994) linked high expectations for achievement with teachers' sense of efficacy in improving students' academic outcomes. Likewise, Foster (1993) reported that in her study of 18 African American teachers, participants recalled the positive effect of high expectations conveyed by teachers as having a profound influence on their academic development. Haberman (1995) found that teachers with a high sense of efficacy address students' lack of success by failing to make excuses for their shortcomings and finding ways to improve their performance.

Teachers perceived as role models for the participants positively influenced their academic development. Consequently, role models inspired the participants to work hard and again reaffirmed personal belief in their academic worth. That supports Bandura's (1986) contention that one source of efficacy is vicarious experiences, which relate to the effects of actions by others on the individual. Previous findings such as those presented by Obviakor et al. (1993) and Loehr (1988) addressed the importance of African

American teachers as role models for African American students. While that may be true in some cases, participants in this study indicated that teachers of nonAfrican American descent also were positive role models and influential in shaping career aspirations. That contention is supportive of Bradshaw's (1995) finding on role models. Bradshaw noted that caring and nurturing are qualities most essential for teachers regardless of race or gender.

The social and academic adjustment of African Americans is a key factor in teacher retention in teacher-education programs. This may be especially true for African Americans attending predominantly White institutions. As Posey and Sullivan (1990) found, some African Americans on predominantly White campuses experience feelings of isolation and racism. That may contribute to the African American dropout rate in teacher-education programs. However, it was apparent in this study that all individuals possessed a high degree of self-efficacy to overcome obstacles. Such display of high self-efficacy relates to Pajares' (1996) findings on a variety of related motivational constructs such as self-regulation and goal setting.

Conclusions indicate that school experiences consisting of rigorous course work, supportive feedback about academic

progress, teams of educators who promote teaching as an alluring profession, and a learning environment conducive to both academic and social adjustment are instrumental in helping individuals acquire a strong sense of academic self-concept of their ability to succeed in teacher-education programs. Subsequently, belief in ability further enhances self-efficacy to achieve career goals, such as in teaching.

It also is reasonable to conclude that if the African American applicant pool is to be increased, the challenge lies in students' willingness to avail themselves of higher level learning opportunities and to seek and utilize available help when needed. A further challenge for African American students is the realization that academic self-concept of ability is acquired through hard work and that self-efficacy is part of the process.

#### Community Influences

Findings support the conclusion that the role community representatives play in fostering the academic growth of African American youth has a significant influence on students' belief in their ability to succeed in higher level learning and their subsequent attainment of a professional career (e.g., teaching). That was especially evident as participants referred to various community influences such

as role models, church affiliations, and alliances to promote teaching formed with school systems and representatives from business and industry. As a result of support from these community groups, participants also displayed a sense of self-efficacy in their teaching practices to improve the academic performance of their students.

Those conclusions about the significance of community influence on the acquisition of self and motivation for success support a number of previous findings in this area. Hidalgo et al. (1995) established a strong correlation between church attendance and academic achievement in low-income African American youth. In this instance, involvement in church helped participants develop a sense of worth about their ability. Similarly, Griggs (1992) and Pinkney (1996) linked church involvement with the academic development of African American youth. Farrell (1994) contended that church attendance strengthened personal confidence to confront worldly issues. Consequently, students tend to acquire a stronger sense of efficacy when dealing with adversities.

As cited the participants, community role models served as another source of inspiration and personal motivation to select the teaching profession. The identification of

community role models included adults who did not hold formal teaching credentials as well as those who did. The former were included in the "teacher" category because of the participants' perception that these individuals wanted them to grow up and become "somebody." As a result some individuals chose to enter teaching because of a desire to prove their self-worth as well as to emulate others.

In support of this conclusion about the effect of role models, both Obiakor et al. (1993) and Loehr (1988) also found this true. According to them, African American teachers provide positive role modeling and inspiration for African Americans to choose teacher as a career. Schunk (1981, 1983, 1987) also concluded that significant role models in an individual's life can have a positive effect on a person's aspirations.

Financial and moral support as provided through partnerships between school systems and members of the business/industry sector are instrumental in motivating African Americans to select a teaching career and complete teacher-education requirements. This form of community support provides resources for some potential teacher-education candidates who otherwise might not be able to afford a college education. Additional support from this venture such as personal access to technology needed for

course requirements, mentoring and direct assistance when needed, and verbal encouragement from partnership group members are examples of resources needed for more African Americans to attend college and be academically successful in the college environment. As a result of this concentrated display of support, the individuals spoke of their self-efficacy to excel in the classroom setting as teacher candidates.

The results support the premise that community involvement and various forms of support for African American students is crucial for those pursuing college careers and especially careers in teaching. Increased participation of community representatives from the private and public sector likely would provide additional resources and other forms of support which would inspire more African Americans to pursue a teaching career. The increased support also would strengthen self-concept of ability and self-efficacy to be successful in career attainment.

#### Institutional Factors

Conclusions on institutional factors indicate that teachers' sense of efficacy and academic capability for teaching are influenced by experiences encountered both in the immediate working environment (classroom) as well as by experiences shaping their perceptions about the operation of

the school system district-wide. Specifically, institutional factors such as meeting the daily demands of students in the classroom, relationships with immediate supervisors and colleagues, having input on policy and procedural matters as they pertain to operation of the school system have a direct influence on individual self-efficacy and for teaching. These factors specifically relate to school climate and job satisfaction and can affect self-efficacy for teacher retention.

In support of this conclusion are previous studies conducted by individuals such as Shaw (1996) and Cichon and Koff (1980), whose findings focused on experiences in the classroom. Shaw reported that both African American prospective teachers and experienced teachers cited discipline problems as a major reason why more African Americans choose not to go into teaching or once in teaching find discipline problems a major concern. Cichon and Koff specifically referred to discipline problems as causal factors contributing to teacher burnout and withdrawal from the profession.

Additional classroom experiences such as the need for more parental involvement and support from the home, the challenges of working with reluctant and slow learners, and increased demands for accountability related to teachers'

sense of efficacy in fulfilling job requirements. Conclusions in this area indicate that while participants encountered challenging situations in the classroom, their sense of efficacy to address adverse situations was most evident. Likewise, both Pajares (1996) and Bandura (1997) linked self-efficacy with an individual's willingness and determination to overcome obstacles. However, issues such as these merit further attention so that the work climate for teachers contributes to job satisfaction and, therefore, teacher retention.

Results on relationships with immediate supervisors (e.g., building principals) and colleagues in the workplace indicate that a wholesome school climate is vital. That was characterized by respect for diverse opinions, inclusion in the decision-making process, and recognition and respect for academic capability for teaching- all qualities that foster teachers' commitment to remain in the profession. These findings are consistent with those of Peterson's (1997) who cited those factors as characteristic of a positive school climate.

It is reasonable to conclude that institutional factors affect African American teachers' perceptions of their self-concept of ability to be excellent teachers. Likewise, schools and districts that employ strategies designed to

promote a wholesome working environment consisting of recognition and attention to variables that might adversely affect teachers' perceptions of issues they see as important are of prime significance in job satisfaction and teacher retention. Although this conclusion about institutional factors is germane to all teachers, it is especially important for school systems such as Roanoke City who wish to maintain a diverse teaching staff reflective of its student population.

This study further presents the proposition that individual self-efficacy for teaching is further influenced on a wider basis such as collective efficacy and that the combination of the two are strong motivational variables related to institutional factors influencing teacher retention. This simply means that in addition to effecting positive change in students at the classroom level, teachers who feel part of a collective system (e.g., teams of classroom teachers, schools, and school districts) likely experience a greater sense of self-efficacy. Feeling part of a larger unit and participating in change on a wider scale, would have a positive effect on job satisfaction and teacher retention. The issue of collective efficacy was cited both by Bandura (1986) and Pajares (1997). Bandura referred to collective efficacy as a group's shared belief in its

capacity to attain goals and accomplish tasks. Pajares found also that collective systems such as teams of classroom teachers, schools and districts are part of a collective efficacy.

#### Recommendations Arising from Study Issues

Individuals in this study expressed concern and praise about environmental and institutional factors affecting interest in teaching for African Americans. Both are noteworthy because of implications they have for policy and procedures to establish and maintain a diverse teaching staff.

Recommendations that follow are examples of ways in which the researcher believes school system involved in this study could best interest and retain African American teachers. Some of the recommendations were made by the participants and reflect personal experiences encountered in the workplace. Additional recommendations are listed by the researcher. The following are offered with respect to the data in this study.

#### Implications for Home

1. Increase the number of existing Family Resource Centers to provide more access to literacy-enhancing activities and other educational resources for children and parents. Presently, the school system has three centers,

which are located in housing projects. Opening additional centers would allow more parents to take advantage of resources such as: (a) a lending library for children and adults, (b) user-friendly computer labs and software, (c) educational family games, and (d) structured time for homework and snack. This might be a possible solution for the lack of parental support for school assignments as raised by the participants.

2. Expand offerings through the Parent University Program and include topics related to the preparation of future teachers. Currently, Roanoke City forms partnerships with community organizations and agencies to use facilities for school-related topics. Three topics have been addressed since the inception of the Parent University, which offers training to parents in various topics to help their children succeed in school. Those topics were: (a) How to Reduce Test-Taking Anxiety, (b) Helping Your Child Read, and (c) Homework Without Tears. Area colleges could be encouraged to participate and address topics pertinent to developing young people for teaching careers and helping them locate resources to finance college.

3. Include in the school system's annual parents' survey indicators to assess parents' interest in their children becoming teachers in the area. A typical indicator

might be: "Have you ever thought about encouraging your child to pursue a career in teaching and later return to the area as a teacher? Circle: Yes or No. If yes, what support would you need for this to become a reality? Would there be a family role model(s), teacher role model(s) or community role model(s) you would like to ask to be a mentor?"

#### Implications for Schools and School System

1. Principals could continue to observe and evaluate ways in which teachers convey high expectations for students and their achievement. Revisiting the current TESA (Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement) model and placing an added emphasis on this component would help raise teachers' awareness about messages they convey to children. High expectations strengthen feelings of academic capability for success in school as well as later success in teacher-education programs. Also, an added advantage for students might be the positive influence teachers could have by being identified as role models for the profession.

2. Conduct district-wide teacher career fairs annually at the elementary and secondary level. This would be an excellent opportunity for guidance counselors to play a more visible role in promoting the teaching profession. This also might allow retired educators an opportunity to participate and serve as mentors and role models for African American

prospective teachers.

3. Pursue grant funds to open a magnet school with a special emphasis on preparing students to become teachers.

The establishment of a magnet school for individuals interested in teaching is one way to promote the profession. An ideal grade level would be middle school because of the uncertainty of career paths that many students experience at that time in their life. Also, the middle school years would permit some individuals the opportunity to become stronger academically before entering high school and later college.

4. Colleges and universities could continue to assess students in teacher education for their perceptions of areas in which they need help in order to feel more competent during their first year of teaching. Participants cited areas of need such as more time to observe the daily routines and demands of teaching and, especially, ways to handle discipline problems. Colleges and universities must continue upgrading their student-teaching model so teachers are better able to address issues that might interfere with instruction.

#### Implications for Community

1. Roanoke City Schools could benefit from the talents of African American members of social and civic groups as

well as retired educators. Community groups especially need to connect with African American students and play a more visible role as mentors and role models for those choosing teaching as a career. Participants in this study also expressed the need for their involvement with African American youth. The school system's Partnership Office could initiate contact with this group of individuals through the current volunteer program.

2. Likewise, the Partnership Office could work closely with churches and -- especially African American churches -- in encouraging them to conduct reviews of their education programs and outreach efforts for African American youth.

Strengthening the positive influence churches might have on inspiring African Americans to acquire the knowledge needed to pursue careers in education is one way churches could mentor more potential teachers.

#### Implications For Institutional Influences

1. The Office of Human Resources could review its recruitment plan and expand efforts to include colleges and universities with a number of African Americans enrolled in teacher-education programs. Currently, only one college located in the deep South is on the annual recruitment list. Expanding recruitment to include more historically African American colleges in the deep South would increase the

applicant pool and add diversity to the Roanoke City teaching staff. Presently, the pool of African American teachers come from Virginia and bordering states. Also, the recruitment plan could include an added emphasis on highlights of the school system and attractiveness of the area.

2. Review the current interview questions used to recruit teachers and ask how the local school system could enhance the professional growth of future teachers. That strategy would be useful in helping the school system plan for areas of need, as identified by teachers. The existing "New Teacher Academy," as developed by the school system to assist teachers in their transition to teaching, is an excellent program. It could use the information to conduct several intensive small group sessions based upon areas cited by teachers.

3. Create a profile of assistance for beginning teachers and include mentoring, expectations of the school system, immediate help when needed, and increased opportunities to observe other teachers. While such a support system may exist in some form at certain schools, the school system could insist that all schools offer this assistance to beginning teachers and employ supportive strategies. Currently, as part of the New Teacher Academy,

building principals are encouraged to provide school-based mentors and other support needed for beginning teachers. By making this a standard procedure endorsed by the school system, all beginning teachers would feel at ease to seek and receive help when needed.

4. As part of the evaluation component, principals could be asked to include in their staff survey a section specifically addressing school climate. Currently, principals survey staff every three years using an original instrument or one purchased from a company. This could be standardized for the school system if a team of administrators and teachers were assigned the task of developing the instrument.

5. Encourage increased participation of African American teachers in the decision-making process. Also, offer financial assistance for teachers to conduct action research projects. Sometimes solutions to complex problems may best be addressed by those closest to the source. Issues raised by the participants (e.g., insufficient parent involvement, perceptions of overrepresentation of African American students in special education, and other concerns) likely lead to policy and procedural adaptations.

6. As part of annual planning, schools and the school system should conduct team-building sessions. This technique

promotes collegiality and mission building. Consequently, participants tend to experience a sense of worthiness in the organizational change process, which enhances self-concept of ability and a commitment to support change.

7. The school system could seek funding and support from private and nonprofit organizations to establish a teacher-preparatory partnership. It is needed to attract and retain future African American teachers. As emphasized by two individuals in this study, partnerships of this nature are critical in developing interest in teaching for African Americans. Full funding and other support mechanisms (e.g., tutoring, regular access to professors, and computers donated for student use) help strengthen determination to complete program requirements.

8. To attract and retain quality teachers, the school system could continue to investigate the feasibility of implementing "pay for performance." Presently, Roanoke City Public Schools are studying this issue for possible implementation in the near future. This could be one way to retain classroom teachers. According to perceptions of some participants, the financial rewards in the profession are at the administrative level.

#### Implications for Future Research

This study has raised issues that merit additional

research. Implications for future research include the following:

1. Future investigations of academic self-concept of ability and self-efficacy should encourage researchers to further examine those motivational variables in relation to other minorities in teaching. That would be especially noteworthy because of the shortage of African American teachers and the projected rise of other minority populations (e.g., Asian, Hispanic, and Native American). Those populations could be well represented in teacher shortages as well. A comparative study of other populations in teaching might add much to the literature on the effect of environmental and institutional factors. Similarities and differences using a wider sampling group could have implications for policy and procedural matters.

2. Future studies should examine the extent to which boys are socialized for achievement within the home and school setting as compared to girls and the effect that has on choice of teaching as a career. New information in this area could have implications related to parent practices and ways in which schools address education of the whole child (i.e., the male child -- socially, emotionally, and academically). Gurian (1996) indicated that approximately 50% of boys are emotionally neglected and that differences

in the treatment between boys and girls have devastating results on their overall development. According to Gurian, boys are not perceived "manly" if they express feelings in an emotional manner (e.g., by crying). As a result, some engage in risky behavior as a means of self protection. Unfortunately, risky behavior has often resulted in a high percentage of males being incarcerated, dropping out of school, and becoming victims of murder as well as suicide.

Findings addressing this issue could bring new insight into the shortage of male teachers -- and especially African American male teachers. A leading question might be related to how the teaching profession is viewed as a suitable career for males.

3. A future inquiry should be made about the role siblings play in fostering academic development of younger or older brothers and sisters. Individuals in this study said older siblings often encouraged them to do well academically. In some instances, encouragement was supported by siblings' actions such as assisting with homework and assuming duties as a primary caretaker in the absence of the parent. The influence of sibling support for academic achievement is a noteworthy factor which merits further investigation to learn more about family influence and school success.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**INTRODUCTORY LETTER**

April, 1999

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**

The purpose of this letter is to provide you background information about a research project I would like to conduct during the latter part of May, 1999. Individuals who will be asked to participate in this study involve a small sampling of 10 African American teachers who are currently teaching in our school system. These individuals will be asked to participate because of the unique perspective they might bring to the phenomena of interest in this study (i.e., their reasons for selecting teaching as a career as well as plans to remain in the profession). Of particular interest in this study are the sources of motivation supporting those reasons as influenced by environmental factors--home, school, and community and institutional factors--experiences in the workplace, job satisfaction, and school climate.

Results from this study will be beneficial in helping our school system examine policies and procedures which might be helpful in attracting and retaining African American teachers. Please be assured that this study will not involve loss of instructional time for our students. I thank you in advance for your permission and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Virginia B. Stuart

**APPENDIX B**  
**REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN STUDY**

Letter Requesting Participation in Study

3774 Laurel Ridge Rd. N.W.  
Roanoke, Virginia 24017  
May, 1999

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am currently a doctoral student majoring in Educational Leadership at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. Presently, I am employed with the Roanoke City Schools as Director of Human Resources. In fulfillment of program requirements for the Doctor of Education degree, I am seeking your participation in a study entitled: REASONS FOR SELECTING A TEACHING CAREER AND REMAINING IN THE PROFESSION: A CONVERSATION WITH 10 AFRICAN AMERICAN ROANOKE CITY TEACHERS.

Specifically, my inquiry on the topic will explore two sets of related factors on an individual's choice and attainment of a teaching career as well as plans to remain as a teacher in the Roanoke City Public Schools. The first set of factors are environmental and focus on home, school, and community influences. The second set of factors are institutional and center more on experiences in the workplace, school climate, and job satisfaction. This area of interest is of particular importance because of the existing shortage of African American teachers representative of our diverse student population. The latest figures for the 1998-99 school year shows the African American student population as: 5,752=42.6%, while the African American and Other teaching staff is listed as 153=14.8%. Of course, this lack of adequate representation of African American teachers is not only a concern for Roanoke City, but tends to reflect a nationwide problem as well. Therefore, your participation in this study will be most valuable in helping our school system learn from your perspective, ways that Roanoke City could attract and retain more African Americans to teach in the area.

Your participation will involve two separate interviews that will require your responses to two survey instruments related to environmental and institutional factors influencing your selection of teaching as well as plans to remain in the profession. Interviews will last approximately one hour each and will be recorded and later transcribed. You will be asked to identify a suitable time and location

for us to talk. Prior to the final written document, participants will be encouraged to review the draft copy for accuracy of responses.

Please be assured that the information you will be asked to provide will be treated in a confidential manner. In order to assure anonymity, your name will not be printed in the document and ellipsis points(...) will be used in text to further protect your identity.

I thank you in advance for your participation and willingness to cooperate in this study. Results will be beneficial in helping local school officials, politicians, college deans of education, and, community representatives investigate ways that might be helpful in attracting and retaining more African Americans to teach in Roanoke City.

I shall be in contact with you very soon to discuss a suitable time and date for us to talk. Feel free to contact me for questions and concerns you might have. I have enclosed by business card for your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Virginia B. Stuart

**APPENDIX C**  
**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

CHECKLIST FOR PREPARING  
INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

1. Introduce the interviewer
2. Summarize the importance of the study and how results will be used.
3. Verify correct address, spelling of name, telephone number, E-mail address, and present teaching assignment.
4. Clarify terminology used in letter of introduction, letter seeking participation in study, and in survey instrument.
5. State the anticipated length of interview.
6. Again, insure confidentiality, anonymity, and explain the importance of answering each question truthfully.

**APPENDIX D**  
**SURVEY INSTRUMENTS**

**SURVEY STATEMENTS**  
(Environmental Factors for Interest/Selection in Teaching)

1. During my earlier developmental years (preschool and K-12), I recall home literacy enhancing activities (e.g., book reading, checking homework, parent attendance at school conferences and/or school functions) as being instrumental in aiding my academic development.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

2. My confidence in my personal ability was positively influenced by my family.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

3. Family role models influenced my decision to become a teacher.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

4. My motivation to become a teacher was self-derived.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

5. I would not have completed college without financial assistance from loans, grants, or scholarships.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

6. I recall during my high school and/or college years, teachers who conveyed high expectations for my achievement as being instrumental in helping to boost my self belief.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

7. My motivation to succeed was influenced by my determination, hard work, and personal belief in my ability.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

8. My motivation to succeed was influenced by teachers who doubted my ability to be successful in academic endeavors.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

9. I chose teaching because of a special teacher or teachers who served as role model(s) for me.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

10. Help, assistance, and/or encouragement from my high school guidance counselor was beneficial in inspiring me to become a teacher.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

11. As a high school student, when given less than desirable feedback about my work, I tended to view such feedback as being bias and doubtful about my academic capability.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comment:

12. As a college student, when given less than desirable feedback about my work, I tended to view such feedback as being bias and doubtful about my academic capability.
- 5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree
- Comments:
13. During my college years and in my academic preparation to become a teacher, I actively sought assistance from college university personnel when needed.
- 5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree
- Comments:
14. Help and academic assistance as provided from college/university personnel served to enhance my personal belief in my ability to become a successful teacher.
- Comments:
15. My college campus environment was conducive to my overall social adjustment.
- 5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree
- Comments:
16. My college campus environment was conducive to my overall academic adjustment.
- 5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree
- Comments:
17. Church attendance and/or participation in church related activities positively influenced my academic success in school.
- 5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree
- Comments:

18. My participation in a special program and/or activities sponsored and funded by representatives from business/industry, or other community agencies, was beneficial in my choice and attainment of a teaching career.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

19. My interest in teaching may be attributed to community role models who enhanced my self-concept and inspired me to become a teacher.

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

20. Are there other factors other than the ones we discussed (home, school, and community) that influenced your choice of selecting and attaining a teaching career?

5=Strongly agree 4=Agree 3=Uncertain 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

Comments:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS  
(Institutional Factors)

1. Provide me with some background information about yourself.

**Probes**

- . College attended, native/non-native of area
- . Family (any educators?)
- . Previous occupation prior to teaching
- . Talk about your teacher preparatory experience
- . Present teaching assignment and how long in that assignment
- . Number of years in teaching

2. Describe for me your teaching experience.

**Probes**

- . Successes and rewards
- . Challenges/problems/concerns
- . Coping mechanisms and problem solving
- . Role that your college teacher education experience played in helping you cope with challenges in teaching

3. Talk some about how you came to teach in Roanoke.

**Probe**

- . Initial perception of Roanoke once you arrived and/or starting teaching in Roanoke City?

4. Reflect on your present teaching assignment and describe the students you instruct.

**Probes**

- . Description of students in terms of your perception of their academic capability and performance
- . Referrals to special education programs/How many out of total number you taught for the past year or two?
- . Why did you refer them?
- . Perception of the role that each of these forces play in terms of their influence on academic performance of students: (home, school-your role, community)

- . Self evaluation of your personal efficacy in effecting positive changes in students (Scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest)
  - . Dealing with discipline problems
  - . Again, on the scale of 1-10, your overall level of satisfaction as a classroom teacher
5. To what extent did your college teacher preparatory program prepare you to deal with challenging situations?

**Probe**

- . Recommendations for college teacher preparatory programs
6. Compare your perception of what teaching involves today to when you first started your career.

**Probes**

- . Factors that have influenced your perception
  - . Explain factors
  - . Ways your school/school system could address factors
7. Let's talk now about your perception of school climate factors and how they affect you as an African American Roanoke City School teacher. Address each of the following and tell me on what do you base your perception?

**Probes**

- . Level of autonomy for teaching according to your preferred style and methods (i.e., use of special groupings for students, team teaching, method for teaching reading/language arts, etc.,)
- . Perception on your principal's view about your overall talent and effectiveness a teacher.
- . Opportunities you've had to lead some type of significant project or assume a leadership role for your school (e.g., grade level chair, team leader, department chair, etc.,)
- . Describe your experience with this.
- . If there were some or any as indicated above, were you selected/elected? By whom? Volunteered?
- . Why do you think you were chosen?
- . If you've not had any leadership experience, what would you like to lead, and why?

- . Do you anticipate any barriers associated with your choice? What and why?
  - . Talent/expertise you could bring to this choice of leadership
  - . Opportunities you've had to interact with your colleagues, how frequent?  
social related? school related,? initiated by whom?
  - . Perception of the role that your principal plays in promoting a wholesome  
and inviting school climate where inclusion, respect for various opinions, and  
equity in the distribution of leadership opportunities is valued and sought
  - . Matters you would like to see addressed related to your overall school climate
  - . Participation on division-wide committees (which kind/kinds? how selected?  
preference for being on one?)
8. Would you mind sharing your overall latest evaluation rating from your principal?
- . Do you think it was accurate, fair, useful and why would you say that?
  - . In what way did this affect your academic self-concept of your ability?
  - . What did it do for your sense of self-efficacy?
9. Talk about your future plans.

### **Probes**

- Remaining in Roanoke City as a teacher (Why?)
- . For how long?
  - . Employment in another field
  - . Advancing to an administrative position in Roanoke  
(What kind, why this choice)
  - . Seeking employment outside of education (Why?)
  - . Does pay have anything to do with it?
  - . If leaving or entertaining idea of leaving, what factors contribute  
to decision?
10. What could Roanoke City do to attract and recruit more African Americans to  
teach in our school system?
11. What could Roanoke City do to retain African Americans once they arrive here as  
teachers?

**Probes**

- . Would you like to comment on that?
- . Would you care to elaborate?

**APPENDIX E**  
**MATRIX FORMS**

**MATRIX FORMAT  
Environmental Factors  
(Comments)**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Home</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Community</b>
<b>#1</b>			
<b>#2</b>			
<b>#3</b>			
<b>#4</b>			
<b>#5</b>			
<b>#6</b>			
<b>#7</b>			
<b>#8</b>			
<b>#9</b>			
<b>#10</b>			

**MATRIX FORMAT  
Institutional Factors  
(Comments)**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Experiences in Workplace</b>	<b>School Climate</b>	<b>Job Satisfaction</b>
<b>#1</b>			
<b>#2</b>			
<b>#3</b>			
<b>#4</b>			
<b>#5</b>			
<b>#6</b>			
<b>#7</b>			
<b>#8</b>			
<b>#9</b>			
<b>#10</b>			

**VITA**

The author, Virginia Barr Stuart, was born in Red Springs, North Carolina, and spent her entire childhood in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. She is one of five children born to the late Mr. John Barr and Mrs. Augusta McPhaul Barr. At present she is a resident of the Roanoke, Virginia area where she has served in many leadership capacities. She has been a successful elementary school principal for 15 years, and is currently the director of human resources for Roanoke City Schools, a position which she has held for the past three years. She is a Virginia Urban Schools Fellow, an Institute of Educational Leadership Fellow, the author of the Roanoke City Public Schools Elementary Handbook, and was the Principal of a Blue Ribbon Nominee school. She received a Bachelors in Elementary Education with a minor in English from Winston Salem State University in Winston Salem, North Carolina. Her Masters degree as a Reading Specialist is from Radford University in Radford, Virginia. She received her certification in Administration Supervision from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia.