## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express sincere appreciation to the many individuals who have offered support, inspiration, and encouragement throughout this research effort.

Special gratitude is extended to Dr. B. June Schmidt, my graduate committee chair, for her support, leadership, patience, and guidance without which this study would never have matured. She has served as a role-model through her constant display of professionalism and her enthusiastic approach to educational research. Appreciation is extended to both Dr. B. June Schmidt and Dr. Curtis R. Finch for serving as mentors and helping me to grow professionally during my graduate studies. Their counsel and assistance were invaluable. Special appreciation is also extended to Dr. Bruce Brown for his encouragement when I initially made the decision to return to school. His instructional methods created in me a life-long quest for learning. Thank you, Dr. Brown, for believing in me. I would also like to recognize the other members of the committee--Dr. Susan Asselin and Dr. James L. Hoerner--whose instructional approaches have been inspirational. Dr. Asselin, I appreciate your ability to help me keep things in perspective; and Dr. Hoerner, I appreciate your wealth of knowledge on this particular subject.

I further wish to express appreciation to fellow graduate students who have endured the dissertation process with me. This group has worked together, laughed

together and lamented together. We have also been proud of each other's accomplishments. Thanks goes to Eileen Keeney and Becky Cox, without whom I would never make it through graduate school. Additionally, appreciation is expressed to members of the New River Community College faculty and staff who provided continual encouragement.

Above all, my deepest expression of appreciation goes to my husband, Sam. His love, support, motivational talks, and late-night neck-rubs have made it possible for me to pursue this degree. I also appreciate the sacrifices of my family in order that I might devote time and energies to my studies. A special thanks goes to the East Radford Church of God which has provided prayers and encouragement throughout my educational endeavors. A special thanks goes to Brother Leon Neal, who has adopted me, as a student, to pray for each year. Without the love and support of all the above mentioned people, none of my dreams for the completion of a doctoral degree would have ever come true.