

2022

Program Experiences of Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education Graduates that Impact Retention in the Field

Austin Veiga

Follow this and additional works at: <https://pilotscholars.up.edu/etd>



Part of the [Higher Education and Teaching Commons](#), and the [Religious Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Veiga, Austin, "Program Experiences of Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education Graduates that Impact Retention in the Field" (2022). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 104.
<https://pilotscholars.up.edu/etd/104>

This Doctoral Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Pilot Scholars. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Pilot Scholars. For more information, please contact library@up.edu.

Program Experiences of Pacific Alliance for
Catholic Education Graduates that Impact
Retention in the Field

by

Austin Veiga

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

In

Learning and Leading

University of Portland
School of Education

2022

**Program Experiences of Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education Graduates
That Impact Retention in the Field**

by

Austin Veiga

This dissertation is completed as a partial requirement for the Doctor of Education (EdD) degree at the University of Portland in Portland, Oregon.

Approved:

REDACTED

3-30-22

Chairperson ✓

_____ Date

REDACTED

3.30.2022

Committee Member

_____ Date

REDACTED

30 MAR 2022

Committee Member

_____ Date

If applicable:

_____ Additional Committee Member

_____ Date

_____ Additional Committee Member

_____ Date

Approved:

REDACTED

3-31-22

Graduate Program Director

_____ Date

REDACTED

3/30/22

Dean of the Unit ✓

_____ Date

REDACTED

3/30/22

Dean of the Graduate School or Representative

_____ Date

Abstract

Teacher retention rates in America have remained low over the past decades, with almost half of teachers exiting the field in their first five years of teaching. High teacher turnover has a financial impact on schools and districts as well as negative impacts on student learning. The Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education (PACE) is a teacher preparation program that has graduates who have demonstrated higher retention rates in the teaching field over the first five years. This single-case study investigated the experiences of six graduates of the PACE program during their time in the program, and sought to understand their decision to remain teaching in the classroom after graduation. Six interviews and one focus group were conducted in order to explore attitudes and experiences that supported participants in their early career. Key findings revealed that participants remained in the field for altruistic reasons such as connections and impacts on student lives, and making significant differences in the world. Additionally, participants described the importance of a collaborative and supportive administrator both in the early years of their career, as well as their current school environments. Participants also indicated that informal mentors that were sought out positively impacted their willingness to stay in the profession. Participants identified PACE programmatic supports, that had little or no impact on their experiences as early career educators, including the need for student affairs professionals to assist individuals in the program, and the need for more applicable and pertinent feedback from university supervisors. Implications for best practices for alternative teacher preparation programs are suggested, based on the data received from participants.

Keywords: teacher retention, alternative teacher preparation program, teacher support, Catholic schools, school administration, mentor teacher, induction program, university supervisor, teacher attrition, student affairs, student support.

Acknowledgments

I would like to begin by thanking my committee chair, Dr. Sally Hood, whose encouragement, advice, and expertise have supported me over the course of this process. Thank you for walking this journey with me. Thank you for the constant support and feedback along the way. I could not have done it without you.

I would also like to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Katie Danielson and Dr. Eric Anctil. Thank you for your insightful questions and feedback. You helped me refine my writing and my thinking and provided moral support along the journey. I would also like to thank the wonderful faculty at the University of Portland. For all of those that were willing to sit down and give me feedback, insight, or thought-provoking questions. You all made me enjoy being a researcher and I am lucky to have had your support while in the program.

Thank you to the participants in this study. Without your willingness to sit down and provide honest and transparent responses, this study would not have been possible. Thank you for opening up and telling me about your journeys and experiences. Your testimony inspires me and gives me hope for the future of education in our communities.

To my parents, thank you for your curiosity about my dissertation and your enthusiasm for my dreams and professional goals. Thank you for forming me and teaching me to value education and to prioritize helping others. Your support has meant the world to me.

Most importantly, thank you to my life partner Marisa. Your unwavering support has helped me through this entire process. You inspire me every day by being

a teacher yourself. Your love and support for your students reminds me that the impact of our teachers is so great and profound. Thank you for always believing in me, and letting me talk to you about teacher preparation for far too long.

Dedication

To the teachers in the PACE program: Past, present, and future.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgement,.....	iv
Dedication.....	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study	9
Research Questions	10
Significance of the Study	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review	12
Literature Review	12
Theoretical Framework	46
Chapter 3: Methodology	56
Research Design and Rational	56
Participants	59
Design and Procedure	60
Role of Researcher	62
Issues of Trustworthiness and Ensuring Quality	63
Ethical Considerations.....	64
Data Analysis	65
Chapter 4: Results	69
Overview of Participants	69
Themes in the Data.....	74

Chapter 5: Discussion	100
Interpretation of Findings	102
Practical Implications for Practice	117
Limitations of the Study	114
Conclusions	128
References	131
Appendix A: Interview Protocol.....	139
Appendix B: Focus Group Protocol	143

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

In the United States there are a variety of issues that are negatively impacting both public and private elementary and secondary schools. One issue is teacher retention which has put the current education system in America under increased stress (Ingersoll, 2006). According to the US Department of Education, nearly 50% of new teachers leave the field in the first five years (Ingersoll, 2006). Ingersoll later replicated the study in 2017 and found that 44% of new teachers left the field in the first five years. Another recent longitudinal study by Gray and Taie (2015) found that 8% of first year public school teachers left the field. Of those first-year teachers that began teaching in 2007, 18% of those teachers were no longer teaching in the 2012-13 school year. Ingersoll hypothesizes that because school populations have grown in the past 50 years, the need for more teachers has resulted in more beginning teachers entering the field and therefore making up a larger percentage of the workforce. However, several other factors have been identified as causing these low retention rates. One of these factors is the model of teacher preparation that the teacher experiences (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). In examining best practices in teacher preparation programs, recommendations provide teacher education programs with guidelines that ensure effective preparation for the next generation of teachers.

Literature About the Problem

There have been many quantitative studies that have identified trends and patterns in teacher retention across the United States. National data regarding teacher employment status has been collected through the Teacher Follow-up Survey (Teacher

Follow-up Survey, 2001) which was conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This survey was done in conjunction with the Schools and Staffing Survey (Schools and Staffing Survey, 2001). Ingersoll (2001) analyzed teacher attrition rates across the country, using the data collected by the NCES. This study, which analyzed data from 1991 to 1992, was designed to be comprehensive and nationally representative, and examined issues of teacher movement, attrition, and the rationale for these movements (Ingersoll, 2001). The data analyzed correlations between teacher retention and other factors. Ingersoll (2001) found that one of the biggest indicators of teacher retention was teacher age; younger teachers who were under the age of 30 were 171% more likely to leave the profession than teachers who were between the ages of 30 and 50. Because of low retention rates in the early years of teaching, researchers sought explanations about ways in which teachers are prepared. In a more recent study (2014), researchers found that of 3,377,900 public school teachers polled during the 2011-2012 school year, 16% of them left their teaching placement that year (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles). According to Goldring et al. (2014), 51% of teachers who left the teaching profession found that the workload in their new job was more manageable than their teaching position.

Several different reasons have been found as to why teachers choose to leave schools. Some teaching jobs are temporary, some teachers are fired, and some teachers decide to leave because of working conditions (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Many teachers leave because of high work demands and a loss of idealism that occurs when teachers encounter the reality of the classroom. With changing curriculum and high stakes assessment many teachers feel as if they do not have the support needed to excel in

their work (Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, & Peske, 2002). Additional factors that affect a teacher's decision to leave the field include the low quality of management, low pay, and lack of sufficient support in the field (Mezies, 2015). A 2016 report from the Learning Policy Institute found that there were a variety of factors that could impact teacher attrition which included better salaries and compensation, reducing the barriers of entry, including cost, to the teaching profession, improving working conditions for teachers, and improving induction and support of new teachers (Podolsky, Kini, Bishop & Darling-Hammond). While these factors may not be easily rectified, steps may be put in place to address some of the issues that teachers confront.

Poor teacher retention rates have increasingly negative impacts on schools and districts. One of the ways that teacher retention negatively affects school systems is in the form of financial cost to schools and districts. In 2005, it was determined that public schools lost approximately 4.9 billion dollars to replace or recruit new teachers for positions that were vacant (Alliance for Excellence in Education, 2005). There are further implications of low teacher retention rates as well. In districts that saw high levels of turnover in staff, students scored lower on both language arts and math standardized tests (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2013). Ronfeldt, Loeb and Wycoff indicated that these scores are lower in part because quality teachers tend to move to more affluent and high achieving schools, thus furthering the achievement gap between schools with struggling populations and schools with affluent populations. Identifying characteristics of teacher preparation programs that output teachers who

stay in the teaching field long-term may help in developing future effective teacher preparation programs.

Because low retention rates of teachers have caused national teacher shortages, many institutions of higher education have been seeking alternative ways to educate future teachers outside of the traditional four-year undergraduate degree model (Feistritzer, 2011). In 2011, Feistritzer analyzed nationally collected data and found that 33% of teachers came from an alternative certification program, as compared to 1980 when only 12% of teachers came from an alternative certification program. Additionally, these alternative certification programs take on a wide variety of forms and look very different from one another. Most of these programs have been designed to license and prepare students that already hold a bachelor's degree (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). As the number of alternative certification programs has risen, the research on their effectiveness is still emerging. While these new programs evolve, it is important to understand the impact they have on teacher retention in the first five years of classroom practice.

One model for alternative certification programs that has grown in prominence in the last 25 years is the residency teaching model. In these programs, participants are trained to become classroom teachers by being placed in a teaching environment in which they are assigned a mentor and are gradually given more duties and responsibilities within the classroom. This is done while candidates are taking courses at a local university to work towards licensure. These programs are often a year or two in length, and frequently require an additional commitment to teach in a school district for multiple years following the program. These programs allow for the teacher to

learn through coursework at a university or college, while receiving real world experience in the classroom. Of these residency teaching models, many are city-based and run by school districts. For example, New York City Teaching Fellows is one of the country's largest alternative certification programs that has a residency component (Brantlinger, Haydar, Smith & Gonzalez, 2011). Similarly, Boston public schools host Boston Teaching Fellows, where alternative certification is achieved through service in Boston public schools. Both New York City Teaching Fellows and Boston Teaching Fellows partner with local universities to provide participants a low-cost form of teacher certification.

Another alternative teaching program is Teach for America (TFA). This program, however, does not license teachers. Instead, TFA asks participants to apply for emergency licensure in the states they serve, and independently work with a teacher preparation program at a nearby university if they wish to qualify for permanent licensure after leaving the program (Teach for America, 2020). TFA places young adults who hold a bachelor's degree in classrooms across the country. The schools that partner with TFA usually struggle with finances, class sizes, and, most notably, the retention of teachers. TFA teachers are often recruited by appealing to teachers' desire to serve and support struggling schools. Those that support the TFA model cite the recruitment of candidates who have strong academic backgrounds, a bachelor's degree from a college or university, and who have extensive experience in leadership positions (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, Rockoff & Wyckoff, 2007). Teach for America is different from residency programs because their placements require participants to be full teachers of record, not all teachers are provided a mentor, and

participants do not participate in coursework simultaneously with teaching. Instead, teachers engage in a summer training session that prepares teachers for the field.

The University Consortium for Catholic Educators (UCCE) is an organization that houses educator preparation programs that have components of TFA and residency programs and that place participants in religious-based placements, mainly Catholic schools. In 1998, the model was replicated at several other universities including the University of Portland, Loyola Marymount University and Providence College (Smith, 2007). All participants of UCCE programs are college graduates who partake in a two-year residency in a Catholic school while living in an intentional Christian community. The formation of these intentional communities was designed to be a support measure for young teachers in the field (Davies & Kennedy, 2009). All UCCE programs focus on the implementation of this community model with the intention of fostering teaching cultures that promote long-term stability in Catholic schools. While working full time in Catholic schools, teachers in these programs are also working towards a master's degree and/or certification by the state to be a licensed teacher. Similar to residency programs, participants are concurrently taking coursework towards a master's degree and/or teaching license while gaining practical experience. However, it is important to note that like TFA, UCCE participants are the full-time teacher of record in the classroom and do not receive support from a mentor teacher. In this case, mentorship comes from other elements of the program including cohort community living and university staff.

As these new alternative teaching programs have emerged, there has been more research conducted on their effectiveness. One common metric that is used to

evaluate these programs is retention rates in the profession of their graduates. In 2016, Zhang and Zeller analyzed retention rates of teachers in their first five years of the profession and separated the data based upon the type of teacher preparation model. The general data suggest that teachers who went through traditional four-year undergraduate preparation models were more likely to stay in teaching in the first five years, as compared to alternative certification programs and residency programs (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). However, this study did not evaluate specific programs. Research demonstrates that residency programs, such as New York City Teaching Fellows and UCCE programs, have higher rates of teacher retention in the field. In a 2012 study it was found that 75% of teachers who completed New York City's program were still teaching after four years (Papay, West, Fullerton, & Kane, 2012). Additionally, of participants who graduated from UCCE programs, 47% stayed at their placement school after graduation and an additional 24% remained teaching in a Catholic school system (Davies & Kennedy, 2009). Unfortunately, TFA has come under much scrutiny as a residency program, with some critics pointing out that completers of this program stay in education at much lower rates than the national average and are negatively impacting the schools they serve because of the financial and learning gains lost when teachers transition out of schools. This is in part due to TFA's preparation model for teachers entering the field. Darling-Hammond found in a 1994 program analysis that TFA had major shortcomings in teacher preparation and cited that five former TFA teachers left the field within the first year directly because of a lack in preparation. While teacher retention is not the only metric of success for a teacher preparation program, it is important to acknowledge that programs which

produce teachers who are more likely to stay in the field are, arguably, contributing to the overall stability of the education system as a whole.

In a limited number of studies, the efficacy of religiously affiliated residency programs has also been examined. A 2009 study by Kennedy and Davies found that graduates of religiously affiliated programs in the University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE) stayed in the teaching profession in the five years after graduation at higher rates than the national average. These graduates largely taught in Catholic schools and served for two years while earning a master's level degree as well as a teaching license. While there are 13 programs that are part of the UCCE, there have been a limited number of studies of each specific program.

One program that has been given some research attention is the Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education (PACE) which operates under the University of Portland, a Catholic university in Portland, Oregon. In a 2016 study, Exley found that graduates of the PACE program stayed teaching after graduation from the program at higher rates than the national average and fellow UCCE programs. Additionally, the study examined the role that PACE's core pillars played on the graduates' experience of the program. Nevertheless, the study did not look at factors of the graduates' experience that may have affected the decision to stay in the teaching field five years after graduation.

Deficiencies in Past Literature

While several quantitative studies have been conducted to examine retention rates within UCCE programs, and specifically PACE, there have been few qualitative studies that explore experiences of graduates of PACE and the effect those

experiences may have had on the decision to stay in the field of teaching. By exploring factors that may have affected graduates' decisions to continue in the teaching field, teacher education programs can reform their structures and curriculum.

Audience

This study may be used to inform the practices and policies of administrators of teacher preparation programs. Because this study aims to examine the higher retention rates of teachers in the field that have graduated from the PACE program, best practices and programmatic elements may be utilized to better improve other programs. Additionally, this study may provide useful information to the 13 other UCCE programs that share some characteristics with the PACE program, and may provide implementable elements that might improve other programs. Since PACE shares similarities and differences with other teacher preparation programs, best practices may better inform a variety of other programs.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this case study was to explore PACE program graduates' decisions to remain teaching five years after the completion of the program. Participants were graduates of the PACE program who were still teaching in the field up to five years after graduation. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews aimed to explore the experiences that affect the decision making of PACE graduates.

Research Questions

- RQ1: How do PACE program experiences affect PACE graduates' retention rates in teaching after graduation?
- RQ2: How do working conditions in PACE schools affect graduates' decisions to remain in the teaching profession during the first five years of their career?
- RQ3: How do PACE's multiple communities of practice affect participants' decisions to stay in the field after graduation?

Significance of the Study

It is important to examine program experiences that may affect teacher retention because it allows program creators and implementers to utilize best practices for administering teacher preparation programs. As alternative licensure programs become more common, it is important to acknowledge the crucialness in educating future teachers who are particularly effective and remain in the field. While teacher retention is not solely correlated to teacher success or effectiveness, it does indicate some level of stability in the field (Ingersoll, 2006).

Although previous studies have examined the retention rates in the field of teaching of graduates of the PACE program, there is a gap in the research in exploring the experiences of the graduates of this program. By exploring the experiences of recent graduates of the PACE program, more information can be gathered regarding effective practices of this alternative certification program. This information can inform programmatic or curricular changes for the PACE program, other residential teaching programs, and teacher preparation programs as a whole. In attempting to

make programmatic and curricular changes, teacher preparation programs can foster environments that affect a teacher's decision to stay in the teaching field for five years and further (Raue & Gray, 2015).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Teacher Retention in the United States

A 2006 study conducted by Strunk and Robinson sought to use data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and disaggregated the data to examine other factors and variables that might impact teacher retention. Using a national database provided by NCES, researchers randomly sampled 28,885 teachers across 6,481 schools. Strunk and Robinson (2006) concluded that foreign language teachers were more likely to leave their positions, citing that many of these teachers are early educators on probationary teaching licenses who lack career experience. They also found there was no statistical difference between male and female attrition rates amongst teachers. More importantly, they established that although there was not a linear relationship between experience and probability of leaving the field; it was clear that teachers with fewer than four years of teaching experience were statistically more likely to leave the field of teaching. While this research does provide general information about teachers on a national level, a more state-specific or district-specific study would yield more specialized and detailed factors affecting teachers in particular areas of the country.

A more recent quantitative study by Raue and Gray (2015) examined Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The study followed 1,990 first year teachers who began teaching during the 2007-2008 school year. Teachers were surveyed every year in their first five years of teaching and were categorized as “stayers” that remained at their school, “movers” that went to teach at a different school, and “leavers” who left the teaching

field. The study found that 10% of first year teachers left the field after the first year of teaching and that 23% of teachers had left the field by year five of teaching. While these attrition rates are not as weak as previous studies, the data indicate that close to one in four teachers left the field in the first five years of teaching.

In a study by Collins and Schaaf (2020), researchers examined teacher retention of over 50,000 public school teachers in the state of Tennessee. Collins and Schaaf found that between the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years 90% of teachers in the state stayed teaching in Tennessee, while 80% of teachers were retained at the school where they taught. Teachers who had more than five years of teaching experience were retained within their school at a rate of 83%, while those with less than five years of experience stayed in their school at a rate of 75%, and teachers that were in their first-year teaching stayed at their schools at a rate of 69%. It was determined that urban teacher retention rates were lower than their suburban and rural counterparts, and those teachers that were moving schools were less likely to move to an urban school. While these retention rates are above the national average, Collins and Schaaf indicate that upon follow up from a 2013-14 school year study, only 60% of teachers were at the same school as they were five years prior. Additionally, 13% of Tennessee's public-school teachers are Black and those teachers are retained at a rate of 79% in the state as compared to White teachers who were retained at a rate of 87% within the state. Collins and Schaaf attributed the departure of Black teachers at higher rates to the fact that Black teachers were more likely to teach in urban schools that have higher turnover rates for Black and white teachers. This study of Tennessee's

public education system re-affirms that schools and districts see relatively high attrition rates across teachers in the United States.

Factors that affect teacher retention. There are many factors that influence a teacher's decision to stay in their current position or leave the field. A 2017 study conducted by Chiong, Menzies and Parameshwaran, examined why teachers decide to stay in the teaching field. Researchers surveyed 926 teachers in England, and included teachers in both urban and rural settings. Based on the results of the surveys, researchers determined the two most common reasons that teachers chose to remain in the field were "professional mastery reasons" and "altruistic reasons." Participants who remained in the field because of professional mastery reasons connected with the statements: "I teach because it is something that I am good at" and "I teach because it was something I was well qualified to do." Participants who connected with altruistic values indicated that they continue to teach because they are making a difference in society and students' lives, and that their impactful relationships with students was a motivating factor for remaining in the field. These findings were also consistent with previous studies as well. One limitation of this study is surveyed teachers had varying degrees of success in the classroom based on metrics like standardized test scores or evaluations. Researchers could have separated the data and looked at the results of teachers who were more effective in the field based on certain metrics.

Several studies have also examined why teachers decide to leave schools. When surveyed, a focus group of 40 teachers indicated factors that influenced their decision to leave the field included workload, quality of leadership in the school, insufficient pay, and lack of support (Menzies, 2015). Most schools cannot directly

change pay or workload, but some have experimented with establishing more clear forms of support for new teachers. Schools and districts have attempted to react to this feedback with a variety of programs and systems put into place to give teachers a better sense of support in the form of mentorship. In one quantitative study that examined 1,440 first year teachers in the United States, Raue (2015) found that teachers who were assigned a mentor in their first years of the profession were 10% more likely to stay in teaching as compared to those who were not assigned a mentor. Additionally, Ingersol and Smith (2014) found that the best mentors for incoming teachers provided guidance and support. Clement (2019) indicates that effective mentors provide classroom resources for beginning teachers, as well as helping a new teacher organize their classroom and lesson plans, and orienting them to a new school environment. Good mentors also model positive time management and invite mentees to observe the mentor teacher in their classroom to gain best practices. In a later study, Raue (2015) indicated that when incoming teachers were placed in an induction program, 80% of them stayed in the profession for at least five years. Induction programs are designed to support teachers in the first years of teaching by providing models and tools to begin the teaching career and provide specific guidance towards meeting performance standards. Induction programs involve schools assigning an experienced teacher as a mentor to new incoming teachers. When provided with additional support, schools have seen increased retention rates of teachers over time. While Raue's study did examine the relationship between teacher retention and a variety of supports an early teacher may receive, it did not ask those who left the field what factors led to the decision to leave.

A 2020 study conducted by Ulas and Senel examined relationships between a teacher's commitment to teaching, their teaching efficacy, and feelings of marginalization and isolation. Participants were 408 physical education teachers in the Turkish education system. Data from the results of the Ohio Teacher Efficacy Scale were compared to a survey sent to participants in which teachers' commitment to teaching and feelings of isolation were measured. Researchers found that these three relationships correlated with one another in multiple ways. Participants with high levels of feeling marginalized and isolated also indicated they had a lower commitment to teaching and were less efficient in the classroom. Additionally, participants that were highly efficient were also statistically significantly more likely to have a higher commitment to teaching and fewer feelings around being marginalized and isolated. It was concluded that one way to increase teacher efficacy and commitment to teaching is to find ways to make teachers feel less isolated. Some proposed solutions included mentorship programs, new teacher induction programs, and providing professional development to teachers. While this study did have statistically significant findings, its results are not very generalizable because the participants were Turkish physical education teachers. A more diverse sampling may have led to more generalizable results.

There are several studies that have examined qualitative data regarding teacher decisions to leave the field. In a 2002 qualitative study by Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Lui and Peske, researchers interviewed 50 first- and second-year teachers in Massachusetts to identify issues that these teachers encountered. Interview data revealed that many first- and second- year teachers felt overwhelmed and lacked the

kind of guidance and support they received in their preparation programs.

Additionally, it was found that teachers had a heightened sense of anxiety because of the pressure associated with standardized tests. Several interviewees indicated this pressure was too much to handle and they considered leaving their job. The researchers suggested providing early educators communities of assistance and support to help them implement unfamiliar curriculum.

Another factor that impacts early teacher retention is the loss of idealism that early career educators face. A 2001 study by Chubbuck, Clift, Allard, and Quinlan explored this concept by examining the phenomenon described as “reality shock” when teachers enter the field. “Reality shock”, in this context, is described as the difference in values and ideals that is found in teacher preparation programs and the values and ideals experienced in the field. In interviews with 41 first- and second- year teachers, researchers found that teacher preparation programs fostered communities of support, experimentation, and innovation, whereas early teachers in the field found schools and districts did little to offer these supports or areas of innovation.

Researchers suggested establishing communities of support, including but not limited to professional learning communities, can help reduce early educators’ shock when they enter the field. Additionally, these researchers suggested larger systemic issues need to be addressed to create education environments that allow early educators to feel safe enough to experiment with new, innovative ways of teaching. This may include reducing the importance of standardized testing scores, so that teachers feel as if the risk of experimentation will not result in the perceived shortcomings of the teacher.

In a 2002 study, Tye and O'Brien surveyed 114 graduates of Chapman University that had graduated and entered the field of teaching. Of the teachers surveyed, 51% were still in the teaching field and 49% had left the field. Graduates that were still teaching were asked to rank and describe factors that might cause them to leave the field, while graduates who had already left the field were asked to rank and describe factors that caused them to leave teaching. Of those teachers that had left the field, the most common response was an increased emphasis on testing and accountability, with many teachers lamenting they felt they were just teaching to the standards rather than exercising true creative liberty in the classroom. Both teachers in the field and those that had left the field indicated a difficult workload was a cause. Many teachers indicated much of the increased workload at school included additional paperwork and useless meetings. This additional workload at school caused teachers to take home other necessary work such as lesson planning or grading. Finally, both teachers in the field and those that had left the field indicated lack of administrative support led to job dissatisfaction, with one teacher indicating "all administrators want is a lack of waves" or teachers that do not cause controversy or difficulties at the school (p. 6).

In 2016, recommendations made by the Learning Policy Institute, posited key areas that can be improved to increase teacher retention. These included salaries and compensation, preparation and cost of entry into the profession, induction and support, and working conditions (Podolsky, Kini, Bishop & Darling-Hammond). Researchers imply that by tying teacher salaries to regional cost of living, schools and districts can incentivize teachers to remain at their schools. Additionally, it is recommended that

the federal government cover the cost of teacher preparation through scholarship or loan forgiveness for teachers that commit to teaching in high-needs communities or for positions that are in demand. More funds from the federal government can also help fund quality induction programs which could lead to new teachers staying in the field at higher rates because of the support structure that quality induction programs bring. Finally, researchers recommend investing in the development of effective principals to create better working environments for teachers, as well as developing methods for collecting teacher feedback to be able to make appropriate changes within school cultures.

Further studies have explored the effect of working conditions on teacher morale and attitudes towards work. A 2016 study by Leithwood and McAdie found that working conditions directly impacted eight self-reflective opinions teachers had of themselves. These included individual sense of professional efficacy, collective sense of professional efficacy, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, stress and burnout, morale, engagement to the school and profession, and pedagogical content knowledge. Within the classroom Leithwood and McAdie found that workload volume had a significant impact on those self-reflective opinions. Teachers that perceived they had a higher workload volume felt they had excessive paperwork, or too many students to maintain, had lower morale, and were more likely to seek employment at another school. Additionally, teachers were more likely to perceive that their own personal workload was excessive when they actively compared their workload to other professionals within their own school or another school. Another working condition that Leithwood and McAdie identified was school culture. School

cultures that indicated clear goals for teachers led to lower levels of conflict and positively contributed to seven of the eight internal states. Finally, principal leadership had a large impact on workplace conditions and best practices were indicated.

Principals who exhibited strong direction setting were more likely to have teachers who held themselves accountable for school expectations. Additionally, principals that focused on personal and professional development created more supportive environments for teachers. Many of the recommendations by Leithwood and McAdie are implementable, but some factors require significant funding to create supportive work environments.

During the 2020-21 school year, the COVID-19 global pandemic impacted teacher working conditions on a variety of fronts. Depending on local guidelines, teachers taught remotely, in-person, or a combination of the two. Some researchers hypothesized that because of the new demands put on educators there may be a sharp increase in teachers leaving the field (Will, Gewertz, Schwartz, 2020). Many teachers expressed frustration over the demands placed upon them, but researchers found there was no discernable trend in teachers leaving the field across the United States. Within this study, some educators indicated they considered retiring early because of pandemic restrictions, but many indicated they were going to remain teaching through the pandemic to serve their students.

Model of teacher preparation and teacher retention. Another factor that has been shown to affect teacher retention is the model of the teacher preparation program in which teachers participate. Because of the variety of teacher preparation programs available, it is important to determine if certain programs cultivate teachers who are

more likely to stay within the field of education. Although some data regarding retention and the type of teacher preparation programs do exist, there is still substantial research that needs to be done because of the vast number of teacher preparation programs available and the large variance in how those programs operate.

A 2020 study explored teacher retention of teachers in their first three years teaching in public schools in Rhode Island (Bailey, Khanani, Lacireno-Paquet, Shakman, & Bock). Using graduate data from the 11 state teacher preparation providers researchers, of 946 beginning teachers between the years of 2012 and 2017, only 31% of them were still teaching in their initial school, 34% were teaching in a different public school and 34% were no longer in the teaching field. It was found that teachers in Rhode Island that had been licensed through an alternative teacher preparation program that permitted candidates to teach before all licensure requirements were met, left the field after three years at a significantly higher rate of 72% as compared to their traditional four-year undergraduate peers that left the field at a rate of 21% after the first three years. While teachers who participated in alternative teacher preparation programs left the field at a higher rate than their traditionally prepared counterparts, the alternative preparation program graduates were also a smaller sample size. It is important to acknowledge that alternative teacher preparation programs vary greatly in quality and content, and data pertaining to these graduates may represent a wide variety of program experiences and preparation.

It is also important to note that teacher preparation does not always have a direct effect on teacher retention. For example, a 2009 study by Freedman and Appleman examined qualitative and quantitative data by following 26 novice teachers

over the course of their first five years of teaching in high-poverty, urban schools. Teachers were surveyed each year to determine whether the teacher was still at the school, whether they moved to another school, or whether she or he left the field of teaching. Freedman and Appleman found that teachers in high-poverty areas were more likely to continue teaching if they were able to adopt multiple educational roles and that teacher preparation methods did not have a strong influence over the teacher's decision to continue teaching (2009). This study, however, was conducted in urban schools in high-poverty areas and is not necessarily generalizable to a national level. This indicates that teacher preparation methods are still a worthy factor in examining teacher retention.

Teacher retention in Catholic schools. When examining teacher retention within the Catholic school system several key findings are notable. According to Przygocki, teachers who are under 40 in Catholic schools are statistically more likely to leave their positions than teachers under 40 in public schools (2004). Several factors have been identified as a cause of this trend. The primary factor for teachers under the age of 40 leaving Catholic schools at higher rates is a significant difference in salary between Catholic and public schools, with some Catholic school teachers making approximately half of the annual salary of a public-school teacher (Schuttloffel, 2001). These lower salaries can often be attributed to low job satisfaction among teachers in the field. In a 1991 meta-analysis that examined nationwide data from the National Catholic Educational Association, Guerra found that salary schedules at Catholic schools were historically lower than public schools and that job satisfaction was tightly linked with salary. Because of these salary differences, Catholic schools often

find it more difficult to recruit and retain high quality educators. While this study did look at reasons that Catholic school teachers left Catholic schools, it did not examine motivations for teachers to remain in the school in which they taught.

With Catholic school teacher retention rates lower than public school teacher retention rates, it is important to look at factors that teachers who stay in the field of Catholic education cite as important in a teacher's decision-making process. In a 1992 book, Convey examined survey data from Catholic school teachers to determine factors that affected a teacher's choice to stay at their school. Those teachers that chose to remain in Catholic education often placed higher values on the quality of the environment, a love of teaching, and teaching as a faith ministry, than on the factor of salary (Convey, 1992). While these findings reaffirm Guerra's assertion, other factors influence a Catholic school teacher's decision to stay in the field. A 2017 qualitative study by Jakuback surveyed 13 Catholic school teachers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Teachers were interviewed one on one and asked several questions about their decisions to continue working in Catholic schools. It was found that although Catholic school teachers made less than their public-school counterparts, many Catholic school teachers appreciated the interpersonal relationships they were able to create in their smaller communities, as well as a greater sense of collaboration and collegiality. This was primarily associated with the relatively smaller size of Catholic schools and their values-driven missions. Because teachers are retained at lower rates within Catholic schools, these factors outside of salary can be emphasized to retain teachers within the Catholic school system. While this study examined factors that retained teachers in

Catholic schools, it was limited in scope because of regional sampling and would need to be replicated to be generalizable to other parts of the country.

Models of Teacher Preparation Programs

There are numerous ways in which teachers are prepared across America. Because of the variance and number of teacher preparation programs it is important to analyze the effectiveness of these programs and examine factors that might affect teacher retention. By examining program features of traditional four-year teacher preparation programs and a variety of alternative preparation programs, researchers can evaluate the relationship between the type of teacher preparation program and the retention rates of early educators in the field.

Four-year teacher preparation program. The most common form of teacher preparation program is the four-year teacher preparation programs that take place across colleges and universities throughout America (Feistritzer, 2011). These programs occur during students' undergraduate experience and almost always incorporate a pathway for state licensure in teaching after graduation. Additionally, the most common form of teaching experience in these programs is the student teaching placement which involves the undergraduate student entering a classroom and working alongside a cooperating teacher to teach classes, usually for a limited amount of time (Feistritzer, 2011). Because of the time and financial commitments associated with this form of teacher preparation, many people decide to seek out teaching programs after receiving an undergraduate degree that includes a more specialized program (Feistritser, 2011).

The number of courses and the content of those courses also impact teacher retention. In a 2012 study that examined quantitative data from over 50,000 teachers over a time period of 20 years, the NCES, researchers found that teachers who had taken more courses in teaching assessment and methods were more likely to stay in the occupation, regardless of their prior knowledge, experience, or comfort with the subject area that they were teaching (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2012). There was also a substantial movement to integrate a clinical component into teacher preparation programs. Many universities seek to connect campus courses with teaching practices and faculty often focus on the clinical side of teaching (Zeichner, 2010). For the case of this study, clinical experience was defined as a student teacher directly teaching in the subject area. The shift for universities to focus more on the clinical component of teaching has allowed for program participants to participate in more accurate experiences of teaching in classrooms prior to being the sole instructor in the room.

Alternative certification programs. A four-year bachelor's degree requires a substantial financial and time investment to receive a teaching license. As a result, alternative certification programs were established, in part, to help reduce the barriers of entry for prospective teachers who wanted to enter the field. Alternative certification programs are defined as academic programs that do not result in a bachelor's degree but do grant the completer a teaching license (Feistritzer and Chester, 2002). As low retention rates of teachers remain, states and institutions of higher education have sought ways in which non-traditional students can receive licensure. Feistritzer (2011) analyzed nationally collected survey data from 1,171 educators and determined that 33% of public-school teachers came from an alternative

certification program, as compared to 1980, when an overwhelming 88% of first time teachers came from a four-year undergraduate degree program. The rise in popularity of these alternative programs has led to an influx of recent research regarding their effectiveness in preparing educators.

It is important to recognize that because of the broad nature of the definition of alternative certification programs, there are vast differences in the ways that these programs operate. Over time, the majority of alternative certification programs have come to mirror traditional programs with over one third of the programs requiring a master's degree component with approximately 30 hours of study (Walsh and Jacobs, 2007). While these programs have been designed to reduce the barriers of entry into the teaching field for qualified adults, their effectiveness varies based upon the type of alternative certification program and the acceptance rate into such programs. Walsh and Jacobs (2007) found that two-thirds of alternative certification programs on average accept more people than they reject, thus indicating that the majority of alternative certification programs are not as selective as some of their minority program counterparts. It is important to note that selectivity does not ensure higher quality candidates, but it can be a determining factor. Most programs did not provide teacher support in the first year of teaching and cost graduates between \$5,000 and \$10,000 (Walsh and Jacobs, 2007). When examining the effectiveness of alternative certification programs, it is important to look at models that have yielded teachers who remain in the profession and who report valuable experiences.

Retention in traditional four-year preparation compared to alternative certification programs. Traditional four-year preparation programs prepare the

majority of teachers that are in the field. A 2016 mixed-methods study by Zhang and Zeller interviewed 60 first and second-year teachers across North Carolina that had been prepared by a variety of models, including a four-year traditional undergraduate model and an alternative certification model. Researchers found that teachers who went through traditional four-year preparation models were statistically more likely to stay in teaching over seven years as compared to an alternative certification program and a residency program (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). The researchers posit that because of the duration of undergraduate education, there is more time for students to develop their own philosophy of education and be more committed to education in the long term. The study did acknowledge that because of the small sample size, the results were not likely generalizable. While four-year preparation programs did display higher levels of retention in education, there are specific alternative certification programs that do produce teachers with higher rates of retention in the field.

Teacher retention after TFA. There is research that indicates that certain aspects of TFA's teaching model does not effectively fulfill its purpose and goals (Heineke, 2014). Because the TFA model does not involve teacher licensure, its teacher preparation and mentorship models are not tied to any given state or national standards. A 2014 quantitative study by Heineke surveyed 73 TFA teachers leaving TFA after their two-year commitment. The teachers all came from the same region of the TFA program. Half of the survey respondents reported that they would be staying in the teaching field for the foreseeable future, 18% reported that they planned to stay in the field for just one more year, and 32% were planning to leave the field. About 65% of those that were planning to leave the field in the immediate or near future were

planning on going back to graduate school to pursue degrees in law or attend medical school. Additionally, of those deciding to stay in the teaching field for the foreseeable future, 35% acknowledged that they may plan to change careers in the future, but did not currently have a concrete plan in place. This study would be more indicative of wider TFA trends if the survey respondents had been from diverse regions of the TFA program. With a broader sample of survey respondents, researchers could better understand if TFA participants left the field because of the program itself or for alternative reasons.

Anderson (2019) pointed out that TFA places participants for two years in high-need, low-socioeconomic status schools, and therefore a higher attrition rate is to be expected. Although TFA provides temporary stability in struggling urban schools, issues with high attrition continue to negatively impact these schools in the long-term (Anderson, 2019). While TFA was one of the first organizations to popularize alternative teaching programs amongst college graduates, others have followed it and have higher rates of retention and increased measures of teacher preparation and effectiveness (Anderson, 2019). Thus, there is a need to further explore ways in which to combat these potential pitfalls.

One of the ways that TFA affects short-term teacher retention in the schools the organization serves is through their lack of professional development. Researchers have found “such failures are especially pronounced among recruits who are placed in elementary and middle schools but have had no training in child development, learning theory, or such essential skills as how to teach reading” (Darling-Hammond, 1994, p. 9). Because of the lack of preparation of TFA teachers in these fields,

participants in the program find that they are underqualified and overwhelmed with the responsibilities of teaching. A 2014 study by Brewer critically analyzed the theoretical framework of TFA and found that the teachers received inadequate training to enter the field. Specifically, because the preparation for TFA teachers takes place over the course of a short summer session, these overwhelming feelings lead to increased feelings of burnout, often at an accelerated rate (Brewer, 2014). Lack of preparation in teaching methods often contributed to feelings of less preparedness when entering the classroom. In order for alternative teaching models to have lasting impacts on retention in the profession of teaching, teacher preparation needs to be comprehensive, extensive, and take place over time (Brewer, 2014). Some of the logistical constraints, along with some other limitations, adversely affect the retention of completers of TFA in the field of education.

As TFA has developed over time, they have attempted to address earlier research claims that their teacher preparation programs have been lacking in teaching practical skills in the classroom. In 2016, TFA attempted to adjust by changing its summer teacher training and implementing a new, re-designed model (Rappaport, Somers & Granito, 2019). Rappaport, Somers and Granito (2019) reported that although this new implemented model was “bold,” instructors were not adequately prepared for the new curriculum and much of the implementation of the new instruction was left up to the individual instructor. Although these professional development summers have been adjusted since the implementation in 2016, there are still data that suggest that these new professional development re-designs have not had an impact on TFA teacher retention in the field of teaching and that retention rates in

teaching amongst completers of the program is still on the decline (Brewer, 2019).

Brewer (2019) suggests that low retention rates in TFA might be a result of the short period of teacher preparation and not the actual content.

The residency teaching model. Some alternative certification models have incorporated an emphasis on teaching as the full-time teacher of record within a classroom while working towards certification. The National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) describes a teacher residency model that “blends a rigorous full-year classroom apprenticeship for pre-service teachers, with academic coursework that is closely aligned with the classroom experience.” According to Gatti and Catalano (2015), of 17 residency programs reviewed, all of them shared three common elements that included a year-long paid internship with concurrent Masters coursework, participation in a cohort with other teachers in the program, and intensive induction support. These elements are designed to support teachers through a rigorous apprenticeship. Additionally, Wasburne-Moses (2012) noted that districts and program providers, which are usually local universities, work with one another to inform the curriculum and content of the coursework provided to participants in order to better prepare participants for the district they are about to enter. This unique aspect of residency programs may help better support teachers entering the field in specific districts, but does not necessarily mean it is replicable or transferable to other districts or programs because collaboration requires buy-in from all stakeholders.

Residency programs tend to accept fewer candidates, about one in six, and require additional academic and experience requirements, in the form of higher GPA requirements and prior leadership experience (Walsh and Jacobs, 2007). These

programs are more selective and recruit candidates with higher GPAs and leadership experiences because of the need to have high quality candidates immediately in classrooms. A 2015 study by Silva examined 377 teachers in their first and second years of teaching in a residency program in an urban setting. Researchers analyzed district administrative data to determine if teachers stayed in the same school, moved to another school in the school district, or if the teacher left the district. These teachers represented 12 programs that were being supported by federal grants. Silva found that teachers in these programs were more likely to stay in their school in the years after graduation than first- and second-year teachers in similar placements. Those teachers that did move schools most often moved to schools in the same district with higher achievement levels. This study did not examine the long-term retention rates of graduates of these programs.

Effective teacher residency models. Several universities across the United States have implemented teacher residency models to prepare teachers for the profession. One such program is Old Dominion University's Teacher Immersion Residency (ODU-TIR) program. Program participants engage in a year-long immersive teaching apprenticeship while taking courses at Old Dominion and receiving support from their fellow program participants as well as strong mentor teachers (Britt, Donahue & Judge, 2016). Additionally, ODU-TIR brings program participants together every Friday to discuss a variety of topics and issues that are introduced by the participants themselves. When participants join ODU-TIR, they are also asked to commit to three additional years of employment to the school district in which they serve. In the first four years of the program, 100 percent of all graduating

residents received a master's degree and were hired by one of the two participating districts and by the end of the 2013-2014 school year 100 percent of graduates of the program had served their three years of additional service (Britt, Donahue & Judge, 2016). Partner principals also indicated that residents in the ODU-TIR program were better prepared to teach than traditional beginning teachers. Finally, program participants indicated that a strong sense of partnership with their mentor teachers and reliance on one another in the cohort model led to students feeling more supported during and after their experience in the program (Britt, Donahue & Judge, 2016). One area of concern that was mentioned by program participants is the variable quality of mentor teachers, with some participants expressing frustration that some mentors were better prepared to serve as a mentor than others.

Another residency program that aims to prepare teachers through a year-long intensive apprenticeship is the University of California, Los Angeles Inspiring Minds through a Professional Alliance of Community Teachers (UCLA-IMPACT) program. This program aims to recruit a diverse pool of candidates to serve in Los Angeles schools by providing residents with a living stipend, while facilitating a full year apprenticeship experience at a school site (Nava-Landeros, Isken & Francois, 2020). Ingersoll (2003) indicated that teachers who teach in high-poverty school districts are 50% more likely to leave their school district than teachers in schools that are not in high-poverty areas. UCLA-IMPACT has placed 240 teachers in Title 1 schools that predominantly serve students of color in the Los Angeles area and has seen a retention rate of 86% for teachers after their first three years in the same district and 76% for teachers after their first five years (Nava-Landeros, Isken & Francois, 2020).

Additionally, UCLA-IMPACT aims to heighten the cohort model by asking partner schools to accept multiple residents at one time in order to allow program participants at the same school utilize one another for socio-emotional support and give a sense of shared experiences. There is also a sense that the UCLA-IMPACT program is built on strong partnerships with the Los Angeles School District where stakeholders from the district and UCLA can invest in long term career arcs for teachers in the area (Nava-Landeros, Isken & Francois, 2020). Because this strong partnership takes time to establish, yet is so integral to the efficiency of the program, it may be difficult to replicate between other universities and school districts if one of the stakeholders is not as invested in establishing a program.

One final residency program that has seen success is the University of Indianapolis's Woodrow Wilson Indiana Teaching Fellowship Program (WWITFP). This residency program is focused on preparing teachers to teach in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) environments and has participants teach in one of three local districts for one year with a mentor teacher (Drake, Moran, Sachs, Angelov & Wheeler, 2011). The aim of WWITFP is to weave education theory and classroom practice while providing candidates with an experienced and trained mentor to support them during their year-long placements. Additionally, WWITFP aims to provide additional supports to graduates upon departure from the program. Once graduates are hired in an urban, high-need school within or outside a partner district, they are assigned a content-area mentor who maintains regular contact with the graduate through in-person observations and phone and video conferencing (Drake, Moran, Sachs, Angelov & Wheeler, 2011). Of all graduates of WWITFP, 60% have

been hired in high-need schools across the state of Indiana. While WWITFP has shown promise in preparing future educators, program administrators admit that the program has a higher financial cost and investment than a traditional four-year teaching program.

District-based residency models. In many urban areas, teacher shortages have a greater effect on a wider population. As a result, school districts have taken notice of some of the successes of residency models and have developed alternative certification programs that incorporate residency components (Boyd, 2008). While some cities have implemented programs that have specific academies at which residential teachers can teach, there are quite a few that have implemented incentive structures in order to attract teachers to residency models in very urban areas. Candidates are asked to teach in public schools for two years and are often guaranteed a full-time job with a salary and benefits and a partially or fully subsidized education program to achieve licensure (Boyd, 2008). These programs are used to address teaching shortages in urban areas.

The rise and availability of alternative teacher preparation programs has allowed for some district-based programs to emerge. Some public-school districts viewed the teaching residency model as not only an opportunity to prepare and license teachers, but also to foster teacher retention in urban schools in which teachers serve (Feistritzer and Chester 2002). One of these institutions that implemented a teaching residency model is New York City's public education system. New York City Teaching Fellows (NYCTF) is one of the country's largest selective alternative route certification programs that incorporates a residency component (Foote, Brantlinger, Haydar, Smith & Gonzalez, 2011). Members of NYCTF dedicate two years of their

lives to teaching in struggling schools in New York City. In return, participants receive a low-cost teacher certification from one of several local universities.

Additionally, NYCTF is an alternative route certification program in which participants receive formal teacher preparation in select colleges and universities across New York City. Additionally, the state of New York also requires certain systems of support to be implemented in their alternative route certification programs. These include consultation with faculty and school district personnel, daily mentoring in the first eight weeks of teaching, scheduled time to meet with mentors, monthly observations from a mentor, and ongoing support with university faculty (New York State Education Department, 2000). These supports are informed by educational policy in New York and are regarded as adequate ways in which teachers can be supported in alternative certification programs. Research indicates that within NYCTF's program, and other urban city programs, while participants agree that the aforementioned supports would be beneficial to incoming teachers, program participants often find that these supports are inconsistently applied or not applied at all within their program (Foote et. al, 2011). Without systems of accountability, NYCTF's program does not have an effective means of measuring their achievement of standards outlined by the state.

Teacher retention after district-based residency models. District-based residency models have found some margins of success in training and retaining early career educators. Of 45 teachers surveyed in the Boston teaching residency model, 88% stayed in teaching after their first two years in the program and 75% stayed in teaching after four years (Papay, West, Fullerton, & Kane, 2012). These rates of

retention are much higher than their peers in Boston schools with only 83% of non-residency teachers choosing to continue teaching after one year and 51% choosing to continue teaching after five years. It was also found that the long-term commitment of these teachers in Boston led to increased student math scores. If residency models are more likely to produce teachers who stay longer in teaching than some of their alternative certification siblings, they should be explored as viable solutions to the current teaching shortage crisis.

There is conflicting research regarding NYTF's teacher preparation model. Because NYTF does allow for licensure at the end of the program, the program is closely aligned with coursework at local universities. NYTF has identified that its teachers are trained in the *new professionalism* model which views teaching as a technical undertaking and sees teachers as easily replaceable because teachers are present in order to implement scripted curricula. (Brantinger & Smith, 2013). Because of the variability of the institutions preparing teachers in this program, researchers have found that not all institutions participating in NYTF teach to the same standards. One quantitative study surveyed 270 math teachers in NYTF (Brantlinger & Smith, 2013). Teachers were surveyed regarding the preparation received and asked if it met the goals set out in the model presented by NYTF. Of the four universities the math teachers attended, researchers found that teachers felt only one was teaching to the standards and the other three were not meeting those standards to various degrees (Brantlinger & Smith, 2013). The variability across these participating institutions has led to an inconsistent implementation of alternative route certification standards in this regional program.

There have been several urban teaching programs that attempted to address the concerns and issues that these residency programs possess by implementing programs at the university level. One notable program began at Bank Street College and its partnership with Boston's Teaching Residency (BTR) program. Researchers sought to evaluate the efficacy of the BTR program by analyzing program and district data from as far back as the program's founding in 2003. Careers of the program's graduates were tracked, and researchers sought to analyze retention in the field. Researchers analyzed the careers of 262 teachers that were BTR graduates. It was found that in order to create an effective and beneficial program, all stakeholders, including the university, district, and schools, needed to be part of the establishment of the program (Berry, Montgomery, & Snyder, 2008). Additionally, BTR teachers stayed in the field of teaching at higher rates than their non-residency counterparts (Papay, West, Fullerton, & Kane, 2012). By involving all stakeholders in the establishment of BTR, it is hypothesized that the program more effectively met its goal of keeping teachers teaching longer in urban Boston schools.

Religious alternative teaching programs. In addition to district-based teaching residency programs, a variety of faith-based universities have emerged to serve the needs of private religious schools. The University Consortium for Catholic Educators (UCCE) is a teacher preparation model that specifically serves the needs of under-resourced Catholic schools. The consortium began with the creation of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program in 1993 (Davies & Kennedy, 2009). In 1998, the model was replicated at several other universities, including the University of Portland, Loyola Marymount University and Providence College (Smith,

2007). All participants of UCCE programs are college graduates, who partake in a two-year residency in a Catholic school, while living in an intentional Christian community. The formation of these intentional communities was designed to be a support measure for young teachers in the field (Davies & Kennedy, 2009). All UCCE programs focus on the implementation of this community model with the intention of cultivating teaching cultures that promote long-term stability in Catholic schools.

UCCE programs share elements in common and several areas of difference with residency programs and other alternative teaching programs like TFA. Similar to TFA, UCCE program participants are the full-time teacher of record in the classroom and do not have a direct mentor in the classroom with them during their teaching. Additionally, the UCCE programs attract and recruit diverse candidates that would not be drawn to a traditional four-year teacher preparation program because of several factors, including cost and the desire to pursue graduate coursework and not another undergraduate degree. Like residency programs, the majority of UCCE programs offer free or reduced tuition and provide participants a modest living stipend.

Several UCCE programs have implemented mentorship models to provide mentors to their participants, but these are often colleagues designated to support participants in the field, and not every UCCE program implements a mentorship model. UCCE program participants do receive relevant concurrent coursework while they are teaching for two years in the program which is different from TFA's summer preparation model and more similar to a traditional residency model. UCCE participants are part of a cohort model which is something that many residency programs rely heavily on to offer support to their teachers. In UCCE programs,

participants are connected to a cohort and an intentional living community that can support participants during the first two years of teaching. Finally, many UCCE programs form strong partnerships with the dioceses and archdioceses they serve, but curriculum and instruction of the coursework provided is largely determined by the university itself. Some programs attempt to be more responsive to the individual needs of the dioceses and archdioceses they serve through a variety of methods, but traditional residency models tend to receive more input on instruction than UCCE programs.

Teacher retention after UCCE programs. Although there are limited studies into the effectiveness of UCCE programs, the results of those studies yield analyses of retention rates of UCCE graduates. Data were collected by Davies and Kennedy (2009) regarding participants and career paths of the alumni of UCCE programs. Career paths for 1,802 graduates of UCCE programs were analyzed and retention rates were calculated. From 1993, when ACE was first started, and 2009, the time of the study, there were several key findings. Of all 1,802 graduates surveyed, 47% stayed at their placement school for at least one year after graduation and an additional 24% chose to continue teaching in other Catholic schools for at least one year after graduation (Davies & Kennedy, 2009). In addition, the total rate of UCCE graduates still in the field of teaching after five years was 64% which is significantly higher than the national average of 50%. It is important to note the limitation that because of the size of the ACE program at Notre Dame, their graduates made up 57% of the total respondents of the survey. While specific conclusions about the factors that affect this statistical difference have not been confirmed, Davies and Kennedy point to several

factors that may affect teacher retention within these programs. These include the quality of program candidates, commitment to religious based institutions or missions, and program support both inside and outside the classroom (2009). While these characteristics are not exclusively linked to these programs, the combination of these factors may yield the increased retention rates. It is important to evaluate and further the exploration of these rates to examine program factors that may be replicated elsewhere.

It is important to note that because there is limited research regarding religious residency-based teaching programs, there is an opportunity to expand the field of knowledge by collecting and analyzing comprehensive data from these organizations. Additionally, higher than average retention rates do not necessarily indicate that teacher retention is a direct product of the type of program. By understanding the rationale behind the teachers who do graduate from these programs and go on to continue to teach, researchers can better understand components of these models that might have a direct impact on teacher retention.

Teacher retention in the Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education. One specific UCCE program that has been studied is the University of Portland's Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education (PACE). PACE is a Catholic school teaching residency program that has program participants teaching in Catholic school classrooms across seven states in the western United States. Participants simultaneously complete graduate coursework and most work towards their initial teaching license. PACE began in 1998 and ran an average cohort size of five to eight members for the first fifteen years of the program. Beginning in 2013, PACE cohorts

grew to an average of 23 to 28 participants, with the most recent 2020 cohort having 32 participants. As the program has grown, more attention has been drawn to the unique aspects of the program.

Prior to teaching in the field, participants complete six weeks of intensive coursework over the summer with an emphasis on preparing participants to enter the teaching field in the fall. While teaching in the program, participants primarily complete coursework during the summer while working on licensure requirements and seminar classes during the school year. Because participants are teaching in Catholic schools during their time in the program, it is not required that participants hold a teaching license and, therefore, are able to be the teacher of record in the classroom. Principals of schools that participate in hosting a PACE teacher are aware of the lack of experience a PACE teacher may have, but seek out PACE because of the desire to have a young, passionate teacher and a financial incentive that the PACE program provides to the school. While in the program, teachers earn a modest living stipend and live together in intentional communities within rent-controlled properties. All members of the program pay the same amount in rent and every participating school pays a fee to the University of Portland.

PACE shares many of the similarities and differences between UCCE programs, residency programs, and alternative teaching programs, but also has some unique aspects that borrow practices from these other programs. PACE attempts to create a more robust mentorship program than that found at TFA by having each partner school principal assign a staff member at their school to act as a mentor for the PACE teacher. While not as intensive as the mentorship provided by a traditional

residency program, this mentor is designated to provide support to PACE participants by meeting regularly and offering feedback. Similar to some residency programs, PACE provides participants structured coursework outside of the standard University of Portland curriculum during which PACE participants engage with their cohort on self-derived topics that teachers encounter in the Catholic schools in which they teach. PACE participants meet twice a week during the summer session to discuss unique aspects of their schools. These topics include discussion of the unique skills and knowledge needed to teach in a Catholic environment. In addition to these student-led conversations, PACE staff and administration work with partner schools, dioceses, and archdioceses to bring speakers and professional development to PACE teachers during summer instruction. These seminars, outside of the traditional coursework offered at the University of Portland, allow program participants to make connections between their formal University of Portland coursework and the practical experience they receive while teaching in Catholic schools. This aspect of PACE is similar to the foundations of residency programs.

PACE utilizes a similar stipend and tuition system that residency programs offer with additional benefits to help attract and recruit diverse candidates. Similar to some residency programs, PACE covers the cost of tuition for each participant while also granting them a modest living stipend. PACE also significantly subsidizes the housing for each community in the program, making rent affordable on that modest living stipend. These costs are covered by the PACE program's contracts with schools. Because PACE teachers are the full-time teacher of record in the school they serve, PACE partner schools pay the University of Portland a slightly subsidized portion of a

first-year teacher salary. This revenue is then used to cover the cost of PACE participant stipends, housing subsidies, and program administration at the University of Portland.

While PACE was founded in 1998 and has recently grown in size, few studies have examined aspects of the program. In 2016, Exley examined University of Portland's Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education (PACE) program in a comprehensive dissertation. Exley examined quantitative and qualitative survey data from 138 graduates of the program from 2010 to 2015. It was found that 88.29% of graduates were teaching in the first year after graduation, 84.81% of graduates were still teaching three years after graduation, and 81.34% of graduates were still teaching five years after graduation. These retention rates are statistically higher than both the national average and the retention rates of the UCCE aggregate data. Additionally, since the PACE teachers in this study generally were young teachers (under the age of 30) with less experience, the attrition rate is more impressive considering that age was often the main variable identified as a predictor of attrition (Goldring, Taie & Riddles, 2014; Ingersoll, 2001; Stunk & Robinson, 2006). Because of these higher retention rates, it is important to determine internal and external factors that may cause graduates of the PACE program to stay in the field at higher rates than their peers.

Exley's study did attempt to examine factors that might impact a graduate's decision to stay in the teaching field. This was done by evaluating quantitative data in the form of a survey that examined the importance or impact of the three main pillars of PACE. These pillars consist of Academic Learning, Professional Teaching, and Community Living. Academic Learning includes the coursework that candidates

receive during their summer months in the program. Professional Teaching focuses on the professional development that candidates receive from the program and the school in which they served. Community Living focuses on the intentional living component of the program in which participants agree to foster a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment, while actively engaging with one another's faith. While these pillars are not comprehensive to the PACE experience, many of the administrative decisions made in the program are through these lenses. Survey participants collectively ranked Professional Teaching as the most important pillar and Academic Learning as the least important pillar (Exley, 2016). While this survey was not comprehensive and did not examine specific elements of those pillars, the results do imply that factors that most impacted graduates were program elements that occurred outside the confines of students' academic studies.

Finally, Exley examined graduates' views of the program by examining qualitative data in the form of exit surveys administered to recent graduates of the program. The majority of the responses focused on the community living pillar of the program with many graduates citing that they found it challenging but also rewarding (Exley, 2016). Participants expressed feeling a sense of support from their community members and connection to one another. This factor is unique to both the UCCE and PACE programs and could indicate a unique component to support early career educators.

While these factors are important, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of the data collected by Exley. Both the qualitative exit survey and quantitative study examined graduates' relationship to the program through the lens of the program's

three main pillars. While the three pillars are defining features of the program, they do not encompass all factors that may have affected a graduate's decision to stay in the teaching field. By asking more comprehensive and broad questions, researchers may be able to more explicitly connect a teacher's decision to stay in the field and facets of the program. Additionally, if graduates are explicitly asked how PACE may or may not have affected their choice to stay teaching, researchers may find that the program itself may not have had an explicit effect on the graduates' decision.

Conclusion

In order to address the issue of teacher retention within the United States, it is important to evaluate ways in which teacher preparation programs can effectively create teachers who are more likely to stay in the field. With the rise in number of alternative licensure programs and the large disparity in quality between these programs, best practices and qualities of effective programs must be examined. While teacher retention in the first five years of teaching is just one metric for determining teacher success, it has been shown that teachers that stay in the field past those five years are statistically more likely to stay in the field than their peers that have just entered the field (Ingersoll, 2001). Teacher retention leads to longer term stability, cost saving, and student success within schools. Therefore, programs that yield higher teacher retention rates should be examined for best practices.

The PACE program has yielded graduates that stay in the field of teaching at higher rates than the national average. While there have been limited studies into the effectiveness of the PACE program, it is important to acknowledge that there are possible factors within the program that may be affecting these higher retention rates

in the first five years after graduation. By further exploring these experiences, best practices may be found that may chiefly inform the administration of alternative licensure programs and a variety of teacher preparation programs across the United States.

Theoretical Framework

Situated learning theory is a theory that aligns with fundamental components of the PACE program and program experiences can be viewed through the lens of this theory. Situated learning theory states that every idea and human action is a generalization, adapted to the ongoing environment; it is founded on the belief that what people learn, see, and do is situated in their role as a member of a community (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Situated learning theory was observed in several professional communities including midwives, tailors, and butchers. Participants gradually gain knowledge and skills both by doing the occupation and by interacting with others that are in the field. By learning in the field, participants in situated learning theory learn within a context to apply their skills, instead of abstract thoughts, theories, and ideas being absorbed in a more traditional classroom setting. Situated learning theory assumes that all instruction occurs in complex social environments, even when the learner is alone (Greeno, 1997). Although participants may be alone, they are still influenced by the social engagements and influences that brought them to that learning. Situated learning theory suggests that interaction with other people creates mental structures that are not individual mental representations, but rather “participation frames,” which are less rigid and more adaptive (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Learning is constantly changing, and knowledge is constantly being gained.

Individual identities within situated learning theory are influenced by the social constructs around the individual. Participation in social interaction allows for the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Learning from a social practice perspective is dynamic and involves interaction and participation. It is also a situation whereby a person is defined through their relations to community systems of meaning (Lave and Wenger, 1991). The continued interaction between individuals in a community of practice layers context into mastery of a given skill.

Situated learning theory posits that students are more likely to learn if they are active participants in the learning experience (Lave, 1988). Additionally, Lave and Wenger (1991) indicated that situated learning theory states that individuals learn by participating in communities of practitioners. Stein (1998) indicates that learning is socially oriented and relies on interacting with others to effectively problem solve. Lave and Wenger (1991) expanded upon their community of practice model by indicating that communities of practice are made up of “experts” and “novices.” Novices are defined as those individuals entering the field for the first time, and who need experience and support in order to thrive. Experts are defined as members of a community of practice that have more experience than the novice and who have relevant experience and materials to support a novice teacher (Lave, 1991). A good expert does not impart information and knowledge by lecturing a novice, but rather by coaching novice teachers, and working to model best practices in the field (Kurt, 2021). In these communities, activities, artifacts, identities, and relationships all form the foundation for interactions between community members. “Experts” regularly interact with one another sharing best practices and growing the knowledge base of the

group. At the same time, “experts” are tasked with offering support and mentorship to “novices,” moving them from the periphery of the group closer to the center. Over time, the “novices” gain knowledge and experience and as they move from the periphery to the center of the group, they join the “experts” as leaders in the field and work to support the new novices. All of this occurs within an individual “context” which is unique to the community of practice.

Figure 1 was developed in 2021 by Kurt, and outlines the relationship between novices and experts within a community of practice.

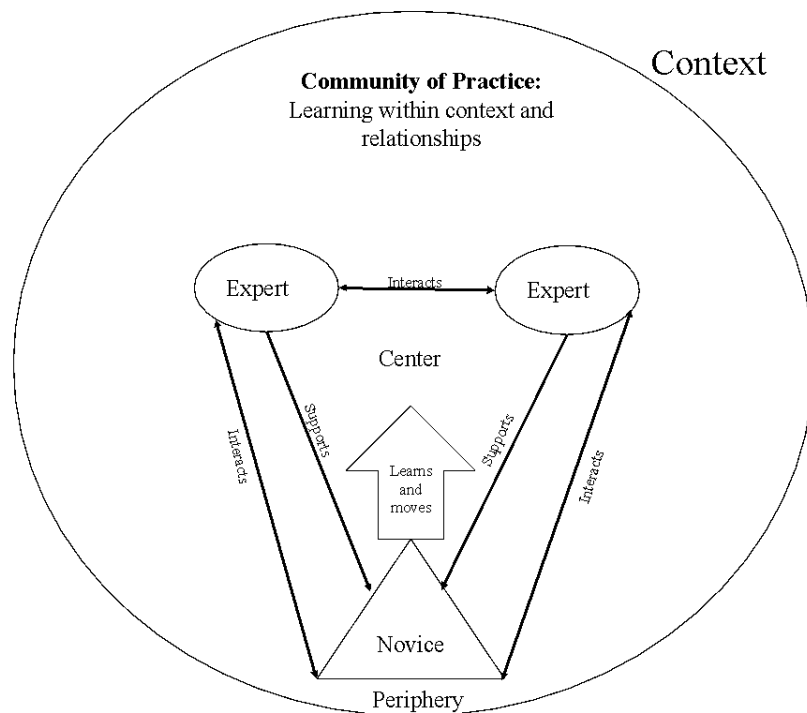


Figure 1. Community of Practice

Communities of practice exist within an individual’s context, and learning and growth takes place through interactions, experiences, and knowledge imparted upon novices by experts. All learning takes place within a given context. Novices move from the periphery to the center of a community of practice through experience and

growth. As novices approach the center of a community of practice, they then become experts in that context and interact with fellow experts as well as support new novices.

For the sake of this study, there are multiple communities of practice and multiple experts that interact with PACE teachers within their given context. These communities include the PACE teachers' placement schools, their intentional living communities, and the cohorts above and below them within the program. While these communities sometimes intersect directly or indirectly, they are all part of a participant's context for learning while teaching in the field.

Within the placement school community of practice, PACE teachers are intentionally mentored by a school administrator. PACE school administrators are required to observe and give constructive feedback to PACE teachers during their time in the program. Additionally, many PACE teachers seek out other forms of mentorships at the placement school. It is not uncommon for PACE teachers to seek out experienced teachers who are willing to act as informal mentors and provide tangible support in the form of resources or feedback. PACE teachers also participate in various professional development opportunities with their school and district as assigned. The PACE program is intentional in choosing partner schools that can provide quality mentorship and professional development to teachers. PACE participants engage in multiple communities of practitioners which support individuals during their time in the program. PACE fosters mentorship within the schools where PACE participants serve and indicate that there is value in having a more experienced practitioner pass skills and knowledge to less experienced teachers. Each PACE teacher is assigned a mentor teacher at their placement school. Although the mentor

teacher does not serve in an evaluative capacity, they are designated to be a faculty member that can provide guidance and advice to PACE teachers.

Another component of a PACE teacher's community of practice is the intentional living community a PACE teacher lives with. Within these communities, half of the teachers are in their first year of teaching, and the other half are in their second year of teaching. Intentional communities are intended to provide support and safety to first- and second-year teachers in an environment in which they can share their experiences and struggles. PACE communities are intended to be collaborative and supportive so that knowledge may be shared between individuals. While the difference between a first and a second year teacher is only one year, second year teachers may still offer support and learning even though they themselves are not yet an expert.

Additionally, PACE participants engage in a community of practitioners within the entire program. Problem-solving and critical thinking skills are applied when PACE participants meet to discuss unique problems from individual classrooms. During the summers of the program, teachers from across three years of experience come together to take coursework. Novice PACE teachers are encouraged to meet with more expert teachers who have had two years of teaching experience. PACE teachers in their third summer are also encouraged to be leaders and mentors to those teachers in their first or second summers. By fostering a community of teachers, individuals have a greater support system in which they can communicate with others that have the same or similar experiences.

The PACE program also provides participants with a university supervisor that is responsible for observing and giving feedback to the teacher while in the program. These supervisors are required to have a minimum of five years of teaching experience, or hold an administrative license. These experts are responsible for giving practical and implementable feedback to the PACE teacher over two years.

In participating in these communities of practice, PACE teachers are able to actively move from “novice” to “expert” by learning from peers, senior members of the PACE program, assigned mentor teachers, and university supervisors. These communities allow PACE teachers to put their experience within context and build their own knowledge by interacting with others who have more experience than they do.

Figure 2 demonstrates the interaction between a novice PACE teacher and their given context and community of practice as outlined in Figure 1.

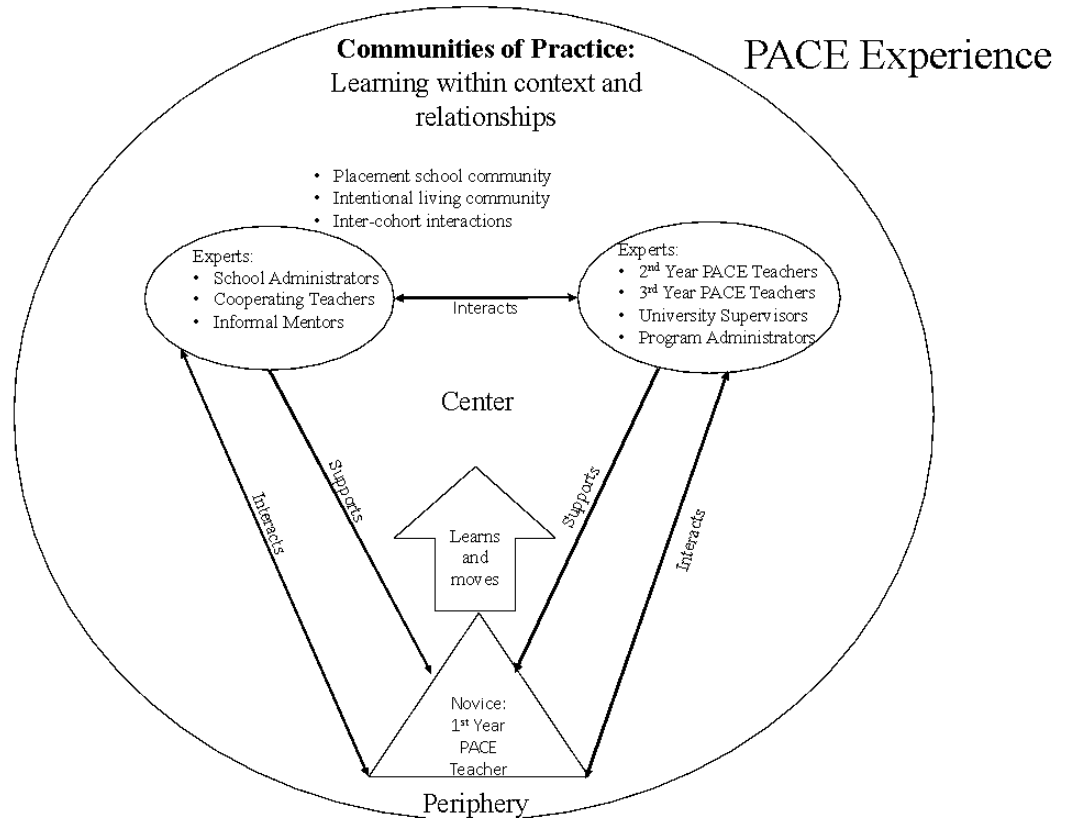


Figure 2. PACE communities of practice.

Within an individual's PACE experience, they interact with and receive support from multiple experts in the field. These include school administrators, cooperating teachers, and informal mentors. Additionally, the structure of the PACE program's cohort model allows individuals to learn from second- and third-year PACE teachers within and outside of their living community, as well as programmatic supports such as the university supervisors or program administrators. The support of these experts helps move novice PACE teachers from the periphery of a community of practice toward the center, where they then become a new expert.

Lave and Wenger (1991) also describe the concept of legitimate periphery participation. Legitimate periphery participation indicates that newer, less experienced members of a community of practice should be actively engaged in a community of practice by learning and asking questions of the “experts” in the community. Gradually, younger community members take the role of more experienced community members and pass their skills and knowledge to the new, less experienced community members. This concept is reflected within the PACE program. Because PACE takes place over three summers, PACE participants in their third summer are tasked with leading or facilitating conversations between less experienced community members. Knowledge and skills are passed between groups. Topics and information that is facilitated by these PACE teachers in their third years include classroom management and lesson planning, but also more informal topics such as classroom bathroom procedures or how to make lesson plans for a substitute teacher. First year teachers are also encouraged to ask pertinent questions that they have about entering the field. Lave and Wenger (1991) also indicated that more experienced community members are still able to learn from less experienced community members because each unique individual brings diverse skills to a community.

Many new teachers feel an amount of loneliness in teaching and find that the large amount of information given to new teachers is difficult to process (Feiman-Nemser, 2004). Because new teachers feel this lack of connection or feeling of being in-experienced, many teachers remain on the periphery of their own teaching communities. The structure of PACE fosters more inclusive communities of practice in which early career educators can interact with one another to better share skills and

knowledge of effective instruction to teachers that are entering the field. By fostering inclusive communities of practice, “novices” entering the field feel less isolated, and more included, leading to further retention in the teaching field.

The PACE program structures some elements of the program to actively transition teachers from the “novices” group to the “experts” group. For example, PACE teachers in their third and final summer of the program are asked to lead Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), during which teachers in the program meet and discuss common issues that early educators face. These PLCs are made up of brand-new teachers, teachers who have taught for a year in the program, and teachers who will be graduating from the program at the end of the summer. By giving teachers in their third summer the leadership opportunity of facilitating these PLCs, they may actively view themselves as “experts” instead of “novices”. Additionally, in the PACE teachers’ third summer, a leadership retreat is held in which participants are asked to reflect on mentors and leaders they have learned from during their time in the program, and then shift to reflecting on how they may be leaders within their school communities themselves.

It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the communities of practice within the PACE program. In order to maximize learning that may occur within an individual’s community of practice, the program must continuously evaluate the function that experts serve novices within the structure. By continuously examining and adjusting programmatic features, the program may help individuals build more supportive communities of practice where they can move from being a novice, to being closer to the center of the community as an expert.

Situated learning focuses on individuals learning skills and mastery within a given context and community of practice. When individuals enter a community of practice they are on the periphery of the community as a novice. Through experience, interaction, and support from experts in the community, novices move towards the center of a community of practice where they then become an expert in the community itself. Within the PACE program, participants experience a community of practice with several opportunities to interact with experts in order to grow in the field. Within the placement school community, PACE teachers receive support and advice from administrators and school mentors. Programmatically, PACE provides participants with experts in the form of university supervisors and administrative support in order to give valuable feedback and help novice teachers grow. Finally, PACE teachers interact with other cohorts and collaborate in order to help individuals move towards the center of the community of practice. PACE participants also have the opportunity to do this while living in their intentional living community during their two years in the program.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this case study was to explore PACE program graduates' decisions to remain teaching five years after the completion of the program. Participants were graduates of the PACE program who were still teaching in the field up to five years after graduation. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews that aimed to explore the experiences that affect the decision making of PACE graduates.

Research Questions

- RQ1: How do PACE program experiences affect PACE graduates' retention rates in teaching after graduation?
- RQ2: How do working conditions in PACE schools affect graduates' decisions to remain in the teaching profession during the first five years of their career?
- RQ3: How do PACE's multiple communities of practice affect participants' decisions to stay in the field after graduation?

Research Design and Rationale

In order to best answer these research questions, a qualitative approach was taken. Qualitative research helps explore the human condition of "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). This study's research questions focused on exploring the real-life experiences of program graduates, and how those experiences may or may not have affected graduates' decisions to stay in the teaching profession. Additionally, Creswall and Poth (2018) indicate that

qualitative research is holistic in nature, and explores the meaning made by individuals or groups of individuals.

The best way for this study to answer the research questions was to create a case study. A case study was appropriate because it examines an entity within a real-life, contemporary context (Yin, 2014). A case study also allows for a narrowing of scope of the research. It does this by providing an in-depth analysis of a bounded system (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Because it was unclear what factors may affect PACE graduates' decisions to stay in the profession, this study explored the human conditions that affect this decision making within the context of a specific program.

Rationale for a Case Study Methodology

When examining the first research question, a single case study was implemented to best answer the inquiry.

Q1: How do PACE program experiences affect PACE graduates' retention rates in teaching after graduation?

A single case study can best explore the experiences of participants within a bounded system. The bounded case in this study was the experiences of graduates of the PACE program. This methodology allowed for an in-depth analysis of this bounded system (Creswall & Poth, 2008). Additionally, a single case study seeks to examine the individual experiences of each participant in relation to the other experiences within the case. Because the single bounded case was the experiences of these six participants, themes and patterns were explored across the data.

A single case study takes a holistic approach and recognizes the interrelationship between phenomenon and context (Stake, 1995). Additionally, a single case study is empirical and relies on the interpretation of the data gathered in the field. Stake (1998) also indicates that a single case study can be flexible and responsive. Data collection can be progressive and protocols that occur later in the study may be informed by the context given from data collected earlier in the study.

Stake describes the role of the researcher as an individual who identifies sources of good data, significant understanding, and recognizes the positionality and responsibility of the researcher to investigate the data from multiple viewpoints. Stake recommends using interviews as a primary way of collecting data for a case study (1995). While a single case study does not have a distinct starting point, the study is finished when the research questions are adequately answered by the data collected. Finally, Stake describes analyzing data as a process of “essentially taking ...our impressions, our observations apart” (p.71). As the researcher makes sense of their observations, they are effectively analyzing the data. Stake also indicates that data collection and data analysis happen simultaneously, as researchers immediately begin to make meaning of their observations of the data. Similar to Stake’s views on the design of a single case study, researchers have flexibility and should modify the analysis of data based upon the intuitions and understanding of the researcher.

A single case study can best explore the experiences of the participants in this study in an in-depth and detailed way. The case study then seeks to make meaning of these experiences. Because of the low sample size of this study, the findings are not necessarily generalizable. However, qualitative single case studies allow the reader to

make connections to the findings and potentially generalize those findings to their own individual experience (Stake, 1980).

Participants

Participants were selected based upon predetermined criteria. Criterion sampling was used to identify cases that may yield more information to answer the research questions (Patton, 2001). For this study, participants were graduates of PACE that have continued to teach in K-12 schools. In order to ensure that there is accurate data gathered and that graduates had recent memories of the impact of their individual program, participants have graduated within five years and have between four and six years teaching experience after graduation. Six participants were selected through purposive sampling and were selected based on several representative factors. Because 80% of the PACE graduates identify as female, it is important that 80% of the participants in the study identified as female, and 20% male. As a result, one participant in the study identified as male (16%), while the other five identified as female (84%). Additionally, participants were purposely selected based on the academic program that they completed. Throughout the program, participants complete one of two academic tracks over the two years. The Masters of Education (MEd) academic track of the program is completed by participants who have a Bachelor's degree in Education or a related field, and who hold a valid teaching license at the start of the program. The MEd academic program focuses on earning an endorsement for the already existing teaching license. The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) academic track is for participants without prior education experience and who do not possess a valid teaching license. MAT participants work towards receiving a

teaching license during their time in the program. While current demographics of the PACE program have 66% of participants completing the MAT program and 33% completing the MEd program, the graduates in the years from which these participants attended the program there were approximately equal numbers of graduates from both the MAT and the MEd. As a result, three of the participants in this study were MATs and three were MEds. This is to better ensure that the interview and focus group data is more representative of program graduates as a whole. Participants were selected after reviewing demographic survey data collected from graduates of the last six years. These survey data were used to determine participants that will provide a depth of insight in answering the research questions.

Design and Procedure

One method for gathering the experiences of study participants is through the use of interviews. Semi-structured interviews are designed to directly capture the voice of the participants (Yin, 2018). In order to do this, a clear protocol must be developed. To refine the interview protocol Castillo-Montoya's (2016) four-phase process took place. In phase one, interview questions were aligned with research questions (Appendix A). In phase two, the researcher constructed an inquiry-based conversation as the base of their interview (see interview protocols attached). Stage three involved receiving feedback on the interview protocols and stage four had the researcher piloting the interview protocol.

Pilot study. Prior to conducting interviews with participants, interview questions and protocols were examined by doctoral students in order to solicit feedback on the quality of the interview process. After adjusting the protocol based on

the recommendations, the interview was piloted with a sample participant who met similar criteria as the participants in the study. In this case, the pilot was conducted with someone that had graduated seven years ago. Feedback regarding the quality of questions was solicited from the participant in the pilot study, and the researcher examined whether or not the pilot study participant's responses to the interview questions answered the research questions. The interview was modified and additional questions were added to have participants reflect on times in which they thought about leaving the field.

Interviews. In order to select participants, a survey was sent to graduates of the PACE program from graduating years 2016 to 2018 using emails held in the PACE alumni database. Participants were encouraged to complete the survey by the indication that those selected for the focus group and interviews would receive a small financial compensation in the form of a \$10 gift card. The survey collected demographic information including the graduates' graduating year, current employment, degree track while in the program, gender identity, and placement community while in the program. Using the demographic data collected, participants were selected based upon predetermined criteria.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with all participants using a protocol from the literature surrounding case studies and qualitative research (Appendix 1). Additional probing questions were asked in order to elaborate upon answers given. Interview questions were open-ended and focused on the graduates' experience in the profession and decision to remain in the field of teaching. Interview questions were also aligned with the study's research questions

(Appendix 1). In order to increase accessibility to a variety of participants, interviews were held virtually through the Zoom platform. A 2019 study by Archibald, Ambagtsheer and Casey found that participants in qualitative interviews conducted through Zoom rated their experience as highly satisfactory and rated Zoom interviews preferable to face-to-face interviews, telephone, and some other video conferencing tools. The interview was digitally recorded on two devices in order to ensure accuracy.

Focus group. In addition to semi-structured interviews, participants took part in a focus group that occurred after individual one-on-one interviews. The timing of the focus group was to allow individuals to share their personal thoughts with the interviewer before entering an environment in which their opinion or explanations can be impacted by the views of peers. The protocol for the focus group emerged and developed based on the data collected during the interview process, but focused on many of the same elements of the original interview questions (Appendix 2). This allowed for the researcher to explore topics and codes that came up during the analysis of the interviews, and gave the researcher the ability to clarify viewpoints that may have arisen during the interview (Morgan, 1988).

Role of Researcher

It is important to acknowledge that the researcher is a graduate of the PACE program and the current Assistant Director of the PACE program. In addition, the researcher held a position of authority, or was a peer, to all of the program graduates interviewed. As an employee of the PACE program, the researcher has a generally favorable view of the program, and believes the program has a lasting effect on graduate retention in education both through anecdotal and observational evidence,

and through formal studies conducted on the program. As an administrator of the program, it is important to acknowledge that the researcher must be aware of their own biases in collecting and analyzing data and alternative explanations must be explored. By seeking outside input through a pilot interview, the researcher sought to mitigate any favorable bias the researcher may have inadvertently placed in the instrumentation. The researcher was open and attentive to all experiences shared by interviewees, especially because many of those experiences were shared with the researcher or directly in conflict with the researcher's experience. Additionally, it is important to examine alternative explanations to the research question during the data analysis portion of the study. This was done by having fellow doctoral researchers examine the results of the data analysis and determine whether or not the themes and conclusions gathered were rational and reasonable. By acknowledging one's own biases, the researcher worked to directly counter them, and reduce the impact they may have had on the study.

Issues of Trustworthiness and Ensuring Quality

When utilizing interview instruments, all interview instruments were piloted before being administered to participants. Yin (2014) suggests that pilot tests are good tools to refine data collection plans and reform questions to better answer research questions. It may also reduce researcher bias by soliciting feedback regarding the content of the questions. For this study, feedback on interview questions was given by fellow doctoral students and the study was piloted once with a sample participant that met similar criteria of the participants in the study. The researcher solicited feedback from both the doctorate cohort members and the sample participant and incorporated

modifications to create interview questions that would better answer the research questions.

In order to increase the quality and trustworthiness of the qualitative data, multiple data sets were used to triangulate the findings. Interview data, focus group data, and graduate demographic data were triangulated to increase validity. Graduate demographic data included how long a graduate stayed at their placement school following graduation. Triangulation is a validity method that converges multiple sources of information to support the themes revealed by the data (Creswell, 2017).

Finally, member checking was utilized to increase validity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicate that member checking is one of the most important components of increasing reliability because it allows participants to verify the information in their narration, therefore making the data more reliable. Participants member checked both the transcripts for the individual interview that was conducted as well as the focus group. Participants were sent copies of quotes and ideas from the interview and focus group that were going to be used in the study. Then, through email correspondence, participants gave input as to whether or not the quotes and notes represented their correct statements. Quotes and notes used in the study were then modified based upon participant feedback.

Ethical Considerations

In order to conduct ethical research, this study was submitted for IRB approval, and was approved September 14th 2021. Participant data were stored on a secure server that is password protected. Additionally, on all interview transcripts, as well as focus group transcripts, participants' names were removed and replaced with a

pseudonym in order to increase anonymity, while still preserving continuity between the individual interview and the focus groups. Consent forms were collected to ensure that participants were aware of their rights during the study. Finally, because the researcher had a previous authority position over many of the participants, clear statements were made to allow participants to know that the content of their interviews or focus groups would not negatively impact their relationship with the PACE program.

Data Analysis Strategies

Recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher using Zoom's transcription application and then edited after listening to the recordings while examining the transcription. Interviews were then stored on a secure server. Each participant in the interview was sent quotes from the interview for member checks. Omissions or clarifications were made as requested by participants to ensure an accurate transcript was used for analysis.

Using Saldaña's (2015) two cycle model of coding, the researcher began with a priori codes derived from the literature and allowed for additional codes and themes to emerge from the transcripts. The qualitative data from this study was coded both deductively and inductively (Yin, 2014). Deductive coding involved analyzing the interview and focus group data through the theoretical framework of situated learning theory, while inductive coding was used to determine if answers to the research questions existed outside of the theoretical framework. The codes within the theoretical framework focused on communities of practice and gaining knowledge and expertise through professional work experience.

For this study, data were coded over three cycles (Saldaña, 2016). Data were organized in Excel spreadsheets and Word documents. During the coding process, an analytical memo was kept in order to organize and record thoughts around emerging categories and patterns seen in the transcripts (Creswell, 2007).

First cycle: Inductive coding. Pre-coding was completed prior to the first cycle of coding as the interviews and focus group were transcribed with “preliminary jottings” and memos taking place (Saldaña, 2016). Circling and underlining significant quotes helped better inform inductive analysis in the first cycle.

During the first cycle, several coding methods were implemented including descriptive, in vivo, and values coding. Descriptive coding was used to summarize transcript responses into general topics and subjects, and provided an overview of the responses that would later be sorted into themes (Saldaña, 2016). In vivo coding was used to capture the voice of the participant and aggregated important quotes from participants in the interviews and focus group (Saldaña, 2016). In vivo coding fit into some of the topics found in descriptive coding, and quotes from participants could be grouped based on these topics. Finally, values coding was implemented in order to label how participants felt or attitudes they may have carried that may be significant or impactful (Saldaña, 2016). The questions asked by the researcher sought to explain motivations of participants to remain in the teaching profession. When assessing interview and focus group data, motivations, attitudes, and values were identified amongst participants as factors in choosing to remain in the field. Because the PACE program is largely mission driven and infused with forms of spirituality, the values or

attitudes held by program participants and graduates yielded distinct data outcomes including themes around vocation.

Second cycle: Pattern and focus coding. During the second cycle of coding, both pattern and focus coding took place. Pattern coding sought to determine similarities in the first cycle coding, and looked to group certain data together based upon similar patterns (Saldaña, 2016). Additionally, focused coding was implemented to examine the most frequent or significant codes from the first cycle (Saldaña, 2016). The combination of focused and pattern coding helped establish larger categories and themes that were present in the data. Additionally, in order to increase trustworthiness, the researcher sought to eliminate biases by exploring possible divergent paths in the data that did not fit into the larger general categories, as well as seek alternative explanations or answers to the research questions within the collected data. Finally, while certain themes and attitudes were derived, some participant data directly contradicted some of the themes. These data were included in the analysis as counterpoints to the developed themes.

Third cycle: Deductive coding. The third cycle of coding was done through the theoretical framework of situated learning theory. Patton (2002) suggests using the framework to identify themes and patterns in the data. Communities of practice within the PACE program were identified and the individual within the program was labeled the novice. Potential experts within the participants' communities of practice were identified. These included placement school administrators, university supervisors, informal mentors, and other PACE program participants. Data were analyzed to determine if these potential experts in communities of practice served their purpose of

being meaningful supports for novice teachers. The deductively analyzed data were then compared to the inductively analyzed data. Analytical memos and coding rationale were kept throughout the process. These memos were documented in a researcher journal to rationalize and analyze data regarding the effectiveness of specific programmatic supports. Finally, these memos sought to make sense of certain themes that emerged from the data. This analysis yielded both true experts in communities of practice that worked to actively support early career educators, and potential experts in communities of practice that were not being best utilized to support novice teachers.

Situated learning theory focuses on the experiences of an individual learning within the context of their environment and community. Therefore, the data were connected to various themes found within situated learning theory. These themes include communities of practice, learning through experience, and transitioning from the individual as a “novice” to an “expert.” The data were analyzed to examine if the data reaffirmed or contradicted the theoretical framework that was present.

Summary

This study utilized a single case study model to best examine the experiences of graduates of the PACE program. Participants were selected through purposive and criterion sampling, and were representative of the demographics of the program itself. An interview and focus group were utilized to collect data and data analysis took place over three phases. Finally, multiple measures were taken to ensure trustworthiness, quality, and ethics were met, including piloting of instruments and member checking.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview of the Participants

Participants were selected in order to represent a diversity of experiences of graduates of the PACE program. Of the 16 graduates of the cohort that graduated in 2016, 11 of them responded to the survey. Two of the respondents were no longer teaching, and another two were not chosen because of their proximity to the researcher as they had been part of their intentional living community with the researcher. The MAT participant that responded to the survey and fit the criteria indicated said they were unable to participate in the study at that time, so another MAT participant was chosen from a different cohort.

Of the 26 graduates of the cohort that graduated in 2017, 13 responded to the survey and 8 fit the criteria of the study. The MAT participant that was selected from this cohort was also the only male represented in the study and represented the rural placement criteria as well. The MEd participant was a secondary math teacher who did not live with any of the other participants in the study.

Of the 14 graduates of the cohort that graduated in 2018, 9 responded to the survey and 8 of them were still teaching in the profession. Because more MATs were represented in this cohort a second MAT was selected to account for the lack of a MAT participant in the 2016 cohort. The MEd that was selected represented the Mountain West region of the program, and the other MAT selected represented the West region of the program. These three participants also did not live with any of the other participants while in the program.

Nicole

Nicole graduated in 2018 and was a teacher in an upper elementary classroom in a west coast state during her time in PACE where she completed the MAT track of the program. She is currently a teacher in an early elementary classroom in the Pacific Northwest. After graduating from PACE, Nicole left her placement school and moved to work at a Catholic school in the Pacific Northwest to be closer to her family. She left her Catholic school at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, and cited the reason as being the adoption of a school-wide curriculum that did not align with her values of inclusion and equity. The curriculum was being implemented by the school's pastor; the principal also left the school as a result of the curriculum. Nicole's new school that she is teaching in this year is a public school, but Nicole feels the school and the district have policies and procedures that better align with her commitment to equity and inclusion of all students.

Sarah

Sarah graduated in 2016 and was a middle school teacher in the Pacific Northwest while in the program. Sarah completed the MEd track of PACE. She currently teaches middle school math at a different Catholic school in the Pacific Northwest. After graduating from PACE, Sarah decided to stay at her placement school. She remained at that school until the end of the 2019-2020 school year when she decided to change schools. Sarah indicated that a change in administration starting in 2018 placed more pressures on her outside of the classroom. In addition, her status as a part-time technology teacher at the school required increasingly more responsibility during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately, she believed she could find a better balance at a different school in the area. Sarah appreciates the

return to normal responsibilities at her new school and finds joy in collaborating with her staff. She also indicated that she feels a strong connection to her new school because many of the staff are graduates of the PACE program as well.

John

John graduated from PACE in 2017 and was an upper elementary school teacher in a rural placement school while in the program. John completed the MAT track of PACE. After graduating from PACE, John decided to move closer to his fiancé's family in the southwest, and left his placement school on good terms, feeling supported and effective. He currently teaches middle school social studies and religion in the southwest. This year John's school has a new principal, and John has acknowledged that the transition has not been the smoothest.

Rachel

Rachel graduated from PACE in 2018 and was an early elementary school teacher in the Mountain West while in PACE. During her time in the program, Rachel completed the MEd track of PACE. She currently teaches upper elementary students at a Catholic school in the Pacific Northwest. After graduating from PACE, Rachel decided to continue teaching at her placement school for an additional two years. Rachel decided to return to her hometown in the Pacific Northwest and begin teaching closer to home for the 2020-2021 school year. Additionally, she mentioned that she enjoys her current work environment because she can help a current PACE teacher that was recently placed at her school.

Noelle

Noelle graduated from PACE in 2018 where she taught middle school Spanish at a school in a rural city in the Pacific Northwest. While in PACE, Noelle completed the MAT track of the program. After graduating from the program Noelle decided to move closer to home and began working as a high school English teacher in a more urban environment in the Pacific Northwest. Noelle has expressed some dissatisfaction with her school community, including a negative staff environment that feels non-inclusive. In addition, Noelle indicated that her work-life balance is not necessarily healthy because of how much time she devotes to teaching. She indicated that she has thought about a career change in the past three years. However, Noelle chose to come back to the classroom because of the connections she has with her students and the impact her work has on the lives of those she teaches.

Beth

Beth graduated from PACE in 2017 where she taught high school math at a school in an urban city in the Pacific Northwest. Beth completed the MEd track of the PACE program. After graduating from PACE, she stayed at her placement school where she taught for an additional two years. For the 2019-2020 school year she moved to the east coast to teach high school math at an all-girls, Catholic high school. She left after just one year for multiple reasons. Beth indicated that her experience on the east coast was much different than her experience teaching in the Pacific Northwest. The school community had families that were heavily involved in politics, and many of her values did not align with theirs. Additionally, school decisions were made by a board that consisted of all males, and staff input was not incorporated into decision making. Beth felt like major decisions, including COVID-19 related safety

decisions, were made without her input, and she thus felt unheard. Additionally, Beth's workload at this new school was more than her placement school in the Pacific Northwest, and she felt over-worked and under-compensated. Beth indicated that she greatly missed the supportive environment and collaborative administration she had encountered at her placement school. She made the decision at the end of the 2020-2021 school year to move to the southwest where she is teaching calculus, and attending graduate school to receive a master's in mathematics. She appreciates the flexibility of her new teaching position, as it allows her to attend graduate school as well.

Table 1 outlines the information about each of the participants.

Table 1

Participant Information

Participant Name	Degree	Graduation Year	Teaching Level	Placement School	Remained at Placement School
Nicole	MAT	2018	Upper Elementary	Pacific Northwest	No
Sarah	M.Ed	2016	Middle School Math	Pacific Northwest	Yes – 4 years
John	MAT	2017	Upper Elementary	Rural	No
Rachel	M.Ed	2018	Early Elementary	Mountain-West	Yes – 2 years
Noelle	MAT	2018	Middle School Spanish	Pacific Northwest	No
Beth	M.Ed	2017	High School Math	Pacific Northwest	Yes – 2 years

Themes of the Interviews and Focus Group

The following themes were coded from the data collected in the interviews and the focus groups. While not every participant agreed with each theme, similar and differing viewpoints are presented throughout.

Participants considered leaving the field

Of the six participants, four of them indicated that they had thought about leaving the teaching profession since graduating from PACE. Several different factors were cited, but major themes were consistent with literature exploring factors affecting teachers' decisions to leave the field. These included, poor work-life balance, lack of financial compensation, and poor support or collaboration from administration. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic created new stressors.

Several participants cited the lack of work-life balance and indicated that they felt overworked and under compensated. Noelle said "I feel like my life balance isn't always there" and John described feeling like in his early years of teaching that he needed to work "80 [or more] hours to just keep your head above water." Noelle expanded and indicated that she did not feel she was financially compensated well for the time she invested in her job. She stated "I think financially you're not compensated for [the work], like you're giving everything and then still dealing with financial issues especially at a Catholic school." Additionally, Nicole indicated that she was "frustrated with not having enough time to do things."

Three participants had changed schools for the 2021-2022 school year, and all of them cited poor relationships with administration as a major reason for leaving their school. Beth's administration at her previous school never observed her teach a lesson,

a support that was previously evident at her PACE placement school. Additionally, Beth indicated that many decisions were made by administration and were passed down to teachers, rather than teachers being consulted regarding policy changes. Beth contrasts her experience with the administration at her PACE placement school and the school she left at the end of the 2020-2021 school year by saying:

I think too it's important that you have a leader that really wants your input as a teacher because a lot of times at my last school I was at, the teachers weren't appreciated, whereas the principals in PACE were really good about making me feel appreciated. I always felt like I could go to the vice principal and tell her what was going on and she would listen to me on a person to person level compared to a more hierarchical way.

Sarah indicated that she left her school because the administration had increased her workload outside of her role as a middle school math teacher. Finally, Nicole indicated that the pastor at her school had decided to adopt a new curriculum without input from the principal and teachers. Nicole described the curriculum as having what she perceived as “racial dog whistles” and other problematic material. As a result, she left the Catholic school and is now teaching in a public-school district that better aligns with her values.

COVID-19 related work challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted the teachers in this study. As research emerges about the challenges teachers faced with a transition to virtual

classrooms, the participants in this study all acknowledged the stress and friction placed upon them during this difficult time.

Both Sarah and Beth cited COVID-19 policies at their schools as reasons for seeking new jobs in the 2021-2022 school year. Sarah was both the middle school math teacher and the school's technology teacher. Because Sarah had no prior training as a technology teacher, she felt her primary role was as the middle school math teacher. Before COVID-19 caused schools to close in the spring of 2020, Sarah's school hired a new principal. As COVID-19 unfolded, the principal of Sarah's school assigned her with the task of training all the teachers at the school on how to transition to a virtual classroom. The extra work was coupled with additional technology duties such as helping payroll organize their virtual billing system. Sarah describes this transferring of duties by outlining:

I was assigned with coming up with our school's virtual learning plan and that was a huge factor in why I left. One of the reasons all of that stuff got put on my plate was that, you know, our principal, vice principal and the business manager all left the same year and the new administration changed assigned duties.

Because Sarah was never compensated for this extra work, she felt she could achieve a better work-life balance at a more conventional middle school position. Beth indicated that administrators made the decision to return to the classroom in-person in the fall of 2020 unilaterally and did not seek the input of teachers. She indicated that the Chief

Financial Officer of the school indicated that they needed to return to in-person learning in order to continue gaining revenue from students. Beth goes on to say “I felt like I was shut down and that my opinion didn't matter. I also felt like I was used.” Because these decisions were made without teacher input, and Beth perceived that in-person learning was prioritized for financial reasons, Beth left her school at the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

Connection to students

When asked what motivates them to stay in the teaching profession every participant indicated that their students, and the connections and relationships they had with those students is what makes the job fulfilling and positive, even in some cases outweighing negative school staff environments.

When talking about both her decision to stay at her placement school after graduating PACE, and her current teaching position, Sarah talked about the joy of working in a middle school where she can create relationships with students and watch them grow over the course of three years. She enjoys seeing them progress and was especially proud when students she taught as sixth graders presented their capstone projects as eighth graders. When Sarah talked about connecting with students she indicated that she wants to help and support students and foster “critical thinking, even outside of a math context.” She wanted her students to be able to make good decisions. While Sarah did switch schools for the 2021-2022 school year, and has actively thought about leaving the field, she feels that when she is “working with kids, and everything is going well, that’s what brings [her] back.”

Beth briefly talked about the impact that teachers have on students' lives and told an anecdote about an activity done during PACE that she remembered. She was asked to name the winner of album of the year at the Grammys from the year 2013. She was then asked to name the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize from 2011. Then she was asked to name her third-grade teacher. While Beth struggled with the first two questions, the third question sparked instant memories of Beth's third-grade teacher. Beth recognized that the students that she made a positive, neutral, or negative impact on would all likely remember her for years to come. When deciding to leave her school at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, Beth indicated that "It's not the kids right? It's never about the kids."

Noelle stated that she felt like when she worked to connect with her students that they reciprocated the effort. She noted:

I like to pour everything into my students, and they give it back. They can tell who loves them, and who will support them and be there for them. Teachers that have won them over. That makes you not want to leave the field, because you just like work to get to know them and now I love them.

Noelle further explained that the role of a good teacher is to create an environment where students feel that. Noelle mentioned that there are some negative elements to her school environment including a lack of collaboration amongst her staff and difficult work-life balance, however she is drawn to the connections she can make with students.

When speaking about his school, John indicated that he is drawn to the strong connections between students, families, the school, and the school parish. Similar to Sarah, he enjoys being able to see students grow over three years and that connections to students over multiple years keeps him committed to his school community. John elaborated on his relationship with his students by saying:

I have considered looking at other schools in the past and what keeps me committed to this school in particular is actually my students. I think that's a really special part about working in middle school is because I get to see them for multiple years, it's not just one and done we're on to the next crew. They make me come back. I think it's from the viewpoint of those relationships, which really make the job matter.

Nicole indicated that she feels most successful in the classroom when she has those positive relationships with students. She indicated that one of the most important things in the classroom is “kids need to know that they are cared about, and that they can be successful too.” Nicole acknowledges that she has the gift of caring deeply for others’ children and is happy to do that as her career.

Rachel said that she enjoys seeing the “progression of a human person” from the start of a school year to the end. She outlined:

I’m happy to be that person who supports students and loves them and is kind of that stability for the ones that don't have that at home. It's nice to see the

kind of progression of a human person from the start of a year to the end of the year.

Finally, Rachel indicated that as a teacher “you can be that safe space for [students] where they can speak without thinking and guide them along their path of life.”

Collaborative and supportive administrations

Every participant indicated that a school’s administration was a primary factor for why they chose to remain in, or leave a school. Additionally, every participant talked about the role of the principal in their PACE placement, and how the principal did or did not support them during their time in the program. Finally, three participants indicated that in order to increase retention of teachers during and after the program, PACE should put into place a more rigorous screening process of partner schools, so that every PACE teacher has a strong, collaborative principal.

Both Sarah and Beth left their previous school at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, and both participants indicated that a primary reason for their transition was the quality of the principal and administration. Sarah had remained at her PACE placement school for 5 years following her graduation from the program. She described her principal while she was in the program as someone well equipped to support a new teacher. Sarah said:

I would say at least at my school when I started there, my principal was a seasoned principal. She had been a principal for forever and so right away she

knew how to support young teachers, so like we had a weekly meeting every week for that first year, just as a check in, just to ask “hey how are you doing this week” and “what are some of the things that are going well and what are some things that aren't going well” or “what just random questions do you have.” I think that was really valuable for me.

For her first year, they had weekly check-ins to see how she was doing, both as a teacher and as a person. It also gave her space to ask questions and collaborate on classroom management and other school duties. Sarah also mentioned that her role as middle school math teacher, and the entire school’s technology teacher, was well defined and her principal worked to ensure that Sarah was never overwhelmed by additional responsibilities. Unfortunately, Sarah’s principal left the school to retire in 2018, along with the vice principal and business manager. The new principal entered during a difficult transition period, but many teachers felt that the new principal did not understand the community of the school, and many teachers felt unheard and under-appreciated. Several teachers left at the end of the 2018-2019 school year. With the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020, Sarah felt she was unfairly assigned additional duties to help with distance learning, and that she was not consulted about these additional assignments. Sarah described not feeling listened to, and feeling that it was unfair for her to have additional duties. As a result, Sarah decided to leave her school after six years.

Beth described a similar situation. Beth stayed at her placement school after graduating in 2017, and stayed there for an additional two years. She positively

described her experience with the administration at her placement school. When talking about her assistant principal, Beth indicated that the assistant principal was someone she “could go talk to” and be honest about issues in the classroom, and receive collaborative feedback from. Beth also indicated her assistant principal “would listen” and that she “really cared about [her] as a person.” Beth felt that there “was an understanding that [she] was a person.” At Beth’s most recent school she indicated that the new administration rarely consulted teachers and that when voicing her opinion, she often felt “shut down” and that “her opinion didn’t matter.” She also described an increased work-load because of a late departure of a fellow teacher, and the extra work made her feel like she was “used.” She fondly remembered her time at her placement school in the Pacific Northwest and commented that she “felt like there was more collaboration at [her placement school]” than at her new school. As a result, Beth left her school at the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

During the focus group, both Rachel and Nicole suggested that PACE place an emphasis on partnering with schools that had highly trained, experienced, and supportive principals.

Nicole summarized her sentiment by saying:

The administration at the school makes such a big difference in teachers’ lives and so making sure I guess, like being a little bit pickier about what schools you're putting the PACERs in and making sure that the leadership at that school is a strong leadership. Even if it's a struggling school, that as long as it has kind of that good backbone, that will be more helpful for teachers because if you're

put into a struggling school with a not so great administration then you're going to have just a way harder time.

Nicole acknowledged that PACE teachers can be placed in Catholic schools that are struggling or under-resourced, but having an experienced and supportive principal can help a teacher thrive in difficult circumstances. Both Rachel and Nicole indicated that they believe one of the reasons that PACE teachers leave the field after graduation is poor experiences in under-resourced schools, combined with administrators that struggle to support staff in a meaningful way.

Teaching as a long-term goal or vocation

Five of the six participants indicated they had a long-term commitment to the teaching profession because they viewed teaching as more than just a job. Two of the participants used the term “vocation” to describe their teaching role and five of the participants indicated that teaching had been a long-term goal they had been working toward. Two of the participants indicated they held the belief that many of their peers in PACE that had left the teaching profession did not necessarily have teaching as a long-term goal, and did not know definitively that teaching was their vocation.

Both John and Sarah explicitly referred to their teaching role as their personal vocation. John indicated that one of the reasons he returns to teaching year after year is because “[He] knows that [his] vocation is, as a teacher, as a husband, and as a father.” Additionally, Sarah made connections to the Catholicity of the program and indicated that her view of her teaching role was seen through her lens of faith. Sarah

also indicated that the reason she believes teaching is her vocation is because she felt “called” to be a teacher, and the job brings her genuine joy in life.

When Rachel was asked if she had ever considered leaving the teaching profession, her reply was: “I would say that I haven't really thought about leaving the profession. I knew I wanted to be a teacher when I was seven [years old].” Both Noelle and John, who did not have undergraduate degrees in education, indicated that they had considered being an education major, but sought specific subject areas of study with the knowledge that they might participate in PACE after graduation from their undergraduate institution. Finally, both Sarah and Nicole indicated that regardless of their experience in PACE, they believe that they would still be teachers because they were so committed to the idea of being in the teaching profession.

Both Sarah and Noelle stated that they believed their peers who had left the field may not have felt “called” to the profession, or did not hold teaching as a long-term goal. Sarah further explained that some of those program participants that are drawn to PACE as a service program may not have a full picture of what teaching is, and may find that the stress of the job is not conducive to their success or mental health. Noelle differentiated herself from her peers that had left the field by indicating that for others “it just might not have been something they had been dreaming about for a long time.”

PACE programmatic supports

Participants were asked to reflect on their experiences while in the PACE program, and to make connections to wanting-ness and willingness to remain in the teaching profession. All of the participants talked about the supports that were present

in the PACE program, and how those positively influenced their view of the teaching profession, their mental health, and their stability while in the program. Additionally, participants described several shortcomings or informality in some of the support structures that PACE offered them, and highlighted ways in which the program could have supported them, but did not. Several participants also contributed improvements that they believe would better support PACE teachers in the program and foster stronger relationships with PACE partner schools. Finally, participants described their experiences with the academic coursework associated with the program, and how those experiences impacted their view of teaching and education as a whole.

Placement school administrators.

Five of the six participants reported having positive relationships with the principal of the placement school they taught at while in the PACE program. Participants were supported in a number of ways, including constructive feedback, weekly meetings, and helping PACE teachers manage their workload. Two of the participants expressed that their placement school principal “trusted” them to do their job, and checked in, but were never overbearing. In some of the situations described by participants, the administrator supporting them was not the principal, but another administrative support role like assistant principals, vice principals, or deans of students.

John notes that one of the characteristics he admired in his placement school principal was her commitment to being a “good servant leader” and thinking about serving both the students and her staff as a primary objective. Additionally, he felt that his principal was well connected to the school community, and was a well-known

individual in the small city he lived in. John also talked about how his principal allotted him resources in his first year as a teacher, and had a teacher leader in the school meet with him on a weekly basis to support and collaborate with him. Finally, John's principal encouraged him to extend his students' philosophy of "growth mindset" to his own development as a teacher, and fostered an environment where John could learn from his mistakes and move forward.

Nicole and Rachel both felt a degree of freedom from their principals at their PACE placement. Nicole said "there was never a feeling like I was being micromanaged but there was always support if I asked for it. It was a really cool feeling to just be like trusted to do the job I was hired to do." Additionally, Rachel noted that her administrator "trusted her to do the job" and if any issues ever came up with parents of students, the principal would check in with the teacher and support them in whatever ways they could. Rachel did acknowledge that because of the size of her placement school, and the number of duties and crises her principal had to deal with, Rachel was rarely observed teaching, and when she was, it was for no more than "ten minutes." Rachel acknowledged that the lack of direct supervision from her principal and the lack of constructive feedback from her university supervisor left her feeling that the programmatic support from the PACE program was lacking for her.

Finally, Noelle expressed a strained relationship with the principal at her placement school. Her administrator was in the first year of being a principal, and was often inconsistent in behavior. Noelle described her as "not always being very nice" and "never knowing whether she was going to be nice or not." Additionally, Noelle indicated that her principal's background was in elementary education, and she was

unable to provide her with resources that were specifically curated for a middle school teacher. Noelle felt that the principal was “short” and “kind of judgmental” and described feelings of wanting to “run and hide.” While Noelle did find informal mentors within her placement school community she left her placement school at the end of her two years teaching in PACE.

Informal mentors.

Every participant indicated that during their PACE experience they sought or received informal mentorship from someone that was not directly connected to the PACE program. These relationships were often long-lasting, and several still existed at the time of this study. Additionally, informal mentors provided participants with emotional support as well as resources to help make the workload more manageable. One participant, Nicole, indicated that her mother was teaching the same grade as her, but at a different school, and that relationship offered support on multiple levels. It is important to note that John’s mentor was assigned by his school for additional support.

Beth appreciated both her department chair, and a veteran teacher that taught the same subject as her. To help Beth in her first two years of teaching, they provided her with resources, including packets and worksheets, and helped talk her through concepts she was not yet familiar with teaching. Beth credited her relationships with her staff as contributing to a positive work environment where she felt supported and indicated that she really felt that her school environment was one in which “people wanted you to do well.” Finally, although Beth has changed schools since her time in PACE, she indicated that she still has regular text message conversations with the mentors she met during her PACE experience.

Sarah made strong connections with another middle school teacher with whom she worked. Additionally, this coworker was a parent of a student at the school as well. Sarah stated:

It was another teacher in the school who just also happened to be a parent of the school as well. So that was nice to get both kinds of perspectives in terms of a parent and a teacher. It was helpful that she knew the students and I was able to see like what strategies work well with certain students in her classroom. That way, it wasn't just all trial and error. You have like at least somebody's previous experience to go off of and then you get to observe them in their classroom. I remember my first year I had a harder time managing the seventh-grade students and so getting to go observe her teaching the seventh grade students and seeing that she was also encountering these same behaviors, but this is how she deals with them. That was really helpful and I still talk to her today.

She emphasized that it was helpful having someone who knew the context of her school, and “knew the students,” helped her collaborate and strategize to address potential problems that would arise. Sarah also noticed that her mentor was encountering some of the same behavioral issues in students, and Sarah appreciated seeing “how she dealt with them.” Similar to Beth, Sarah still talked with her informal mentor at the time of this study.

Both Noelle and Rachel talked about being close to their staff and feeling supported by those around them. Rachel recalled asking for other staff members to come watch her teach, and solicited feedback from those observations. Rachel also talked about the size of her staff, and indicated that because it was large for a Catholic school, she was able to observe several other teachers and learn skills to better improve her practice. Noelle also recalled a fellow staff mentor that offered words of support and made her feel like “[she] can do it.” Noelle’s staff also offered to step in and offer her breaks on stressful days by substituting for ten- or fifteen-minutes increments.

John received a mentor that was assigned by his principal. John’s mentor was receiving their initial administrators license and coaching was part of his practicum to receive the license. John met with his mentor once a week where he debriefed issues that arose that week, and collaborated and solved problems that were in the classroom. John described his mentor as “an absolute rock star” because his support came at a time when he “was really struggling.” His mentor acted as a good “soundboard” where he could learn skills and “make changes [he] needed to make in order to be successful.”

Inconsistent university supervisors.

Five of the participants expressed neutral or negative experiences with PACE university supervisors while in the program. The one participant who did express a positive relationship with his university supervisor, expressed that the relationship started off under difficult and stressful circumstances, and was not initially a positive

relationship. Many participants indicated that their university supervisor did not give constructive feedback and did not have an impact on their teaching practice.

Beth described her university supervisor as being “just ok” and said during her interview that she felt her university supervisor was not as helpful as other teachers in her school. Beth reiterated that she felt she would have “been fine without her,” but felt better feedback was given from “people in [her] department who knew what [she] was teaching.” Finally, because Beth did not see feedback from her university supervisor as being valuable, she also felt that her university supervisor conducted too many observations while she was in the program. She indicated that as an M.Ed. she felt that four observations a semester felt excessive.

Both Noelle and Rachel expressed frustration with the lack of feedback they received from their university supervisors. While Noelle expressed that she “liked” her university supervisor as a “person,” the feedback she received was less helpful. Noelle described inviting her university supervisor to her most challenging class so that he could give her advice on how to deal with classroom management. Noelle did not feel the feedback she received was helpful, and indicated that her problems were dismissed by the university supervisor describing disruptive behavior as “boys will be boys.” Rachel indicated she was “not super impressed with the feedback [she] was getting.” She described receiving great scores on her observations, but felt like there was no constructive feedback. Rachel felt as if her supervisor was using good scores as a means of not having to give feedback, and felt that as a first-year teacher she wanted to be told what skills she needed to cultivate.

Finally, John had a unique relationship with his supervisor. John described struggling during the first semester of his first year. His university supervisor waited until October to conduct the first observation, whereas most supervisors try and observe their teachers in September to identify any early problems. In his university supervisor's first observation she identified many issues and described his classroom as "chaos." The university supervisor recommended to his principal that he be put on "probation" and receive extra support from the faculty at his school. He described that first interaction as "scary" and indicated it started the relationship off in a negative direction. However, as John improved, and later "thrived" in his second year as a teacher, he positively described his university supervisor saying "she gave great feedback, and she was also very detailed" in her feedback.

Community living.

Every participant cited the community living component of PACE as a positive experience, with three participants indicating that it was the most important element of support during their time in the program. Participants cited multiple elements of community living that added to the support they received in the program including: collaboration between community members, lack of feeling isolated while living in a new location, and opportunity to engage with like-minded individuals and grow in personal and spiritual formation with community members.

Beth, John, and Nicole all indicated that a positive element of community living was the ability to collaborate with community members to become better teachers. Beth indicated that she enjoyed talking with one specific community member who taught the same subject as her, but at a different school, and enjoyed being able to

lend help when needed, or receive it when needed. John said that his community enjoyed “bouncing ideas off each other and learning and growing with one another” and specifically mentioned that he enjoyed growing with his community members in areas of faith and spirituality. Finally, Nicole noted that she enjoyed collaborating with community members when she said:

I did have someone that I could bounce things off of or share resources with. We were also teaching the same grade level, so there was a lot that we could talk about together. That definitely made that first year easier.

Rachel indicated that living in an intentional community allowed her to be held accountable by others in order to better preserve her work life balance. Rachel described the feeling of “always lesson planning and working late,” and needing a support system at home to help tell her that it was necessary for her to take a break from her professional workload. Rachel talked about how important it was to be in a program with fellow teachers that were “experiencing similar things” to her, and who could relate on a relational level. Sarah also indicated that community became like “family” to her, and expressed that she missed living with people that were “going through the exact same thing.”

Fall retreat.

Four participants spoke about the importance of PACE’s fall retreat for their mental health in their first two years of teaching. It was noted that the comments from these four participants centered around themes that were outside of the content of the

retreat, and instead focused on other interesting aspects such as the timing of the retreat, and the ability to step away from the classroom. The PACE fall retreat takes place on the first full weekend in November. PACE arranges with partner schools to allow for PACERS to take both the Friday and the Monday of the retreat weekend off so they can travel to and from the university. Administrators in PACE have identified the first weekend in November as an optimal point to check-in with teachers, and allow space for them to reconnect with others in the program. All communities fly or drive to the university on Friday. Participants then take buses to an off-campus facility where a retreat centered around Catholic themes is held. The content of the retreat is different each year that a participant is in the program. The themes of the retreat focus on self-reflection for teachers through the charisms of the Congregation of Holy Cross Holy Order. Charisms include themes such as “hope to bring”, zeal, and educating the head, heart, and hands. PACE teachers are given short talks about the themes and then given time to self-reflect, and reflect as a group, on the way in which those themes exist within the participants’ past, present, and future in the program. On Monday, PACE teachers take buses back to campus and then drive or fly back to their respective communities.

Nicole indicated that the timing of the retreat was particularly helpful for her as a first- year teacher. Nicole said:

I also find that just the timing of that Fall retreat [is helpful]. I, as a seasoned teacher, by that first week of November need a fall retreat. I think regardless of

what the content [of the retreat] is, it gives that spiritual, mental rejuvenation. It's nice just having that time to reflect.

Additionally, Beth said at the time of fall retreat she felt like she was “drowning,” but when she met with others at the retreat, she felt a sense of solidarity because “everyone else is in the same boat.” John, whose placement was in a rural setting, indicated that fall retreat was a good “opportunity to get away and be in a place together with others.” Finally, Rachel talked about the pressure she had felt in the fall of her first year. She felt she had something to prove, both to PACE and her school, but also herself, to be the best teacher she could be. Fall retreat allowed her the opportunity to reflect on how her “needs were being met” and briefly disconnect from her role as teacher, and instead focus on her personal needs.

University of Portland’s School of Education.

Most of the experiences that participants had with the University of Portland’s School of Education were positive, with some participants highlighting some shortcomings of the academic program in which they participated. Participants talked about the values instilled by University of Portland professors, and the concrete tools that were provided to them during their academic program. Participants also identified elements of the School of Education’s mission statement they felt were instilled in them during their time in the program.

Sarah indicated that because her academic program in PACE was rooted in teachers as researchers, she was more likely to seek out “master teachers that were professional researchers” to better inform her practice and gather practical resources.

Sarah also talked about how she felt University of Portland's professors instilled in her a sense of "dignity and justice being achieved through education." When Sarah had previously thought about leaving the field, she found inspiration and purpose in the idea that the work that she does has profound impacts on students and the world. Finally, Sarah indicated she had several classes with the same professor and found that professor "was a really good influence on practical strategies that [she] could use in the classroom."

Rachel demonstrated one of the primary reasons she chose PACE and the University of Portland was because her personal values aligned with the values of the program and the university. She cited University of Portland's reputation in providing "good programming" and teaching modern "educational practices and policies" as reasons she was drawn to the program. Finally, Rachel talked about how the University of Portland taught teachers to have a holistic approach to education, teaching the "head, heart, and the hands" of each child.

John expressed great appreciation for the support he received from his professors while in the program. He specifically cited a professor that helped his cohort through the first year of the edTPA assessment for PACE participants. The edTPA is a performance-based, subject-specific assessment and support system used by teacher preparation programs throughout the United States to emphasize, measure, and support the skills and knowledge all teachers need from day one in the classroom. Passing the edTPA is also a requirement for graduating from the MAT program and receiving a teaching license. John also talked about his perceptions of professors and the "amount of pride that his professors took in [his] learning" making a large impact

on his learning. He connected this to his practice and indicated that professors “wanted to see us be successful,” and that helped him “better build [his] practice.”

Some participants did express mild frustrations with their academic program as well. John stated that in his first summer of the program, there was a lot of programming, and acknowledged that this takes place over the short period of six weeks, but indicated he “still didn’t know what to expect being in a classroom full time.” While he acknowledged learning “a lot of things about classroom management,” he was unable to immediately implement many of those things when he entered the classroom. Beth was a secondary math teacher who was also an MEd. As a result, she had to choose between a reading intervention specialist endorsement and an English to Speakers of Other Languages endorsement. Because her long-term goal was to teach secondary math, she indicated she did not find much value in her coursework as a reading intervention specialist. She indicated that having more endorsement options for participants might allow for other teachers to better connect their coursework to practice.

Cohort model.

Two participants explicitly talked about the support and connections they made through PACE’s cohort model. However, it is important to note that three of the participants discussed the difficulty of finding mentors (experienced PACE teachers) that were participating in their third summer of the program. Sarah and Nicole indicated they had formed connections across cohorts and felt as if they were supportive and meaningful. Specifically, Sarah talked about finding good role models in cohorts above her. Sarah said:

I feel like it set up good role models. You had people that you just automatically were drawn to, and [said] I want to kind of be like them. I really like their philosophy or I want to just be similar to their style or use some of their ideas. Just giving you those role models or people to help guide you to how you want to get where you want to get to.

Additionally, Nicole stated that the cohort model helped her have more “touch points” for people that were experiencing the same things she was. In particular, Nicole talked about collaborating with more experienced PACE teachers and “being able to find another specific teacher having that specific problem in that specific grade and widening the net beyond your community.”

Both John and Nicole talked about the difficulty in connecting with PACE participants that were in their third summer, while they were participating in their first summer. John noted they “didn’t really have much contact with them” and noted that by the time they were in their third year he “didn’t feel like [he] was much of a mentor either.” Nicole noted by her third summer the establishment of “professional learning communities” or PLCs allowed herself and other PACE teachers across cohorts to interact with one another based upon the subject area or grade level they taught. However, Nicole noted that she did not get to experience PLCs in her first summer, and felt that the majority of her interactions with PACE teachers in their third summer was informal and unstructured.

Participant support and alumni engagement.

Four of the study participants talked about ways in which PACE could better support participants and recommended expanding the scope of the program. These participants emphasized the need for program staff to support the individual needs of teachers in the program. Additionally, participants found that they did not feel they were adequately engaged after graduation, and expressed a desire to remain connected after graduation.

Rachel articulated the need for additional program staffing:

I think having a designated emotional support check-in person would be super beneficial because part of what is lacking on the administrative side of PACE is that [staff] are focusing on the overall program. With the traveling and the checking-in on communities here and there, but also recruiting [new] people, there are a lot of things happening on the paperwork side of things, that the emotional support side gets left to the side. It's unfortunate because a lot of people for the first time have moved away from home in addition to starting a new job and trying to figure out a living situation with a lot of people in most communities. So, there's a lot of growth that happens for people in that time and for some it's easier than others. So, someone who's designated as that check-in and support person I think would definitely be beneficial.

Nicole also acknowledged that she felt the program was “understaffed” and that additional staff were needed to “support communities and individuals.” Finally, Beth talked about the need to have program staff who have experiences similar to those that

are currently a part of the program. Beth said “you need somebody who’s done it” when talking about who can best support teachers in the field. Beth referenced “somebody who’s done it” as being a person who had both taught, and lived in an intentional community.

Summary

While all participants described challenges they faced in the years since graduating from PACE, they described feeling inspired to continue teaching. When examining reasons they remain in the teaching profession, participants cited their connection to their students, supportive and collaborative administrations, and described their commitment to the occupation as a vocation and a long-term goal that they had for a long time. When reflecting upon their time in the PACE program, participants cited some of the same things that still keep them in the profession at the time of the study, including supportive and collaborative administrations, and supportive work environments. Participants also reflected on programmatic supports that made their first two years of teaching more manageable. While it is not yet possible to directly correlate PACE programmatic supports with long-term retention of teachers in the field, it is important to acknowledge that participants’ positive experiences may have impacted their views of themselves as teachers.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this case study was to explore PACE program graduates' decisions to remain teaching three to six years after the completion of the program. Participants were graduates of the PACE program who are still teaching in the field three to six years after graduation. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and a focus group that aimed to explore the experiences that affect the decision making of PACE graduates. Below are the three research questions that guided this qualitative single case study.

- RQ1: How do PACE program experiences affect PACE graduates' retention rates in teaching after graduation?
- RQ2: How do working conditions in PACE schools affect graduates' decisions to remain in the teaching profession during the first five years of their career?
- RQ3: How do PACE's multiple communities of practice affect participants' decisions to stay in the field after graduation?

This study implemented purposive criterion-based sampling to select six graduates of the PACE program who remained in the teaching profession. Through one on one interviews and one focus group, data were collected to answer the research questions. Participants had the opportunity to member check the data in order to ensure the data were reliable. Data were then analyzed through three rounds of coding. The first cycle of coding was inductive and consisted of in vivo, descriptive, and values-based coding. The second round of coding utilized pattern and focus coding.

Finally, the third round of coding was deductive and looked at the data through the situated learning theoretical framework.

Key themes emerged after the three rounds of coding. The first finding was that all participants in this study expressed their connection to students as the primary factor in choosing to remain in the teaching profession. Participants also expressed the importance of a supportive administration in their current teaching positions and during their placement while in the program. Several participants described leaving schools later in their career because of poor administrators. Additionally, participants described seeing teaching as vocational, and having a higher purpose. While participating in the program the participants in this study described various supports they received as an early educator. The participants talked about the importance of mentors that they sought outside of their school administrators and the PACE program. Participants also talked about the positive and collaborative nature of PACE's cohort and community living models. However, participants also indicated there was a lack of formal mentorship between participants in their third summer of the PACE program and participants in their first summer of the PACE program. Participants also indicated the program needs improved staffing in order to better meet the individual needs of teachers in the program and should promote engagement with alumni. Finally, participants talked about the inconsistent ways in which university supervisors supported them while they were in the classroom field.

Below is a personal and professional interpretation of the findings. The results of this study will be connected to the existing literature and recommendations for

improvement will be made as well. Limitations of the study will be explored and future areas of study will also be posited.

Interpretation of the Research Findings

Many themes that emerged from the interviews and focus group conducted in this study are supported by current research and practice. The PACE program offers several programmatic supports to aid teachers in their first and second years of teaching which are supported by research. While PACE does not implement all best practices, the program does implement several that are important to this study

Pressures to Leave the Field

It is important to acknowledge that teachers leave and stay in Catholic schools for different reasons than some of their peers. While a 2004 study by Przygocki found that a primary reason teachers leave Catholic schools is because of lower salaries, only one PACE graduate in this study indicated that they did not feel they were financially compensated well for the work they had done. When looking at reasons Catholic school teachers remain in the field, Jakuback (2017) indicated Catholic school teachers appreciated the interpersonal relationships they were able to create in their smaller communities, as well as a greater sense of collaboration and collegiality. This was reaffirmed by PACE graduates' experiences in this study where participants expressed the strong connection to students, those students' families, and the school community as a positive factor that impacted their job satisfaction.

In Tye and O'Brien's 2002 study, teachers that had left the field were asked about the factors that caused them to leave their position. The top reason for leaving the field was an increased pressure for students to perform on standardized tests.

While this does not match the factors identified by PACE graduates in this study, Tye and O'Brien's participants identified increased and unmanageable workload as a factor for leaving the field. This is consistent with PACE graduates' experiences and considerations for leaving the field, including having a "poor work-life balance" and having excessive duties assigned to them. Because these PACE graduates' interviews took place in 2021, many of these increased workloads were associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and while there is limited research about the effects of the pandemic's impact on teacher retention, it is important to note that increased workload was identified by Tye and O'Brien as a factor that caused teachers to leave the field.

Additionally, Leithwood and McAdie (2016) identified several key working conditions that impacted teacher morale and attitudes toward work. Similar to Tye and O'Brien's 2002 study, Leithwood and McAdie indicated that teachers that had a larger perceived workload were more likely to have low morale and poor attitudes toward work. Leithwood and McAdie made a clear distinction that teachers were more likely to perceive their own workload as larger if they were able to directly compare it to other teachers in their school or in the field. While comparison of workload does occur within PACE communities, two of the participants in this study emphasized the value of their community and cohort because everyone around them had an equally difficult workload.

Connection to students and teaching as vocation

Participants in this study emphasized the connection they had with students as a primary reason for why they continue to teach each year. This is consistent with Chiong, Menzies and Parameshwaran's 2017 study that found that many teachers

remained in the field for altruistic reasons that usually center around the direct impact and relationships teachers have with their students in the field. This 2017 study reinforced themes found in Day and Gru's 2009 study that indicated the longer teachers stay in the field, the more likely they were to have a big picture perspective about how their work impacted not only individual students, but society as a whole. Although this language is somewhat layered in the participants of this study, three participants talked about seeing their job as a vocation, implying that their job was more than just a job because it was impactful and making a difference in the world. John indicated one of the reasons he feels he knows he will return to the classroom after each school year is his connection to teaching as a vocation and that he sees his work as having "an impact for making real and lasting change."

Supporting early career educators

The participants in this study indicated that there were several factors in their early career experience that helped facilitate a positive and supportive work environment which encouraged the participants to stay in the field. These factors and supports reflect some of the literature that exists surrounding supporting early career educators and increasing their retention in the field.

Placement school administrators and informal mentors.

PACE supports are unique because teachers in the program are the full-time teachers in the classroom; they are not co-teaching or student teaching with a mentor teacher. Because of this, some supports that PACE offers participants resemble best practices found not only in teacher preparation programs, but also teacher induction programs. In Rau's 2015 study it was found that teachers who were assigned a mentor

upon entering a school were 10% more likely to stay in the field than those that did not have a mentor. All PACE graduates who participated in this study indicated they either received strong mentorships from their administrators or found an informal mentor at their placement school. Additionally, participants indicated that their mentors provided them with teaching materials, and oriented them to their new school environment. This is consistent with Clement (2019) who asserted that effective mentors provide classroom resources for beginning teachers, as well as help a new teacher organize their classroom and lesson plans, and orient them to a new school environment.

Leithwood and McAdie's 2016 study also indicated that the principal had a large impact on morale and attitudes toward work. They identified that principals with a strong sense of direction, and who were able to provide support and professional development, were able to create strong positive communities where teachers were more likely to stay. PACE graduates in this study indicated that administrators played a role in fostering positive and supportive environments, and affected graduates' decision to remain at their school. Of the three teachers in this study who had left their previous teaching position for a new one in recent years, all of them indicated a decision, or multiple decisions, by administrators was a primary factor in their decision to leave the school. One participant succinctly summarized the importance of strong administrators by saying "I feel like the principal sets the tone."

Intentional community.

In Ulas and Senel's 2020 study, there was a correlation between teacher efficacy and feelings of isolation while teaching. The teachers that felt more isolated

were less efficient in the classroom. PACE's cohort and community model aims to combat some of those feelings of isolation that some teachers experience during their first years in the program. PACE graduates in this study expressed positive experiences with their cohort and community members. They mentioned that these supports helped them collaborate and feel like they were coming home to individuals who understood their experience and some of the challenges they encountered. By incorporating interaction and collaboration in communities and cohorts, PACE can help avoid those feelings of isolation in early career educators.

Inconsistent university supervisors.

One of the supports that all the participants agreed had little impact on their experience in the PACE program was their relationship with their university supervisor. Three of the participants described their supervisor as not providing meaningful feedback during observations. A 2016 study found that a characteristic of strong residencies were strong mentors in the form of supervisors within the classroom (Britt, Donahue & Judge). One difference between the mentors in Britt, Donahue and Judge's study and the university supervisors in PACE is that the mentors in residency programs are full-time teachers of record at the school that the student is placed at. University supervisors do not have the same in-depth knowledge of a school community as someone who works within the school itself. Beth indicated this best when she said "[her university supervisor] was fine, but that [she] received better feedback from other teachers in [her] department.'

Fall retreat.

The fall retreat for PACE participants focuses on both spiritual and professional development of PACE students. Five of the six participants described the positive experience of the fall retreat, stating that it “came at the right time in the school year” and was a strong way to reconnect with others in the program going through similar experiences. In recommendations made in 2016 to support teacher retention, researchers found that strong induction programs helped increase teacher retention (Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, Darling-Hammond). One of the elements of a strong induction program was the presence of retreats for novice teachers, to allow space for reflection and growth. The PACE fall retreat allows participants space for reflection and relaxation. Rachel describes:

In your first year of teaching, you almost feel like you lose your own personal self and you become this teacher-self, and you're really putting all of your effort, your time, your energy into trying to be the best teacher you can be. You're trying to prove it to your administration who hired you. Trying to prove it to PACE. You're trying to constantly prove yourself and prove yourself over and over again. So the retreat gave time away to ask “how am I actually doing?” Am I getting what I need? And if not, how can I fit some more of my own spiritual self in order to fulfill that more?

By adding this additional programmatic support, the PACE program can provide space for novice teachers to reflect and grow.

University of Portland School of Education.

Four of the six participants in this study expressed a strong connection to the mission of the school of education at the University of Program and the PACE program. They were also able to describe important elements of the school of education that impacted their view of teaching, and the impact that it makes on students. A 2009 study by Davies and Kennedy indicated that teachers who go through teacher preparation programs and feel more connected to a program's religious affiliation or mission are more likely to stay in the field than those that do not. Rachel connected with the University of Portland's mission to "educate the whole child, heart, mind, and hands." In regards to the mission of the University of Portland's school of education, Sarah elaborated saying:

The part of the school of education's mission that I connected to was that dignity and justice are achieved from education. I would say that that runs deep in my veins, as a teacher, and I know that came from my experiences in PACE and the school of education. I think that that probably ties into my persistence to teach and to not be "oh, I don't need to do this anymore. There's something else I'd rather be doing somewhere else." I don't know specifically when along the way that that was implanted deeply, but I strongly believe that dignity and justice come through education.

This attachment and commitment to the mission of both the PACE program and the school of education may impact the decision to stay in the field.

Theoretical Framework

Situated learning theory is a lens through which the supports of the PACE program can be viewed. However, there are structures within the PACE program that need to be addressed to better reflect the tenets of situated learning theory. Lave indicated in a 1998 study that situated learning theory postulates that students are more likely to learn if they are active participants in the learning experience. Additionally, Lave promotes genuine social interactions between individuals in authentic environments to facilitate the learning of information. The individuals that make up these environments, and the way they interact, form what are called “communities of practice,” where knowledge is passed from more experienced “experts” to less experienced “novices.” Experts are defined as members of a community of practice that have more experience than the novice and who have relevant experience and materials to support a novice teacher (Lave, 1991). A good expert does not impart information and knowledge by lecturing a novice, but rather by coaching novice teachers, and working to model best practices in the field (Kurt, 2021). Figure 2 describes a novice PACE teacher’s community of practice, and the potential experts that one may encounter within that community.

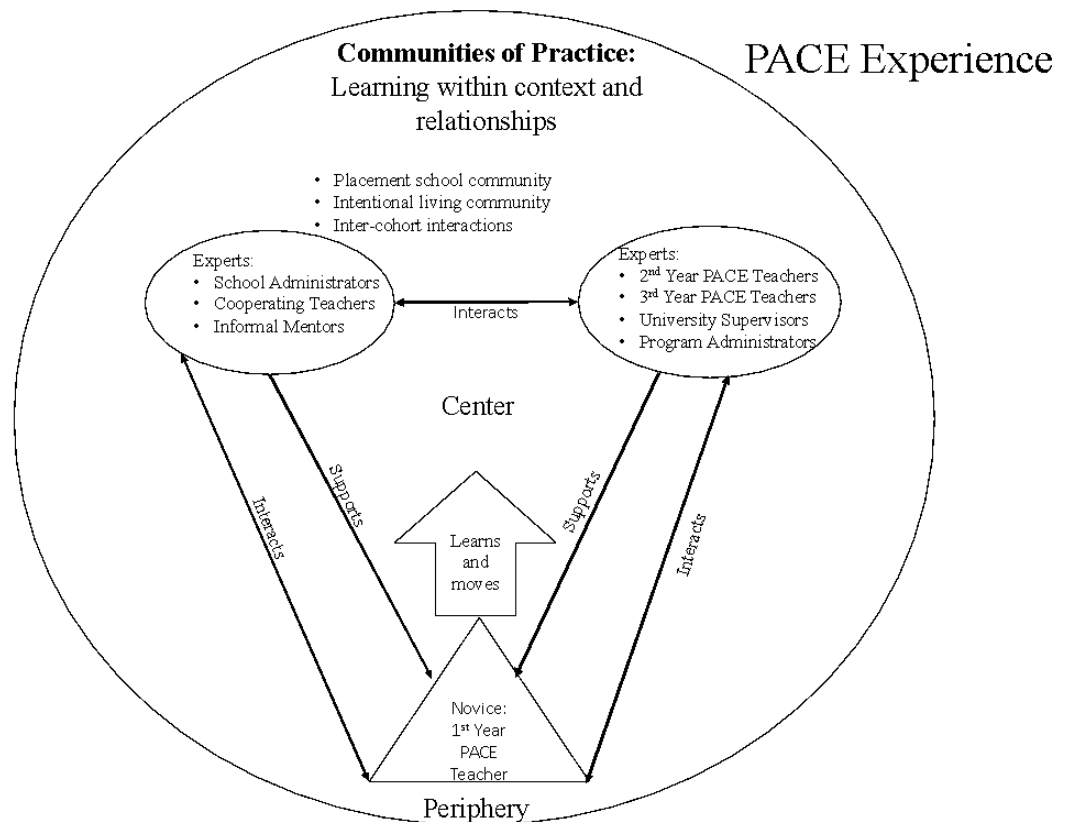


Figure 2. PACE communities of practice.

This study sought to examine some ways in which PACE participants interacted with experts in their given community of practice, and if those experts functioned and supported PACE teachers in ways consistent with situated learning theory.

PACE participants participate in authentic learning environments as the full-time teacher at their placement school. They interact with school administrators and fellow staff and the participants in this study indicated that positive interactions and learning “on-the-job” allowed them to grow in their first two years of teaching. School administrators and mentors at the placement school act as experts and effectively work to move novice PACE teachers closer to the center of the community of practice.

Nicole articulated this positive workplace environment by saying:

I worked with four other women who were really good at their jobs and really supportive of me and my principal just trusted me to do my job. There was never anyone feeling like I was being micromanaged but there was always support if I asked for it. It was a really supportive feeling.

By being intentional about the quality of support at a PACE teacher's placement school, the program can work to foster positive work environments in the first two years of teaching. The participants' experiences reflect Lave's (1998) theory that learning and growth exist within authentic environments and have genuine social interactions that allow for experts in the community to support novices.

Additionally, PACE participants interact with one another, forming another community of practice. Participants in this study expressed positive experiences with the cohort and community model and felt those relationships were collaborative and supportive. They also talked about the positive effects of being able to experience challenges in the workplace and being able to process those at home, with others who were going through similar experiences. While communities and cohorts are largely novices themselves, it is important to recognize that even amongst early career educators, some may be closer to the community of practice than others. As a result, cohort members and community members can provide support and interaction with others in those communities. Collaboration and emotional support are concrete ways in which community and cohort members work together to bring novices closer to the center of a community of practice. Rachel articulated these relationships by saying:

I would definitely say the biggest take away, and what I still hold true today, out of the program, is being with people who are also in their first few years of teaching is life changing because talking to veteran teachers gives you some input and talking to other administrators or talking to family and friends helps, but no one quite understands what you're going through unless they are also a first or second year teacher and so, living with people who are experiencing that whether it's the MATs or the MEds doesn't really matter what your background is but moving forward and collaborating in a community setting is what I think is missing in a lot of other programs that are not like PACE.

Stein (1998) indicates that learning is socially oriented and relies on interacting with others to effectively problem solve. The collaborative and social nature of these programmatic supports connect to situated learning theory. Within these contexts PACE participants gain knowledge and skills from their multiple communities of practice, which reflects tenets of situated learning theory.

This study did uncover one way in which a feature of PACE's model is not connected to situated learning theory. Three participants expressed that they did not feel there were meaningful interactions or knowledge shared amongst first summer and third summer PACE teachers. PACE's structure is designed to bring back teachers for a third and final summer before graduation, both to complete coursework, but also to be mentors and share knowledge with first- and second-year teachers on campus. This structure of the PACE program could create an additional support structure

within the community of practice, with PACE participants in the third summer acting as experts that can support and interact with PACE participants in their first and second summer sessions. Participants in this study expressed that there was a lack of mentorship for them when they entered the program, and others expressed that they felt they themselves were not mentors when they were in their third summer. John noted that while in theory the PACE teachers in their third summer of the program would make good mentors, that was not his experience, both as a PACE teacher in his first summer, and his third summer. Because experts are defined as members of a community of practice that have more experience than the novice and who have relevant experience and materials to support a novice teacher, the PACE teachers in their third summer should be able to impart some knowledge on incoming cohorts. This can be done through coaching, or sharing experiences. In order to better utilize and spread support to earlier cohorts, PACE may seek to incentivize third summer participant interaction with first summer students. This may be done by more explicitly recognizing PACE teachers in their third summer as experts. This can be done with formal titles or processes, such as assigning first year teachers a PACE teacher in their third summer as a mentor or coach. This intentionality may empower PACE teachers in their third summer to see themselves as experts who have experiences and knowledge worth sharing. Additionally, intentional time and resources might be allocated to facilitate interactions between cohorts in ways that could support knowledge sharing and mentorship. It is important that PACE utilizes this potential support by facilitating mentorship between PACE teachers graduating from the program and those entering the field.

Limitations

A limitation to this study is the sampling process. While intentional, purposeful, and criterion sampling took place, this did not guarantee that the results are generalizable to the experiences of all PACE graduates. However, it is important to acknowledge that through the sampling process and the analysis of data, common themes across multiple graduates' experiences were sought, and while every graduate's experience in the program may be different, emerging themes may better reveal programmatic features or other commonalities that many graduates may have experienced while in the program. Increasing the sample size may increase the generalizability of the data found. Additionally, while the sample was supposed to equally represent the three cohorts studied, the cohort that graduated in 2016 only included one participant, instead of two. This is because those that were part of the cohort that graduated in 2016 had a lower response rate to the survey, and of those that did respond there were not enough MATs that met the study's criterion sampling.

Because this study only has six participants, the findings are not necessarily generalizable to all graduates of the PACE program across the three represented cohorts. While the experiences are not statistically generalizable, Stake (1980) indicates that a strength of qualitative case studies is that readers have a responsibility to generalize the findings to their own experiences and gain knowledge and insight relative to their own experiences and context. A future study may seek to explore a wider data set to determine whether some of the themes present in the findings of this study are statistically generalizable to the greater PACE teacher experience.

This study looked at the specific experiences of graduates of a particular UCCE program. As a result, these experiences and programmatic elements are not necessarily replicable by other programs, limiting the impact of the study. Because PACE implements a variety of elements of other alternative teacher preparation programs including residency models, it is difficult for other programs to emulate all elements of the PACE program. Finally, because this study will examine the experiences of select individual graduates of the PACE program, the results cannot be directly generalizable to every graduate's experience.

Another limitation of this study is that it does not explore ways in which the PACE program has changed over time. The program experienced multiple changes in leadership and staffing between 2016 and 2022, and as staff have changed, so have some of the elements of the program. However, the feedback and the experiences, both positive and negative, of the participants can still inform best practices, not only for PACE and other UCCE programs, but also alternative teacher preparation programs. Many of the findings within these data are supported by and reaffirm the current body of research and can be used to inform best practices in teacher preparation.

Future Studies

It is important to acknowledge that these results may lead to future studies around teacher preparation programs and teacher retention in the field. While this study explored the reasons that PACE graduates stay in the teaching field, future studies may explore why the few PACE graduates that leave the profession choose to leave it. Those findings may be similar to national studies around teacher retention,

but there may be correlations between negative PACE program experiences, and a graduate's decision to leave the teaching field. Additionally, participants in this study implicated that the quality of administration was a factor in a teacher's decision to stay in the profession. Future studies might explore PACE participants who leave the field, and the experiences they had both with administrators within the program and if applicable, after the program.

Over the course of this study participants talked about the difficulty of teaching through the COVID-19 pandemic. Several participants cited leaving their previous school because of administrations' decisions surrounding the pandemic. There were many stressors placed upon teachers during the pandemic, and while there are some preliminary findings about the effect of the pandemic on teacher retention, further research could explore the factors that led to teachers choosing to leave the field during this time period.

An additional finding that may warrant future research is the role that a program retreat may have on teachers in their first two years of teaching. Participants in this study indicated that while the content of the retreat was not necessarily the most important factor, the timing of the retreat offered an optimal time for participants to step back, reflect, and reconnect with others, away from the teaching profession. Retreats may offer necessary time for reflection and may allow for early educators to connect with others, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness.

While PACE is a Catholic program and Catholic themes and values are used throughout a participant's experience in the program, this study did not explore the role of faith and religion on a graduate's decision to stay or leave the field. While

several participants used some language connected to some religious practice, such as vocation, and some participants talked about their own faith life, this study did not explicitly connect PACE's Catholicity with teachers' decisions to remain in the profession or leave the field. Future studies may explore the role of faith and religion on PACE graduates' decisions to stay in the teaching profession.

Practical Implications for Practice

In many ways, this study reaffirms many of the things that researchers already know about teacher retention. However, both the reaffirmations of the research and new findings may better inform practice within PACE and other teacher preparation programs. Fostering positive experiences for program participants can better allow participants to engage with programmatic elements and feel better supported during their time in the program, leading them to be less likely to leave the field.

One theme and recommendation that came from the study's participants was the need for high quality administrators that collaborate and support PACE teachers in the field. Five of the six participants described those positive qualities in their principal or administrator at their placement site. This feedback reiterates findings in Leithwood and McAdie's 2016 study that found that the quality of administrator was a strong indicator if an early educator stayed in the field or left. The PACE graduates in this study indicated that one of the major factors in choosing to stay or leave their school was the quality of the administrator. One recommendation that was made by two participants was that PACE needs to create a system to better ensure that PACE teachers have positive experiences at their placement school, with Nicole noting:

The administration at the school makes such a big difference in teachers' lives and so being a little bit pickier about what schools, you're putting the PACERs into and making sure that the leadership at that school is a strong leadership. Even if it's a struggling school, as long as it has that good backbone, that will be more helpful for teachers because if you're put into a struggling school with a not so great administration then you're going to have just like a way harder time.

When looking at establishing partner schools, PACE should create a system to assess the quality of the administration at the partner school. This may include the responsiveness to communication from the administrator, and interviews with other staff members inquiring about the culture and the support offered by the school. Additionally, PACE should develop a form of formal feedback that PACE teachers can submit each year evaluating the strength of the principal. This form can be similar to the form in which University of Portland students evaluate their university supervisor. It is important to note that there has been minimal feedback from PACE teachers in regard to University Supervisors because of low response rates to the evaluation forms. PACE administrators should encourage and incentivize participation in these surveys to better collect data regarding university supervisors and partner principals. No single negative review of a school or a principal would disqualify the school from being a partner with the program, but the data may be used to investigate issues that teachers are finding at their placement and identify themes that may lead to the evaluation of the continued partnership with the school.

When residential teaching programs, UCCE programs, and student teaching placements, look at the environment in which they are placing early educators, they should consider the strength of the school administration and the supporting teachers. By placing participants in environments that are more supportive and collaborative in nature, participants may be more likely to have positive experiences and choose to remain in the teaching profession. Placement schools with strong administrators and supportive induction programs are more likely to produce teachers that will stay in the field (Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, Darling-Hammond, 2016). Because teacher preparation programs have a degree of control over where they place program participants, evaluating and assessing the strength of the support of a cooperating teacher or administrator may ensure more positive outcomes.

One programmatic support that was not widely seen as useful to the participants was the role of the university supervisor. All participants described their relationships with university supervisors as largely neutral, and four of the six participants indicated that the feedback they received from their university supervisor was not constructive or helpful towards their practice. Beth describes her relationship with her university supervisor in the following way:

As far as my supervisor is concerned, I was not super impressed with the feedback that I was getting from my supervisor. He just had a lot of great things to say about me and I got a lot of great scores but it felt like he was just doing observations to get them done, and not to give feedback. I was like “okay but I'm a first-year teacher so there has to be improvement somewhere.”

One possible explanation for these experiences is that university supervisors tend to traditionally supervise student teachers. Student teachers enter into a cooperating teacher's classroom and adopt the classroom management and community of the cooperating teacher. In PACE, participants are the full-time instructor of the class and are responsible for class-wide implementations of classroom management and policy decisions. Because PACE teachers are the lead teacher in the classroom, they may need feedback around the implementation of these policies. University supervisors at the University of Portland evaluate student teachers. After several lesson observations, the university supervisor evaluates if the student teacher has made adequate progress toward standards-based criteria. Traditional feedback from university supervisors is specific to the lesson they observed, whereas PACE teachers seek feedback toward things that persist outside of a single lesson. In Britt, Donahue & Judge's 2016 evaluation of a residency program, researchers found that strong supervision and mentors at the program participant's placement school led to students feeling better supported. In order to provide constructive feedback, university supervisors could be selected from within a PACE placement school, or a supervisor may be chosen who has previous experience working at the placement school. This additional experience may give context to the feedback that is given to the PACE teacher.

One important implication the data in this study around university supervisors shows is the need for university supervisors to be knowledgeable of the classroom and school communities they are entering. University supervisors of traditional four-year undergraduates and alternative teacher preparation programs may be better prepared to

provide pertinent and helpful feedback by having a deeper understanding of the school community in which the student teacher is teaching. This additional context can come through a meeting with the placement school principal, or increasing supervision hours. Although these additional hours of work will require additional financial compensation, the added context for the university supervisor may provide for more helpful feedback.

All the participants in this study also indicated that they sought informal mentors outside of those provided through PACE. Beth said the following about a mentor she found at her placement school:

I had a teacher who was at my school who was really awesome. I will still text her to this day. She was always there to help me out and she was the ideal mentor who wasn't my assigned mentor and she did a lot more for me than my university supervisor did in terms of feedback and support.

These mentors supported teachers and assisted them in gathering materials, planning lessons, and supporting induction into the school community. In Raue's 2015 study researchers found that first year teachers with strong mentors that modeled positive time management, and provided resources and feedback to their mentees, were more likely to stay in the profession than their peers without strong mentors. This process can be formalized in two potential ways. First, PACE could ask the partner school principal to assign a mentor teacher to the PACE teacher during their first two years, and include documentation of tangible ways mentors could support new teachers. This

process ensures every PACE teacher has an assigned mentor but does not factor PACE teacher choice in the “choosing” of a mentor. The alternative solution is to strongly encourage or require PACE teachers to seek out a mentor in their first year of teaching. However, this process may have PACE teachers selecting staff members who are not viewed as highly by administration, and the role of the mentor may be less well defined. A hybrid of these solutions is to ask each partner school to assign a mentor teacher to each PACE teacher, and after the first semester communicate with the PACE teacher about the relationship they had with their mentor. If the PACE teacher did not report a positive relationship with their mentor teacher, they may be encouraged to look for other supports through an informal mentor of their choosing. The participants in this study recognized the importance of mentorship in early career success and formalizing a process of attaining these mentors can support current teachers in the field.

Within more traditional four-year teaching programs and other alternative teacher preparation programs it is important to recognize that informal mentors can yield positive results as well. Students in all teacher preparation programs should be encouraged to find and collaborate with individuals they see as experts in their community of practice. By seeking out teachers with more experience, individuals may find supports in forms outside of the elements of their teacher preparation program. Encouraging program participants to cultivate and work toward cultures of collaboration and support will help create communities of practice across school communities that better support novices, and move more individuals toward the center of their community of practice.

Four participants also expressed the need for PACE to expand the number of staff running the program in order to better support the individual needs of the program participants and effectively and constructively engage with alumni of the program as well. Those four participants also described the need for staff members to have been graduates of the PACE program in order to better support and understand the unique experiences that PACE teachers process while in the program. Beth describes this in saying:

I think something that people were always talking about was more community and individual support, especially to support people when something happens or if community members don't see eye to eye. You need somebody who's done PACE and can relate to the experience of being in the program.

While it is not necessarily practical to have all staff be graduates of PACE, it is possible to examine the experience of the staff of the program and ensure that there is a strong understanding of what PACE teachers go through and where they may struggle, both inside the classroom and in their personal lives. Additionally, expanded staffing may better support teachers in the field, and meet the unique individual needs of the participant leading to more positive experiences. This support may better mitigate or identify PACE participants' feelings of isolation or loneliness and actively work to make them feel more included, thus increasing the commitment to the profession (Ulas & Senel, 2020). Finally, additionally staffing to support PACE's

growing alumni base may allow for more interaction between alumni and the program. This additional staffing could provide professional development, mentorship opportunities, or social gatherings to better help alumni feel connected to the program. This connection may lead to formal or informal mentorship from alumni to current PACE teachers because many of the alumni of PACE live in cities which host PACE.

While staffing teacher preparation programs costs a teacher preparation program money and resources, it is important to acknowledge that first-year teachers and student teachers face significant challenges and hurdles. It is important to have staff that are dedicated to supporting student teachers and early educators inside and outside of the classroom. Programs should consider having student affairs oriented staff that are directly responsible for outreach and support of teachers in the field. Having experience working in an elementary or secondary classroom would make these student affairs professionals particularly able to empathize and support teachers through problems they may encounter. Participants indicated these connections and supports in PACE teachers' personal lives are as important as support within the classroom from principals and university supervisors. While principals and university supervisors may encounter a PACE teachers' struggles outside of the classroom, they may lack the training or helping skills that a student affairs professional may possess. Formal, quality support for individuals may lead to success and a higher likelihood of retention in the field.

Although PACE's cohort model could facilitate communities of practice outlined in situated learning theory, more formal systems need to be in place to establish quality learning of first year PACE teachers. While this study's participants

expressed strong mentorship from professionals at their school, they also expressed that they did not feel particularly strong collaboration or learning from PACE teachers who were to serve as mentors. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), an individual within their own community of practice interacts with experts that support and collaborate to help move the individual toward the center of the community of practice. Within the communities of practice of the participants in this study, they did not feel as if knowledge or skills were shared between PACE teachers in their third summer and themselves. John articulates this issue by saying:

That first summer we didn't have much interaction with the third years, and even by my third summer it wasn't there. There was a lot of promises that we made to first years that we weren't quite able to fulfill so that was also difficult. I would say, as far as that practice goes in theory, it seems like a great idea, but I think it would have to be a cornerstone of the program that doesn't exist yet.

In order to better facilitate these interactions, PACE could create more opportunities for third summer PACE teachers to share knowledge with their first summer teacher counterparts. These interactions may come in the form of professional development sessions, or the leading of professional learning communities in which teachers in similar subjects or grade levels could share best practices. Finally, with increased alumni engagement, the more “expert” teachers may be more likely to remain engaged with first- and second-year PACE teachers after graduation, further imparting

knowledge and expanding PACE's community practice outside of the current teachers in the program.

Many teacher preparation models already incorporate cohort models, but the data in this study reaffirms the value that cohorts bring to teacher preparation programs. Collaboration and empathy are built within community members and shared experiences allow participants to support one another during their teaching experiences. Alternative teacher preparation programs can utilize cohorts to create cultures of collaboration. Four year teaching undergraduate programs may also adopt a similar cohort model to facilitate these positive outcomes. While undergraduate programs somewhat naturally create a cohort model within schools of education, formalizing the language and creating events for cohort members to share their experiences may lead to higher retention within schools of education.

When looking at areas that may make an immediate impact on PACE participants' experiences, it is important for the program to evaluate which of these implications is most urgent and what solutions may be easily or readily implemented. Based on this data, a more comprehensive look at the effectiveness of University of Portland university supervisors should take place. Because university supervision costs the University of Portland a substantial amount of money, it is important to make sure this support is interacting with participants in a meaningful way. Data should be collected in which PACE participants deliver feedback on university supervisors. This data should be cross-referenced with university supervisors' feedback forms and scores and a comprehensive look at the quality of this feedback should take place. Reform and changes in university supervisor training will take time and resources, but

collecting this data and making relevant changes may impact participants' experiences in a more meaningful way. In order to begin this process, the PACE program should consider collecting data regarding feedback on university supervisors as soon as possible.

An additional change that may immediately impact PACE participants' experiences in the program is the intentional implementation of programs to foster mentorship between PACE teachers in their third summer and PACE teachers entering into the program. The PACE program may seek to foster spaces in which teachers in their third summer can facilitate professional development sessions for first- and second-year PACE teachers. By implementing programming to foster these relationships, PACE teachers may more meaningfully interact with more experienced PACE teachers to best facilitate the transfer of knowledge. A long-term goal for the PACE program may be to better utilize the alumni network of the program to provide support to PACE teachers in the field. By engaging with alumni, the program may better provide mentors for teachers that are in the field. This process would take investments in time and resources, but immediately reaching out to alumni of the program may lead to the identification of potential mentors, or university supervisors that may better support PACE teachers in the field.

Conclusions

Low teacher retention is a problem that costs schools and districts large amounts of money, and negatively impacts student learning. Nearly half of new teachers left the field in their first five years of teaching (Ingersoll, 2006). More recently a 2015 study by Gray and Taie found that 18% of teachers left the field within

the first four years of teaching. When examining retention rates, it is important to connect retention to the teacher preparation program in which educators participated. While traditional four-year education majors were more likely to stay in the field than their alternative teacher preparation peers, there are unique alternative teacher preparation programs such as residency programs and UCCE programs, that implement various supports to aid educators as they enter the field.

Based on previous research, graduates of the PACE program are more likely to stay in the teaching field than their peers (Exley, 2016). This study aimed to examine factors that positively impacted those retention rates. Participants talked about their current motivations to stay in the teaching profession, but also the supports they encountered as early educators while in the PACE program, which allowed them to succeed within their first two years of teaching. Participants also highlighted ways in which the program can improve supports to uniquely support first year teachers.

PACE and other UCCE programs implement a blend of supports because of the unique nature of their participants. Participants are the primary instructor in the classroom in which they teach, which differs from residency programs. Additionally, PACE attracts candidates that have already completed a teacher preparation program. As a result, the supports that PACE offers participants blends preparation supports with traditional teacher induction supports. The research acknowledges that early career educators benefit from supports such as strong mentorship or collaborative administration (Raue, 2015). PACE utilizes elements of residency programs, such as mentor teachers, to aid in supporting early career educators.

In many ways PACE reaffirms what is already known about early career educators and teacher preparation programs. Supporting early career educators helps retain them in the field long-term. Strong administrators, collaborative staff, and regularly checking-in with new teachers' well-being, all help induct a new teacher into the field (Leithwood & McAdie, 2016). Additionally, as a graduate program, PACE offers additional supports like communal living, cohort-based coursework, and financial support.

While PACE blends a variety of programmatic and school induction supports, there were several areas that participants identified as areas in which PACE may improve. By changing the way that university supervisors are trained, PACE can better work to support teachers in the field. Additionally, teacher preparation programs should acknowledge the nuances and individual nature of each student teacher and the placement school. University supervisors must be able to support teachers in a variety of environments. Teacher preparation programs, and PACE, should also invest in staffing that can support the individual mental health and well-being of participants in the program. This may lead to positive outcomes including increased retention rates.

When comparing PACE to other comparable programs like ACE or TFA, it is important to acknowledge that there is a difference in messaging between the programs. PACE summarizes "our mission is simple, we create and sustain careers in Catholic education" (PACE, 2022, para. 1). Whereas ACE talks about how their graduates go on to "lead in some of the nation's most competitive Phd and MD programs" and work in "prominent ventures in engineering, finance" (ACE, 2022, para. 4). Likewise, TFA promotes profiles of alumni that include careers in business,

law, government, and healthcare (TFA, 2022, para. 3). While programs like TFA and ACE seek to provide supports to participants in the programs to retain participants, their long-term goals do not necessarily reflect teacher retention in the field. In contrast, PACE seeks to sustain careers in education. This commitment is reflected in the participants of this study because many of them expressed their view of their job as a vocation, and that their commitment to being an educator existed long before participation in the program.

When examining long-term impacts of poor retention rates, it is important to acknowledge that systemic change must take place for the education field to change as well. Improving teacher salaries, creating equitable workloads, and fostering positive working conditions can also fundamentally change the profession (Podolsky, Kini, Bishop & Darling-Hammond, 2016). After speaking with participants, it is clear that these individuals are drawn to this profession out of a selfless care for others. It is also clear that these individuals experience stressors and difficulties in their workplace. Supporting early career educators certainly has positive impacts on their view of the field, but it is important to look at larger disparities and inequities in the system. By working to create better supports for early career educators both teacher preparation programs and school induction programs can create lower attrition rates in the field of teaching.

References

- Anderson, A. (2019). Assessing the “education debt”: Teach for America and the problem of attrition. *Critical Education, 10*(11), 1–24.
- Archibald, M., Ambagsheer, R., Casey, M., & Lawless, M. (2019). Using Zoom videoconferencing for qualitative data collection: perceptions and experiences of researchers and participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.
- Bailey, J., Khanani, N., Lacireno-Paquet, N., Shakman, K., & Bock, G. (2020). Teacher preparation and employment outcomes of beginning teachers in Rhode Island (REL 2020–029). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands.
- Berry, B., Montgomery, D., & Snyder, J. (2008). Urban teacher residency models and institutes of higher education: Implications for teacher preparation. A paper commissioned by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education with funding from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations and the MetLife Foundation.
- Boyd, D., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., Rockoff, J., & Wyckoff, J. (2008). The narrowing gap in New York City teacher qualifications and its implications for student achievement in high-poverty schools. *Journal of Policy Analysis & Management, 27*(4), 793–818.
- Boyd, D. (2008). Surveying the landscape of teacher education in New York City: Constrained variation and the challenge of innovation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 30*(4), 319–343.

- Brantlinger, A., & Cooley, L. (2017). How urban mathematics teacher selection, training and induction affect retention. *Psychology of Mathematics & Education of North America*, 475–478.
- Brantlinger, A., & Smith, B. (2013). Alternative teacher certification and the new professionalism: The pre-service preparation of mathematics teachers in the New York City Teaching Fellows Program. *Teachers College Record*, 115(7).
- Brewer, T. J. (2014). Accelerated burnout: How Teach for America's Academic impact model and theoretical culture of accountability can foster disillusionment among its corps members. *Educational Studies: Journal of the American Educational Studies Association*, 50(3), 246–263.
- Britt, M., Donahue, T., & Judge, S. (2016). A teacher-immersion residency program that prepares highly-effective educators: an innovative model. *The International Journal of Pedagogy and Curriculum*, 23(3), 13-24
- Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016) Preparing for Interview Research: The Interview Protocol Refinement Framework University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut, USA. The Qualitative Report.
- Chiong, C., Menzies, L., & Parameshwaran, M. (2017). Why do long-serving teachers stay in the teaching profession? Analysing the motivations of teachers with 10 or more years' experience in England. *British Educational Research Journal*, 43(6), 1083–1110.
- Collins, E., & Schaaf, K. (2020). Teacher retention in Tennessee. Tennessee Department of Education.

- Convey, J. J. (1992). Catholic schools make a difference: Twenty-five years of research. Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches (Fourth edition.). SAGE.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1994). Who will speak for the children? How “Teach for America” hurts urban schools and students. *Phi Delta Kappan* 76, 21–34.
- Davies, M., & Kennedy, K. (2009). Called to collaboration: The university consortium for Catholic education. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, 13(2), 248– 275.
- Drake, J., Moran, K., Sachs, D., Angelov, A., & Wheeler, L., (2011). The University of Indianapolis Woodrow Wilson Indiana teaching fellowship program: reviewing the policy implications of university-based urban clinical residency programs in stem teacher preparation. *Planning and Changing*, 42(3), 316-333
- Exley, D. L., "Teacher retention in the Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education residency model" (2016). Graduate Theses and Dissertations.
<https://pilotscholars.up.edu/etd/5>
- Feiman-Nesmer, S. (2003). What new teachers need to learn. *Educational Leadership*, 60(8), 25-29.
- Feistritzer, C.E., and D.T. Chester (2002). “Alternative Teacher Certification: A State-by-State Analysis.” Washington, DC: National Center for Education Information.
- Foote, M. Q., Brantlinger, A., Haydar, H. N., Smith, B., & Gonzalez, L. (2011). Are We Supporting Teacher Success: Insights from an Alternative Route

- Mathematics Teacher Certification Program for Urban Public Schools.
Education and Urban Society, 43(3), 396–425.
- Freedman, S., & Appleman, D. (2009). “In it for the long haul”: How teacher education can contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, urban schools. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(3), 323–337.
- Gatti, L., & Catalano, T. (2015). The business of learning to teach: A Critical Metaphor Analysis of one Teacher’s journey. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 45, 149–160.
- Goldring, R., Taie, S., & Riddles, M. (2014). Teacher attrition and mobility: Results from the 2012-13 teacher follow-up survey (NCES 2014-077). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Gray, L., Taie, S., National Center for Education Statistics (ED), & Westat, I. (2015). Public School Teacher Attrition and Mobility in the First Five Years: Results from the First through Fifth Waves of the 2007-08 Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study. First Look. NCES 2015-337. National Center for Education Statistics.
- Greeno, J. G., & Middle School Mathematics through Applications Project Group. (1998). The situativity of knowing, learning, and research. *American Psychologist*, 53(1), 5–26.
- Guerra, M. J. (1991). Lighting new fires: Catholic schooling in America 25 years after Vatican II. Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

- Heineke, A. J., Mazza, B. S., & Tichnor-Wagner, A. (2014). After the Two-Year Commitment: A Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry of Teach For America Teacher Retention and Attrition. *Urban Education, 49*(7), 750–782.
- Ingersoll, R., & Merrill, L. (2010). Who’s teaching our children? *Educational Leadership, 67*(8), 14-20.
- Jakuback, K. G. (2017). Catholic school identity: Perceptions that influence teacher retention (Order No. 10277902).
- Kauffman, D., Johnson, S., Kardos, S., Liu, E., & Peske, H. (2002) “Lost at sea”: New teachers’ experiences with curriculum and assessment. *Teachers College Record, 104*(2), 273-300.
- Kurt, S (2021). Situated learning theory. <https://educationaltechnology.net/situated-learning-theory>
- Lave, J. (1988). *Cognition in practice: Mind, mathematics and culture in everyday life*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Leithwood, A., McAdie, P. (2016) Teachers working conditions that matter. *Education Canada Vol. 47* (2)
- Lewis-Spector, J. (2016). State-level regulations for alternative routes to teacher certification in the U.S.: are candidates being prepared to develop their students’ literacy? *Literacy Practice & Research, 42*(1), 5–15.
- Menzies, L. (2015, June 26). Why Teach? [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://www.lkmco.org/why-teach/>

- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Morgan, D. L., Krueger, R. A., & King, J. A. (1998). *The focus group kit*, Vols. 1–6.
- Nava-Landeros, I., Isken, J. A., & Francois, A. (2020). Open the Door to Diversity. *Learning Professional*, 41(6), 33–36.
- New York University Steinhardt (2021).
<https://teachereducation.steinhardt.nyu.edu/benefits-of-choosing-a-teacher-residency/>
- New York State Education Department. (2000). 52.21(b)(3)(xvii) Alternative teacher certification program.
- Noel Smith, B. L, Benson, K.E, Levinson, M.M & Stengel, B.S. (2019). Demoralized: Why Teachers Leave the Profession They Love and How They Can Stay. *Educational Theory*, 69(3), 341 – 354
- Papay, J. P., West, M. R., Fullerton, J. B., & Kane, T. J. (2012). Does an urban teacher residency increase student achievement? Early evidence from Boston. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 34(4), 413-434.
- Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative research and evaluation and methods* (3rd ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., Darling-Hammond, L. (2016) Solving the teacher shortage how to attract and retain excellent educators. *Learning Policy Institute*.
- Przygocki, W. F. (2004). Teacher Retention in Catholic Schools. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, 7(4), 523–547.

- Rappaport, S., Somers, M.-A., Granito, K., & MDRC. (2019). A redesigned training program for new teachers: Findings from a study of Teach for America's summer institutes.
- Raue, K., & Gray, L. (2015). Career paths of beginning public school teachers: Results from the first through fifth waves of the 2007-08 beginning teacher longitudinal study. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- Ronfeldt, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(1), 4- 36
- Rowley, J. (1999). The good mentor. *Educational Leadership*, 56(8), 20-22.
- Saldaña, J. (2009). The coding manual for qualitative researchers.
- Schuttlöffel, M. J. (2001, February/March). Catholic education. Catholic schools: What's in it for teachers? *Momentum*, 32, 28-31.
- Silva, T., McKie, A., Gleason, P. (2015). New Findings on the Retention of Novice Teachers from Teaching Residency Programs. NCEE Evaluation Brief. NCEE 2015-4015. In *National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance*. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.
- Smith, P. (2007). The university consortium for Catholic education (UCCE): A response to sustain and strengthen Catholic education. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, 10(3), 321-342.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). The art of case study research. SAGE Publications.
- Stein, D. (1998). Situated Learning in Adult Education. ERIC Digest No. 195.

- Strunk, K. O., & Robinson, J. P. (2006). Oh, Won't You Stay: A Multilevel Analysis of the Difficulties in Retaining Qualified Teachers. *Peabody Journal of Education (0161956X)*, 81(4), 65–94.
- Tye, B. B., & O'Brien, L. (2002). Why are experienced teachers leaving the profession? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(1), 24.
- Ulas, M., & Senel, E. (2020). The Relationship between Commitment to Teaching, Teacher Efficacy, Marginalisation and Isolation: A Study on Physical Education Teachers. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, 15(6), 1439–1453.
- Walsh, K. & Jacobs, S. (2007). Alternative certification isn't alternative. Washington, D.C: National Center for Teacher Quality.
- Wasburn-Moses, L. (2010). A national descriptive survey of teacher residency programs. *School-University Partnerships* 10(2), 33-41
- Will, M., Gewertz, C., & Schwartz, S., (2020) Did covid-19 really drive teachers to quit? *Education Week*, November 18, 2020 (6 – 7)
- Yin, R. K. (2003). Case study research: Design and methods. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Zeichner, K. (2010). Rethinking connections between campus courses and field experiences in college and university-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(1-2), 89-99.
- Zhang G. & Zeller, N. (2016). A longitudinal investigation of the relationship between teacher preparation and teacher retention. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 43(2), 73–92.

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Housekeeping / Consent

The interview will begin with a greeting and then a review of the purpose of the interview (Yin, 2017)

- This interview should take approximately 45 minutes
- All interviews will be audio recorded. Participants will be able to member check their responses when reviewing the transcripts later.
- Review the consent form
- Participation is voluntary and confidential – does the participant still want to proceed with the interview?
- Does the participant have any questions before we begin?

Building Rapport and Trust

A qualitative interview should be opened with an overall review of the topic, and an invitation for the participant to enter into conversation with the researcher (Spradley, 1979). The opening question is designed to be easy and approachable and may solicit general answers that may not directly answer the research question, but can be elaborated on further. For the sake of this study the first question will be “What are your thoughts and reflections on the experience you had while in the PACE program?”

Guiding Questions to Answer the Research Questions

Guiding questions allow the researcher to stay on topic, but still give the participant the ability to explore the breadth of their experience (Galletta, 2013; Madill, 2011). All guiding questions are aligned with the research questions.

- Tell me about where you are teaching now and why you are teaching there.
- If any, what elements or experiences in the program lead to you deciding to remain in the teaching profession after graduation? (RQ1)
 - Follow up – Did those elements or experiences have longer term effects that have kept you in teaching to this day?
- How did PACE’s cohort and community-based model lead to you deciding to remain teaching? (RQ3)
- How did PACE’s placement school lead you to decide to remain in teaching? (RQ3)
- How did PACE’s mentorship from Principals or University Supervisors lead to you deciding to remain teaching? (RQ3)
- How did the academic program of the University of Portland affect your attitude towards teaching, and did it impact your decision to stay in the profession? (RQ1)
- What role did mentorship, from a colleague or a university support structure, play in your view of education and your decision to continue teaching longer term? (RQ3)

Exiting the Interview

Yin (2017) indicates that the interview should be ended by letting the participant have the last word with a question like: “Is there anything else that you would like to

share?” Finally, the participant will be thanked for their time and contact information will be shared if the participant wishes to reach out after the interview.

Appendix B: Focus Group Protocol

It is important to note that the focus group protocol will largely remain the same, but some questions and protocols may change based upon the data collected and analyzed in the interview portion of the study.

Housekeeping / Consent

The focus group will begin with a greeting and then a review of the purpose of the focus group.

- Ask participants to display their first and last name as their username on the Zoom conference call.
- This focus group should take approximately 45 minutes
- The focus group will be audio recorded. Participants will be able to member check their responses when reviewing the transcripts later.
- Review the consent form
- Participation is voluntary and confidential – do each of the participants still want to proceed with the interview?
- Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

Building Rapport and Trust

It is important to establish trust both between the facilitator and the participants, but also between the participants themselves (Morgan, 1988).

Additionally, the emphasis of the focus group should be on the participants voice, and the involvement of the researcher should be limited but guiding. Participants will

introduce themselves to the group, and include an icebreaker question to help develop rapport during the focus group.

Guiding Agenda for the Focus Group

The role of the interviewer in the focus group is to guide the discussion toward concrete and detailed accounts of the participants' experiences (Merton, 1956). As a part moderator, it is important to present topics for discussion, but not answers to direct questions. The topics will be derived from outcomes of the analysis of the interviews done earlier in the study. Anticipated topics are below:

- Role of PACE intentional communities in PACE experience (professional, living communities, faith communities, and cohort model).
- Role of placement school and work conditions on PACE experience and decision to stay in the field.
- Role of mentorship and other support from PACE while in the program.
- Potential factors or obstacles that may have dissuaded or pushed graduates away from the profession.

Exiting the Focus Group

A clear indication of when the session is ending is made (Morgan, 1988). As part of the ending of the focus group, participants are given the opportunity to make a final statement that goes uninterrupted and not discussed further. This may lead to a participant sharing one final thing that previously may have been contested by another participant. Participants are thanked and then given contact information to reach out to the researcher with any further information.