

## CHAPTER III

### HOW THE RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED

#### Access to the Subjects: Methods, Problems, and Issues

##### The Population and Sample

The cohort for the study was all teachers who resigned from the New Wales Department of School Education between the first day of school in 1991 and the beginning of the 1992 school year. As mentioned in Chapter II, on previous experience this would normally represent some 5 per cent or more of 47,000 teachers or at least 2,350 individuals. However, as Garcia (1992: 14) has reported, the N.S.W. Minister for Education released figures in March 1992 which showed that the resignation rate for teachers from Government schools between the beginning of the 1991 school year and the beginning of the 1992 school year fell to 3.2 per cent, or "just over 1,440 teachers", the lowest rate since "the mid-1980s" and "probably due in part to the recession".

Both primary and secondary teachers were included in the study, although gaining access to the cohort did pose some problems, as will be explained below.

Because of privacy considerations, amongst other factors, it was not possible for the Department of School Education to provide the researcher with access to Departmental records of resignation. Conversations with personnel involved in the "human resources" area of the Department revealed that responsibility for handling teacher resignation had been devolved to the 10 educational regions and that centralised records, except those of a broad statistical nature, were not kept and would not have been available in any case.

However, the Department did approach the researcher in March 1992 when the study had been reported in the press. The researcher was told by an officer of the Human Resources Directorate of the Department of School Education who had expressed interest in the study on behalf of the Department, that the information contained on official resignation forms where teachers outlined their reasons for resignation was not analysed by the Department, and that in any case, the individuals concerned were unlikely to fully and frankly state their reasons for leaving the Department. Thus, according to the officer spoken to and others subsequently, the Department was interested in the study and any findings flowing from it.

The New South Wales Teachers Federation was also approached for assistance in locating resigned teachers, but was also unable because of policy on members' privacy, to provide the researcher with contact details of resigned teachers. How then were the resigned teachers interviewed in the study reached?

### Making Contact With the Resigned Teachers

As detailed in Chapter IV which examines the conduct of the pilot study, the N.S.W. Teachers Federation and the Independent Teachers Association, the major unions covering teachers in government and non-government schools in N.S.W. respectively, were utilised in locating or contacting former government teachers. A letter to the editor was published in "Education", the official journal of the N.S.W. Teachers Federation, in the latter half of 1991 (Appendix 2.1), and this was followed by a brief article in the same journal in December 1991 (Appendix 2.3). These approaches yielded six of the seven respondents who took part in the pilot study.

In addition, a letter requesting assistance was written to the principals of one in five secondary schools and one in twenty primary and central schools in the state in November 1991 (Appendix 2.2). This measure of contacting schools directly yielded only one useable reply, possibly due to the fact that the end of the school year is a particularly busy time for schools and the request for assistance from the researcher was undoubtedly of low importance to principals.

Later, following the pilot study, an advertisement was placed in the first two editions of "Newsmouth", the official journal of the Independent Teachers Association, in Term 1 1992 (Appendix 2.5). Letters to the editors of the major newspapers the "Sydney Morning Herald" (Appendix 2.4), the "Sunday Telegraph" and the "Sun-Herald" were also written seeking assistance, the latter two not being published. However, the most successful approach was placing an advertisement in the high circulation "Sun-Herald" on March 8th 1992 (Appendix 2.5), despite the cost of \$670, as it yielded in excess of 35 respondents.

Eventually, seven resigned or resigning teachers were contacted and were interviewed as a pilot study in late 1991, the conduct of which is described in more detail in the following Chapter.

An additional 50 teachers were interviewed from early February to late April 1992 following the completion of the pilot study. Because of satisfaction with the conduct, methodology and results of the pilot study, there was little change to the methodology employed when the additional 50 teachers were interviewed following the pilot study analysis, giving a total of 57 completed interviews which provided the data for the study. This number of interviews, while

fewer than the number of respondents typically utilised in more quantitative studies, did represent almost 4 per cent of the number of resigned teachers for the period under study and produced in excess of 65,000 words of transcript.

Obviously with such an approach to the contact of members of the cohort, the study can make no assumptions about the randomness of such a sample gathered, although as will be seen later, there did appear to be a representative range of respondents on the criteria of gender, age, qualifications, experience, position held and educational regions taught in.

Gay (1987: 201) has raised the problem of non-response in such a situation and the consequent problem of "generalisability" since the researcher does not know if the respondents represent the total population: "The subjects who responded may be different in some systematic way from non-respondents ... they may be better educated, feel more strongly about the issue (positively or negatively), or be more successful". As mentioned previously, it is because of these reasons and others pertaining to its theoretical context that this study makes no claims to universality nor to objectivity in the strictly scientific positivist sense. However, what the study has provided is a series of 57 interesting and intensely personal case histories which have added depth and complexity to previous research, and have in many instances either tended to confirm or cast doubt on previous findings of the literature and what passes for conventional wisdom, while at the same time offering valuable new insights into both teacher resignation and teacher persistence.

As the study did not involve research within schools, the permission of the Department of School Education to undertake the research was not required, but the Department was, as mentioned above, informally notified of the project and later the Department itself approached the researcher following the appearance of the requests for assistance in newspapers and official union journals.

Because resignation is undoubtedly difficult for many people, sensitivity was required in dealing with the subjects and as is the case with this type of research, the anonymity of all subjects was assured, although as will be mentioned later, the bulk of the interview subjects had few qualms about being quoted or identified, and spoke openly and freely with the researcher.

The names used to identify the 57 teachers interviewed are false, and in some cases, finer detail which could have either identified the respondent or defamed a former colleague was omitted from the transcripts at the request of those interviewed. In several such cases the information supplied but not recorded in the transcripts could have resulted in disciplinary action by the Department of School Education and/or criminal charges being laid against certain teachers and Departmental officers, if such information was in fact genuine.

pilot study. It had been intended to modify these following the pilot study, but as will be seen later, ultimately this was not required.

More importantly, teachers were asked to "tell their story" through the use of open-ended questions deliberately designed to encourage reflexivity in that the questions asked the resigned teachers to describe why they became a teacher, their positive and negative experiences during their pre-service training and teaching career, the circumstances leading to their resignation and how they felt about resigning. They were asked to reflect upon and trace how and why they gradually -- or suddenly as the case might be -- became disillusioned or dissatisfied with their occupation and/or their employer.

Teachers were also asked to reflect on what gave them greatest satisfaction in their teaching career and what would be required to induce them to work once more for the Department of School Education in an attempt to throw some light on factors or variables that might contribute to teacher persistence.

There was a deliberate intention in the construction of the interview schedule to avoid leading questions or having too narrow a focus on the topics canvassed, hence for example, there were no questions asked directly about stress, or about relationships with others, despite the fact that the literature had suggested that these factors were likely to be important. The open-ended questions were devised to allow these issues to emerge, if in fact they were of significance. It was hoped that the responses would shed light on the forces, tensions and structures that precipitated resignation, without actually asking those interviewed "Why did you resign?".

It had been originally intended to carry out face-to-face interviews with resigned teachers in an attempt to provide additional depth to the telephone interviews, but the conduct of the seven pilot interviews, which included one face-to-face interview, and the remaining interviews which included two face-to-face interviews, revealed that in this particular case study, the method and the instrument were effective and that face-to-face interviews would not have added to the data gained through the telephone interviews. There was only one exception to this in the 57 interviews conducted. Joseph (4.45) was an overseas trained teacher and he and the researcher experienced a great deal of difficulty communicating when the interview was being arranged via telephone. Fortunately, Joseph lived close to the researcher's workplace and a personal interview was undertaken.

Concurrent with this study, the researcher had also been involved in a large number of face-to-face interviews as part of the conduct of two other research projects, one for the N.S.W. Department of School Education and the other for the Australian Government, and because of the comparison of the conduct of these projects, telephone interviews were in fact seen to

possess a number of distinct advantages over face-to-face interviews if the former were conducted appropriately.

## **Treatment of the evidence**

### Analysis of The Interviews

Background data relating to teacher characteristics was gathered to provide greater understanding of the cohort and its sub-groups and to relate it to previous research and was entered directly onto the interview schedule. This enabled key variables such as gender, age, years of teaching experience, position held, salary, teaching area and so on to be identified and as mentioned previously, these variables were later related to the reasons and factors contributing to teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction and teacher resignation and persistence revealed by the open-ended interview questions. The gathering of this information at the start of the interviews also tended to "break the ice" in that the questions were easy for the respondents to answer, while providing the interviewer with a feel for the background and experience of the interviewees.

Data gathered during the open-ended questioning were entered directly onto the interview schedule and written up at the earliest convenience with direct quotations noted. Sometimes transcription took place after the interview while in other cases it took place the following morning (see Appendices 3 and 4 for transcriptions of the pilot and other interviews respectively). The interview schedule had been developed from the literature review and was found not to require modification once the pilot study of seven former teachers had been completed, although as will be explained later, it was determined to place greater emphasis on certain questions or parts of certain questions because of their emerging significance. The variables on the checklists which had been derived from the review of literature in an "a priori" fashion were utilised as benchmarks and related to the findings of the interviews following the analysis of the transcripts.

The literature review had also enabled a draft model of teacher persistence to be formulated. This was considerably modified following the grounded theory process by which the interview transcripts were analysed. The methodology relied heavily upon the subjects telling their own story with the key themes or variables to be employed in the content analysis hopefully emerging from this in an "a posteriori" fashion in the manner of grounded theory advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990).

The techniques of grounded theory are described in detail later in this Chapter as they were of crucial importance in the design of the instrument and the analysis of the interview data.

## Towards A Model of Teacher Persistence

Once the interviews had been conducted and analysis had taken place, which included the development of a grounded theory to explain teacher resignation, an attempt was made to identify the key factors responsible for teacher persistence and for teacher resignation, bearing in mind the possibility that these factors might be quite different, given that the factors responsible for teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction had been found by some to be largely mutually exclusive.

An attempt was then made to relate these factors or variables to the respondent sub-groups interviewed in the study to develop a model of teacher persistence from the draft model developed as a result of the literature review. What eventuated in fact was substantial modification to the original conception of the model to explain and hence enhance teacher persistence.

Unlike the draft model of teacher persistence which was intentionally largely descriptive with a simple division between structural and human factors, the final model of teacher persistence developed as a result of the analysis of the interview transcripts was explanatory, with a wider range of factors which in combination, impinge upon the individual teacher's decision to persist or resign.

## Overview of the Research Process

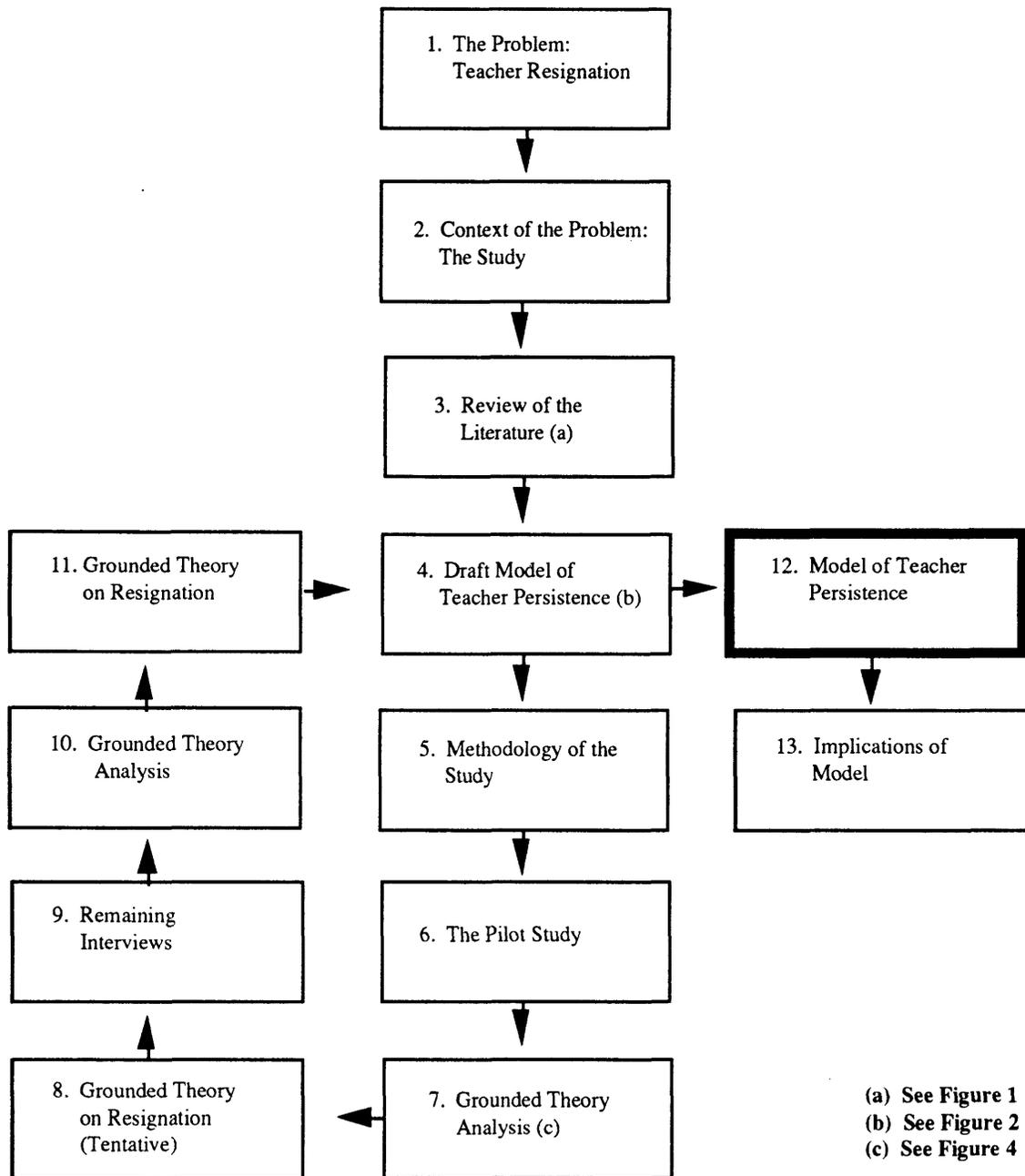
An overview of the research process outlined above is found below in Figure 3. It can be seen how the draft model of teacher persistence was derived from an examination of the phenomenon of teacher resignation, the context of the phenomenon or problem, and the review of the literature.

In turn, the interview process had been shaped by the draft model of teacher persistence and the identification of the variables potentially affecting teacher resignation and teacher persistence identified from the literature review. Following the interviews, results of the content analysis of the data using grounded theory techniques were reflected upon in the light of what had been learnt and what has gone before in the research process in the manner of grounded theory. This reflection is illustrated by the circular nature of the inquiry process.

Following this cycle of reflection, the researcher then returned to the draft model of teacher persistence and modified it in the light of what has been discovered. From this model, recommendations for the Department of School Education and the findings of the study were

derived. Finally, the implications of this final model of teacher persistence (e.g. for teacher recruitment, teacher pre-service training, teacher induction, teacher professional development and resignation and for other educational systems and employers) were explored. It was thought that if such wider implications could be drawn, it would enable the analysis to move from a substantive level of theory to a more formal level (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 79).

**Figure 3: Overview of the Research Process**



## **Grounded Theory Techniques and Procedures**

### Background To Grounded Theory

The mode of qualitative analysis termed grounded theory was first presented by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and developed in a number of subsequent publications culminating in the most recent publication by Strauss and Corbin (1990) from which this examination of grounded theory has chiefly been drawn. Strauss and Corbin (1990: 9) maintain that:

The books collectively offer one approach to doing quantitative analysis and their purpose is very specific: that of building theory. The philosophic beliefs and the scientific tradition that underlie the books give rise to their mission of building theory through qualitative research. Formulating theoretical interpretations of data grounded in reality provides a powerful means both for understanding the 'world out there' and for developing action strategies that will allow for some measure of control over it.

Strauss and Corbin (1990: 9) further maintain that the analytic techniques of grounded theory, although complex, are "learnable by anyone who will take the trouble to study its procedures" and cite a number of significant studies that have employed this methodology.

### Qualitative Research and the Use of Grounded Theory Techniques

Strauss and Corbin (1990: 17) define qualitative research as:

any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about persons' lives, stories, behaviour, but also about organisational functioning, social movements, or interactional relationships. Some of the data may be quantified as with census data but the analysis is a qualitative one.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990: 18), the qualitative researcher requires the skills:

to step back and critically analyse situations, to recognise and avoid bias, to obtain valid and reliable data, and to think abstractly. To do these, a qualitative researcher requires theoretical and social sensitivity, the ability to maintain analytical distance while at the same time drawing upon past experience and theoretical knowledge to interpret what is seen, astute powers of observation, and good interactional skills.

Qualitative research techniques were chosen as being most suitable for this present study because the exploration of personal experiences and feelings more naturally leads to a qualitative methodology. Qualitative methods can be used where the aim is to uncover and understand fresh slants or novel approaches and insights to what is a known but yet not fully understood phenomenon such as teacher resignation (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 19). The

review of the literature carried out in Chapter II pointed towards the suitability of qualitative techniques to explore what appeared to be a gap in the literature, that being personal perspectives of teacher resignation. This review and the thrust it suggested enabled the development of an interview schedule designed to explore personal feelings and experiences, and the transcripts of these interviews, both at the pilot study stage and later, are reproduced with minimal reduction and with no attempt at analysis in Appendices 3 and 4 at the end of this study.

What then is grounded theory and what is its purpose? Strauss and Corbin (1990: 23-24) state that:

A **grounded theory** is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to the phenomenon ... one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that study is allowed to emerge ... The purpose of grounded theory method is ... to build theory that is faithful to and illuminates the area under study. Researchers working in this tradition also hope that their theories will ultimately be related to others within their respective disciplines in a cumulative fashion, and that the theory's implications will have useful application.

### How Then is Grounded Theory Developed?

Figure 4 at the end of this Chapter provides an overview of the grounded theory process derived by the researcher from the discussion of grounded theory techniques which follows.

Like other methods, grounded theory begins with a research problem. However, there is, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990: 29), a fundamental difference between mere description of a phenomenon or problem, and theory. That difference is the use of concepts in the latter. Concepts involve the grouping of similar data and giving these groups conceptual labels. To achieve this, interpretation of the data is required. The concepts developed in this fashion can then be related by means of statements of relationships. However in description, data are simply organised into themes with little or no interpretation and with no attempt to relate the themes to form a conceptual schema, something which does occur in theory development, according to the authors.

Before such concepts and relationships can be developed, data are required. This can be in the form of existing text or the transcriptions of observations or interviews. In the case of interviews, Strauss and Corbin (1990:30) advocate full transcription early in the study and that these transcripts be analysed before moving to the next round. Later, as a "general rule of thumb ... transcribe only as much as is needed ... the actual transcribing ... should be **selective**". The first part of this advice has been taken in this present study where seven former teachers were interviewed, transcriptions made in some detail including selective direct

quotations, and analysed as a pilot study before moving to the remaining interviews. However if anything, transcription tended to be fuller as the interviews progressed and not the reverse, as the interviewer became more adept and as the key elements of the theory began to emerge, although in a much larger study, Strauss and Corbin's advice to transcribe selectively later in the study would be advisable.

### The Importance of Theoretical Sensitivity

A key aspect of the grounded theory technique which is essential to the process is termed "theoretical sensitivity" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 41-42):

Theoretical sensitivity refers to a personal quality of the researcher. It indicates an awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data ... [It] refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't.

A researcher's theoretical sensitivity can come from a number of sources, including the literature, and one's professional and personal experience, while the analytical process itself will add to the researcher's theoretical sensitivity. This researcher had reviewed the literature on teacher resignation, spent 14 years as a teacher with the Department of School Education, resigned from the Department, spent four years lecturing to undergraduate and postgraduate education students, and been involved in similar research projects, all of which hopefully has contributed to a fairly high degree of theoretical sensitivity.

However, despite such theoretical sensitivity, Strauss and Corbin (1990: 50) maintain that:

it makes no sense to start with 'received' theories or variables (categories) because these are likely to inhibit or impede the development of new theoretical formulations, unless of course your purpose is to open these up to find new meanings in them.

This advice has been heeded in this present study and as a result, the lengthy lists of possible variables and the tentative model of teacher persistence developed from these as a result of the review of the literature were used to structure the interview schedule and to increase theoretical sensitivity, but were consequently "put aside" until the analysis of the interview data had been completed, at which time they were compared with the findings of that analysis. As Strauss and Corbin have noted (1990: 55-56), "Of course, any categories, hypotheses, and so forth, generated by the literature have to be checked out against real (primary) data" although the authors wisely warn against becoming a "captive" of the literature.

## Coding: Open Coding, Axial Coding, Selective Coding, and the Core Category

Following the transcription of data, the next task of the grounded theory researcher is that of coding. In grounded theory, three related types of coding of increasing sophistication are undertaken: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The nature and importance of each type of coding follows, but to begin with, an explanation of coding is provided by Strauss and Corbin (1990: 58):

Coding represents the operations by which the data are broken down, conceptualised, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data.

The first level of coding, "open coding", is described by Strauss and Corbin (1990: 62) as:

the part of analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorising of phenomena through close examination of data ... During open coding the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data. Through this process, one's own and others' assumptions about phenomena are questioned or explored, leading to new discoveries.

In open coding, as opposed to mere description of phenomena, phenomena are labelled and in this way the transcripts are used to form concepts. By grouping concepts or labels that seem related to the same phenomena, categories are discovered. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990: 65), categories are more abstract than concepts and have "conceptual power because they are able to pull together around them other groups of concepts or subcategories".

The names for the categories that are discovered in this way can come from the literature or from the researcher. Alternatively, they can also come from the informants themselves, in the latter case, termed "in vivo" codes (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 65-69). At this stage, the categories developed and the names applied to them are considered provisional, as they have yet to be tested against the data. In the early stages, the authors advocate line by line coding, but note that at later stages it is acceptable to code by sentence, paragraph, or even by entire document. This advice was not followed in this present study, when the entire 57 transcripts were coded line by line, but the advice to code more selectively would be advantageous given a greater volume of text to analyse in a shorter time frame.

Thus, to sum up, in open coding the transcripts are examined and questions asked about the data. Comparisons are made as the researcher searches for similarities and differences. The researcher then attempts to group and label similar events and incidents to form categories, which have particular properties and/or dimensions.

"Axial coding", the next step, is "A set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories" (Strauss and Corbin,

1990: 96). This is achieved by means of the "paradigm model" in which (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 99):

we link subcategories to a category in a set of relationships denoting causal conditions, phenomenon, intervening conditions, action/interaction strategies, and consequences. Highly simplified, the model looks like this:

(A) CAUSAL CONDITIONS --> (B) PHENOMENON -->  
(C) CONTEXT --> (D) INTERVENING STRATEGIES -->  
(E) ACTION/INTERACTION STRATEGIES -->  
(F) CONSEQUENCES.

Thus, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990: 114-115):

Axial coding is the process of relating subcategories to a category ... we develop each category (phenomenon) in terms of the causal conditions that give rise to it, the specific dimensional location of this phenomenon [e.g. high-low, small-great] in terms of its properties, the context, the action/interaction strategies used to handle, manage, respond to this phenomenon in light of that context, and the consequences of any action/interaction that is taken.

Following axial coding which relates the subcategories, an important process termed "selective coding" takes place in which the "core category" is selected. Strauss and Corbin define selective coding as "the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 116).

There are five key tasks in selective coding although the authors stress that these should not be thought of as a lock-step sequence, as the researcher will continue to cast his or her thoughts back over previous steps and indeed previous phases of the analysis generally. The five steps in selective coding are (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 117-118):

1. Explicating the story line
2. Relating subsidiary categories around the core category by means of the paradigm
3. Relating categories at the dimensional level
4. Validating those relationships against data
5. Filling in categories that may need further refinement and/or development.

Selective coding is considered the final step between creating a list of concepts which occurs in open coding and producing a theory.

Story telling is considered important because basically it requires the researcher to consider the data carefully and to correctly order the categories. Explicating the story line is "the conceptualisation of a descriptive story about the central phenomenon under study. (When analysed it will become the core category.)". There is a problem in doing this, according to the authors when "**one is so steeped in the data that everything seems important, or more than a single phenomenon seems salient**" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 119).

The authors recommend that the basic technique in explication of the story line is again asking questions and making comparisons. From this the "essence of the story" or "the main problem" can be discerned. This may initially be descriptive, but then moves from description to conceptualisation where the story is told analytically and centres on a core category or central phenomenon which must be named if this has not yet occurred. It may be necessary to move up an analytical level where no single existing "category seems broad enough to say it all" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 121). The authors warn against the danger of trying to simultaneously develop two or more core categories or central phenomenon as this will hinder "tight integration and the dense development of categories required of a grounded theory" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 121).

The core category, like other categories, needs to be developed in terms of its properties and dimensions and thus the story needs to be told to indicate the properties of the core category. The next step is then to relate the other categories to the core category by making them subsidiary categories. According to the authors, this is the "**heart of the integration process** ... [and] is the essential cement in putting together - and keeping together properly - all the components of the theory" and is accomplished by means of the paradigm, with the categories being ordered and related to reflect this (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 124).

The establishment of repeated relationships between properties and dimensions of categories enables patterns to be identified. Strauss and Corbin (1990: 130-131) believe that:

It is very important to identify these patterns and to group the data accordingly, because this is what gives the theory specificity. One is then able to say: Under these conditions (listing them) this happens; whereas under these conditions, this is what occurs.

What follows is "**Validating one's theory against the data [which] completes its grounding**". According to the authors this is done "by laying out the theory in memos either diagrammatically or narratively. Then statements regarding the category relationships under varying contextual conditions are developed and finally validated against the data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 133-134). These statements are then checked against each case to see if they fit in a general sense, although the researcher is not looking for a perfect fit in every case and in fact such "prototypical" cases which do not fit the theory are valuable because they might represent a "state of transition" because some change or changes are occurring in the basic conditions leading to the central phenomenon or possibly intervening conditions may have come into play, and thus the analyst needs to "back track" to determine the reasons for these conditions.

The final step in selective coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 141) is the "filling in" of gaps in the categories:

Satisfied that the theoretical framework holds up to scrutiny and that conditions and processes are built in and accounted for, **the analyst can then go back to the categories and fill in any missing detail**. This is necessary to give *conceptual density* to the theory, as well as to add increased *conceptual specificity*.

Strauss and Corbin (1990: 143-175) go on in some detail to describe the process of validating grounded theory, including: the linking of action/interactional sequences; contingency or unplanned events and how these can be accommodated in the theory; the role of change in theory; analytical tools such as the conditional matrix; tracing conditional paths; and studying phenomena at different organisational levels, such as international, national, state, local, and so on down to the specific context of the phenomenon under investigation.

However Strauss and Corbin (1990: 174-175) have some cautionary points to make about "substantive" and "formal" theory, the major difference between the two being that a substantive theory is really only about a phenomenon at one of the contextual levels of a conditional matrix such as the national or community level, while a formal theory, on the other hand:

emerges from the study of a phenomenon examined under **many different types of situation** ... The error sometimes made by researchers is that they think they can make the leap from substantive to formal theory because they have generalised to different types of situations from a phenomenon studied in only one situation. However cautiously a researcher may suggest the wider applicability of his or her substantive theory, this cannot be done with any assurance unless these other situations have also been studied.

The above has important implications for this present study which is restricted to the state, organisational, institutional, group and personal levels and thus by definition, any theory developed as a result of this study is substantive rather than formal in nature, although the possible implications of any substantive theory can be outlined, something which has occurred in this particular case.

### Theoretical Sampling

A final key aspect of grounded theory construction is that of theoretical sampling, something which is cumulative during the analysis process. At the beginning, the researcher is interested in generating as many categories as possible, while later the emphasis turns to the development and "saturation" of the categories. Theoretical sampling is defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990: 176-177) as:

Sampling on the basis of concepts that have proven theoretical relevance to the evolving theory ... concepts are the basis of analysis in grounded theory research ... [and] the term **proven theoretical significance** indicates that certain concepts are deemed significant because (1) they are **repeatedly present** or **notably absent** when comparing incident after incident, and (2) through the coding procedures they earn the **status of categories** ... The aim of theoretical sampling is to sample events, incidents, and so forth, that are indicative of

categories, their properties and dimensions, so that you can develop and conceptually relate them.

Sampling occurs during open coding, termed "open sampling", where the aim is to discover, name and categorise phenomena. Sampling during open coding is open as "you want to allow sufficient space for other potentially relevant concepts to occur" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 181). In other words, keep an open mind, but proceed systematically from person to person and from case to case.

During axial coding, the aim of theoretical sampling, termed "relational and variational sampling", is to relate more specifically the categories and subcategories revealed during open coding: "You relate categories in terms of the paradigm: conditions, context, action/interaction, and consequences. Thus sampling now focuses on **uncovering and validating those relationships** ... you propose statements of relationships, then while out in the field determine whether those relationships hold up" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 185). Again, questions and comparisons are used in the process of relational (similarities) and variational (differences) sampling.

During selective coding, what is termed "discriminate sampling" takes place where "a researcher chooses the sights, persons, and documents that will maximise opportunities for verifying the story line, relationships between categories, and for filling in poorly developed categories" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 187).

Strauss and Corbin (1990: 187) make the point that testing:

is a crucially important and integral part of grounded theory. **It is built into each step of the process.** Though not testing in a statistical sense, we are constantly comparing hypotheses against reality (the data), making modifications, then testing again. Only that which is repeatedly found to stand up against reality will be built into the theory.

An important question to be answered is how long does theoretical sampling continue, for it could go on indefinitely. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990: 188):

**The general rule** in grounded theory research is to **sample until theoretical saturation of each category is reached** ... This means, until: (1) no new or relevant data seem to emerge regarding a category; (2) the category development is dense, insofar as all of the paradigm elements are accounted for, along with variation and process; (3) the relationships between categories are well established and validated.

A related question is that of how representative is the population sampled. However, Strauss and Corbin (1990: 191) maintain that:

In terms of making generalisations to a larger population, **we are not attempting to generalise but to specify.** We specify the conditions under which our phenomena exist, the action/interaction that pertains to them, and the associated outcomes or consequences. This means that our theoretical formulation applies to these situations or circumstances but **to no**

**others.** When conditions change, then the theoretical formulation will have to change to meet these new conditions.

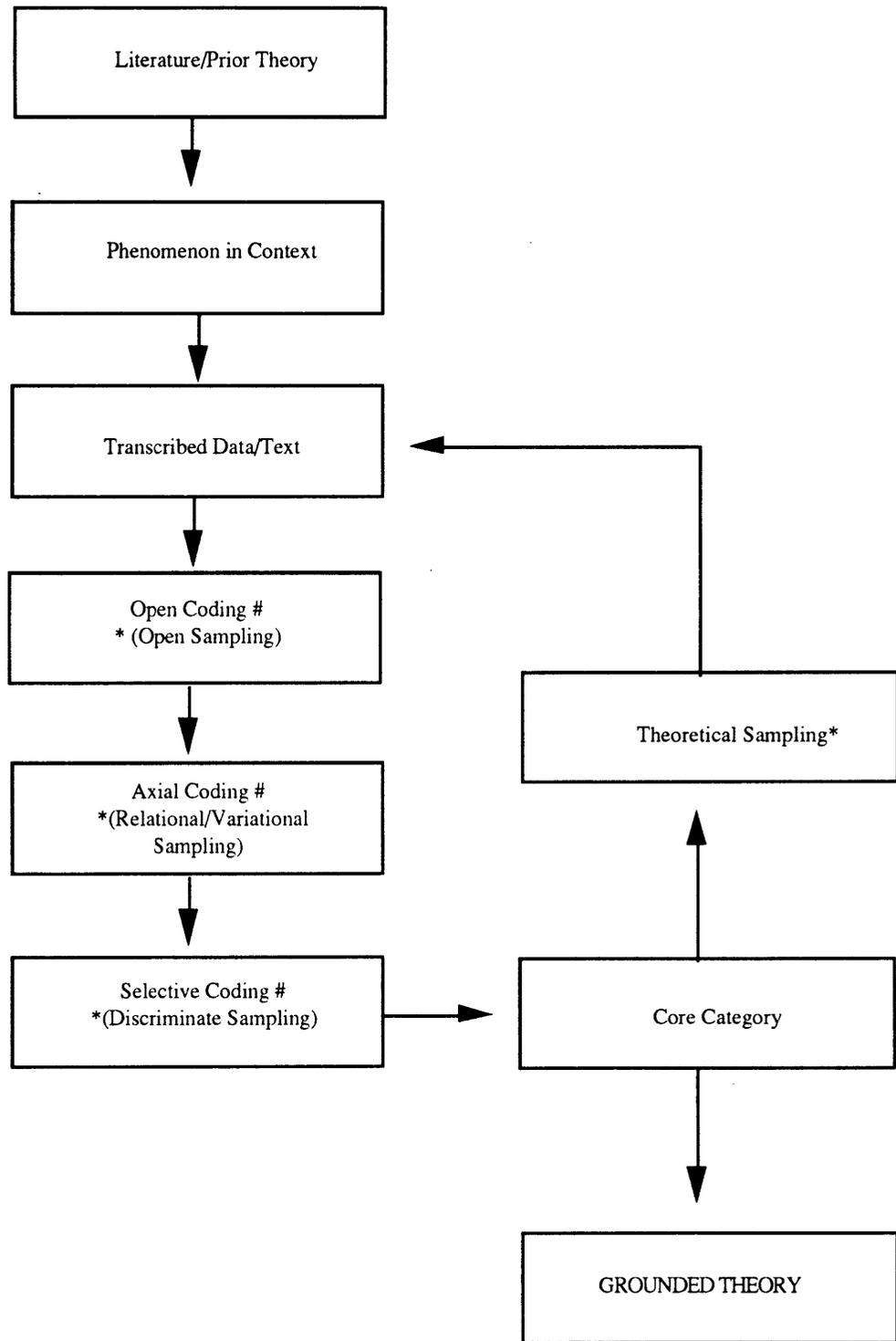
The authors point out that despite the importance of theoretical sampling procedures to the development of grounded theory, specific sampling decisions can't be planned prior to embarking on a study, but rather they evolve during the research process itself.

### Conclusion to the Examination of Grounded Theory Techniques

As mentioned previously, this examination of grounded theory techniques as represented in the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990) and dating back to Glaser and Strauss (1967) has been considered necessary to fully demonstrate the approach to data analysis employed in the study. To further illustrate the essential features of the development of grounded theory, Figure 4 "Overview of Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques" has been developed from the approach to grounded theory outlined by Strauss and Corbin.

Further discussion of data gathering and analysis methods employed in the study are found in Chapter IV below which describes the conduct of the pilot study.

**Figure 4: Overview of Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques**



# Coding Paradigm

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS OF THE PILOT STUDY

#### Conduct of the Pilot Study

##### Access to the Subjects

The pilot study commenced early in November 1991. Access to the subjects proved to be difficult and the process used was outlined in Chapter III.

Eventually, seven interviews comprised the pilot study, and the transcripts of these are contained in Appendix 3.

##### The Pilot Telephone Interviews

Once the researcher had been contacted by the resigned teachers, a follow up telephone call was made to the subjects and a convenient time for the telephone interview was arranged. In the interview itself, further details of the project were provided, including the fact that the interviewer was an ex-teacher. This seemed to help in "breaking the ice" and in establishing a measure of common ground and openness. Interview subjects were assured of anonymity, although interestingly the prevailing view of those interviewed, particularly the more experienced teachers, was that this was not important. It appeared that the respondents had contacted the researcher because they had something to say both about their own experiences and education in general. Several of the subjects actually complimented the researcher for being "brave" in attempting the study, an unanticipated response.

Interviews took place both from the researcher's office at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean or from the researcher's home. The latter from found to be more suitable because of quiet and lack of interruption, essential when conducting telephone interviews, and it was decided in the study proper to utilise evening interviews from the researcher's home wherever possible. In most cases then, the interviews took place in the evening, usually from 8-00 pm, after children of the interview subjects had been put to bed or other commitments had been completed. This timing and setting in the familiar surroundings of the subject's home seemed

advantageous to concentration and reflection, and in some cases it was obvious that the interview had almost a cathartic effect. Several subjects even stated that they had not previously spoken about some aspects of their resignation, and that some of the questions had helped them to clarify their feelings.

Printed copies of the [draft] interview schedule (Appendix 1) were used by the researcher with notes written directly upon this. It was found that it was possible to make sufficient notes to capture the interviewees' responses while concentrating upon what was being said, although at times, when transcription was difficult or when meaning was unclear, it was necessary to restate what had been recorded and to clarify or correct this as necessary.

It was also found useful in the early interviews to read back to the subjects the notes written by the researcher to determine the veracity of recorded responses. Reaction to this measure was encouraging. In addition, one of the interview subjects Bob (3.7), was interviewed in a face-to-face fashion and was later given a copy of the transcribed interview. Bob, experienced in educational research, was satisfied that the interviewer had correctly interpreted and captured his thoughts, feelings and experiences. He commented later after reading the transcript that "I sound a bit negative, but that is what I said ... I guess I had not thought deeply about the whole thing before".

As suggested by the literature, it was necessary to use such comments as "tell me more about that" or encouraging prompts such as "mm", "right", and so forth, to keep the interviewee "on track" and to assure he or she that they were still being listened to. As mentioned previously, it was necessary to clarify certain points on occasion but as the literature had suggested, the interviewer avoided entering into debate and simply accepted the responses of the subjects at face value. The researcher's recent and extensive experience with face-to-face interviewing in three states in two allied major research projects gave confidence to the conduct of the telephone interviews and in fact confirmed some advantages of this approach over face-to-face interviewing.

It was found that the structure of the interview schedule was sound and did not require modification, although as trends and commonalities began to emerge, the emphasis placed on certain questions or parts of questions altered. The way that the questions began with simple closed questions and then moved chronologically from the experiences of the resigned teacher from prior to pre-service training through to the present was found to be very effective in aiding reflection. The final question asking for any additional comments (Appendix 1, Part B, question 12) gave the opportunity for some insightful and valuable comments to be made which had not arisen elsewhere in the interview schedule.

Interviews were time consuming, taking up to 50 minutes to complete, and it was obvious that the subjects were thinking deeply about the questions while being at ease in familiar surroundings in their own home, although one former teacher, Christine (3.4), did admit to feeling stressed by having to "re-live" some of her experiences. It was not uncommon for the resigned teachers to thank the interviewer sincerely for the opportunity to take part in the study. As mentioned above, it appeared from the responses given that the experience of the interview helped to clarify personal feelings or even dilemmas. For example, Part B question 11 which asked "How have your experiences as a teacher affected you?" was described by several of the subjects as being "a good question" and some said "I haven't really thought about that until now" when the question was asked of them. Question 10 which asked the respondents how they felt about teaching at the present time and the second part of the question which asked what it would take to induce them to work again for the Department of School Education was also described as being "a good question".

It was felt on several occasions that by the interviewer appeared to be performing something of a counselling function, although in a non-intrusive manner. The overall impression gained by the interviewer was that the subjects were intelligent, open, self-critical and in most cases determined people, although some were obviously still coming to terms with their decision to resign. Most appeared to have given a great deal to education, with education having been a central and major part of their life for some time.

It should be noted that the experiences outlined above were generally repeated in the 50 additional interviews which took place following the completion of the pilot study.

## **Analysis of the Pilot Interview Data**

### Transcription of the Data

Following the interview process outlined above, the interview schedules were transcribed at the earliest convenience (see Appendix 3) while the details of the interview were still fresh in the mind and some of the more cryptic notations on the interview schedule could still be understood. When the interview took place in the evening, writing up took place either immediately after the interview or first thing the following day, while where the interview was earlier in the day, writing up took place on the same day. This prompt writing up is considered essential when carrying out interviews, even when audio or video recording has taken place, as sharp detail can quickly become blurred over time. Only one attempt was made to interview two people in the same evening and it was decided to avoid this in the future if possible.

The typical pattern was for the interview to take place from 8-00 pm to around 8-45 pm, at which time transcription in the form of word processing from the notes on the interview schedule began immediately, usually being completed by 10-30 pm. Normally, the transcription was reviewed for accuracy against the interview schedule the following morning and any corrections thought necessary made. Completion of the interview, followed by writing up, proof-reading and checking against the interview schedule, typically took two and a half to three hours in total.

The subjects were informed that the interviewer was writing as the interview progressed and at times, a pause would occur during which a particularly apt or detailed quotation or observation was recorded. This proved to be unexpectedly beneficial because frequently the subject then added something to his or her previous answer which had come to mind while the interviewer was recording a response.

As mentioned previously, at times a recorded response was read back to the interviewee either for clarification or simply to test the accuracy of transcription. When this occurred, the subject was usually able to confirm that what had been recorded was correct, although this measure too, often led to further elaboration from the subject which was useful in gaining fuller understanding of the matter under discussion. It was found later with the subsequent interviews that when a respondent was talking too quickly and getting ahead or away from the schedule of questions, it was a useful strategy to ask him or her to stop and check the accuracy of an answer already recorded. This had the desired effect of both bringing the subject back

"on track" and also verifying the response if they had been talking too quickly. However, this was a minor problem overall.

### How the Data Were Reduced and Organised

Once it was apparent that the method of the telephone interview was working effectively and that the questions were appropriate both in addressing the matters raised in the literature and in aiding reflection over the subjects' entire teaching careers, analysis utilising grounded theory techniques in the manner outlined in Chapter III was undertaken. Following the advice of Strauss and Corbin (1990), a line by line analysis (open coding) was carried out in the pilot study and concepts identified. Following this procedure, categories were formed, labelling took place, and the additional processes of axial coding, selective coding, selection of the core category and theoretical sampling were undertaken.

As a result of this process a tentative theory was developed which was further developed and tested in the conduct and analysis of the remaining interviews and which was utilised in turn in the formulation of a model of teacher persistence.

Below are found some general findings of the pilot study followed by the actual results of the coding and grounded theory procedures. This is then followed by some modifications made for the conduct of the remaining interviews and general conclusions drawn from the pilot study.

## Results of the Pilot Interviews

### The Respondents: Overview of Responses to the Closed Questions in Part A of the Interview Schedule

Seven former teachers were interviewed in the pilot study, comprising five women and two men. Four were formerly secondary teachers (one male and three female) and three primary (one male and two female). Four held a promotion position at the time of resignation (two male and two female) and three were classified as "assistant teachers". Age varied from 23 years (with one year of experience) to 53 years (with 33 years of experience). The remaining five respondents were between the ages of 34 and 40. Average length of teaching experience was approximately 16 years.

Both male teachers had secured full-time employment following their resignation, Mark as an insurance agent earning approximately \$25,000 more than his previous salary as a "P [Principal] 3", and Bob, earning a salary as a university lecturer similar to that he earned as a secondary Head Teacher. Allison and Vicky had both obtained employment in private schools on similar salaries to those they had formerly earned with the Department of School Education. Sarah, a former secondary Head Teacher, was earning very little as an occasional casual teacher, as was Mary who was teaching music on a one to one basis. Christine had opened a music shop in partnership with her husband, but had yet to operate it for long enough to estimate her likely income from the venture. None of the seven former teachers interviewed gave salary as a reason for their resignation.

### Overview of Responses to the Open-Ended Questions in Part B of the Interview Schedule

When asked why they had entered teacher training, the respondents' answers fell into two groups. The first group saw teaching as something they had always wanted to do. Mark said that he "just wanted to be a teacher", while Sarah said that she "always wanted to be a teacher ... wanted to help kids, it was the most useful thing I could do". Vicky recalled that she "always liked kids and always wanted to be a teacher. I thought it would be really good". Allison too, "wanted to teach". There was also an element of role modelling, in that Bob had experienced several fine teachers at school, while Mary was influenced by her mother who was undergoing her teacher training while Mary was in high school.

However, some of the responses to this question fell into what could be termed the calculative. Mark said that despite his desire to be a teacher, there were few other options open to him

because he lived in a small town and he had "no other real choice" of career other than teaching. Allison said that in the early 1970s "options for girls were limited ... teaching, nursing and clerical work", and that as the training was only two years this was an attraction as she "wanted to get married" and begin earning an income. Christine was living in New Guinea and said she "didn't know what to do ... it was a last resort ... the only other choice was working in a bank".

As to what the respondents thought of teaching at the time, there seemed to be a common view that while they had experienced some good teachers at school, they didn't really know what to expect. It was decided following the pilot study to stress this aspect of question 1 in Part B more and ask the respondents what they thought of the standing of teachers in the community at the time they entered teacher training.

Generally, there was a degree of dissatisfaction from four of the respondents concerning their pre-service training. Mary was critical of her training at a college because "we didn't go into the classroom enough" and that when she undertook practice teaching "we were thrown into the deep end" as a result of the lack of practical emphasis in her training. Mary believed that she "learnt much more than from a book" during "prac" and that her training should have been more practical "like an apprenticeship" and less "theoretical". Mark, while "fairly satisfied" with his college training, felt that he had not been adequately prepared for his first appointment to a one teacher school, and that his training too could have been "more practical". Allison found during her pre-service training that "it was a lot harder than you thought". Following her degree, Vicky undertook a Diploma of Education during which her formerly positive attitude towards teaching received a jolt during practice teaching when she "ran into lots of problems. I was not good at discipline ... I pictured it would be like it was when I was at school, and it wasn't".

On the other hand, Christine, who entered teaching because of a lack of other options, found during practice teaching that "I decided I loved it as soon as I got in front of a class, the power, the challenge of organisation, seeing kids respond". During his college training, Bob recalled how he "was influenced a lot by sociology. I had a negative view of school prior to college but became interested in helping people who were poor achievers and quickly became involved in alternative styles of teaching and learning". Sarah simply commented that her "idealism" about teaching didn't change during her university training.

Once again, the respondents were fairly evenly divided when it came to evaluating their initial full-time teaching appointments. Mary described her first six months as "miserable" as she was a "reserve" teacher in a primary school and did not have her own class. She spent her time "covering books, cleaning the storeroom and relieving other teachers". She complained that she "didn't know what to do or what was expected of me" and that her school had an "85 per cent Greek population, and college had not prepared me for that". Mary described her first year

as "a series of shocks, until I got used to it". An appointment to her own class in the second half of her second year "got me started", according to Mary. Mark too found his first appointment to a one teacher school in the late 1950s difficult, mainly because he had to cope with a wide range of pupils from Kindergarten to high school correspondence students. He did not feel adequately prepared to teach infants students (Kindergarten to Year 2) as he had been primary trained (Years 3 to 6) and described teaching younger pupils as "very difficult". Sarah described her first year of teaching in the 1970s at a then fairly notorious western suburbs school in Sydney as "horrific". By her own admission, Sarah had come from a "middle class" background, and was not prepared for "the swearing, the incest ... We had to do playground duty in pairs ... I discovered a world I was totally unprepared for ... It was a shock to the system, I thought I had made the worst decision of my life". Vicky also had difficulties. She had been posted in 1991 to a new school in the western suburbs of Sydney that contained only Year 7 students. She "loved it for the first month but then the kids settled in and started mucking up ... I'm too soft. I also knew a lot of the kids socially and it is hard to have a social relationship and to teach them at the same time".

The remaining respondents had better experiences in their first appointment, however. Bob spent his first five years of teaching at a country central school and described his early experiences as "a dream, I had no problems with discipline and could concentrate upon developing curriculum and teaching". Being in a school with the full range of students from Kindergarten to Year 12 gave a "good perspective ... it felt good, there were a lot of young people and a lot of freedom to be innovative and to be appreciated by others". Bob "got on well with the kids. They were friendly and it was very rewarding". Allison, like a number of the other respondents, received her first appointment to a Sydney western suburbs school where, despite the poor reputation of the area during the early 1970s, she "enjoyed it immensely".

Christine had something of a mixed experience, being posted to a country school against her will, but enjoying it while she was there. She had requested a city appointment because she didn't have private transport and "felt hard done by, the males got Wollongong, the females were sent west ... We heard it was to make sure the Department got value from the female teachers as they thought they usually resigned after a few years to have children". Despite this, Christine enjoyed teaching in a small country town where "the people were different, it was very enjoyable, although there was a culture and weather shock".

When asked what gave them greatest satisfaction in their careers, the respondents were generally united in their opinions, the only partial exception being Vicky who was far less experienced than the other former teachers. As suggested by the work of Herzberg, *et.al.*, (1959), Sergiovanni (1967) and others, satisfaction came from personal achievement, the achievement of their students, the work itself, recognition by others, advancement, and good relationships with students, teachers, superiors and parents. Christine for example, gained

great satisfaction when "kids created something beyond what they thought they could do ... I instituted a school orchestra and felt proud of it". She also gained satisfaction from "art, craft, and the camaraderie of the staff, if it was a good one". In her career, Allison gained most satisfaction from teaching infants and "seeing the spark ... [of] learning, teaching reading, especially slow learners ... just the kids", and from supervising "first year outs, student teachers and teaching 'dem' lessons" to teacher trainees.

In his career, Bob gained greatest satisfaction from "being able to teach the whole range of kids and from achieving something positive, creating self-esteem in kids" and later, as a Head Teacher, from "whole school roles, affecting change in other teachers, changing their practices and attitudes ... from running in-services and team-teaching" and from changing his faculty from one being conservative to one which was "open, reflective and trying things". Sarah spoke of how she gained great satisfaction from "seeing kids when the light goes on, when they understand a difficult concept" and how "it was great to see tough little nuts turn into decent human beings". A further point mentioned by Sarah was how she gained satisfaction when her former pupils contacted her and described the pleasure they had gained from "reading a book, seeing a play". Mark too had similar views, describing how he gained greatest satisfaction from "classroom teaching" and from "getting good results". He also spoke of the "camaraderie within the school, people pulling together" as being a source of satisfaction. Mary spoke of gaining greatest satisfaction from "seeing a child discover something", and gained "joy from leading without telling". Recognition for her work from others and using her musical talents "creatively" also gave Mary satisfaction. Vicky, being only in her first year of teaching, had less experience to draw upon and stated that she had gained greatest satisfaction from "successfully organising an excursion to the zoo" and from the fact that "some kids have come around, kids that hated Maths now know the work". She also said it was "nice to be working and not studying" and that she "liked kids in general".

There was equal unanimity when it came to the sources of dissatisfaction. Again, as suggested by the work of Herzberg, *et.al.*, (1959) and Sergiovanni (1967), the major sources of dissatisfaction lay in the more extraneous aspects of teaching such as increased administrative responsibilities, changes in policy and emphasis from the Department without teacher input, poor resources and facilities, poor relationships with superiors, increased expectations and criticism from society, being treated as a "number" by the Department, career disappointments, and other matters which prevented or reduced their capacity to teach their students.

Mary, for example, recounted how the "pettiness" of other staff caused her stress and was also very critical of some of the changes that had occurred recently in education and how these changes had been accompanied by bureaucratic policies, rule changes and "jargon", much of it unnecessary "nonsense" about things "you should just do". Being responsible for "everything from go to whoa" including teaching programs and "kids' health" was also stressful for Mary.

For Mark, his greatest source of dissatisfaction was "decisions being made whether you liked it or not" with a lack of "liaison and input" which ran counter to his way of running a school. Dissatisfaction came also from the fact that although he was a Principal, he had to teach a class because of the classification of his primary school. Because of his administrative responsibilities and the changes occurring in education, Mark frequently arrived at school at 7-30 in the morning and was still there at 10-00 in the evening. He recalled how "I wasn't getting on top of it ... it bugged me ... expectations were too high, and people who said they were [coping] were kidding themselves". Mark also spoke of the "hypocrisy" of the changes occurring within the Department since 1988 and how "the system was being revamped, but no improvements were being made ... salary went up but there was no real advantage". Mark was also critical of the fact that he had been told by the Department that the rent on the school residence he occupied would not be increased, and how it was increased by 150 per cent a few weeks later. He spoke of not being able to get concrete or consistent answers from Departmental officials.

Sarah recounted how over the years she had become "more cynical, although I still love kids ... I became disenchanted ... the respect of teachers from kids and the community was eroded, we were blamed for society's ills which we had no control over". She found that declining attitudes and discipline in class caused her dissatisfaction, and how "an incredibly increased workload, constant changes, the penny pinching, having to put my hand in my own pocket for in-service" were causes of dissatisfaction, as was change "without philosophical foundation". Sarah described how she "couldn't have lunch properly for 17 years, couldn't finish a cup of coffee" because of the necessity to deal with the morning's problems, and how the Department treated its teachers like children. "You get into trouble for leaving school five minutes early, but they don't recognise that you were there the previous night 'til six o'clock". Sarah said there were "very few rewards, no recognition, the give and take from the Department was disappearing". Sarah also found the legal responsibility to her students draining, and related how she had urinary tract problems because "you can't go to the toilet when you need to", something that people in other occupations "don't understand".

For Bob, the conservatism he encountered in schools was a source of dissatisfaction and he spoke of a "lack of vision and breadth of experience" with some teachers being like "brick walls" when it came to encountering new ideas and change. As a Head Teacher, Bob found it "unrewarding to deal with a range of problems superficially. I was doing a lot, and not doing it well". Allison also found difficulties in being an Executive Teacher. Despite the fact that classroom teaching "stayed much the same, I always enjoyed it", she "became negative because of the increase in workload" and this plus the changes that were occurring in education "hardened" Allison. She was especially critical of school staffing procedures. Due to the fact that her school had a fairly transient population, classes had to be adjusted almost weekly as pupils came and went, causing composite classes to be formed and reformed. These changes to

class sizes which occurred from 1989 were described by Allison as being "the killer". Allison also resented the imposition of "irrelevant" administrative tasks which undermined her classroom teaching and felt she was not appreciated by the Department and was "just a number".

Christine found the bickering between the Teachers Federation and the Department and the "backstabbing and lying" she encountered in education causes of dissatisfaction. Christine also found her physical teaching conditions a source of dissatisfaction and stress. She recounted how she used to "wake up at two in the morning" worried about the power points in her library which leaked water, and how her Principal, a "nice bloke, wouldn't rock the boat" to have essential repairs made. Christine said that she "sounded like a broken record" because of her complaints and that when her school eventually moved to new premises, the new library was "an absolute disaster, the whole library was designed without consulting me ... it leaked in one corner and the carpet was pulled back and nothing done for a year ... walls facing the sun were almost totally glass and it was 42 degrees inside ... I went home like a wet dishrag after school ... it dehydrated me ... when I went home and looked at food I felt ill, I feel stressed just talking about it". Christine also recounted how due to changes in the classification of ancillary staff, she was given a former Home Science assistant as a library aide, and how this person could neither type nor understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction. To compound matters, the Department had decided not to utilise a new computerised system of book cataloguing because of cost, with the result that there was an increased number of books to be catalogued by Christine in a new library with an assistant who did not understand the procedure. Christine felt that the "ostriches in government" were actually adding to costs, and not decreasing them in a time of recession, and she was being forced to "compromise my standards". She believed that principals did not "understand the complexities and complications of the job" and that librarians were undervalued.

Vicky found that her greatest source of dissatisfaction came from her inability to discipline her classes. She found it "hard being a probationer, with the Head Teacher giving me more attention and being watched constantly". Her fellow teachers were in adjoining rooms and came into her room to quieten her class, something Vicky found to be "embarrassing".

An important finding of the pilot study was that in every case, teacher dissatisfaction was seen to result in some form of mental and in some cases physical stress in the individual concerned, and a number of those interviewed believed that they could not overcome this stress while they remained working within the Department of School Education.

When asked to describe the circumstances leading up to their resignation, in all cases there appeared to be a pattern of mounting dissatisfaction coupled with an incident that "broke the camel's back" or precipitated the decision to resign. As mentioned above, this dissatisfaction

was accompanied by stress and in some cases physical debilitation, with commensurate effects upon family members for a number of the teachers.

For Christine, the critical incident precipitating her resignation was a staff meeting at which it was decided to send two members of the executive of her school to a two hour course to learn how to locally select teachers for promotion and appointment, something which Christine found "insulting to the profession" and hypocritical as the staff had earlier gone on strike in protest against the introduction of such local "merit" selection. Christine had also recently lost some key members of her orchestra and went home from the meeting in a poor state. Her husband, a non-teacher, said "you are resigning" and Christine replied "yes, I think I'm ready". According to Christine, the decision "had been building" due to the problems with her library described above.

For Allison, her decision to resign had its origin during the two years she was acting as an Assistant Principal in her school, at the end of which time she passed an inspection which enabled her to take up the position officially. However, someone else was given the job from outside her school and Allison received her promotion elsewhere, something which left the parents at her school "up in arms" because they didn't want to lose her. When she approached the Department to ask if she could stay where she was and the other promoted teacher take Allison's new position, she was told by an official "don't expect the Department to be logical". Allison termed this the "beginning of the end" and felt she was "just a number" to the Department. Her new school was even more difficult than her previous one, with a highly transient population which necessitated almost daily changes in class sizes due to the Department's altered staffing policy. The Principal of her new school had been "demoted" from a larger school and "passed the buck" to her on many issues. She described her Principal as "schizophrenic ... [a] backstabber ... a maniac". She worked hard to sustain the school, but the Principal and the other Assistant Principal called her a "yuppie" for her efforts. Allison approached her local Cluster Director about her Principal but she told Allison that the Department intended to "leave him here, what do you expect?", and gave her no help or advice, just a "pat on the back" for her efforts. The final straw for Allison was when "Schools Renewal hit, I could see the writing on the wall ... all the extra work ... couldn't control it". The whole school had to be reorganised, and the bulk of the responsibility fell to Allison who worked long hours. According to Allison, "it tipped me over the edge ... [I was] burnt out ... I hated going to school, I didn't want to be there, I went to a doctor with skin rashes, nausea, continual tiredness ... classic stress ... it has taken a year to recover". Allison's teenage children were also suffering as her husband worked long hours as well. She began looking for other jobs in the newspapers, saw a position as a Teacher Librarian in a leading private school and applied successfully for it.

Sarah had considered resignation because of some of the dissatisfactions outlined above, but decided in an effort to alleviate her feelings of frustration to take a promotion to Head Teacher from the beginning of 1989, leaving the school where she had spent the previous 10 years. A year later she met her future husband and married. Because of her age [late thirties at the time] and her desire to start a family, "it was now or never ... I had given up a lot of things for the job and decided to do something for myself for a change ... there is a lot of emotional blackmail in teaching to do things 'for the good of the kids', and the quality of my own life was being eroded". Her husband, a non-teacher, was "amazed" at the amount of work she undertook "without pay ... working to midnight on week nights and marking all Sunday ... [and by] the worry about kids". He also told Sarah how she had been "a totally different person and much easier to live with" during the 1990-1991 Christmas vacation, their first holiday together, and this made both of them realise the effect that teaching was having upon her. After talking "at length with friends and my husband", Sarah made the decision to resign.

Bob traced his decision to take leave from the Department at the end of 1989 (and ultimately to resign at the end of 1991) to 1988 when he applied for promotion to the newly created position of Leading Teacher. He received an interview but failed to be promoted, something which caused him to "take stock". When a new Leading Teacher was appointed to his school and "achieved very little", Bob concluded that to affect change in schools he would need to become a principal, but "there were too many constraints" on this role and thus he decided he "didn't want to be a boss". This coupled with some other disappointments when his ideas were not accepted in his school caused Bob to look "around for alternatives" and eventually he applied for and received a position as a lecturer in a university.

Mark's decision to resign was precipitated by the reclassification of his school. Due to an increase in pupil numbers, his school was to be reclassified at the end of 1990 and Mark was unsure of his position. Conversations with the local regional office proved fruitless and he learned indirectly that a new non-teaching principal or "P2" had been appointed to take his place, and that due to its higher classification, other assistance which he and his school had gone without for years would now be provided to the school. At first, the Department of School Education denied this, but later confirmed that this was in fact the case and that there was now no place for him at the school. Mark then applied for a "P3" position in the surrounding area but none was available, and so he took up a position as a classroom teacher for seven weeks at the beginning of 1991 while he "organised his affairs". Mark maintained that "pressure was put on me to make a decision" and subsequently he resigned, his resignation to take effect ten days prior to the end of first term. Mark described how his Principal and Cluster Director attempted to talk him into delaying his resignation until the end of the term "so that a casual teacher would not have to be hired from global budget funds". Mark decided to resign at the same time as he and his wife were moving from their teacher residence to another

home as "it seemed a good time to make a break, although it was a huge step, not taken lightly".

As to her decision to resign, Mary mentioned how teaching in a large country town with a significant Aboriginal population was difficult for her, "although I'm not a racist". There were problems and "friction" in the town, and it was difficult to teach when "there was hatred in the atmosphere". The school couldn't solve the children's behavioural problems without "help from the parents ... both sides". She also mentioned how, despite being over 30, she was one of the youngest members of staff due to the desirability of North Coast Schools, and how the older staff "wouldn't accept change". She was not permitted to take a class to Canberra on an excursion "because I was too young". There was "a pecking order" and an "autocratic, traditional principal" at her school. Mary felt that her "professionalism was not recognised ... it wears you down ... the staff was divided [between] modern [and] traditional" teachers. Mary felt that this situation was taking its toll on her family, as was the travel each day to school. She "couldn't do it properly" and there were "too many worries". She became pregnant but "only told a few teachers close to me ... I didn't tell the rest of the staff, [it was] not their business, I was sick of being railroaded, I kept it to myself". She had been seeking a transfer to a school closer to her home and received this three days after school broke up. She began at her new school but took maternity leave after six months. Mary resigned when her maternity leave ran out.

Vicky was in only her first year of teaching and admitted to experiencing problems with pupil discipline. According to Vicky, there were "hints" that she would be declared "unsatisfactory" and this was confirmed when the Principal asked to see her. Her Principal said that if he was in Vicky's position he would resign so that there "was no black mark against me". She had not seriously entertained resignation to this point, and was "determined to keep trying" until the Principal suggested resignation. As a result, and despite the fact that Vicky was still unsure as to whether she would be declared unsatisfactory and what would happen due to the fact she had won a scholarship which tied her to the Department of School Education, she began to seek alternative employment and quickly gained a position at a Christian secondary school where she began teaching in 1992.

In the majority of cases, the decision to resign was shared and discussed with both school colleagues and personal and family acquaintances. However, more senior Departmental employees, either within or outside the school, were not consulted nor did they offer advice or try to dissuade the teachers from resigning. Apart from completion of the official resignation form, there was no attempt made by the Department of School Education to ascertain the reasons behind the resignation of the interview subjects, nor was there official recognition for their achievements or service, aside from official form letters.

The majority of the resigned teachers in the pilot study professed to "mixed feelings" at the time of their resignation. Typically there was regret at leaving students and trusted colleagues, but there was also relief that the decision to resign had finally been made, because as mentioned above, in most cases there had been a period of growing dissatisfaction, accompanied by mental and in some cases physical stress, usually extending over a number of years. In some instances, families had suffered during this period of dissatisfaction, and there was an implicit belief that this would now cease and that family members would receive the attention that they deserved.

Five of the resigned teachers were still teaching, either as casual teachers or in other educational institutions, and were receiving satisfaction from this, but there was a general consensus that the teachers concerned did not wish to return to the Department at the present time because of the changes that had occurred within Government schools within the past four to five years. Allison, for example, now working in a private school, was enjoying her teaching once more and was over her stress. She said she would not return to the Department of School Education unless it "comes to its senses" and replaces "illogical structures" such as the "comparative assessment debacle [to assess teachers for promotion] ... there is chaos in schools". Assistant Principals were overworked and a "fairer, logical system" was needed. Standards of entry into teacher pre-service training needed to be lifted, some student teachers in her demonstration lessons for a university appearing to be "spaced out". The Department of School Education needed to do a "P.R. job" to improve the status of public education and teachers. Ironically, Allison said she had discovered how a self-managing school can operate effectively in her private school. Allison had put both her children into private schools and discouraged their interest in teaching as a career. She said she had experienced a "thankless last four years ... overworked, underpaid and undervalued ... you can't turn off like other professions", but now "I love it, I'm happy to be there". Mark said he "never wants to go back" to teaching, despite being registered as a casual teacher, and that "I should have made the decision years earlier". Although he was working hard at his new job selling insurance, Mark felt "motivated" and revitalised, and was gaining great satisfaction. He couldn't believe how professionally he was treated in his new role and the freedom and flexibility he enjoyed, although he found it difficult to break the habit of regular hours. His work was "not stressful or tiring, just satisfying".

When the teachers in the pilot study were asked to reflect upon how teaching had affected them, there was general consensus that it had helped the respondents to gain fulfilment and had made them more confident and given them important skills, although there was also a common feeling that it had been something of a wearing experience and that dealing with the Department and its recent changes to education had resulted in a degree of cynicism. Bob felt he had "grown out of teaching" and was "more professionally fulfilled now, more autonomous" and said that "I wouldn't want to go back now either as a Head Teacher or a teacher". However, on reflection, Bob believed that "teaching suited me ... I was able to express myself though

teaching. I really have enjoyed people contact and had no other real interests aside from my family and sport". He also stated that "teaching has allowed me to understand my own kids better". Bob believed that he might have stayed in teaching, but that being three year trained initially meant that he "had to do further study, and this was a stimulus for further study and development" which ultimately led to his lecturing position. Christine stated that teaching had helped her to "become much more confident, I can get up and speak at the drop of a hat", and related how she had become "heavily involved in the local community" because of the confidence teaching had given her. She had wanted to become a librarian since sixth class, and teaching had enabled her to fulfil this ambition. She was also pleased with her "growth in music knowledge since college". She was, however, looking forward to the challenge of her new career.

Reflecting upon how her years of teaching had affected her, Sarah said that she had become "fairly cynical about the government", and that teaching had "opened my eyes [about] low income areas ... the problems in families". On the positive side, Sarah had become "a good manager of people" and had "never stopped learning ... it gave me an inquiring mind". Vicky's experience was restricted to only one year. She believed that her Head Teacher "tried really hard to help me. It was his first year as a Head Teacher and he has taken it personally ... He was almost too helpful". Vicky stated that as a result of her experiences, she will "try not to make the same mistakes twice". During her first year of teaching she was "emotionally stressed and always sick. I have discovered what kids these days are like". She also said that she "didn't realise all the extra parts of the job and didn't know anything about being on probation or having to get a Teacher's Certificate. After I graduated, I thought that I was qualified".

A number of the resigned teachers had other comments to make both about their own experiences and education generally. Vicky was critical of the lack of information from the Department of Education regarding probation, the conditions of her scholarship and "what we were signing on for" and believed that this should have been provided during her final year of training. Vicky was also unsure of what would happen regarding her unsatisfactory assessment. She was due to have an interview at Regional Office in the following week but did not know what to expect from this.

Although she had completed her training in the 1970s and was not familiar with training today, Mary felt that teacher training should be more like an apprenticeship. As a result of her experiences Mary also thought that the three year limit on maternity leave should be extended. She "would have liked to stay on the list of permanent teachers", but the rule gave her "no option" but to resign. Her family was now her "priority". Bob described himself as being "basically an idealist ... I never had a real missionary zeal about my subject" and that as a result, he "didn't fit in. I was prepared to be open and reflective" and because of inter-faculty politics at his last school, "the interests of the kids were the last things considered". Bob

believed that "schools need to change ... to become more liberating for students who need a greater part to play ... [there needs to be] more adult learning". Although he had considered opening a school of his own at some stage, Bob was presently content with his current role in teacher education which gave him some of the freedom he believed was presently lacking in school teaching.

Sarah also had some concluding points to make about where she saw education heading. She thought that in the next few years "we are going to lose a lot of good teachers" and how teaching will "lose the cream of Year 12 ... we are getting a second rate teaching force, it is not seen as a viable career by secondary students, they don't see the joy, only the negatives, they don't want to be part of it". Sarah believed that the secondary curriculum was being "diluted, getting easier, skills are disappearing ... there is time wasting, colouring in". Sarah was also concerned with how students wanted "payment for doing things, certificates for just doing what was expected" and that the use of rewards had "gone too far".

### Results of Open Coding

As mentioned in Chapter III, open coding refers to the "naming and categorising of phenomena through close examination of data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 62). Line by line analysis of the transcripts of the seven interviews that comprised the pilot study yielded the concepts contained in Table 6: "Phenomena (Concepts) Identified From Analysis of the Pilot Interview Transcripts", found below. It can be seen that the list is an exhaustive one, and that little attempt was made at this stage to group or in any way prioritise the concepts developed by the naming of the phenomena identified within the transcripts.

Following the identification of the concepts, categories were formed by grouping concepts that were found to be related. The categories formed in this manner are shown in Table 7: "Categories Arising From Open Coding of the Pilot Interview Transcripts".

As suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990: 65-69), the names of the categories were derived both from the literature and from the research itself. In some cases, sub-categories were identified.

While concepts were identified from phenomena and grouped into categories in the process of open coding, no attempt was made at this stage to relate the categories. They appear basically in the order presented because of the ordering of the questions on the interview schedule.

**Table 6: Phenomena (Concepts) Identified From Analysis of the Pilot Interview Transcripts**

Age	Gender
Length/Nature of Service	Original Teacher Training
Pre-Training Employment	Additional Qualifications
Position at Resignation	Breaks in Service
Departmental Leave Regulations	Present Occupation
Salary Differential	Desire to be a Teacher
Liked People	Liked Learning
Role Models of Own Teachers	Lack of Other Options but Teaching
Influence of Scholarship on Career Choice	Original Opinion of Teaching/Education
Opinion of Pre-Service Training	Practicum Experiences
Lack of Preparation for full-time Teaching	Underestimation of Teachers' Workload
First Teaching Appointment Conditions	Lack of Awareness of Probation Procedures
Menial Tasks	Not Being Told What to do
Problems with Pupil Discipline	Early Setbacks
Unwanted Appointment/Transfer	Early Career Support
Initial Commitment to Teaching	Changes in Attitude to Teaching
Having own Children	Growing Cynicism/Disenchantment
Becoming Tougher	Becoming More Competent, Confident
Meeting new People	Gaining new Ideas
Using Own talents Creatively	Pupil Discovery
Creating Something Positive	Whole-School Roles
Affecting Change in Others	Job Satisfaction
Pupil Achievement	Contact With Former Pupils
Appreciation, Recognition by Others	Getting Good Results
Classroom Teaching	Camaraderie in School
Happy School	People Pulling Together
Power of Teaching	Challenge of Teaching
Helping Students	Freedom to be Innovative
Building Pupil Self-Esteem	Seeing Children Respond
Being Self	Self-Expression Through Teaching
Personal Pride	Fulfilment of Ambition
People Contact	Further Study and Development
Supervision of Others	Ineffective Leadership
Inconsistent Leadership	Different Styles, Teaching Philosophies
Conservatism in Schools	Sexual Discrimination
Racial Discrimination	Age/Experience Discrimination
Isolation	Adjusting to Different Physical Environment
Changes to Classification of Ancillary Staff	Unskilled/Unsuitable Ancillary Staff
Unprofessional Contact of Others	Poor/Unsafe Physical Teaching Conditions
Delays in Securing Maintenance	Attitude of Teachers Federation
Conflict between Department/Teachers Federation	Inability to Affect Change
Lack of Wider Experience of Teachers	Increase in Classroom Teachers' Workload
Increase in Executive Workload	Uneconomic Change
Undervaluing of Position	Inter-Faculty Politics
Pettiness of Staff	Staff Pecking Order
Educational Jargon	Neglect of Students' Interests
Administrative Changes	Non-Teaching Duties
Schools Renewal Strategies	Reorganisation of Curriculum
Lack of Change at Classroom Level	Change not for Good of Education, Children
Constant Change	Resistance by Others to Change
Professionalism not Recognised	Political Interference in Educational Decision Making
Lack of Input to Decision Making	Lack of Support for One's Ideas
Lack of Philosophical Basis to Change	Full-time Teaching Principal
Dealing With Others' Problems	Lack of Effectiveness of Superiors
Failure to Meet Responsibilities	Failure to Meet own Standards
Dealing Superficially with Problems	Self-Criticism
High Expectations - Department	High Expectations - Community
Blame for Society's Problems	Inability to Solve Society's Problems
Lack of Support from Parents	Declining Pupil Respect

**Table 6: Phenomena (Concepts) Identified From Analysis of the Pilot Interview Transcripts [Contd]**

Declining Community Respect	Declining Departmental Respect
Declining Self Respect	Pupil Socio-Economic, Cultural Background
Composite Classes	Increased Class Sizes
Support from Staff	Lack of Material Support, Resources
Treatment by the Department	Pressure on Classroom Teaching
Delegation of Responsibility to Teacher	Promotion Disappointment
Changes to Promotion Procedures	Ineffectiveness of New Promotion Procedures
Striving for Promotion at Expense of Pupils	Relationships with Parents
Relationships with Teachers	Relationships with Students
Relationships with School Superiors	Relationships with Departmental Superiors
Media Criticism of Teachers, Education	Change in Pupils over Career
Change in Education Since own Schooling	Change in Pupil Attitudes to Subject Matter
Being Watched by Superiors	Other Teachers Disciplining Classes
Change in Values, Emphasis in Education	Lack of Information from Department
Lack of Flexibility from Department	Legal Responsibilities to Students
Being Treated as a Number	Being Treated as a Child
Departmental Decisions	Complaints from Parents
Lack of Appreciation, Recognition	Long Working Hours
Pressure on Family	Length of Service at School
Growing Dislike of School	Being worn down
No one to talk to at School	Excessive Travel
Inability to eat, relax on job	Physical Stress, illness
Mental Stress	Change in Personality due to Teaching
Building Decision to Resign	Possibility of Being Declared Unsatisfactory
Inexperience of Superiors	Critical Incident
Influence of Family on Resignation	Influence of Others on Resignation
Lower Standard of Teacher Trainees	Poor Status of Teachers, Public Education
Inability to Switch off out of School	Coping with Wide Range of Pupils
Overuse of Positive Reinforcement with Pupils	Loss of Position
Being Declared Unsatisfactory	Pressure to Resign
Being in a Rut	Growing out of Teaching
Lack of Alternative Opportunities	Desire for Autonomy
Resignation	Taking Leave to Consider Future
Sense of System Declining	No Longer Belonging in System
Changing Educational Priorities	Changing Personal Priorities
Willingness to Return to Department	Increased Social Awareness Through Teaching
Manager of People	Sadness to Leave Pupils
Sadness to Leave Colleagues	Sense of Loss
Sense of Desertion	Mixed Feelings
Emotional Manipulation	Challenge of new Career
Satisfaction from new job	Reduction in Stress Following Resignation

## Results of Axial Coding

In Table 7, no attempt was made to link the categories and sub-categories emerging from the open coding of the pilot interview responses in any relational or causal sense. This process was undertaken in the next phase, "axial coding".

Axial coding has been defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990: 96) as a "set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories". This "connection" is achieved by means of the "paradigm model" described in Chapter III. In brief, this considers the causal conditions of the problem, the phenomenon itself, the context of the phenomenon, the intervening strategies used to cope with the problem, and the consequences of any such strategies or actions taken (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 114-115).

Figure 5 below: "Relationship of Categories Derived from Axial Coding of the Pilot Interview Transcripts", shows a tentative schema for the relationship between the categories identified at this stage of the grounded theory process which had arisen as a result of the process of axial coding.

Initially, one's "Attitude to Teaching" is a result of one's "Personal Background", including role models of teachers at school, family members who might be teachers, family attitudes to teaching, community standing of teachers, degree of choice or available options in career selection, desire for tertiary education, the role played by scholarships, and overall desire to be a teacher.

One's attitude to teaching is also seen to be influenced by the "Pre-service Training" undertaken, and the lecturers encountered, the nature of the course work, and experiences during the practicum.

In a global sense, one's attitude to teaching is also seen to be influenced by his or her overall "Employment History", including appointments, forced transfers, voluntary transfers, assessment of permanent status, promotions, periods of leave, periods of secondment, employment prior to teacher training, periods of alternative employment during the teaching career, and employment since resignation.

Once an individual is teaching, he or she will be influenced by "Departmental Policies and Procedures", both inside and outside the school. These might be considered some of the structural aspects identified earlier in the review of the literature.

An individual will also be influenced by "Relationships" with Departmental Officials, school superiors, the community, other teachers, students and parents, and family.

In a broader sense, an individual will also be influenced by "Society" as a whole, including issues such as economic and employment conditions, social and cultural characteristics, the value placed on education by society, the expectations held by society for education, schools and teachers, and the status or standing of teachers, including any criticisms levelled at schools and teachers by various elements of society.

Departmental policies and procedures, relationships with others, and the influence of society will be subject to change, and this change will impact at a personal, school, and system level and may be underpinned by fundamental philosophical educational change, either derived from within education or imposed from without by Governments and pressure groups.

Society, Departmental policies and procedures, and relationships with others, both within and outside the school, can be seen to impinge upon the "The Teaching Role", which includes classroom teaching, extracurricular activities or roles, and administration.

The carrying out of the teaching role can be seen to result in both "Satisfaction" and "Dissatisfaction", both the literature and the analysis of the pilot interview data suggesting that the two phenomena are largely the result of separate sets of forces or factors, hence the distinction made here. Both teacher satisfaction and teacher dissatisfaction can be seen to influence one's "Attitude to Teaching".

If dissatisfaction caused by any of the factors mentioned to this point is severe enough, it may result in "Stress" of a mental or physical nature, and this too has the potential to alter one's attitude to teaching, although it can be seen from the representation in Figure 5 that it is possible that some teachers might be dissatisfied without experiencing untoward stress. Stressors, of course, are likely to be found in many of the categories, and thus, in this sense, the category "stress" is considered to be resultant stress rather than sources of stress.

Through a combination of both gradual change in teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction and the impact of critical incidents, with resultant effects upon one's "Attitude to Teaching", a point may be reached where the teacher makes the "Resignation Decision".

Following resignation, there may well be a reassessment of one's "Attitude to Teaching" in the light of all that has been experienced, including the nature of one's present employment, hence the final impact of "Post Resignation Condition" upon the "Attitude to Teaching".

**Table 7: Categories Arising From Open Coding of the Pilot Interview Transcripts**

**PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

**PRE-SERVICE TRAINING**

- a) Nature
- b) Benefits
- c) Deficiencies

**RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS**

- a) Department of School Education
- b) School Superiors
- c) Other Teachers
- d) Students
- e) Parents and Community
- f) Family

**SOCIETY**

- a) Nature of
- b) Expectations of Education and Teachers
- c) Status of Teachers
- d) Criticism of Teachers and Schools

**TEACHER SATISFACTION**

**TEACHER STRESS**

- a) Physical
- b) Mental
- c) Impact on Others

**POST RESIGNATION CONDITION**

- a) Personal State
- b) View of Education and Department

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

**ATTITUDE TO TEACHING**

- a) Prior to Training
- b) During Training
- c) Early Experiences
- d) Changes During Career

**DEPARTMENTAL / SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- a) Appointment and Transfer
- b) Changes to Curriculum
- c) Changes to School Administration
- d) Changes to Promotion
- e) Political Influence
- f) Salary

**THE TEACHING ROLE**

- a) Classroom Teaching
- b) Administration
- c) Extracurricular

**TEACHER DISSATISFACTION**

**RESIGNATION DECISION**

- a) Building Forces
- b) Critical Incident
- c) Impact on Self
- d) Influence of Others

### Results of Selective Coding: Selection of the Core Category

Axial coding resulted in the relating of the categories and sub-categories identified during open coding of the pilot interview transcripts.

In grounded theory construction, following axial coding, "selective coding" occurs in which the "core category" is selected. The core category is then systematically related to the other categories, those relationships validated, and the categories further refined and "filled in" where considered necessary (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 116).

Selective coding is considered the final step between creating a list of concepts and producing a theory.

As a result of the selective coding process described above and in Chapter III, the core category of "Attitude to Teaching" was selected. The result of the axial coding process illustrated in Figure 5 had pointed to the importance of this category and its relationship to the resignation decision. It should be pointed out that the relating of categories that occurred in axial coding was not a simple straightforward process, but took many hours of reflection and "immersion" in the data during which time various draft versions of the relationship were tested against the data before Figure 5 was determined. It was the intention of the study to further test and validate Figure 5 against the data provided by the additional interviews to be undertaken in early 1992.

### The Importance of Change

A further result of the selective coding process was the identification of an additional dimensional aspect not shown in either Table 7 or Figure 5, that being "change". It was found that a key aspect of the majority of the categories identified in the axial coding process was change of some sort, which then impacted upon other related categories before finally impacting upon the attitude to teaching and the resignation decision. It was found in each case explored in the pilot interviews that a variety of both structural and human changes precipitated the actual resignation decision. For example change had occurred in society and its sub-categories, the nature of society, and its expectations of education, schools and teachers. There had also been changes in the status of teachers and in the level of criticism of teachers and schools.

There had been significant change in the category of Departmental and school policies and procedures, with changes to appointment and transfer practices, changes to curriculum,

changes to school administration, changes to teacher assessment and promotion procedures, changes in political influence on education and changes to salary and conditions.

There was also evidence in the interview transcripts of change in the area of relationships with others, including the relationship between the teacher and the Department of Education, school superiors, other teachers, students, parents and the community, and family members in some cases.

Undoubtedly, there had been major resultant changes in the teaching role for those interviewed, including changed classroom teaching conditions, methods and results, changes in the administrative responsibilities of those interviewed (with the possible exception of the first year out teacher Vicky) and changes in the extracurricular duties of teachers.

All teachers interviewed in the pilot study gave evidence to support the existence of change in both their level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and in the sources of these phenomena over time, and these changes could be seen to flow from the changes in the categories mentioned above.

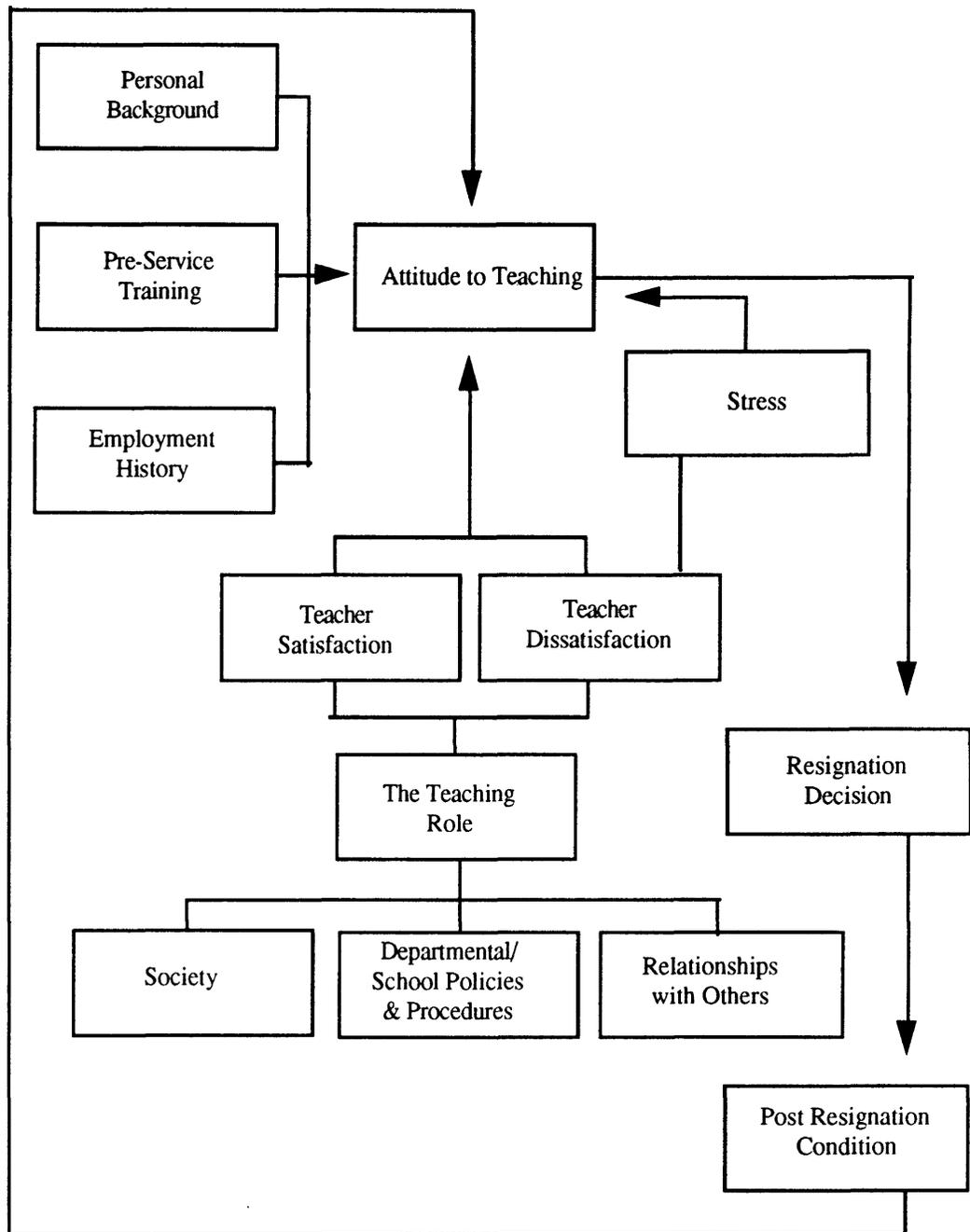
While a certain level of stress is normal for all individuals, all seven of the pilot interview subjects gave evidence of increasing levels of stress during their time in teaching.

In a broader sense, there was also change in the overall employment history of the group, with appointments, transfers, leave, promotion, secondment, classes taught, and so on all being encountered.

All of these changes were then seen to feed into and impinge upon the attitude to teaching held by the individuals, who then experienced the significant change of leaving the Department of School Education. Change then occurred following resignation, with different levels of stress, different responsibilities and patterns of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the new occupation experienced (with the exception of Vicky who had yet to take up her new job at the time of the interview but who hoped that things would change for the better in her new private school job).

Finally, as a result of all these changes, the present attitude to both teaching and to the Department of Education underwent change as a result of all that been experienced up until this point. Because change was seen as all pervasive in the categories and in their relationship to the core category of attitude to teaching, change was not conceptualised at this point as a separate category but rather as a key element and influence upon the entire schema. However, the possibility that a category of change might emerge as a result of the analysis of the later interviews was not discounted at this stage of the study.

**Figure 5: Relationship of Categories Derived from Axial Coding of the Pilot Interview Transcripts**



### The Development of the Theory

As a result of the grounded theory process outlined above, the following theory was developed which was validated against the data in the way suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990: 133-134) by laying out the theory in both diagrams and memos, and then checking against each case. Attention then returned to the categories and sub-categories and both Table 7 and Figure 5 underwent revision. During all these processes from open coding to the development of the theory, theoretical sampling took place whereby events, incidents and phenomena contained within the transcripts were sampled and concepts repeatedly present (such as "achievement of pupils") or repeatedly absent (such as the influence of "salary") were deemed significant (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 176-193).

### The tentative grounded theory

The following theory concerning teacher resignation was proposed at this point of the study:

A teacher's resignation decision is a result of a critical point in that teacher's attitude to teaching being reached. The attitude to teaching held by a teacher is subject to forces of change of both a human and structural nature. Failure of a teacher to have input to change, to be committed to that change, to be involved in its implementation and to be assisted in both a personal and material sense in making such change can result in a critical point in the teacher's attitude to teaching being reached if either the pace of change or its dimensions are sufficient enough, at which time the resignation decision is made.

### Corollary to the Grounded Theory

If the above theory holds true in the case of resignation, then the following corollary concerning teacher retention or persistence was proposed:

If teachers are to be retained, then the pace and scope of change needs to be carefully considered by those in positions of authority. Teachers need to understand the reasons for change, to have input to change, to be committed to change, and to be assisted in its implementation.

Where change is outside the influence of Governments, Departments of Education or schools, then its impact on schools needs to be carefully considered and modified if possible. Where change is of a personal or human nature, teachers need to be assisted to understand the nature of change and to limit its harmful effects where possible through support by educational employers and others.

If teachers are to be retained, there needs to be careful monitoring of teachers' attitude to teaching and of any reasons for changes in this. Efforts also need to

be made to reduce teachers' dissatisfaction and increase their satisfaction through attention to the factors responsible for each.

### Implications and Recommendations for The Remaining Interviews

As mentioned above, it was decided to stress more the second part of the first question in Part B which asked how the respondents felt about teaching prior to entering training, and to ask what the former teachers thought of the standing of teachers in the community at the time if this information had not been forthcoming.

It was also decided to utilise evening interviews where possible in the study proper and not to utilise the researcher's office due to the possibility of interruption. It was confirmed that an absence of noise and distraction for both subject and researcher was essential when conducting telephone interviews.

While Part A of the interview schedule asked subjects to state their income with the Department of School Education at the time they resigned and their present salary in an effort to explore the importance of salary in influencing resignation, and despite the fact that the background to resignation was fully explored in the open-ended questions in part B of the schedule, it was decided to specifically ask later interview subjects the importance of salary in their decision to resign at the time the questions about past and present salary were asked in Part A of the schedule. The reason for this more specific probing arose from the apparent lack of significance of salary in the resignations of the pilot interview subjects which seemed to conflict the general perception of the importance of teachers' salaries.

## Conclusions Arising From the Pilot Study

### Methodology

The draft interview schedule developed as a result of the literature review was found to be suited both to the task of both providing background information on the respondents (Part A) and fully exploring the feelings, attitudes and experiences of the resigned teachers from prior to the undertaking of pre-service training through to the present (Part B).

The use of chronological, open-ended questions appeared to be effective in promoting reflexivity and those participating in the pilot study appeared to react frankly and positively to the interview situation and schedule.

As mentioned above, it was determined to stress the question of salary and the opinion held of teachers and education by the subjects prior to entering pre-service training more fully in the remaining interviews to be undertaken in the study.

Six of the seven pilot interviews were conducted by telephone, a medium which posed few problems but which enjoyed a number of advantages over face-to-face interviews, chief among those the capacity to interview people from a wide geographic region at low cost and the ease and confidence which seemed to come from undertaking the interview in the subject's own home without the presence of the interviewer.

Grounded theory techniques of data analysis allowed a large number of phenomena to be identified which were then labelled and arranged in categories and in some cases sub-categories. These categories were then related in the manner advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and the core category of "Attitude to Teaching" identified. From this process, a tentative grounded theory was developed, the general findings of the pilot study giving direction and a starting point for the interviews and analysis to come.

### Analysis of the Interviews

The pilot study revealed that the resignation decision was a complex one, resulting from the interplay of structural and human factors. These factors were found to impinge upon the "Attitude to Teaching" held by the individual and if the strength or influence of these factors were to change, it was found that this could result in the resignation decision being made.

Thus, the "Attitude to Teaching" held by an individual was found to be a construct of the other categories revealed by the pilot study.

Teacher satisfaction was found to be largely the result of the "human" factors of achievement of one's students, personal achievement and sense of worth, recognition by others inside and outside the school and favourable relationships with students, peers, and parents.

Teacher dissatisfaction was found to be largely the result of "structural" factors such as one's administrative responsibilities, departmental and school policies and procedures, being treated as a "number" or "child", the physical teaching environment, lack of material and financial resources, workload, changes to curriculum, failure to have input to change and decision making and more intangible factors such as community expectations, the status of teachers, and criticism.

It was found that it was possible for a teacher to be experiencing both satisfaction and dissatisfaction at the same time, as both appeared to stem from largely different sources. The balance between satisfaction and dissatisfaction experienced by an individual appeared to be of importance.

All those interviewed gave evidence of a heightened level of stress or frustration associated with their recent role with the Department.

However, while those interviewed had resigned from the Department of Education, five of the seven were still involved with education and their stress and frustration seemed to have eased. Salary was not an issue in the resignation of those interviewed in the pilot study.

### Reflections of the Researcher

A number of comments have already been made about the conduct of the pilot study. More subjective and personal observations are given below as a result of the researcher's participation in the pilot study. In some cases, these observations were noted as marginal comments on the interview schedules, while in other cases they were noted in the researcher's diary.

Firstly, the interview subjects impressed the researcher with their obvious sincerity, intelligence, and commitment to education. The interview subjects did not appear to "hate" teaching, and in fact five of the seven were still teaching in another context. With the exception of the first year out teacher Vicky, the remaining six teachers interviewed appeared to have given a great deal of their lives to education, and all had made significant contributions aside from classroom teaching to the functioning of their schools.

Those interviewed spoke openly and freely, with the interview questions serving as appropriate triggers for reflection. For some of those interviewed, the interview process appeared to be therapeutic, although an element of stress and frustration still remained in some cases.

The significant administrative changes in N.S.W. education since 1988 and the criticism of teachers and schools that this implied appeared to have been a significant cause of dissatisfaction for those interviewed. Despite their commitment, it appeared that they had found it difficult to "get on top" of the administrative demands being made upon them, with commensurate deleterious effects upon classroom teaching. It appeared that having to compromise upon one's previously held standards was difficult.

Finally, as a purely subjective observation, the researcher felt that the Department of School Education could ill afford to lose teachers possessing the talents, experience and commitment of those interviewed in the pilot study, despite the fact that resignation appeared to have benefited those interviewed.

### The Remaining Interviews

Chapter V which follows provides the results of the analysis of the remaining interviews undertaken in the first half of 1992 which comprised the study proper. The schema developed as a result of the grounded theory analysis of the pilot interview data as represented in Figure 5 provided the framework for the analysis of the remaining interviews.

The results of the analysis of the remaining interviews will be related both to the findings of the pilot study and to the findings of the review of the literature undertaken in Chapter II.