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Author

Quartz, Karen Hunter

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Author: Karen Hunter Quartz
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of Education and Information Studies at UCLA
1320 Moore Hall Box 951521
Los Angeles, CA 90095
www.centerx.gseis.ucla.edu

The Careers of Urban Teachers: A Synthesis of Findings from UCLA's Longitudinal Study of Urban Educators

Karen Hunter Quartz
University of California, Los Angeles
February 2009

Educating young people in Los Angeles—and other massive, diverse cities throughout the world—requires the commitment and hard work of many, particularly teachers. Students in urban centers face a set of historically-rooted challenges including living in poverty and densely populated neighborhoods, attending large overcrowded schools often miles from their home, learning a language different than their parents, and many more. With notable exceptions, urban schools have been unable to attract, support and retain a highly qualified workforce to address these challenges. Urban schools lose an average of one-fifth of their teaching staff every year (Ingersoll, 2003a). In a typical Los Angeles urban high school, this might translate into 50 teachers coming and going each fall and spring. And in many of these schools the uncredentialled teachers outnumber those professionally prepared to do a good job. Imagine the flux, the induction challenge, and the disruption and collegial challenge to those teachers committed to a campus for the long haul.

In 1995, this dire situation led my colleagues at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) to create an experimental teacher education program to recruit, prepare and retain teachers in Los Angeles' most challenging schools. This program was part of a new center, named "Center X", to capture both the intersection of research and practice

as well as its roots as an activist community. First conceived in response to upheaval and self-examination stemming from race-related uprisings in Los Angeles (Oakes, 1995), Center X is now a community of more than 200 educators working across 12 programs: two graduate credential programs and ten professional development initiatives. Together, these educators work to transform public schooling to create a more just, equitable, and humane society. This work involves supporting the learning of educators, from novices to accomplished practitioners; partnering with schools, districts and communities; and, integrating research and practice (Quartz, Priselac & in press).

From 2000-2007, I participated in a research group[1] to study the careers of more than a thousand urban teachers prepared by Center X's experimental teacher education program. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, my colleagues and I conducted a range of studies to answer the following questions:

1) What is the effect of specialized teacher preparation on retention?
2) What is the effect of career advancement on attrition among highly-qualified urban educators?
3) What individual and school characteristics are associated with retention in high-poverty schools?

In this chapter, I synthesize the main findings of our longitudinal study and discuss promising policy responses for curbing the attrition of well-prepared urban teachers.

[1] Other members of this research group included Katherine Masyn, Kimberly Barraza Lyons, Brad Olsen, Lauren Anderson, Andrew Thomas.

Part One: UCLA's Longitudinal Study of Urban Educators, 2000-2007

Research Context:

Each fall, Center X's Teacher Education Program welcomes 170 new novice teachers—each eager to join the profession of education. The program, an intensive, two-year pre-service program leading to state certification and a Master's degree in Education, works to specifically prepare its participants for careers in urban, high-poverty schools (Oakes, 1996; Oakes & Lipton, 2003). Part of a growing national movement towards multicultural teacher education, Center X creates opportunities for teacher learning that "challenge the ideological underpinnings of traditional programs, place knowledge about culture and racism front and center in the teacher education curriculum, include teaching for social justice as a major outcome, and value the cultural knowledge of local communities" (Cochran-Smith, 2003).

Prior to certification, Center X students are required to take coursework in the selection and adaptation of materials and learning theory and are required to spend at least 120 hours observing experienced teachers in their classrooms before engaging in their own practice teaching. In addition, they spend 15 weeks of supervised classroom teaching and receive feedback on that teaching. An analysis of national data revealed that approximately 9% of first-year teachers in the United States enter the profession with a similar level of preparation (Lyons, 2007). We interpret the results of our study as generalizable to this population of well-prepared teachers, with one exception. Although most Center X graduates are female (79%), which is similar to national trends, the group's ethnic and racial diversity contrasts sharply with national norms (though it

reflects California's increasing diversity): 31% are White, 27% are Latino/a, 6% are African American, and 31% are Asian. This is significant given the growing "demographic divide" in the United States between increasingly diverse student populations and a still overwhelmingly white, middle class teaching force.

Most of the program's teaching candidates are graduates of selective undergraduate institutions and many grew up in the same type of urban communities they seek to serve as educators. In the United States, fewer than six percent of all education graduates express a desire for inner-city placements (The National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching, 2000), yet for Center X graduates, teaching in such schools defines their professional identity. The majority of Center X candidates report that they are motivated by activist ideals. For example, nearly three quarters of incoming students stated that their belief that "teaching helps change the world and further social justice" was extremely important to their decision to pursue a teaching credential.

Study Overview:

Each spring for six years, we sent surveys to Center X graduates in order to track their career retention and movement. These surveys also provided information regarding the factors that keep teachers teaching and push and pull them away from the classroom—allowing for a deeper understanding of the motivators behind teachers' professional decisions. Additionally, surveys were also administered to participants just prior to entering and exiting UCLA's program, in order to better track the perceptions and intentions of teachers just starting their preparation and their employment as teachers.

These survey data were matched to national data in an attempt to determine the effect of the program. In addition, a supplementary survey was created to understand the effect of social networks on career advancement and retention. Qualitative interview data were also collected to further understand the many factors that shape teachers' careers over time. Further detail is available in the project's technical report and papers (Quartz et al., 2003; Quartz, Lyons, Thomas, 2005; Anderson & Olsen, 2006; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Lyons, 2007; Quartz et al., 2008; Thomas, 2005; Thomas, 2008; Quartz et al, in press; Masyn, Quartz & Lyons, under review). In what follows, I present the findings from these studies according to themes that correspond to our three main research questions.

Findings Theme 1: Preparing to Stay

Researching the effect of specialized teacher preparation on retention involves a number of challenges. First, constructing an appropriate matched sample is difficult. The dearth of common measures across teacher education programs coupled with the challenge of capturing differences in culture and pedagogical principles mean that comparisons across programs must rely on a relatively narrow and straightforward set of measures. In addition, it is difficult to control for the characteristics and motivations of individual students beyond gender, race/ethnicity, age, etc. Finally, as we detail in our related studies, career development and retention is a complex social phenomenon explained by factors that extend far beyond an individual's formal preparation to become a teacher.

Considering these limitations, we designed a comparative study of Center X graduates and similar teachers nationwide in their first through fifth year of the profession. This

study was led by Lyons (2007) who created binary and multinomial logistic regression models of a national sample of beginning teachers, the data for which were extracted from the 1999-2000 National Center for Education Statistics' Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and its companion Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS). The SASS/TFS databases comprise the largest set of data available on public school teachers in the United States; the 1999-2000 database contains responses from a probability sample of 42,086 public school teachers, representing the nearly 3 million across the nation (weighted N = 2,984,782). Data on the quality of respondents' teacher preparation experiences is captured by SASS according to a set of questions regarding the inclusion of coursework in the selection and adaptation of materials, coursework in learning theory or psychology, classroom observations, feedback on teaching, and 10 or more weeks of practice teaching. The TFS data captures retention in one-year intervals. Using these variables as well as the credential type a teacher earned, Lyons studied the effect of Center X's specialized program on retention.

Before I turn to Lyons' findings, it is crucial to define what we mean by retention. Our studies include five different categories of retention and its correlate attrition. First, teachers are retained by educational role; that is, they decide to remain classroom teachers (*teacher stayers*) or leave to take on a variety of other roles, within the education profession (*role changers*) or out of education entirely (*leavers*). We call this role retention and its study provides insight into the larger educational workforce. Second, teachers are retained by school or workplace; they decide to stay at particular schools (*same school stayers*) or move to another school (*movers*). We call this workplace

retention and its study provides insight into the creation of stable professional learning communities at school sites.

In Lyons' study, important differences emerged across these five retention categories. Results from regression analyses of the national data allowed her to predict the rates of Center X graduates' retention in and out of the classroom and the field of education. Differences in the predicted and actual retention rates of Center X graduates served as the bases for judging the impact of the program. Lyons was able to control for school characteristics related to student poverty using a three category variable based on the percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch. This variable allowed her to distinguish between schools that were highly impacted by poverty (i.e., greater than 80% poor students), moderately impacted (40-79%) and slightly impacted (less than 40%). This is significant because Center X places its students exclusively in high-poverty schools. Therefore, controlling for school poverty in this way allowed Lyons to test the hypothesis that Center X graduates would be more likely than others to stay in these challenging schools.

Table 1: Predicted and Actual 5th Year Cumulative Retention Rates for Center X Graduates

	Predicted	Actual	Actual : Predicted
Role Retention			
Stay in teaching	67.8%	59.8%	0.88
Change roles in education	30.2%	28.4%	0.94
Workplace Retention			
Stay in same school	11.2%	29.3%	2.62

These predicted are based on three separate regression analyses for teacher and other role retention and workplace retention. For more detail, see Lyons (2007).

As Table 1 summarizes, Center X seems to have had a positive impact on workplace retention, but not role retention. Given their characteristics, workplaces, and intensive preparation, Lyons' model, based on the national SASS/TFS data, predicted that 67.8% of Center X graduates would be retained as full-time classroom teachers after five years when in fact only 59.8% were. Alongside this result, Lyons found that Center X graduates were slightly less likely over time to change roles within the field of education than similar teachers nationwide. However, looking at the annual—not cumulative—role changing rate, Lyons found that from their 5th to 6th career year, Center X graduates were four times more likely to change roles than similarly prepared teachers. One interpretation of these findings is that Center X graduates enter the program with career advancement in mind and/or are encouraged by the program and others to take on leadership positions beyond the classroom. More discussion on this issue follows in the next section.

The results for workplace retention are more promising for Center X. If they decide to stay in teaching, Center X graduates are much more likely than similar teachers nationwide to stay put in the same school over time. This finding has important implications for the organizational stability and potential reform of urban schools. As Ingersoll persuasively argues, also based on analyses of the SASS/TFS data, what schools should be concerned with is turnover—any outflow of teachers from a school—not simply attrition from the profession. Ingersoll focuses his analyses on the school-level measure of turnover because the movement of teachers from school to school, although not representing a net loss from the "system," creates important transaction costs and

fuels organizational instability. In 1999, for instance, Ingersoll calculated that nearly 290,000 left the occupation altogether (Ingersoll, 2003b) and approximately 250,000 more teachers moved or migrated from one school to another—more often away from "hard to staff" high-poverty schools (Ingersoll, 2003a). Overall, this represents a turnover rate of roughly 15% for all schools and 20% for high-poverty schools.

Although our research did not include school-level measures of turnover, we would expect based on our data that over time the heightened workplace retention of Center X graduates would contribute to decreased turnover in several urban schools across Los Angeles. As suggested above, many factors contribute to teachers' career decisions. Lyons' comparative analysis of Center X graduates with similar teachers nationwide suggests that specialized urban teacher preparation may contribute to workplace retention, particularly in high-poverty schools.

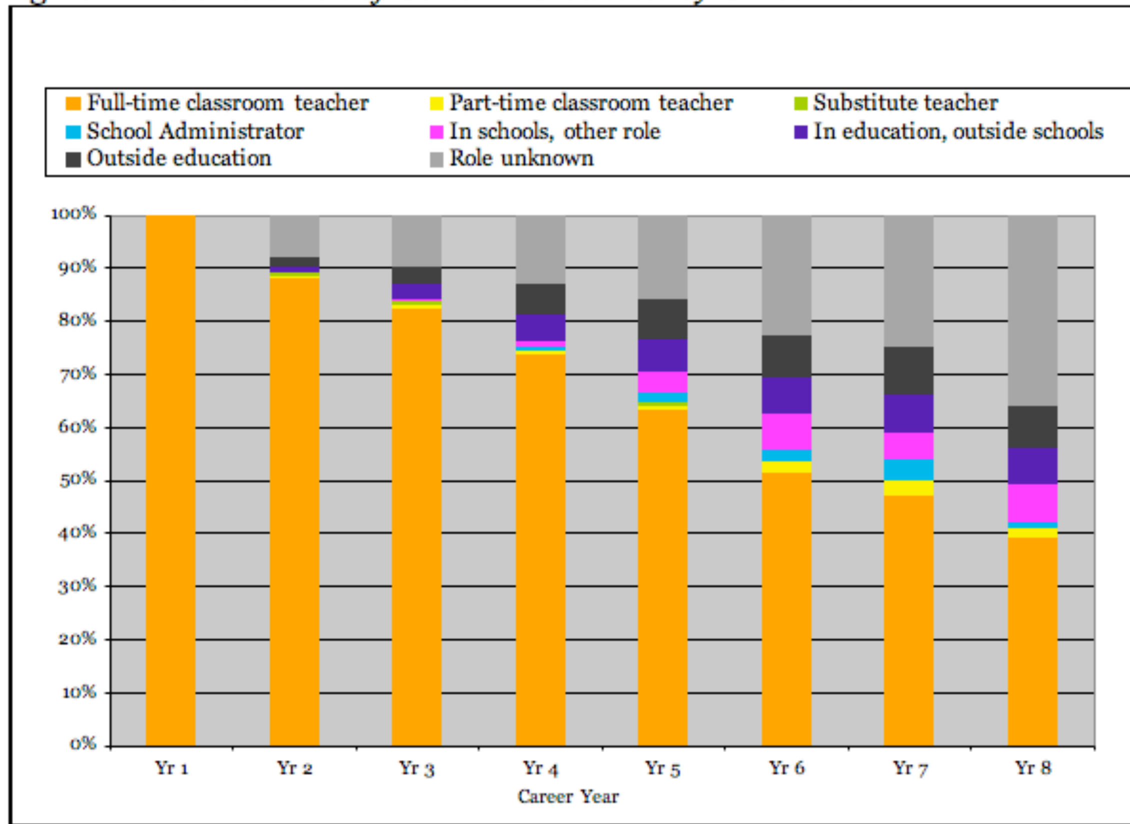
Findings Theme 2: Sanctioned Attrition

Focusing in on the issue of role retention allowed us to study the proportion of teacher attrition that is due to career advancement. This is a form of sanctioned attrition that is rarely included in the study of teacher retention. Most retention research focuses on the factors that contribute to teacher dissatisfaction and hence attrition. According to this essentially negative conception, dissatisfaction pushes teachers away from the classroom. In contrast, by distinguishing between leaving teaching, changing schools, and changing roles, our study adds another dimension to what may motivate teachers' career moves. Lack of resources or poor administration may drive a teacher from an urban school to a

suburban school, but some other factor entirely may prove influential in a teacher's decision to become a district official. As discussed below, our data suggest that many teachers make a positive decision to change roles, perhaps based on the increased "influence" that other positions in the field of education promise. Rather than being pushed, these teachers are pulled out of the classroom. Our study population of diverse, high-achieving individuals working in challenging urban settings provided a unique opportunity to learn more about this form of sanctioned attrition.

Figure 1 describes the proportion of attrition among Center X graduates that is due to changing roles within the field of education. After eight years, this proportion is 70%; that is, seven out of ten teachers who leave the classroom after eight years do so to pursue another professional role. Looking across career years, what is the distribution of roles for those who make such a career move? As illustrated, a substantial proportion of role changing within this population is career movement outside the Kindergarten to 12th Grade (K-12) educational system, the publicly-funded set of schools and districts in the United States that serve 5 to 18 year old students. Also significant is the proportion of role changers who reported "working in K–12 school/district in another role." Not surprisingly, our data indicate a range of roles within these latter two categories. We are able to detail some of these roles based on handwritten explanations and survey items that probed the nature of professional activities and leadership roles taken on by respondents.

Figure 1: Role Retention of Center X Graduates by Career Year



Not all respondents chose to further specify their roles by hand writing additional information on the survey; however, of those who did, "working in K–12 school/district in another role" included, for example, work as an instructional (literacy or math) coach, a bilingual coordinator, a dual-language immersion program coordinator, and a director of an after-school program at a family resource center. Examples of "working in education outside K–12 school/district" included work as a college professor, a college academic advisor, a museum educator and curriculum developer, an educational software developer, and a marketing director for an educational media company.

Survey data about professional activities showed that both categories of role changers (i.e., in and out of K–12 schools) were positively correlated with conducting

“observational visits to other schools” and “presenting at workshops, conferences or training sessions.” Role changers “inside K–12 schools in another role” reported taking on a variety of leadership roles: 59% assumed the duties of trainers or staff developers, 52% reported coaching, and 41% reported coordinating testing, technology, beginning teacher support, or other programs. Engaging in these types of professional activities seemed to set the stage for a role change within the profession.

In addition to enumerating and describing the variety of non-teaching roles into which the teachers in this study moved, we are able to document the patterns of movement, or the “pathways” that teachers take out of the classroom and into other educational roles, and then sometimes back to the classroom again. In an attempt to understand the dynamics of these career pathways, we mapped movement across, or through, roles over time. In an analysis of 432 Center X graduates for whom we had complete role data on at least three but as many as eight *consecutive* career years each year, there were 57 unique observed pathways—underscoring the fluidity and movement within careers in education. Of those graduate in this sample, 95% had been teaching for three consecutive years at the Year 3 mark. Of the graduates for whom we had seven consecutive years of data, 68% had been teaching for all seven years at the Year 7 mark. In total, “stayers” like these who remained in classroom teaching over their entire observed pathway (between 3 and 8 career years beginning in the first year of teaching) represented 76% of the sample, whereas those who changed roles or left one or more times represented 24% of the sample. Of those who changed roles or left one or more times, 59% changed roles/left once and 41% changed roles/left two or more times.

Studying graduates' career pathways over time complicates the issue of retention because it calls into question retention rates reported in cross-sectional studies. Consider the career pathway of a person who teaches for one year, leaves in year 2, returns to teach in another school in year 3, moves to the district office in years 5 and 6, and returns to the classroom in year 7. Depending on the time frame of the cross sectional research, this person could be considered a stayer, leaver, mover, or role changer.

Going beyond a description of role retention rates to understand the individual-level characteristics that correlate with this form of sanctioned attrition, we constructed a discrete time survival model to capture the influence of race/ethnicity, gender, credential type, and age on the timing of the *first* departure from full-time classroom teaching. Consistent with prior research that White teachers leave teaching at higher rates than teachers of color, Latino teachers in our population had a significantly lower attrition rate from education than White teachers. However, when we examined differences within the competing risk model between those who leave and those who change roles, we found that race/ethnicity had very little effect on role changing. This finding may reflect the wide array of opportunities open to our young, well-prepared, and diverse subject population, many of whom work in a predominantly Latino school district. Being pulled out of teaching by leadership and advancement opportunities may be especially likely among this particular graduate population given their placement in schools that tend, like most high-poverty urban schools, to have a relative scarcity of well-prepared and veteran

educators. In such circumstances, there is perhaps increased likelihood of being "cherry-picked" into the advancement pipeline.

Unlike race, gender and credential type did have an effect on role changing. After year 3, men were more likely to change roles than women, suggesting that even among our well-prepared sample of teachers, traditional gender bias around career advancement may be an issue. Assuming that most role changing is movement up the career ladder, men seem to be more likely than women to be promoted. Teaching has a long history as a female-dominated profession in which men have been overrepresented in higher status positions. Our research informs this trend. We also found that teachers with single-subject (secondary) credentials were more likely to leave teaching for a role change in education than their colleagues who hold multiple-subject (elementary) credentials, suggesting that elementary and secondary schools cultivate different norms and opportunities for career advancement.

With respect to age, we found that younger teachers were much more likely to change roles than to leave education entirely—pointing to a broader theme about age and generation. Today's teachers may be entering the profession with long-term career goals that differ from those of previous generations of career educators. As Moore Johnson (2004) and her colleagues have written about the next generation of teachers, "Those who consider teaching today have an array of alternative career options, many offering greater social status, providing more comfortable work environments, and offering far higher pay than teaching" (p. 19). A myriad of factors explain this apparent generational turn in the

educational workforce. In three related follow up studies, we looked deeper at this phenomenon of role changing within our study population.

In their qualitative study of 15 Center X graduates, Olsen and Anderson (2007) probed teachers' reasons for anticipated role changes. Jiao, one of the fifth-year teachers they followed, was planning to leave for graduate school and reported always having viewed teaching as a "stepping stone"—in his case, to a district position working with curriculum and instruction. Although Jiao reported that he would have taken this path regardless, there are several aspects of teaching with which he expressed frustration. He described the profession as "stagnant" concerning salary and status: "In the business world, you can always become an 'associate-' this and then you can become 'vice-' this and then 'director.' In teaching, you're just a teacher." Olsen and Anderson outlined other reported reasons for role changing, including the desire to make a bigger impact in urban education, family pressure to achieve higher status, and more typical career dissatisfaction variables such as lack of administrative support and the emotional and physical toll of day-to-day teaching. The authors also noted the potential role of professional development and leadership opportunities in influencing the construction of career pathways that differentiate and expand teachers' work and influence while keeping them closely connected to the schools where they are arguably most needed (Anderson & Olsen, 2006).

In a second study, Thomas (2005) explored the career-related discussion networks (i.e., who talked to whom about their career choices) of a sub-sample of this study population.

Thomas found that social capital—as manifested in the age, occupational, and status-level diversity of a teacher's professional contacts—was positively associated with role changing. Teachers who changed roles were those who maintained and mobilized a diverse group of professional contacts who tended to occupy non-teaching positions in the educational system, whereas teachers who continued full-time classroom teaching tended to be closely linked to their in-school colleagues and to value collegiality highly.

In a third qualitative study (Quartz, et al., 2009), we analyzed the careers of seven Center X graduates—all of whom had changed roles at least once. We framed their careers in the context of the history, structures and culture of schooling, making sense of their efforts to exercise professional autonomy, build supportive social networks and make a difference in the lives of urban students and communities. In a monograph for teachers, we examined how these seven educators engaged in a common struggle: how to stay connected to the core work of teaching—student learning—in a profession that rewards them for taking on roles and responsibilities beyond the classroom.

Although largely hidden from policy view, role changing, as documented above, is a form of sanctioned attrition that should be added to the landscape of teacher retention research. Policy makers currently struggle with how best to sanction or encourage attrition among "bad" teachers, yet there is virtually no attention paid to all the ways that the educational system sanctions attrition of the nation's most well-prepared teachers.

Findings Theme 3: Professional Learning Communities

Johnson and Birkeland (2003), in their qualitative study of teacher retention, found that many teachers move around voluntarily in search of "schools that make good teaching possible" (p. 21). This is often a search for supportive principals and colleagues, reasonable teaching assignments and workloads, and sufficient resources. Given the scarcity of these conditions in high-poverty schools, teacher migration patterns typically flow from less affluent to more affluent school contexts. As described above, Center X graduates are less likely to make such a move than similarly prepared educators. What explains their staying power was the topic of the research group's final analysis.

Within our population of diverse, specially prepared teachers, we found two individual attributes associated with workplace retention: gender and race. Results from a longitudinal multinomial logistic regression model suggest that among active teachers in a given year, men are less likely than women in our population to move from school to school or leave teaching for the following year. Traditional gender differences such as childbearing may explain this finding of higher workplace and teacher attrition between years among women, although we suspect there are other factors that contribute as well. This complicates our understanding of the influence of gender in retention as our findings from Theme 2 also demonstrated men being more likely than women, upon their first departure from teaching, to change roles within education. We also found that Latino teachers were less likely than White teachers to move from school to school or leave teaching, as noted above. This finding echoes prior research on the heightened retention of teachers of color, yet it has particular significance in Los Angeles, a city that is

predominantly Latino. Many Center X graduates grew up in Los Angeles schools and remain teaching in these same schools as a form of service to their communities; as one teacher explained: “My calling to become a teacher stems from my challenging experiences as a student in the Los Angeles public school system. I attended one of the worst academic performing schools in the state. I am determined to provide quality education and work to keep children from falling through the cracks as I almost did.”

In addition to the individual characteristics of “same school stayers,” we also found that student disadvantage contributed to workplace retention. Our findings stand in stark contrast to a number of studies that have found teachers systematically move away from schools with low levels of achievement and high concentrations of poor children of color (Carroll, Reichardt, Guarino, & Mejia, 2000; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002). For our population of Center X graduates, just the opposite was true. If a Center X graduate were either going to stay or change schools but remain teaching, he or she is less likely to move to a different workplace to continue teaching if he or she is currently teaching in a high priority school. Using a latent class cluster analysis, we define a “high priority” school in terms of student disadvantage in the educational system—students who are most in need of good teachers. The measurement model for the latent class variable, a 3-category priority school status variable (high, medium, and low priority), was based on four school-level measures: 1) average percent of students in the school receiving free or reduced price lunch (family socio-economic status or SES); 2) average percent of students whose parents have some education beyond high school (parent education); 3) average percent of students with English Language

Learner status (English proficiency); and 4) average school base Academic Performance Index score (academic achievement). In the construction of this variable, our intent was to distinguish between schools that are a priority for teacher retention with respect to student disadvantage without directly confounding, in our measurement model, other correlated school-level workplace characteristics that may also, independently, influence teacher and workplace retention.

Our finding that Center X graduates are less likely to move away from high-priority schools contributes to research that disentangles school working conditions from student characteristics as factors pushing teachers out of certain schools or away from teaching altogether. For example, although attributes of students appear to influence attrition in many studies, when Loeb et al. (2005) added district salary levels and teachers' ratings of working conditions—including large class sizes, facilities and space problems, multi-track schools, and lack of textbooks—to student variables in their model, they found that student characteristics become insignificant predictors of teacher turnover. Similarly, Horng (2004) found that when teachers were asked to make tradeoffs among school and student characteristics, the former were often considered more important than the latter. To explore this idea further, we developed a model that included school priority status as well as measures of workplace quality.

The workplace measures we included were based on publicly available California state data on schools. The following school-related variables were considered: 1) school type (elementary vs. secondary); 2) multi-track year-round school; 3) percent of teachers at

school with full teaching credentials; 4) percent of teachers at school with emergency teaching credentials. We found that while school type and schedule did not predict workplace retention, the qualifications of the teaching staff were significantly associated with school movement as well as role changing. Controlling for the priority status of the school as well as other covariates in the model, we discovered that if a Center X graduate were either going to stay or change schools but remain teaching, he or she is more likely to move to a different workplace to continue teaching or shift into another role in education the higher the percent of teachers with emergency credentials is at the current workplace. Figures 2a and 2b depict the estimated outcome category probabilities for two levels of percent teachers with emergency teaching credentials (0% and 50%) at the sample means for the other covariates.

Figure 2a. Model-estimated proportions for teachers in schools with 0% teachers with emergency credentials

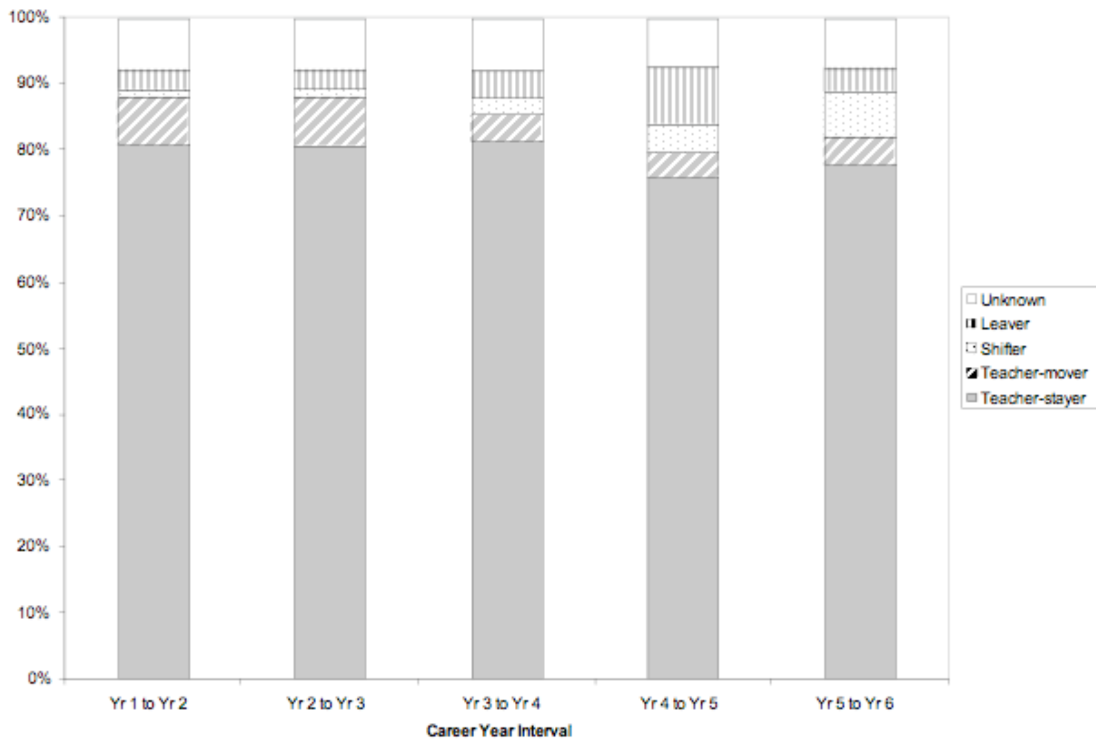
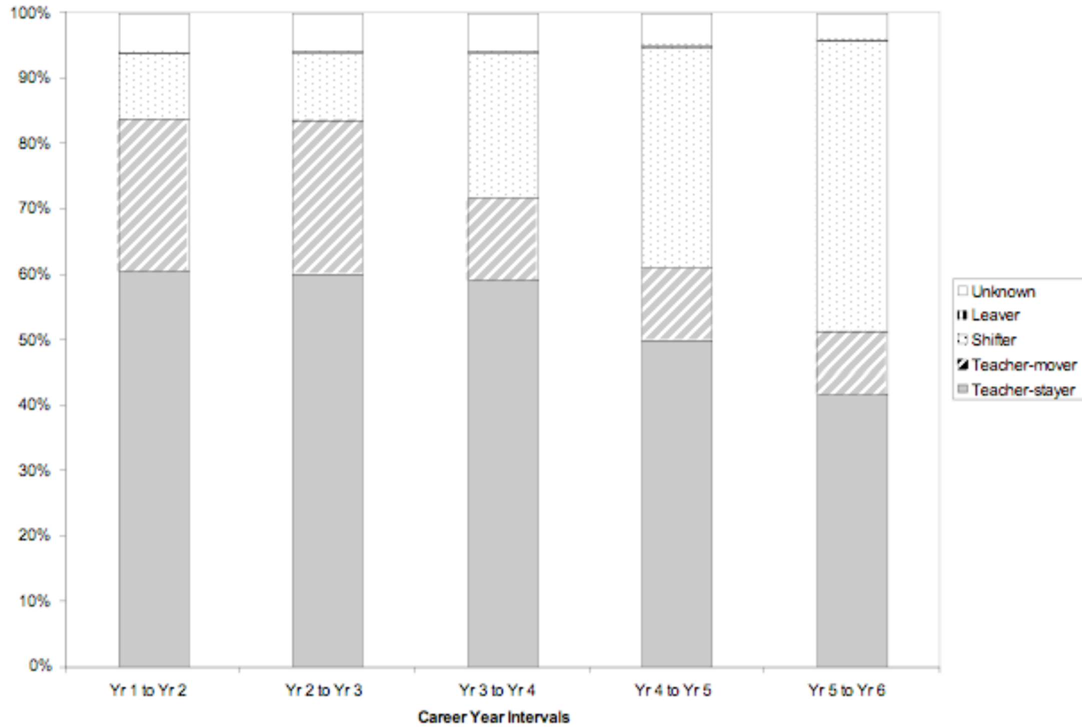


Figure 2b. Model-estimated proportions for teachers in schools with 50% teachers with emergency credentials



We interpret these findings as powerful evidence that highly-qualified urban teachers are motivated and able to stay teaching in schools where they are most needed—high-priority schools—especially if they are joined by others who are similarly prepared for the challenge. Our survey data further elucidate these findings by exploring teachers' motivations for remaining in teaching at a given school versus moving, changing roles, or leaving education all together. Based on tests of associations across all individuals and career year intervals, we found:

- Teachers were less likely to *change roles* between two consecutive years if they found their careers fulfilling and challenging, if they found their work flexible and conducive to parenting/family life and reported liking the school calendar and work hours, if they were pleased with opportunities for professional advancement, and if they were intellectually challenged by their daily work;

- Teachers were less likely to *move schools* if they were committed to working in a low-income community, and if they felt professionally respected by students and parents;
- Teachers were less likely to *move schools or change roles* if they reported a lot of autonomy in their jobs, if they reported strong administrative support and leadership, if they had good relationships with their colleagues, if they felt safe in their primary workplace, and if they felt professionally respected by colleagues;
- Teachers were less likely to *leave education* if they reported feeling respected by society as a whole;
- Teachers were less likely to *move schools, change roles, or leave* if they reported feeling hopeful that their school would improve over time.

Together, these survey findings contribute to the substantial body of research that articulates the working conditions associated with teacher retention. Teachers stay in urban schools where they feel professionally respected, challenged, and supported; where they have autonomy and voice; and where they feel they can make a difference in the lives of their students. How to create and sustain these schools is the challenge.

Part Two: Promising Policy Responses

The National Commission for Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) has framed the key to solving the teacher retention crisis as "finding a way for school systems to organize the work of qualified teachers so they can collaborate with their colleagues in developing strong learning communities that will sustain them as they become more

accomplished teachers" (NCTAF 2003, p. 7). Our research confirms that such professional learning communities and collegial networks contribute to workplace retention. This long-term policy goal represents a broader professionalism movement that has deep roots in American education. As Zeichner (2003) describes, it is "the quest to establish a profession of teaching through the articulation of a knowledge base for teaching based on educational research and professional judgment" (p. 498). The professionalism movement integrates four policy arenas—targeted teacher recruitment, specialized preparation, induction, and career advancement—in its effort to secure a more stable, qualified workforce for the schools most in need of good teachers (Quartz, Lyons & Thomas, 2005). These policy arenas seek to create a professional culture of teaching and schools where learning is not packaged into stages or programs but instead is viewed as a continuum that lasts throughout a teacher's career. Instead of isolating, bureaucratic structures, schools are viewed as professional learning communities—sites where both students and teachers can grow and develop.

On one hand, this move to heighten teacher professionalism is a hopeful and far-reaching solution to the retention crisis. It seeks to elevate the status of teachers by setting up structures and regulations that ensure high quality work supported by continual learning. With these structures and regulations come new programs and roles for educators, both within and outside the educational system. Specialized teacher education programs such as Center X are created. Induction coordinators are hired, trained and supervised. Staff developers proliferate within districts and across a staggering array of educational organizations. Instructional coaches are recruited to facilitate school-wide reform.

Organizations such as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are created to support teachers. Evaluators are brought in to gauge the success of new packages and programs. And the agency for all of this lies within an entity we call "the educational system." As Jiao observed, "in teaching, you're just a teacher," yet the larger system is ripe with opportunities for professional advancement. As described above, most of the attrition we studied was due to teachers changing roles within education. Moreover, national workforce data reveals that these opportunities for role changing are on the rise.

Of pressing policy concern is the extent to which the professional benefits of role changing outweigh the direct costs of attrition to schools and students. One response to this concern is the new vision of teaching espoused by Darling-Hammond (1997) and others that includes "complementary hyphenated roles" for teachers, allowing them to grow and contribute professionally beyond the classroom but still spend part of their day or week teaching students. For example, these advocates recommends creating new leadership roles for teachers, facilitated by flexible administrative structures that allow teachers to take on new roles, such as pre-service mentor, professional development coordinator, or university instructor without leaving the classroom entirely. This vision has gained momentum in several professional communities throughout the United States. The Teacher Leaders Network, for example represents a growing national community dedicated to supporting teachers' growth and development in research and advocacy roles that extend beyond the classroom without stripping teachers of their core identity and

work as educators. Even teachers' unions have advocated for a fresh look at long-standing career and advancement structures.

Traditionally charged with protecting the interests of teachers, union activists are trying to re-envision what it means to support teachers and their profession. For example, Rochester's Career in Teaching program advocates for flexible structures that will allow teachers to have it all—career advancement tied to their core work as teachers. This program includes four stages of teacher development: intern, resident, professional and lead teacher. Here, advancement does not mean leaving the classroom. Lead teachers, who are selected by a joint panel of teachers and administrators, take on leadership roles such as mentor, staff developer, and curriculum specialist, but continue their accomplished teaching at least half time. In return, lead teachers have the potential to earn more than administrators. As Urbanski and O'Connell (2003) explain, this staffing framework provides "an opportunity for exemplary teachers to inspire excellence in the profession, share their knowledge and expertise with others, and actively participate in instructional decision-making without leaving."

Based on these developments and the findings from our longitudinal retention study of Center X graduates, UCLA is currently partnering with the Los Angeles Unified School District, the local teachers' union, and several community-based organizations to create retention-oriented staffing policies within a new urban public school, Bruin Community School[2]. These policies will include opportunities for teachers to develop hybrid careers, taking on complementary multiple roles simultaneously or sequentially. Many of the

[2] For more information about this school, see: http://bruincommunityschool.gseis.ucla.edu.

Center X teachers we studied assumed many roles at once—layering on responsibilities beyond the classroom using structures such as release time, summer vacation, and sometimes evenings and weekends. Others opted to move out of the classroom for short or extended periods, on special assignments or sabbaticals, and then return to their teaching posts renewed and enriched. Developing site-based structures to facilitate these hybrid careers requires extra resources and flexibility in addition to sustained professional development that supports teachers' learning over time. These are investments in human capital that Bruin Community School expects to translate into heightened teacher retention and quality. Staffed by Center X graduates and other highly-qualified urban educators, UCLA is hoping to create a school that builds on the strong commitment of teachers to serve high-poverty urban students and communities over the long haul—rewarding their retention within a professional learning community that supports them to make a difference in the lives of urban students and communities.

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