

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 365 499

RC 019 454

AUTHOR Boylan, Colin; And Others  
 TITLE Retaining Teachers in Rural Schools: Satisfaction, Commitment, and Lifestyles.  
 PUB DATE 93  
 NOTE 20p.; In: Rural Education Issues: An Australian Perspective. Key Papers Number 3; see RC 019 452.  
 PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS Elementary School Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; \*Job Satisfaction; Life Style; Models; Rural Areas; \*Rural Schools; Secondary School Teachers; \*Teacher Attitudes; \*Teacher Persistence  
 IDENTIFIERS \*Australia (New South Wales); Teacher Community Relationship

ABSTRACT

This paper examines attitudes of longtime teachers toward teaching and living in rural communities in New South Wales (Australia). The findings are part of a 2-year study of 1100 teachers with at least 6 years experience in their schools. Over 90 percent of the teachers indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs; about two-thirds indicated fairly high to very high satisfaction. Half cited pupil relationships as their greatest source of satisfaction, while 42 percent considered work related matters their greatest source of dissatisfaction. Almost all respondents expressed commitment to continue teaching; 18 percent said their commitment had increased, while 29 percent said it had decreased. About 74 percent said that they were unlikely or extremely unlikely to leave teaching in the next 5 years. Among those likely to leave, work-related reasons accounted for about two-thirds. About two-thirds of teachers felt that their community appreciated its teachers and was committed to improving rural education. Respondents were split as to whether or not the community viewed its teachers as "local." Asked about the rural lifestyle, respondents generally cited small, caring, safe communities as a good place to raise children but lacking in cultural, health, and higher education facilities. A model for teacher retention is presented, encompassing classroom, school, community, and family factors. (SV)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
 \* from the original document. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

# RETAINING TEACHERS IN RURAL SCHOOLS: SATISFACTION, COMMITMENT, AND LIFESTYLES.

Colin Boylan, Ron Sinclair, Alan Smith, Don Squires,  
Charles Sturt University

John Edwards, Anne Jacob, Des O'Malley,  
Department of School Education, and

Brendon Nolan,  
U.N.E. Armidale

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.  
 Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS  
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Heleen Swain

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

## Introduction

Access to an education of high quality is a basic human right. Issues of access to such an education are undoubtedly a predominant concern in rural areas.

'Access', then, manifests itself for rural communities in tangibles such as the range of subjects a school can offer, the availability of Years 11 and 12, the facilities a school can call upon in implementing its curriculum, the stability of staffing at a school and the quality of its teachers especially that of the Principal who has to manage and lead the entire educational endeavour of the community. A major concern is clearly, and rightly, the staffing of rural schools. Rapid teacher turnover, while considered advantageous because of the 'new blood' continually infused into the system, is generally not welcomed by rural communities because the disruption to school courses, the constant adjustment to new teachers demanded of pupils and other such factors are seen as disadvantages far outweighing the one or two possibly positive aspects of turnover. Good teachers who are prepared to stay in isolated communities for relatively long periods of time are therefore seen as assets to those communities.

The data reported in this paper came from a two year study into teacher retention and satisfaction in the rural regions of New South Wales. At the 1989 SPERA Conference, the team reported on some of the issues involved in attracting and retaining teachers in inland schools in the North-West, Western and Riverina regions of the state (Boylan, *et al.* 1989). That paper also provided demographic and biographical information on teachers who were regarded as long-term 'stayers' in their present schools - teachers with

ED 365 499

RC 019454

at least 6 years experience in those schools. A group of 1100 teachers from an estimated population of 1363 constituted the study's sample.

In this paper further selected findings are reported from the research which, by its very nature, needs to be longitudinal. The question of why such teachers choose to stay for such lengths of time - that is, for periods well beyond the average for such areas - begins to be addressed in this paper. Specifically, information is provided here on the following concerns:

- \* teachers' levels of satisfaction with teaching and with their present situation;
- \* levels of expressed commitment to teaching by teachers;
- \* some teacher perceptions of their communities' attitudes to education, and how their communities regard them;
- \* teachers' transfer plans; and
- \* teachers' perceptions of life in rural environments.

### **Teacher Job Satisfaction**

Research on employee turnover such as that of Price (1977) and Battersby, *et al.* (1990) suggests that enjoyment of one's job, not surprisingly, decreases the likelihood of the incumbent wanting to leave that job. More generally, job satisfaction has a strong positive association with the degree of enjoyment experienced in that job. In developing the present study, appropriate use was made in some instances of previous similar work (e.g. Walker, 1967; Sinclair, *et al.* 1988; Watson, 1988; and Watson, *et al.* 1989). Conceptually, Herzberg's earlier but still influential work provided an acceptable framework within which questions could be developed. Briefly, Herzberg (1966) postulated two basic human needs: the need for psychological growth, and the need to avoid pain. He referred to psychological growth needs as motivation factors because they motivate people to work harder and generate satisfaction. Pain avoidance needs, on the other hand, produce dissatisfaction and disruption in the work situation. However, they tend not to produce greater work effort. These latter needs he labelled, perhaps unfortunately, hygiene factors. The point is, in factor

analytic terms, that the so called 'motivators' and 'hygienes' are not at opposite ends of one bi-polar factor but are separate and distinct factors. The opposite of job satisfaction in these terms, then, is not 'no job satisfaction', and vice versa. Job *satisfaction* and job *dissatisfaction* must be analysed separately. Motivation factors are generally intrinsic to the work situation so that, as applied by teaching, they make it more satisfying - challenging, exciting, rewarding, and so on. The six primary motivation factors Herzberg listed: - achievement; recognition; the work itself; responsibility; advancement; and, possibilities for growth - provided guidelines for questions that might be asked. When such factors are positively represented in the job situation, satisfaction and the effort put into work tend to increase, though the absence of them does not typically produce dissatisfaction merely limiting job satisfaction and reducing motivation.

Hygiene factors, for the most part are extrinsic to the work itself, describe the context of work. They fulfil employees' needs to avoid pain. The sort of prime hygiene factors that cause dissatisfaction relate to matters such as: salary adequacy; relationships with superiors, colleagues and subordinates; physical working conditions; job security; status; organisational policy and administration; and, aspects of a job that impinge on personal life. Dissatisfaction is directly related to deprivation of the positive features of these factors.

Table 1 reports on this long-staying group of teachers' levels of satisfaction with their present appointment, and their greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In considering, *a priori*, the categories responses might fall into, Herzberg's work provided some useful initial stating points.

TABLE 1

Satisfaction with Teaching of 'Long Staying' Rural Teachers

Variable	Category	N*	%
Level of Satisfaction	Very Low	25	2.3
	Fairly Low	72	6.6
	Moderate	279	25.7
	Fairly High	525	48.4
	Very High	183	16.9
Greatest Source of Satisfaction	Staff Relationships	289	18.6
	Pupil Relationships	785	50.6
	Work Related Matters	289	18.6
	Personal/Community Issues	179	11.5
	Other Comments	10	0.6
Greatest Source of Dissatisfaction	Staff Relationships	285	23.7
	Pupil Relationships	149	12.4
	Work Related Matters	506	42.0
	Personal/Community Issues	112	9.3
	Other Comments	152	12.6

\* For each question, a small number of teachers omitted their response. For their level of satisfaction, 16 teachers (1.5%); for greatest source of satisfaction, 43 teachers (3.9%); and, for greatest source of dissatisfaction, 106 teachers (9.6%) did not respond.

The table shows satisfaction levels to be high overall with 91% responding in the Moderate to Very High categories. When the reported reasons for this were analysed it was clear that professional personal relationships - with pupils especially, and with other staff were, overwhelmingly, the sources of greatest satisfaction. In Herzberg's terms a number of his satisfaction-generating motivation factors appear to be reflected in this result: positive outcomes of a teacher's work (Achievement), praise from others (Recognition), the authority to perform the job (Responsibility) and the chance to improve skills and abilities (Growth Possibility). Typical comments made about pupils, for example, referred to matters such as:

'good rapport with country kids';  
 'friendly happy children';

'good pupil/teacher relationships';  
 the 'positive response from pupils';  
 the fact of knowing 'all the children and their families' of really getting  
 somewhere in 'encouraging children to learn and understand science';  
 and more generally,  
 'seeing the students progress from year to year'.

### **Commitment to Teaching**

While a high commitment to teaching does not necessarily equate with intention to stay in a location it is more probable that a low level of commitment affects intention to stay in more than one way: it could increase the desire to move or, if an immediate transfer is not possible, it could result in a less than optimal performance in the present work situation. Commitment to teaching is a multi-faceted phenomenon. Though thought to be associated generally with satisfaction and hence performance at the work-face, a low level of commitment does not necessarily equate with low satisfaction and performance. Nor can it be assumed that 'commitment' in all its complexity is being appropriately tapped through questionnaire responses. Nevertheless, there is some utility in eliciting from teachers their own perceptions of how committed they are to the profession and the direction of change, if any, in the level of that commitment.

Table 2, then, reports teachers' expressed commitment to teaching, any change in those levels of commitment and the direction of that change.

**TABLE 2**

#### **Expressed Commitment to Teaching**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N*</b>	<b>%</b>
Level of expressed commitment to teaching	Low	29	2.7
	Moderate	178	16.4
	Fairly High	454	41.7
	Very High	426	39.2
Change in expressed commitment	Increased	193	17.8
	Remained Constant	577	53.3
	Decreased	313	28.9

\* For commitment to teaching, 13 teachers (1.2%) did not respond; and, for change in expressed commitment, 17 teachers (1.5%) did not respond.

Nearly 81% of the sample reported Fairly to Very High levels of commitment with only a very small proportion expressing a 'Low' level. These data on *present*, expressed commitment were supplemented by questions on other temporal dimensions of commitment - the aspect of past commitment (whether or not they had ever seriously considered leaving the profession) - and an aspect, also, of *future* commitment: the likelihood of permanently leaving teaching. Results of responses to these future commitment questions, originally used by Mason (1961) in his United States Beginning Teacher study, and subsequently by Walker (1967) and, in modified form, by Sinclair (1982) in Australia are given in Table 3.

**TABLE 3**

**Likelihood of Leaving Teaching**

Category	N*	%
Definitely within 5 years	44	4.1
Probably within 5 years	119	11.0
Unlikely within 5 years	293	27.0
Extremely unlikely within 5 years	514	47.2
Will retire within 5 years	116	10.7

\* 14 teachers (1.3%) did not respond.

Additionally, as stated, teachers were asked 'Have you ever seriously considered leaving teaching?' An affirmative response was given by 70.8% of the sample, with 29.2% of respondents answering 'No'.

Table 3 indicates that, notwithstanding the alleged current crisis in teacher morale in New South Wales (an issue this paper does not intend to pursue at this point) about three quarters of the group say they are less likely rather than more likely to leave. Excluding the 10.7% who say they will retire within 5 years, this leaves only 15.1% who see themselves as likely to leave and, of these, two thirds are in the 'probable' rather than 'definitely' category. These results are very similar to those reported by Sinclair, *et al.* (1988)

from a study of all 19 Central Schools of the Western Region of New South Wales.

A first categorisation of the reasons teachers in the present study offered when considering leaving teaching is given below with a typical example in each case of the comments made. These data are presented in Table 4 below.

As a follow up to the question on the likelihood of leaving teaching, as shown in Table 3, a further question was included which asked the teachers who responded affirmatively to indicate the reasons why they had considered leaving teaching. In Table 4, the 1144 reasons from the 779 teachers have been classified into 14 diverse categories.

**TABLE 4**  
**Reasons for Leaving Teaching**

Category	Response		Examples of comments made
	N	%	
1. School Personnel Relationships	71	6.2	'Conflict within school'; 'Executive incompetence'.
2. Seek Other Employment	98	8.6	'I wish to try another field of work'; 'offered double my salary'.
3. Workload at School	101	8.8	'Too much after hours work'; 'Being forced to teach outside my subject area'.
4. Salary Related	88	7.7	'Salary too low'; 'Low level of wages compared to private sector'
5. Department Bureaucracy	117	10.2	'Dissatisfaction with present policies'; 'Lack of support/respect for teachers by State Government/Department of Education'.
6. Teacher Morale/Job Satisfaction	132	11.5	'Dissatisfaction with Department'; 'Lack of recognition for effort'.
7. Promotional Opportunities	61	5.3	'Lack of chance for advancement'.
8. Personal Health	107	9.4	'High level of constant stress'; 'Stress'.
9. Political Influences	66	5.8	'Lack of support by Education Minister'.
10. Family/Personal Reasons	136	11.9	'Child-rearing'; 'To have a family'; 'Isolation from family/friends'.
11. Community Reasons	34	3.0	'Lack of community support'.
12. Student Related	52	4.5	'Lack of pupil discipline'; 'Student attitude towards staff'.
13. Teaching Related	52	4.5	'Lack of professional development'.
14. Never	29	2.5	'Not really considered it'.

These data presented in this table highlight the broad range of reasons provided by the teachers. At a global level these fourteen (14) specific categories can be reduced to two inclusive categories. The first is a general **education related** category which subsumes the following categories from Table 4: School personnel relationships; Workload at school; Salary related; Departmental bureaucracy; Teacher morale/job satisfaction; Promotional opportunities, Political influences; Student related; and, Teaching related reasons. This general category accounts for almost 2/3rds of all reasons offered (64 1/2%). The second general category which can be identified is one that is centred on personal **biography reasons**. This category subsumes: Seek other employment; Personal health; Family / personal reasons; and, Community-related reasons. This second general category represents 32.9% of the responses.

### Teachers' Desire to Stay

A third series of questions, the first of which was taken from The Central Schools Project (Sinclair, *et al.*1988) were used to explore teachers' future plans as these related to their intention to stay in their present school or apply for a transfer to another New South Wales school. Table 5 reports the data from these questions.

**TABLE 5**

### Teachers' Transfer Plans

Variable	Category	N*	%
Likelihood of transferring	Now	58	5.5
	At the End of the Year	107	10.1
	In 1 - 3 Years	199	18.7
	In 4 - 5 Years	98	9.2
	Not in the Foreseeable Future	600	56.5
Preferred Location for Next Transfer	Stay in Same Region	436	40.0
	Elsewhere	664	60.0
Preferred Location for Long-Term Transfer	Stay in Same Region	362	33.1
	Elsewhere	738	66.9

- \* 38 teachers (3.5%) did not respond to the question on the likelihood of transferring.

The table shows that well over half of the sample has no plans to transfer within the foreseeable future. Further, for three fifths of the group when the time came for transfer, it was to a part of the state outside the region in which they were currently teaching.

A closer analysis of the teachers' responses to their **short term** plans to transfer indicated that the five most favoured geographical regions within N.S.W., in descending order of frequency, were:

1. North Coast;
2. South Coast;
3. Riverina;
4. Northern Tablelands; and
5. Hunter.

Unpopular geographical regions of N.S.W., in descending order of unpopularity, were:

1. Wollongong;
2. Sydney; and
3. Western.

Finally, when teachers were asked to project well into the **future** or to a time near the end of their teaching career, 66.9% of teachers planned to transfer to a geographical region that was deemed acceptable as a region in which they could retire.

The five most popular geographical regions of N.S.W., in descending order of popularity, were:

1. North Coast;
2. South Coast;
3. Riverina;
4. Northern Tablelands; and
5. Hunter.

Unpopular geographical regions of N.S.W. for a long term move in descending order of unpopularity were:

1. Wollongong;
2. Western; and
3. Sydney.

Based on both the short-term and long-term transfer preferences for N.S.W. teachers, the desire to move to the coast is evident. This coastal preference has been reported to exist in the Queensland teaching service as well (McSwan, 1988) and is consistent with expressions of preference by graduating teachers in NSW as reported by Watson, *et al.* (1987).

### **Perceived Community Influences**

It is likely that the way in which teachers perceive the community in which they work exerts an influence - possibly considerable - upon their preparedness to stay. Factors such as the degree of community appreciation of teachers' work, and the degree to which teachers' perceptions of how committed the community is to improving and supporting education no doubt all contribute to the influence a community ultimately exercises in the hearts and minds of its teaching force. In the present study such perceptions of community influences were tapped and are reported in Table 6 below.

**TABLE 6**

**Teachers' Perceptions of their Communities**

Variable	Category	N*	%
Community appreciation of the work of its teachers	Not At All	38	3.4
	A Little	280	25.6
	A Moderate Amount	576	52.6
	A Great Deal	201	18.4
Community Perception of 'Teacher as Local'	Not At All	173	16.0
	A Small Amount	349	32.2
	A Great Deal	344	31.8
	Completely	217	20.0
Community Committed to Improving Rural Education	Strongly Disagree	74	7.0
	Disagree	298	28.0
	Agree	586	55.2
	Strongly Agree	104	9.8

\* 5 teachers, (0.5%), did not respond to the question on community appreciation for the teacher's work; 17 teachers, (1.5%), did not respond to the question of the teacher being considered a 'local'; and, 38 teachers, (3.5%), did not respond to the community commitment to improving rural education question.

The table reveals that, on the whole, teachers believe that their work is valued by their communities and that the communities are committed to improving education. However the results are far from being one way. A substantial minority (35%) disagreed with the latter proposition while well over a quarter do not feel teachers' work is appreciated. Moreover, nearly a half of the teachers sampled feel that they are not seen as 'locals' by their community. This, however, might in part reflect the desire of some teachers to distance themselves to a degree from their community.

**Rural Lifestyle**

Finally, teachers were asked to respond to two open-ended questions which sought to establish what they considered advantageous and

disadvantageous about a rural lifestyle. Approximately three quarters of all participants saw this open-ended invitation to respond as important enough to do so. The frequently mentioned perceived advantages were those of:

- \* a healthier, quieter, safer lifestyle;
- \* a good place to raise children;
- \* a smaller, more caring community;
- \* an absence of the problems that affect large cities such as the incidence of crime; and
- \* a plenitude of clean, open spaces.

Disadvantages perceived were clustered into several categories:

- \* the dearth of cultural activities;
- \* the 'tyranny' of having to travel long distances;
- \* the relative lack of educational *opportunities* for children;
- \* the lack of employment opportunities for spouse and own children; and
- \* the relative lack of health facilities and sports facilities.

These results confirm broadly what other research on rural education - though still very much in its embryonic stages - has tended to show. Matters of lifestyle and the interpersonal warmth that can be so compelling an attraction in small communities and their schools are of paramount importance. On the deficit side, Geoffrey Blainey's striking phrase 'the tyranny of distance' perhaps best encapsulates the problems perceived by teachers: they are a long way from the facilities - educational, medical, sporting, business and cultural - which together constitute 'civilisation' in the minds of a well-educated respondent group in this study. The disadvantages of working in the bush as articulated by teachers reaffirm what previous literature has had to say about why teachers leave rural appointments - too often as soon as they are able to do so (*cf* Boylan, *et al.* 1989; Inverarity 1984; Turney, Sinclair and Cairns, 1980). On the other hand, Watson, *et al.* (1989) suggest that this deficit model that has guided approaches to teacher recruitment and retention overstates the effects of perceived disadvantage. They contend that if the prospect of rural service was offered to teachers as a 'challenge' - with appropriate preparation and adequate support - then there would be more opportunities for employing authorities to capitalise on the advantages reported by teachers of life and work in rural environments. These are issues that are currently being

probed in interviews as part of longitudinal case study research with long-staying teachers.

## **Discussion**

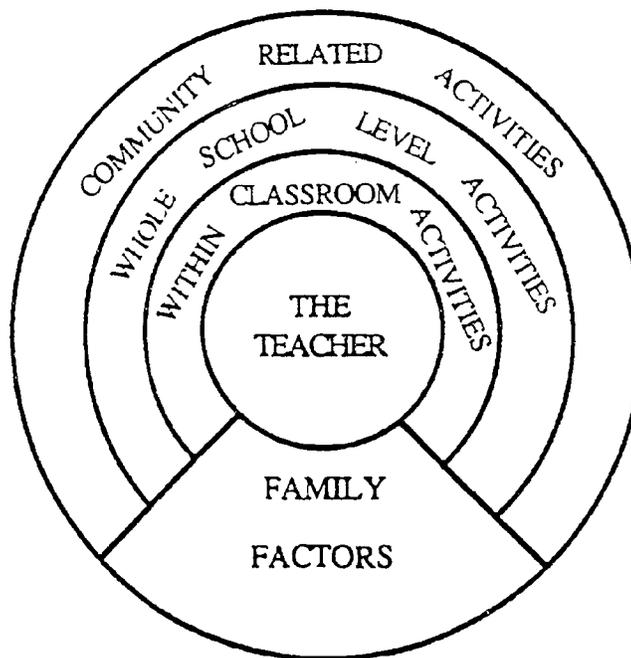
The overwhelming image to emerge from the findings presented is that long-staying rural teachers are satisfied with their career in teaching, they are committed to their profession, they do not wish to leave teaching nor their present rural location in the short to medium term future, they value their community's support for their efforts in the classroom and its support provided for rural education, and they find the rural lifestyle conducive in providing a quality lifestyle and for raising their children.

From our analysis of the data collected from 1100 written responses and from 140 follow-up interviews with teachers, we have generated a theoretical model for teacher retention through using grounded theory methodology. In this model, which has the teacher at its centre, four principal spheres of influence affect a teacher's decision to remain or leave. These influences link sources of teacher satisfaction and commitment with broader school, community and familial influences. The four influences have been labelled as:

1. Within Classroom Activities;
2. Whole School-Level Activities;
3. Community level activities; and
4. Family Factors

These influences are represented in the model shown in figure 1 on the following page.

**FIGURE 1  
MODEL FOR TEACHER RETENTION**



In this model, teacher retention is represented as the complex set of interactions between the four principal influences. Two of the four influences have immediate and direct consequences for the teacher deciding to remain. These are: i) **the within classroom activities**; and, ii) **the family factors**. Both can operate independently of each other, although frequently these two influences operate in a complementary manner. The remaining two influences often provided the social context within which the decision to remain or leave was based, yet each was regarded as being influential in its own right.

**Within classroom activities** relate to the teacher's level of satisfaction and sources of that satisfaction with teaching, and to the level of commitment to teaching. The major sources of satisfaction for the teacher are derived directly from their interactions with firstly, the children in their class, secondly, the positive collegial relationships with fellow teachers, and, thirdly, the challenges implicit in teaching the children. From Herzberg's theoretical position, these sources are all 'motivators' that are implicit in and intrinsic to the teaching process. Teachers comments such as: 'Teaching children'; 'Friendly relationships with pupils'; 'An enthusiastic staff who are

ready to be innovative in curriculum and organisation'; and, 'Feeling that I do a worthwhile job with the students' reflect the main sources of satisfaction with teaching. Typically, high levels of satisfaction with teaching were found to correlate with high levels of commitment to teaching as a professional career ( $X^2 = 358, p < .0001$ ).

**Whole school-level activities** emerged as an influence that reflected the breadth and variety of activities which teachers engage in outside their actual classroom teaching activities. This influence included two main components: i) relationship with colleagues, executive staff and regional personnel, e.g. inspectors; and, ii) work related issues, e.g. administrative duties, programming requirements, access to professional development, physical condition of the school.

When teacher responses were analysed for this influence, a somewhat surprising picture emerged. Overwhelmingly, the teachers regarded these influences as sources of dissatisfaction. In Herzberg's theoretical analysis of job satisfaction, teachers were citing external and extrinsic forces, or 'hygienes', as the potential sources of dissatisfaction. Typical comments included: 'Executive in promotions positions seeking their own advancement rather than putting interests of students first'; 'Lack of communication within the school - particularly when lessons are interrupted'; 'Composite classes do not give sufficient time to handle slow learners'; 'Fighting the paper warfare that takes time away from teaching'; 'Unsuitable classrooms'; 'Isolation - distance from Regional Office and Sydney, therefore inservice, consultancy, other areas of teacher support are very minimal'.

**Community related activities** represented a complex set of interactions. This influence covered parental support for the educational process within the school, involvement in the local community through various organisations, the development of strong friendships, the geographical location of the school, the safe environment within which children can develop, the rural lifestyle and its environment.

From the teachers' responses, it is evident that many teachers valued the community - level activities and regarded these as sources of personal satisfaction which facilitated their desire to remain at their present location. Interestingly, about half the teachers perceived that their community did not really regard them as 'a local' despite, in some cases, having lived in that community for 15 or more years. Through the follow-up interviews, it

emerged that different communities held various definitions of 'local'. In some communities, teachers would always be regarded as 'blow-ins'; other communities regarded a teacher as local only if born in the town/community while other communities accepted the teacher as a local after a long period of time (this varied from 7-10 years typically). From Table 6, about three-quarters of the teachers believed that their contribution to the education of children at the school was valued by the community. Comments made by teachers about their community-level activities included: 'Close ties with other members of the community'; 'Relatively free from some of the problems (e.g. drugs) that can be found in larger centres'; 'I know where they [their children] are and whom they are with'; 'Enjoying living in area'; 'I like country living and country people. This is now my home'; 'Favourable climate and natural environment'; and 'The small size of the school is conducive to a close relationship between school with community'. This analysis of the community level influence suggests that i) the community has an important role to play in retaining teachers in rural schools, particularly through assisting and supporting teachers to become part of the local community; and ii) the advantages associated with the rural lifestyle should be promoted in attracting teachers to rural schools.

The final set of influences, **family factors**, that affects a teacher's decision to remain is concerned with familial and personal issues. In this influence, issues such as home ownership, stability for and commitment to the family, quality of personal lifestyle, personal welfare/health, and contentment with rural living were seen as positive influences. Comments made by teachers included: 'We bought a house in our first year here, started a family and so needed some stability and financial security'; 'My home is in this district'; and 'The community offers an excellent quality of life for my family'. Additionally, teachers mentioned a number of influences which could affect either positively or negatively their decision to remain. These included: availability of employment for spouse, continuity of education for their own children, access to sporting, social, recreational and cultural facilities. Teachers made the following comments: 'Wanted my children to go through the same High School'; 'Good recreational facilities'; and 'The fact that my wife now has a job after 9 years waiting to be re-employed'.

A further set of influences, mentioned by some of the teachers, was seen as negatively affecting their decision to remain. These influences included: a lack of personal privacy, economic costs associated with the isolation from services and facilities, a conservatism in outlook present in *some* rural

communities, access to tertiary education for their children, and a lack of local cultural activities both for their children and for themselves.

Typical comments made by the teachers that reflected this potentially negative component to this influence included: 'Distance involved in taking them [their children] places so they are aware of things apart from country life, e.g. Cultural events, etc. so that they don't become 'country hicks'; 'Time and expense of travelling to better facilities'; 'Less opportunities for some educational experiences, e.g. art galleries, etc'; 'Children have to leave area for tertiary studies - very difficult financially for teachers with one family income and not much assistance from Austudy'; and 'Ostrich - type mentality of local community'.

Taking an overall perspective on this influence, the majority of teachers reported positively on this set of familial/personal influences. They felt happy and contented with their present situation, yet were aware of areas of concern which required them to make compensatory efforts in some situations or may require major changes in their lifestyle when their children are approaching tertiary studies.

## **Conclusion**

The overwhelming amount of evidence collated from this study clearly suggests that long-stay rural teachers are, on the whole, satisfied with and committed to teaching as their life-long career. They enjoy the interactions and friendships developed within the community and find the rural lifestyle one that provides a quality of life for their family and themselves that is hard to better elsewhere. The model for teacher retention developed suggests that three of the four influences affecting the teacher's decision to remain at their current rural school and location are powerful, positive, 'motivators' for staying.

Communities have an important role to play in the process of attracting and retaining teachers through accepting them into the community.

## References

- Battersby, D., Hemmings, L., Kermode, S., Sutherland, S. and Cox, J. (1990) *Factors Influencing the Turnover and Retention of Registered Nurses in New South Wales Hospitals*. Glebe: N.S.W. College of Nursing.
- Boylan, C.R., Squires, D., Newman, W., Edwards, J., Smith, A., Nolan, B., O'Malley, D., Meyenn, R., Jacob, A., Norwood, T. and Craig, A. (1989) Teacher characteristics for Rural Schools: Who Staff Inland Schools in N.S.W.? In Boylan, C. (Ed.) *The Family and Education in Rural Australia*. 5th Annual National Conference. S.P.E.R.A. Bathurst: Charles Sturt University - Mitchell.
- Herzberg, R. (1966) *Work and the Nature of Man*. New York: Wiley.
- Inverarity, D. (1984) Teachers in Isolation. *PIVOT*, 11(6).
- Mason, Washington D.C: (1961) *The Beginning Teacher: Status and Career Orientation*, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.
- McSwan, D. (1988) Teacher Perceptions and Community Expectations of Teachers in Rural and Urban Areas of Queensland: Selected Findings. In Boylan, C. (Ed.) *Symposium of Research in Rural Education*. Wagga Wagga; R.M.I.H.E.
- Price, J. (1977) *The Study of Turnover*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- Sinclair, R. (1982) Student Teacher Role Expectations: An Exploratory Study of the Impress of Lecturers and Teachers on Student Teachers' Role Conceptions. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of New England, Armidale.
- Sinclair, R., et al., (1988) *The Central Schools Project*. Bathurst: Mitchell C.A.E.
- Turney, C., Sinclair, K.E. and Cairns, L. (1980) *Isolated Schools: Teaching, Learning and Transition to Work*. Sydney: Sydney University Press.

- Walker, W.G. (1967) Occupational Commitment in a Sample of Australian Teachers five years after training. *Australian Journal of Higher Education* 3(1) December.
- Watson, A. Hatton, N. Grundy, S. and Squires, D. (1987) *Perception of Country Teaching: The Attitudes of Final Year Teacher Education Students Towards Rural Appointments*. Sydney: Education Commission of NSW.
- Watson, A. (1988) Professional Development in the Rural School: A Case Study of Teacher Satisfaction and Interests. In Reeves, D.T. (Ed.) *Rural Communities Determining their Future - The Quiet Revolution*. 4th Annual Conference Proceedings, Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia, Bathurst: Mitchell C.A.E.
- Watson, A., Hatton, N., Squires, D. and Soliman, I. (1988) The Second Year of Teaching: Adjustment, Satisfaction, Stability and Mobility. In Boylan, C. (Ed.) *Symposium on Research in Rural Education*. Wagga Wagga: R.M.I.H.E.
- Watson, A., Hatton, N., Squires, D. and Soliman, I. (1989) *The Staffing of Schools and the Quality of Education*. Sydney: N.S.W. Ministry of Education.