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The Impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on Mentor Teacher Efficacy

Bryan K. Hullender
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The Impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on Mentor Teacher Efficacy

By
Bryan K. Hullender

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2014

Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Bryan K. Hullender under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Abstract

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This dissertation was designed to examine the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on the self-efficacy of mentor teachers. The study discussed the current training program for mentors in South Carolina and the expected outcomes the training is supposed to produce. The South Carolina Initial Mentor Training was studied in a cohort of nine school districts in the midlands and upstate of South Carolina in partnership with Winthrop University. The expected outcomes of the program were creating professional growth environments for new teachers grounded in the norms of continuous inquiry, ongoing assessment, and problem-solving; recognizing and practicing the attitudes, behaviors, and skills of effective mentors; identifying beginning teacher needs and modifying support in response to those needs; and using various tools that support an integrated system of formative assessment and support.

This study used a mixed-methods design which included surveys and interviews with mentor teachers to identify themes that were linked to their efficacy in being able to work with beginning teachers after participating in the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training program. The researcher analyzed the surveys for emerging themes and developed follow-up interview questions for random interviews of trained mentors. The four themes that emerged were the need for mentor training, the most helpful tools to build efficacy, the least helpful tools to build efficacy, and suggestions for mentor program improvement.

Based on the results of this study, mentor teachers who have completed the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training Program have a much stronger feeling of efficacy in their ability to support beginning teachers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Teacher induction is believed to benefit the classroom environment in a school (Joerger & Bremer, 2001). Along with many employment opportunities outside the profession, the expectation for more broadly prepared teachers who have the ability to integrate the new and old into contemporary instruction and programming has created the need for ongoing professional development programs (Joerger & Bremer, 2001). In response to professional development for mentors, the researcher studied the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training program, which helps to train mentor teachers to support beginning teachers in the classroom. This study involved a combination of nine school districts in partnership with Winthrop University, including urban and rural schools in the upstate and midlands of South Carolina. This combination used the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training to train experienced teachers and administrators to become effective mentors to beginning teachers. The scope of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training is to introduce experienced teachers and administrators to tools and concepts to support beginning teachers through an initial 3-day training. Completion of the 3-day training certifies the experienced teacher or administrator to be a mentor in South Carolina for 5 years.

“Teaching appears to be an exceptionally difficult field to master, with the first year of teaching being a particular challenge” (Wonacott, 2002, p. 1). Due to the difficulty of the profession, beginning teachers leave the profession at a very high rate (Wonacott, 2002). “The transition of prospective teachers into the teaching profession has been variously described in the educational literature as a period of ‘reality shock,’ as a ‘trial by fire,’ and as a ‘sink or swim’ process” (Marso & Pigge, 1990, p. 2). Many of the trends of beginning teachers leaving the field of education point to the first few years

as the most important for a teacher to receive help from those trained as mentors in the schools. According to Wong (2003), mentor teachers are important in the training of beginning teachers; therefore, districts should invest in the training of mentors to help them build self-efficacy to work with beginning teachers. This study examined the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on the efficacy of mentor teachers to support beginning teachers.

Statement of the Problem

One current problem facing school districts is beginning teachers leaving the field of education within the first 5 years of their teaching career. Leaving the profession can be linked to poor job satisfaction due to lack of connection and mentoring. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 2003), approximately 30% of all beginning teachers leave the profession within their first 3 years of teaching. Studies show that as many as 50% of new teachers leave the profession within the first 5 years (Ingersoll, 2003). "Successful induction into the field of education requires a well-designed program to encourage great teaching and curb teacher turnover" (Blackwell, Kelehear, & Taylor, 2012). Mentor teachers, one part of the comprehensive induction experience, were found to greatly influence the success rates and retention rates of induction. "Capable and caring mentors support teacher retention and promote teacher quality" (Fluckiger, McGlamery, & Edick, 2006, p. 9). According to Scott (2001), mentors should want to participate in the mentoring of beginning teachers and should be trained in working with the beginning teacher through the chosen mentor program. Scott's report discussed the need of a mentor training program and the roles a mentor plays in the beginning teacher's job training. According to work by Fluckiger et al. (2006), mentor teacher training programs are a necessity and

are paramount to retaining top-tier, newly hired teachers in the teaching profession.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2011) surveyed teachers who began teaching in public schools in 2007 or 2008. The results showed that 10% were not teaching in 2008-2009, and 12% were not teaching in 2009-2010. The attrition rate of beginning public school teachers who were assigned a mentor in 2007-2008 was lower than the national average for beginning public school teachers without an assigned mentor. According to the NCES (2011), about 8% of beginning teachers with an assigned mentor were not teaching in 2008-2009, and 10% were not teaching in 2009-2010. In contrast, among the beginning public school teachers who were not assigned a mentor in 2007-2008, about 16% were not teaching in 2008-2009, and 23% were not teaching in 2009-2010. NCTAF (2003) found alarming numbers, estimating that “one-third of all new teachers leave after three years, and 46% are gone within five years” (p. 11). In South Carolina, the average 5-year attrition rate for teachers is 9.6%, with a variance across districts from a minimum of 5.9% to a maximum of 27.3% (Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement [CERRA], 2012). With one in 10 teachers leaving the profession each year, time and money are spent trying to train and retain those new teachers the next year. Funds are lost in training teachers each year, and the process of building a foundation of strong principles has to start again. The need for training programs for mentors, as mentioned by Fluckiger et al. (2006), is a key piece to helping beginning teachers.

One coordinator in Scott’s (2001) review of the New Brunswick teacher induction program stated, “New teachers are enthusiastic and want to be the best that they can be. When paired with the right mentor, their first year is a learning/growing period that is gratifying to be part of” (p. 36). Scott’s report continued to say that mentors with

preparation were more able to help a beginning teacher grow and develop into a better teacher. It also showed that beginning teachers were more likely to stay in the field of education due to the experience and guidance from a trained, supportive mentor.

South Carolina Initial Mentor Training Program

The purpose of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training program is to provide mentor teachers with training to develop the skills needed to provide continuous support and guidance to the induction teacher during the first year of teaching. The training was designed to prepare mentor teachers to be able to create professional growth environments for new teachers grounded in the norms of continuous inquiry, ongoing assessment, and problem solving; recognize and practice the attitudes, behaviors, and skills of effective mentors; identify beginning teacher needs and modify support in response to those needs; and use various tools that support an integrated system of formative assessment and support (CERRA & South Carolina Department of Education [SCDE], 2011). The training of mentors is done through a variety of activities which have been identified not only to meet the state guidelines of the induction and mentoring component of the Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT) system but to meet the specific needs of the induction teachers in the district (Heath-Camp, Camp, Adams-Casmus, Talbert, & Barber, 1992). As noted by Parker, Ndoye and Imig (2009), the more mentor support a beginning teacher received, the more likely he/she was to remain in the profession. For the mentor to be adequately trained to support beginning teachers, programs must be in place to support and train the mentor teachers in a variety of strategies and techniques to help them effectively facilitate situations with beginning teachers (CERRA & SCDE, 2011).

Research Question

How does the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training impact the self-efficacy of mentor teachers in supporting beginning teachers?

Significance of the Study

It is expected that several groups of stakeholders will benefit from the research studying the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. CERRA and SCDE will gain valuable insight into the training and its impact on the self-efficacy of trained mentor teachers. Mentor teachers, administrators, district-level personnel, and beginning teachers will experience indirect benefits from the mentor training.

The data gained from this study, in conjunction with up-to-date research, will allow CERRA and SCDE to revise and improve the effectiveness of mentor support in South Carolina. In partnership with SCDE, CERRA has data regarding the training after evaluation of survey and interview responses from the trained mentors. CERRA may also benefit from this research due to the changes in tools, resources, and concepts provided to mentor teachers and their preparation to work with beginning teachers in the classroom. CERRA may look at the deficiencies and strengths of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training and build upon the information coming from the mentor teacher surveys and interviews.

There are many stories from first-year teachers describing their needs as beginning teachers. According to Brown (2012), these stories include various things from discipline and lesson planning to simply having someone there to support them in the hard times throughout the school year. CERRA may take the data and update the training to coincide with best practices being used in higher education teacher preparation programs to further support mentors when working with beginning teachers. Mentors,

district-level support staff, administrators, and beginning teachers can all benefit from the updates and improvements to the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training.

SCDE may also use the data to plan more in-depth studies of individual components in the mentor training program and their individual effectiveness when used with beginning teachers. SCDE may also use the data to revamp the guidelines established for teacher mentoring in the State of South Carolina. According to Riggs (2000), “The ultimate benefit of mentor effectiveness will be more effective beginning teachers” (p. 3).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on the efficacy of certified mentors as they support beginning teachers in the classroom. Mentor teachers were found to greatly influence the success rates and retention rates of induction. Induction teachers reported that the support and coaching made available to them by their mentors was responsible for their perseverance in teaching (Fluckiger et al., 2006). Teacher retention is important in the education of students related to providing continuity and quality instruction (Wong, 2002). Foor and Cano (2012) stated that the abilities and beliefs of a mentor teacher contribute to the success of a beginning teacher. Research from Foor and Cano concurs with Anderson (1987) in identifying attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions of mentor teachers who are highly important to the beginning teachers. According to Wong (2003), mentor teachers are important in the training of beginning teachers, and, therefore, districts should invest in the training of mentors to help them build self-efficacy to work with beginning teachers. According to Fluckiger et al. (2006), districts already invest large amounts of time, money, and professional development in training teachers in initiatives within the

district. If there is a constant revolving door of teachers due to a lack of strong mentors for beginning teachers, time and money are lost in the initial training of beginning teachers.

It is expected that the outcomes of the evaluation will be used to make suggestions for changes to the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. These suggestions will be made to allow mentors more opportunities for training to better assist and support beginning teachers. The focus of the training is to prepare mentor teachers to work with beginning teachers. This training allowed the researcher to study the following research question: “How does the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training impact the self-efficacy of mentor teachers in supporting beginning teachers?”

Definition of Terms

ADEPT. Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching. This is the teacher evaluation program in South Carolina.

Annual contract. Teachers who have completed an induction contract year may be employed under an annual contract. Out-of-state teachers with more than 1 year of experience are considered annual contract teachers. Annual contract teachers must undergo evaluation using the appropriate state required teacher evaluation model:

ADEPT/SAFE-T (<http://www.scteachers.org/adept/evalpdf/Contracts.pdf>).

Attrition. The rate of teachers leaving the teaching profession.

Beginning teacher. A teacher who is entering the teaching profession in the first year of his/her career. This could be directly out of a teacher education program or through an alternative certification program. This term can be used interchangeably throughout the study with the terms first-year or induction teacher.

Continuing contract. Teachers who have successfully completed an annual

contract year may be employed under a continuing contract. Teachers employed under a continuing contract have full procedural rights relating to employment and dismissal as provided for in Article 3, Chapter 19, and Article 5, Chapter 25 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code. Teachers employed under continuing contracts must be evaluated on a continuous basis. The evaluation may be formal, modified formal, or informal at the discretion of the district.

Efficacy. The capacity for producing a desired result or effect; effectiveness. In this study, for clarification or more detail, the researcher also defined mentor teacher efficacy or self-efficacy. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has defined self-efficacy of the mentor teachers as the perceived thoughts of being able to support a beginning teacher in culture, experience, knowledge, strategies, and skills. These terms may be used interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

First-year teacher. A teacher who is entering the teaching profession in the first year of his/her career. This could be directly out of a teacher education program or through an alternative certification program. This term can be used interchangeably throughout the study with the terms beginning or induction teacher.

Induction contract. Teachers who possess a valid South Carolina certificate and have less than 1 year of public school teaching experience may be employed under a 1-year induction contract, provided the date of employment allows the teacher to complete at least 152 days of full-time teaching.

Induction teacher. A teacher who is entering the teaching profession in the first year of his/her career. This could be directly out of a teacher education program or through an alternative certification program. This term can be used interchangeably throughout the study with the terms beginning or first-year teacher.

INTASC. Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards.

Mentor teacher. An experienced teacher who helps guide a beginning teacher in areas of planning, instruction, assessment, classroom management, conferencing, and classroom organization. The mentor teacher also helps the beginning teacher with other areas of concern as needed. For the purposes of this study, the mentor teacher is trained and certified through the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training program which follows a set of guidelines from SCDE. To become a certified mentor, the teacher must complete the 3-day South Carolina Initial Mentor Training.

Mentor teacher efficacy. The capacity for producing a desired result or effect; effectiveness. In this study, for clarification or more detail, the researcher also defined efficacy and self-efficacy. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has defined self-efficacy of the mentor teachers as the perceived thoughts of being able to support a beginning teacher in culture, experience, knowledge, strategies, and skills. These terms may be used interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

NCTAF. National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

PACE. Program of Alternative Certification for Educators Training Program (similar to North Carolina's lateral entry program).

Preservice teacher. A teacher in training in a school for teacher preparation (at a 4-year college or university).

Professional development. Professional development generally refers to ongoing learning opportunities available to teachers and other education personnel through their schools and districts.

Retention. The percent or rate of teachers who remain in the teaching profession.

SAFE-T. Summative ADEPT Formal Evaluation of Classroom Teachers.

SAFE-T is one of the major components of South Carolina's system for ADEPT.

Self-Efficacy. The capacity for producing a desired result or effect; effectiveness. In this study, for clarification or more detail, the researcher also defined mentor teacher efficacy and efficacy. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has defined self-efficacy of the mentor teachers as the perceived thoughts of being able to support a beginning teacher in culture, experience, knowledge, strategies, and skills. These terms may be used interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. A program aimed at training and certifying mentors by providing them with appropriate tools and resources to help them develop the skills needed to effectively support induction teachers.

Teacher education program. An accredited college or university program of study to prepare students for certification as teachers.

Teacher induction program. A teacher induction program is designed to provide a systematic structure of support for a beginning teacher by providing various subjects that include, but are not limited to, new teacher orientation, mentor teachers, support structures, professional development, and evaluation. Each district may implement the teacher induction program in its own way. However, the districts must adhere to the specification set forth by SCDE for induction programs.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on the efficacy of certified mentors as they support beginning teachers in the classroom. The study involved a combination of nine districts in South Carolina involving a mixture of both rural and urban schools and the training program's impact on mentor teacher efficacy in preparation to work with beginning teachers. The leadership of each district planned for experienced teachers and administrators to attend the training to become certified mentors through the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. The expected outcome of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training is to equip mentor teachers with the ability to recognize and practice the attitudes, behaviors, and skills of effective mentors. The initial 3-day training is intended to build skills and provide tools for the mentors. These skills and tools are used to build strong self-efficacy in mentors to help them feel comfortable and confident in their ability to work with and guide beginning teachers (CERRA & SCDE, 2011).

This review of literature was organized into the following four categories: Need for Mentor Teachers, Need for Mentor Training, Components of Mentor Training Programs, and Self-Efficacy.

Need for Mentor Teachers

According to Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998), the need to train mentors is shown in the way beginning teachers respond to surveys about their job experience in their first year of teaching. Many beginning teachers leave the profession after the first year of teaching. Bowie and Gagen (2005) cited teacher retention figures from NCES, showing the turnover rate of beginning teachers. Fifty-one percent of new

teachers leave the profession within 5 years, and more than 60% leave within 7 years (NCES, 2004). One of the strategies discussed to break this trend was teacher support through the use of mentor teachers. Mentors can provide critical support for a beginning teacher by establishing an environment of empowerment and by offering reassurance that the beginning teacher is capable of performing the job. Moir (2003) stated, “The real-life classroom presents questions that only real-life experience can answer” (p. 3). This type of support can be the difference between being overwhelmed and being motivated to find a way to succeed (Sargent, 2003). Bowie and Gagen echoed Sargent (2003) by further outlining the support mentors can provide. Bowie and Gagen stated that mentors should be experienced teachers who share a common discipline or teaching situation with the beginning teacher. Ganser (2002) also focused on the need to have similar teaching assignments for mentors and beginning teachers. Ganser further elaborated by stating the farther removed a mentor teacher is from the situation of the beginning teacher, the more difficult it is to provide the comprehensive information and mentoring that a beginning teacher needs. Research indicates that when new teachers are paired with highly trained mentors, the pace of new teacher learning increases (Moir, Barlin, Gless & Miles, 2009).

Blackwell et al. (2012) found that 95% of the new teachers surveyed reported that the mentoring relationship was important to them. Teacher expertise is at the foundation for increasing teacher quality and advancement (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Blackwell et al. affirmed that mentoring helps to ensure that new teachers have access to accumulated instructional knowledge and expertise of their colleagues in ways that contribute to student success. The results from the survey showed that 81% of teachers had mentors who assisted them with instructional concerns. Mentor support has a long-term payoff according to Riggs (2000), who discussed mentor support as a learned technique when

working with beginning teachers. The support described by Riggs aligns with the results from NEAF's survey that include the need for supportive mentors who are trained with the proper tools and techniques to work with beginning teachers. The mentor should be trained in order to offer support based on the relationship built between the mentor and the beginning teacher (Blackwell et al., 2012).

Kardos and Johnson (2008) found that 78% of new teachers surveyed had mentors; yet, of that 78%, fewer than 60% had three or more conversations about instruction or classroom management with their mentor over the course of a year. Only 41% actually observed their mentor teaching, with even lower percentages for new teachers in low-income schools and those in math, science, or technology. Kardos and Johnson discussed the need for appropriate matches between mentors and beginning teachers. They found that mentors with the most experience and training were able to give beginning teachers the most support.

Need for Mentor Training

“Mentor preparation programs are needed to develop mentoring abilities for the purpose of induction” (Riggs, 2000, p. 2). Riggs (2000) found the ultimate benefit of a trained mentor is the increased effectiveness of the beginning teacher in improving student achievement. According to research by Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005), student achievement tends to be significantly worse in the classrooms of first-year teachers before improving in the teachers' second and third years.

Zepeda and Ponticell (1996) supported the training of mentors to be fully able to help beginning teachers survive in their first few years of teaching. While some districts compensate mentor teachers, some mentors volunteer and do not always handle the mentor role well due to the lack of training. The argument for extensive and ongoing

training of the mentor teacher to support beginning teachers comes from several sources of professional development designed by school districts, universities, and other agencies. The ongoing training allows the mentor to keep up with the training teachers receive as preservice teacher candidates. Training the mentor also allows the mentor to adapt their training to the day-to-day needs of the beginning teacher in the classroom (Zepeda & Ponticell).

Yaman and Alkac (2010) pointed out that mentors have increased responsibilities when assigned to beginning teachers. Yaman and Alkac supported the research of Zanting, Verloop, and Vermunt (2003) by stating that mentors must have the pedagogical knowledge and training to convey practical knowledge to beginning teachers. Robinson (1998) identified the mentor as the one central resource for the beginning teacher and elaborated by stating that “the mentor is the *glue* that helps bind all the inner-workings of the teacher induction process together” (p. 7). Robinson noted that most mentors “frequently volunteer to take new teachers under their wings and help as best they know how with the induction process” (p. 7). Robinson’s statement generally summarizes the need for well-trained mentors in the teacher induction process.

Mentors discussed various feelings and levels of comfort when asked to work with beginning teachers, according to Bowie and Gagen (2005). When a mentor is asked to support a beginning professional, the amount of assistance he or she is expected to give or feels prepared to give is highly variable (Bowie & Gagen). Much of the study by Bowie and Gagen focused on the mentor’s belief that he/she is unable to offer the kind of assistance a new teacher may need due to the lack of training offered by the district. Mentors help provide those answers. Furthermore, Bey (1990) has argued the importance of training by stating that preparing someone to teach is quite different than asking an

adult to support another adult. Bowie and Gagen supported Bey by stating, “When you train someone to teach, they are learning the theory and practice of teaching. Schools make so many demands of novice teachers beyond teaching without offering them the means to accomplish the tasks” (p. 2). Bey (1990) stated,

Beginning teachers are dealing with so many new tasks in their first year. They are trying to learn the ropes of the organization in which they are working while also facing issues related to their personal competence, professional effectiveness, and their ability to fulfill professional dreams as they embark upon their careers (p. 9).

Bey discussed the fact that mentors must be trained to support the beginning teachers on both the professional and social/personal levels. Bey cited two studies that found when mentors have difficulty in their role, it is often because they have not been trained properly (Odell, 1990; Tauer, 1995). The Tauer (1995) and Odell (1990) studies pointed to training as a way for the mentor teachers to feel confident in their abilities and training to work with beginning teachers.

Wright and Smith (2000) were supported by Bowie and Gagen’s (2005) study when they found that many districts provide no training for mentors because they assume the mentors’ experience will suffice. Wright and Smith stated that even though mentors may be very experienced teachers, they need skills in many areas that may require training.

Riggs (2000) discussed the need to develop effective mentors through mentor preparation programs. The ultimate benefit of mentor effectiveness will be more effective beginning teachers. During the study, Riggs stated, “expertise within one’s own classroom does not guarantee the ability to support others in their professional growth.

Thus, mentor preparation programs are needed to develop mentoring abilities for the purpose of induction,” (p. 2). Results from Riggs’s study showed that a mentor with training is likely to have higher self-efficacy with regard to his/her own ability to mentor new teachers. Riggs also stated that mentors completing a training program would have higher or at least comparable mentor self-efficacy to that with which they began the training program. In the study, Riggs predicted that those mentors with the highest mentor self-efficacy, as a result of mentor training, would be most likely to spend time and effort on mentoring responsibilities and have more successful results. The study supported various areas of training as well. Mentor training is professional development for the mentor to learn specific tools, strategies, techniques, and other important factors to support beginning teachers. Some of the areas Riggs mentioned for training were observation, how to work with beginning teachers, assessment, and reflective practice.

Tauer (1995) discussed the relationship between mentors and beginning teachers as crucial in the beginning teacher’s development. This relationship is built through the interaction of the mentor and beginning teacher throughout the year. The study also highly recommends the training of mentor teachers in several specific areas which include active listening, clinical supervision, and adult development. These recommendations come as components in a teacher training program that focuses on both the mentor teacher and the beginning teacher. Another recommendation identified the need for the design of mentor training programs as highly necessary to establish the expectations, roles, and needs of mentors and beginning teachers.

“Mentors are best able to do their work when they explicitly learn about their role” (Villani, 2002, p. 14). A mentor’s understanding of his/her role involves the knowledge of adult development, the needs of new teachers, and strategies that promote

reflection and growth. Villani (2002) continued to discuss training and continuing support as key factors in the success of mentors and mentoring programs. Odell (1990) was supported by Villani (2002) when discussing the training needs of mentor teachers. Odell stated several areas of need for mentor teacher training: the purposes of teacher induction programs; school district philosophy, needs and priorities; district policies and operating procedures; working with the adult learner and stages of teacher development; concerns and needs of beginning teachers; clinical supervision, classroom observation and conferencing skills; and teacher reflection fostering self-esteem and self-reliance in the novice teacher (as cited in Huling-Austin, 1992, p. 176).

Odell (1990) discussed the mentoring process and listed four phases: developing the relationship; mutually determining the mentoring content (where the beginning teacher needed help or examples); applying effective mentoring styles and strategies; and disengaging the relationship so the beginning teacher will not feel trauma but will be able to organize colleague-support networks (open avenues for receiving help from colleagues in the work environment). Odell made several suggestions in each of the previously mentioned areas as ideas for training for mentors. Her study discussed areas such as teacher development, concerns and needs of beginning teachers, clinical supervision, teacher induction, and adult professional development. Odell identified other suggested areas for mentors to receive training. These areas included role clarification, classroom observation, conducting conferences, and how to increase self-esteem in the beginning teacher. Odell supported Bowers and Eberhart (1988) in the proposed process to train mentors. In addition, Odell identified several specific areas of training to support Bowers and Eberhart. Bowers and Eberhart suggested training around the cycle of plan, act, observe, and reflect. Odell's research added to Bowers and Eberhart's study by stating

the planning phase would involve the presentation of content relative to mentoring; the need for opportunities for new mentors to engage in guided practice; observations by mentors; and, finally, reflection on the mentoring activities and training. Odell suggested this process was a valid approach to training mentors due to the clarity of roles and expectations for mentors to follow.

Koc (2011) studied the development of the Mentor Teacher Role Inventory (MTRI). In the study, Koc analyzed data from 1,843 respondents in the MTRI. The mentor's pedagogical knowledge of planning, classroom management, teaching strategies, and assessment skills can provide student teachers with a deeper understanding of teaching practice (Koc). Koc found modeling by mentors helps the student teachers develop their teaching. He also found the need to further study the interactions of the student teachers and mentor teachers. Koc stated the results from this study can serve as an instrument for reflection. He also identified ideas for promoting mentor-training programs. He suggested the study could be used to enhance the supervisory process and implementation of the mentor program. The study also led to the use of the MTRI to serve as a template for developing similar tools for evaluating the mentoring process (Koc).

Bowie and Gagen (2005) evaluated the need for mentor training and found similar results about the process of how mentors were selected and the mentor's thoughts on the tools to become a successful mentor. Just as Koc (2001) found the need to use the MTRI to evaluate the mentoring process, Bowie and Gagen offered the key areas of training for mentors. Mentors who are effectively trained and have experience in the school can help with the transition of beginning teachers in the classroom (Bowie & Gagen). The study on the need for mentor training also found that identifying effective mentors for novice

teachers and training these mentors for their critical support role are the missing elements of mentoring programs (Bowie & Gagen). During this study, the research provided a startling reality in mentor programs. The reality of comprehensive training and the embracing of the mentor role and its expectations relieved mentors of the anxiety of supporting beginning teachers (Bowie & Gagen). Bowie and Gagen discussed the findings from a survey of mentor teachers who showed that mentors needed to be trained in current instructional strategies, expectations of mentoring programs, how to discuss issues with the beginning teacher, reflective teaching practice, and how to provide clear expectations and goals for the beginning teacher. One method suggested that training of mentors include workshops in strategies and techniques for supporting beginning teachers (Bowie & Gagen). The survey of mentor training needs also led Bowie and Gagen to find that mentors wanted a hands-on approach to learning the new delivery and communications methods beginning teachers were using.

From the data collected, Bowie and Gagen (2005) were able to make suggestions on how to conduct a mentor training workshop. One suggestion included multiple sessions for training broken up over a set time interval (before mentors and beginning teachers meet and again 6-8 weeks after the initial meeting between the mentor and beginning teacher. The workshops are tailored to mentor needs in order to support beginning teachers by establishing training expectations and end of training objectives (Bowie & Gagen). In conclusion, Bowie and Gagen found the need for comprehensive training for mentor teachers. They stated that mentor training would help mentors with the responsibilities of mentoring beginning teachers. Successful beginning teachers, backed up by effective mentors, are more likely to remain in the profession, and they will become potential mentors for the new professionals who come after them (Bowie &

Gagen).

Wood and Stanulis (2009) examined and expanded on the idea of mentor training to support induction programs for teachers and the needs of mentors that will improve their overall effectiveness. This study noted that activities focused on teacher self-efficacy should be included in professional development programs in school districts. Once selected, mentors participate in professional development to help them develop a repertoire of knowledge and strategies to help novice teachers improve their practice (Wood & Stanulis). One of the big components of the study showed a focus on the mentor training to support beginning teachers in the induction year. Wood and Stanulis also outlined necessary components for an induction program and mentoring beginning teachers. The components named are training tools to prepare mentors for the mentoring process with beginning teachers; reflective inquiry and teaching practices; systematic and structured observations; developmentally appropriate professional development; formative teacher assessment; administrators' involvement in induction; a school culture supportive of beginning teachers; program evaluation and/or research on induction; and a shared vision of knowledge, teaching, and learning.

Evertson and Smithey (2000) found mentor preparation to be an important factor influencing beginning teacher classroom practices. Mentors were involved in a 4-day training before school began and had monthly follow ups. The planned mentor training allowed mentors to learn the necessary tools and techniques to train and work with beginning teachers. In their study, the beginning teachers with trained mentors had better classroom management techniques and students had better behavior and classroom engagement compared to beginning teachers with nontrained mentors. They focused on mentor preparation and their perceived efficacy to support beginning teachers.

Throughout the discussion of literature on mentor support and beginning teacher training, there is reference to constant improvement in delivery of support. The support is shown to be physical, emotional, and instructional in the classroom. The next section of this literature review will discuss components of mentor training necessary to prepare mentors to be able to offer the support beginning teachers need in their first year of teaching.

Components of Mentor Training Programs

Various studies have contributed to a number of components that make up a strong mentor training program. Larkin (2013) discussed steps mentors should take to work with preservice teachers. These steps focused on areas of mentor training found by Wood and Stanulis (2009). Larkin's work agreed with Wood and Stanulis in areas of reflective practice, communication techniques, content delivery, model teaching, common planning, connecting to the school environment, and learning from each other. These areas of training for mentors allowed the time to talk and discuss lessons, techniques and models to use with preservice or beginning teachers. Larkin concluded that "mentoring a student teacher is challenging and rewarding" (p. 43). Larkin supported this statement with the outcomes found in his research. The hard work that goes into helping someone learn how to teach is balanced by the benefit of having an enthusiastic apprentice with you, and taking advantage of this situation is essential for your own professional learning (Larkin).

Odell (1990) stated, "To begin with, a wide array of related areas of study have been suggested for the training of mentor teachers" (p. 22). Odell supported Thies-Sprinthall (1986) in suggesting multiple areas of training for mentor teachers. These areas include stages of teacher development, concerns and needs of beginning teachers,

clinical supervision, teacher induction, and adult professional development. Thies-Sprinthall identified the additional areas of role clarification, classroom observation, conducting conferences, classroom management strategies, student thinking, and teacher reflection. Riggs (2000) supported Thies-Sprinthall and Odell when stating the need for mentors to have training in classroom observation, how to work with adult learners, assessment, and practice. Tauer (1995) supported Thies-Sprinthall in stating the need for mentor teachers to be trained in the areas of active listening, clinical supervision, and adult development. Using this compilation of recommended ingredients for effective mentor training, the literature review will merge the ingredients into five major components: Needs of Beginning Teachers; Adult Learner Development; Observation Techniques; Communication; and Reflection.

Needs of Beginning Teachers

Moir (1990) identified five stages beginning teachers move through in their first year as a teacher. Moir stated the need for mentors to be trained in identifying these five phases and strategies to help beginning teachers move through each phase. The phases are discussed in the following order: anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation and reflection. Moir elaborated further on the stages by aligning each stage with a point in time on the school year calendar. Moir indicated that trained mentors should be able to identify and help beginning teachers manage each stage in this cycle. Moir further established a framework to aid mentors in understanding and supporting beginning teachers during each phase. In partnership with the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project, Moir helped identify and analyze ways to teach mentors techniques and strategies to support beginning teachers at all stages of this cycle and to help bring them back to the anticipation stage for the next year of teaching.

Gilles, Davis, and McGlamery (2009) conducted a study involving three universities regarding mentoring strategies to retain beginning teachers. They incorporated studies conducted by Kaiser (2004) (Missouri University), Davis and Waite (2006) (Texas State University), and McGlamery and Edick (2004) (University of Nebraska). Mentors provided through these three universities spent one-third of their time with beginning teachers, one-third of their time helping their schools with special projects, and one-third of their time with the cooperating universities. Dividing their time allowed the mentors to focus on the needs of the beginning teacher while also devoting time to their school and working with the university to gain the training needed to support beginning teachers. With these mentor programs, the results were impressive. Over 91% of the beginning teachers (316 total) in these programs were still in education up to 8 years after they left the Missouri University program (Kaiser). Of the 215 graduates from Texas State, 82% were still in education 10 years after their exit from the program (Davis & Waite). At the University of Nebraska, 89% of the teachers were still in education 5 years after participating in the program. The research indicated that success of this mentoring partnership is based on the effectiveness of the mentor programs to aid in retaining beginning teachers (McGlamery & Edick).

Gilles et al. (2009) identified mentoring as a lifeline for beginning teachers through their work. One beginning teacher responded, "My mentor was my lifeline. At times, I thought I was sinking, but she was always there with a listening ear, a bit of humor, and chocolate!" (Gilles et al., p. 45). The study by Gilles et al. portrayed the ideal situation. Mentors could spend one-third of their time with their (teaching) fellows, which meant they saw them each day. Mentors were available to plan with fellows, observe in the classroom, co-teach, work with a small group, answer questions, listen to

ideas, etc. In the fall, mentors visited each day and provided the most support. As fellows became more comfortable, the type and intensity of support changed. Fellows said mentors were the most important part of the program (Gilles et al.).

Sparks and Hirsh (1997) reported on mentor support in the Tucson Unified School District. In the report, Sparks and Hirsh stated that new teachers meet monthly to address typical concerns. They spend part of each meeting in study groups facilitated by members of the teacher cadre. In addition, mentor cadre members provide school-based support for new teachers. This example of mentor support has been repeated in Rochester, New York, Franklin Park, Illinois, Lafourche Parish, Louisiana, and San Diego, California. In all of these locations, attrition rates of teachers were reduced (Kelly, 2001). Heller (2004) stated that new teachers and mentors should also meet regularly to discuss common difficulties and triumphs and to make suggestions for improving their experience and training.

Scherer (2012) noted the need for mentors to be able to support beginning teachers in the classroom during the first year. Scherer identified several areas for professional development the mentor teacher should have in order to offer this support. Scherer, in an interview with Linda Darling Hamilton, said,

It's really important for beginners to have systematic, intense mentoring in the first year. Having weekly support and in-classroom coaching in the first year for fine-tuning skills, for planning lessons and for problem solving about things that come up in the classroom ensures that someone experienced is there during the critical moments of the beginning teacher's first year. That is the ideal way to make sure beginning teachers don't just survive but also become competent and effective—and stay in the profession. (p. 18)

Scherer shows that support for beginning teachers is a necessity and that mentor training exists so the beginning teacher can have the depth of support needed to excel as a beginning teacher. Schools that successfully implement programs to support beginning teachers are showing positive results. These schools, according to Scherer, implement collaborative time for teachers and mentors to plan, create professional learning communities, and build a learning environment that promotes teacher growth. These schools provide growth opportunities, provide teachers with the tools to do their job, and help them build good relationships with parents so they can advocate for the students. When the beginning teacher is in the classroom, the focus is on learning for both the students and the developing teacher. Scherer alluded to the idea of working with the adult learner when she discussed the needs of the beginning teacher throughout the first year of teaching.

Adult Learner Development

According to the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) there are several objectives to target when working with adult learners (Condelli, Kirshtein, Silver-Pacuilla, Reder, & Wrigley, 2010). NCSALL conducted two large studies, the Persistence Study and the Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning (LSAL) which followed adult learners over time. These two studies followed adult learners from the high school dropout to adult education learners to look for factors that influenced their learning. NCSALL also found the research to show the need to extend these principles to postsecondary education as well to help the learners to succeed academically. The four major findings of the two studies suggest the need to develop strategies for

Building persistence in adult learners so that they stay in programs and engage in

self-directed learning activities for much longer periods of time; gather data and build accountability around longer-term outcomes; develop community-wide learning support systems that strengthen collaboration among education providers and social service and community-based organizations to meet learners' needs; and utilize technology to increase system capacity, coordination, and effectiveness. (Condelli et al., 2010, p. 9)

From this research there were two other suggestions by NCSALL for better preparing the adult learner for success: organizing the delivery system toward learner needs and goals and professional development and professionalization needs in the workforce. According to NCSALL, organization of the delivery system to aim at needs, goals, and professional development lead to a pupil-centered system that supports the learner. The need for targeted professional development is glaring (Condelli et al., 2010). According to the authors, having high quality professional development for the adult learner leads to stronger and more qualified employees to handle the changing jobs they hold in the workplace (Condelli et al., 2010).

Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2011) identified six core principles key to adult learning: the learner's need to know, self-directed learning, prior experiences of the learner, readiness to learn, orientation to learning and problem solving, and motivation to learn. The authors discussed each principle in regards to how they are used in connecting to the adult learner. Knowles et al. also noted a process (Andragogy in Practice model) that "recognizes the lack of homogeneity among learners and learning situations, and illustrates that the learning transaction is a multifaceted activity" (p. 146). They further discussed the differences of how the six core principles are applied with two different case studies, one with an adult basic education program and the other being a

management development program. The authors show how various situations affect the leaning of the adult and how to maximize the learning using the previously mentioned core principles. Knowles et al. noted that to get to the core of adult learning, one must be able to assess learning styles that lead to increased motivation of the student and effectiveness of the instruction. The authors refer to each individual as a different learner. Therefore, instruction must be adjusted to each individual so they can effectively apply the instruction to their job situation.

King and Lawler (2003) stated that teachers are adult learners and their professional development is a form of adult education, which shifts the focus of professional development to the needs of teachers and the different contexts in which they learn and teach. According to Knowles et al. (2011), self-directed learning is more aligned with an adult's sense of autonomy, and teachers want to be more active contributors to their own professional development experiences. Teachers should be involved in the content and delivery of programs for them to be meaningful learning experiences. According to King and Lawler, in many professional development experiences, teachers have no influence over the content delivery and are treated like children in a typical elementary classroom. This situation turns adults into passive learners, and the learning process can be impeded by a negative attitude. Based on this knowledge, King and Lawler projected that professional development should provide an environment for adults to have control over their own learning.

Knowles et al. (2011) concurred with King and Lawler (2003) in stating that adults have a wide range of diverse life experiences that will affect their learning. Two specific types mentioned were experiential and cooperative learning, which were noted to be very meaningful to adults in learning situations (King & Lawler). Therefore,

professional development should provide opportunities for teachers to learn experientially and cooperatively on an ongoing basis in the context of their workplace. Knowles et al. again referred to research by King and Lawler, citing the adult learner must be ready to learn. However, Knowles et al. concurred with King and Lawler by stating that beginning teachers may not be developmentally ready to learn experientially and cooperatively.

Berliner (1988) also stated that the novice teacher is concerned with learning the rules, procedures, and daily tasks of teaching. Huberman (1989) supported Berliner in stating that new teachers are intensely involved in their learning process, and they worry about their adequacy and survival as teachers. Issues such as classroom management, pupil discipline, and sense of adequacy are important in the teacher's early stages of development. The deeper initiatives such as school-wide behavior or curriculum implementation are more important to learning for the experienced teacher, usually because they have a grasp on the initial issues of a beginning teacher. Thus, professional development activities should take into account the stages of a teacher's development so that the teacher is ready to learn concepts that will help him or her be a better practitioner (King & Lawler, 2003).

Wilson and Berne (1999) discussed the way teachers learn in respect to experience levels, stating,

Beginning teachers take methods and foundations courses in education departments and subject matter courses in discipline departments. Practicing teachers participate in mandatory partial day or day-long workshops sponsored by their school district. They pursue individual learning opportunities: enrolling in master's courses, signing up for summer and weekend workshops, and joining

professional organizations. (p. 173)

Wilson and Berne showed vast differences in the types of learning between beginning and experienced teachers; thus, the need for varied types of learning experiences for the many teacher stages in a school system. Ball (1996) summarized these concepts by stating, “The most effective professional development model is thought to involve follow-up activities, usually in the form of long-term support, coaching in teachers’ classrooms, or ongoing interactions with colleague” (p. 2).

Observation Techniques

According to Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Pease (1983), the demand for accountability in education has shifted from broad issues of finance and program management to specific concerns about the quality of classroom teaching and teachers. The evaluation system involves direct inspection of the teacher’s work, including lesson plans, classroom performance, and performance results. The school administrator is seen as the teachers’ supervisor (Darling-Hammond et al.). They also stated, “In general, teacher evaluation processes most suited to accountability purposes must be capable of yielding fairly objective, standardized, and externally defensible information about teacher performance (Darling-Hammond et al., p. 303). They list a variety of means for teacher evaluation. These means included competency tests, classroom observations, students’ ratings, peer review, student achievement, and self-evaluation (Darling-Hammond et al.). Darling-Hammond et al. supported Garawski (1980) and Redfern (1980) in stating classroom observation techniques vary significantly in structure and methodology. Garawski and Redfern summarized in their work that the school principal acts as the observer in most cases. They also noted that trained evaluators, school system administrators, other teachers, or students may observe and rate teachers.

Stallings (1980) concluded that the purpose of systematic classroom observation is to improve teachers' classroom instruction. Feedback from the observations has been found to help teachers understand their own strengths and weaknesses and have enabled teachers to significantly improve their instruction (Stallings). Another key point Stallings identified was that the observation process typically involves having trained observers systematically observe teachers and their students in their classrooms and later provide teachers with information about their instruction. Stallings also found that, with the feedback from observations, teachers could positively change their attitude and behaviors toward pupils. She also documented overall findings from the study that suggested that the feedback from classroom observations is a viable and effective mechanism for providing teachers with the information they need about their classroom behavior.

Peterson and Kauchak (1982) reported that teacher evaluation consists of several methods of data gathering. They noted that peer review, student review, systematic observation, academic screening, and further formal evaluation for first and second year teachers be employed as ways to gather information about teacher effectiveness.

Peterson (2000) devised a set of practices to improve teacher evaluation. This set of 11 suggested practices is

emphasize the function of teacher evaluation to seek out, document, and acknowledge the good teaching that already exists; evaluate to reassure teachers and audiences that good work is going on; place the teacher at the center of the evaluation activity; use more than one person to judge teacher quality and performance; limit administrator judgment role; use multiple data sources to inform judgments about teachers; use variable data sources to inform judgments about teachers; spend the extensive time and other resources needed to recognize

good teaching; correctly use research on teacher evaluation (examine “research-based” claims); attend to the sociology of teacher evaluation; and use the results of teacher evaluation to encourage personal professional dossier building (Peterson, p. 1).

Peterson outlined the above techniques to allow teacher observations to be more in-depth and useful for the observers and teachers. These suggestions by Peterson have been used in several settings to revamp the evaluation processes for teachers. His suggestions open the lines of communication between the stakeholders (teachers and evaluators) in order for the observations and evaluations to be effective to ultimately improve the instruction for students.

Communication

According to Robinson (1998), communication is a focus between the mentor and beginning teacher. Sweeney (1998) concurred with Robinson when the research identified several areas of needed strengths for mentors to utilize. Sweeney identified three very important components to maximize mentor effectiveness that include availability—being readily accessible; frequency—taking the initiative to be in contact regularly; and two-way communication—listening, giving input and advice. Beginning teachers asked for time to communicate with mentors according to Robinson, Sweeney, and Bowie and Gagen (2005). They wanted to have conversations about their work and what they observe veteran teachers doing in the classroom. Robinson further established the fact that beginning teachers not only come into the profession needing the continuous guidance from their education program but the leadership of strong mentors as they begin their teaching career.

Communication plays a role in mentoring as noted previously by Sweeney (1998).

According to the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) in 1999, Other attributes are less a function of years on the job and more a matter of especially good ‘people skills.’ Having somebody who knows how to express care for your emotional, professional and other needs can make all the difference. (p. 8)

The NFIE also stated that the mentoring relationship needs to be a collaboration between the mentor and the beginning teacher. Mentors should possess several communication skills, including articulation of issues, attentive listening, effective questioning, positive and productive critique skills, and confidentiality. Strong and effective communication was identified by participants in mentoring programs as one of four general categories needed by an effective mentor.

Field (1994) discussed the new role of the mentor teacher. One aspect of this role is that the mentor teacher must be an effective communicator. Field stated that mentors must be trained to communicate with the beginning teachers they are assigned to support. Field reported that mentors found it difficult to get their teachers to dialogue with them. The mentors had to be trained to promote professional conversations with beginning teachers who were not used to putting their thoughts about their practice into words or onto paper. Field elaborated on the need for mentors to focus on how to analyze the situations with the beginning teachers and begin the conversations needed to further support the beginning teacher.

Reflection

Posner (1993) discussed the need for a continuous process of reflection on the day-to-day experiences throughout the teaching career. Reflection can lead to changes that open doors to professional growth of the teacher. Posner suggested that preservice

teachers learn to reflect on professional growth and continue this process throughout their teaching career.

Teachers make the most progress when they are on their feet, teaching, and then reflecting on their practice (Harding, 2012). Since the inception of Dewey's laboratory schools, reflection has become a major component for programs that prepare educators (Sweigard, 2007). Sweigard (2007) stated that reflection can be a rich source of continued professional development. Teachers influence their students in the learning process by allowing students to see the teacher reflect on his/her practice and making adjustments to instruction and delivery for the students. Sweigard supported the notion that reflective practice in the classroom can help teachers improve and problem solve current or future issues they face in their classrooms. Barth (1990) supported the need for reflection by stating, "By reflecting on what we do, by giving it coherence and by sharing and articulating our craft knowledge, we make meaning, we learn" (p. 79).

Scott (2001) found in a yearly update of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program (BTIP) in New Brunswick, that beginning teachers were still highly satisfied with the overall program, but again, they continued to ask for time to observe. In looking at Scott's work, this trend is easily identified. The mentors and beginning teachers are asking for time to observe each other and to discuss the findings. Mentor teachers identify the need to reflect while helping beginning teachers. Mentors also indicated in the study that the opportunity to reflect on their teaching benefited their students and the beginning teacher. One mentor stated, "Opportunities for reflective practice have made me re-visit my own planning/teaching techniques and examine reasons for my own successes and failures" (Scott, 1997, p. 12). The techniques used for reflection were presented to the beginning teachers and the mentor teachers during trainings. The initial

training sessions were held at the beginning of the year and follow-up sessions intermittently to refresh mentors and beginning teachers with the reflective practice techniques (Scott, 2001). BTIP offers explicit training in techniques of reflection and support for beginning teachers. Reflection is most often cited by mentor teachers as the best practice to support the beginning teacher. The mentors also report impacts on their own professional growth and development due to the reflective practices they employ with the beginning teachers (Scott, 2001).

Scott used four separate questionnaires to gather data from the participants (beginning teachers, mentors, principals, and district contact people). An analysis of the returned questionnaires produced qualitative and quantitative data which resulted in the report on the BTIP in New Brunswick (Scott, 1997). The analysis focused on perceived problems of the program as ranked by each different participant in the questionnaire. One beginning teacher responded,

Having support and sharing experience with other new teachers was a great asset.

Having the opportunity to discuss the good and the bad made me realize that others were in the same boat. We were very fortunate to have such a program available. (Scott, 2001, p. 15)

Mentors also cited the training for having benefits in three personal areas: motivation, friendship, and personal satisfaction (Scott, 2001). Both beginning teachers and mentors ranked reflective practice as a high priority for the program on the exit surveys for the BTIP. This was evident in the recommendations as well. The report stated, "Possibly, district coordinators will have to become more intentional in providing both incentives and skills so that more mentors will feel comfortable enough to attempt the higher-risk activities [listed fourth on the survey of needs was reflection

conversations after observations at 16.9%]” (Scott, 2001, p. 13).

Wood and Stanulis (2009) indicated that conversations between beginning teachers, mentors, and administrators are designed to enhance the communication and better establish practices for the beginning teacher and mentor. Stanulis, Meloche, & Ames (2006) and Olebe, Jackson, and Danielson (1999) concurred with the data identifying open lines of communications after observations as being a strong component in the growth of the beginning teacher. Many quality induction programs end with a culminating formative assessment activity in which novices and mentors reflect on the novices’ professional growth over their induction years and formulate goals for future growth (Wood & Stanulis, 2009).

Scott (1997) questioned beginning teachers and their perception of what they needed from their mentors. One need mentioned was the requests for feedback about teaching and opportunities to observe mentors demonstrating a lesson in the beginning teacher’s classroom (Scott, 1997). In an update from 1997, Scott (2001) found that beginning teachers voiced their need for time to observe their mentors and other teachers. The survey results showed that many principals believe classroom visits by beginning teachers to shadow the mentor and share the experiences in the class were vital to beginning teacher success. The shadowing experiences or visits then lead to discussions about teaching, problem areas, and solutions. Reflections on lessons and observations lead to conversation of how the beginning teacher implements solutions to problems in the classroom (Scott, 2001).

According to Scott (1997), reflective practice, as discussed previously, helps one to refine his/her teaching craft. In regards to mentoring, the reflective process allows for teachers to examine situations and learn from the results of previous events. When

teachers revisit situations, they can rethink the process that led to their actions (Lupinski, Jenkins, Beard, & Jones, 2012). As a mentor uses this information to improve his/her mentoring abilities, along with mentor training, the mentor can become more comfortable with the process of supporting beginning teachers. According to Killion and Todnem (1991), constant reflection on a body of work can lead to changes that improve work practices.

Self-Efficacy

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are assumed to influence their instructional behavior and many other related outcomes (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). According to their study, self-efficacy has to do with self-perception of competence rather than actual level of competence. Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) cited Bandura (1997) when discussing a person's thought levels on assessed skills they could use to accomplish a difficult task. Teacher efficacy has also been defined as both context and subject matter specific. When working within different areas, efficacy has been found to change based on the level of comfort with which the teacher views the context of the subject matter (Tschannen-Moran et al.). The study also found that successful event completions led to a higher sense of self-efficacy within teachers. As stated, these events called *mastery experiences* led to more achievement due to successful attempts to complete different tasks. They stated that the self-efficacy theory predicts that teachers with a high sense of efficacy work harder and persist longer even when students are difficult to teach, partly because these teachers believe in themselves and in their students.

Holzberger, Philipp, and Kunter (2013) produced a longitudinal study of teacher self-efficacy. They used Bandura's (1997) definition of self-efficacy as a person's belief that he or she is capable of dealing with complex tasks. "Beliefs of personal efficacy

constitute the key factor of human agency” (Bandura, p. 3). Holzberger et al. studied self-efficacy of teachers and how these beliefs influenced their instructional behavior and outcomes. Holzberger et al. stated that teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs may be impacted by their classroom experiences or their students’ achievement, their observations of peers, the arguments of their colleagues, and/or their levels of exhaustion. Teachers with higher self-efficacy beliefs reported higher cognitive activation, better classroom management, and more individual learning support for students (Holzberger et al.).

Erdem and Demirel (2007) studied self-efficacy of preservice teachers at Hacettepe University in Ankara, Turkey. The study was based on the idea that “individuals’ beliefs play an important role in their behaviors” (Erdem & Demirel, p. 573). This study has implications for all teachers in that the basis of our beliefs about how we interact with others can influence outcomes in those situations. Erdem and Demirel further discussed the sense of self-efficacy and how it affects “expectations of success or failure, and also influences motivation through goal-setting” (p. 574). Self-efficacy can be tied directly to mentor teachers and their thoughts of how they promote positive behaviors in beginning teachers. Mentors utilize constructive interaction on lesson presentation, classroom management, and questioning strategies in evaluative contexts of the beginning teacher (Erdem & Demirel).

Kelm and McIntosh (2012) researched the concept of self-efficacy as it related to the work environment and a more specific effect on school-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS). In the study, teacher self-efficacy was defined as an indication of teachers’ feelings of professional effectiveness and preparation to meet the challenges of their classrooms. Kelm and McIntosh’s research also supported Schwarzer and Hallum (2008) and Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) as it suggested that self-efficacy is a protective

factor against job stress in the school. This research allowed the definition of self-efficacy to relate to the overall environment of the teacher in the classroom and the school setting. The research established that relationships can result from interactions in the school between students and teachers, teachers and colleagues, and teachers and community stakeholders. The researchers also elaborated on findings that defined high and low teacher self-efficacy. High teacher self-efficacy is related to job satisfaction and commitment to the school, whereas low teacher self-efficacy is linked to job stress and burnout (Allinder, 1995; Betoret, 2006; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Coladarci, 1992; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). Kelm and McIntosh elaborated further by stating that teachers may reevaluate their perception of self-efficacy in the context of new tasks. When faced with a new task or changing conditions, self-efficacy leads to greater persistence on a task. This will often lead to higher performance, which in turn will contribute to an increase in self-efficacy.

Brudnik (2009) found self-efficacy as a way to protect teachers from professional burnout. The strength of perceived self-efficacy positively affected a teacher's outlook and approach to stressful situations. "Professional burnout occurs in conditions of chronic stress, the source of which is another individual" (Brudnik, p. 170). Brudnik also found through this study the connection of strong self-efficacy to a teacher's ability to fight off stress with a good mood and increase in the body's immune system. Perception of self-efficacy is one of the components of the cognitive system structure of an individual, according to Bandura (1997). Brudnik supported Bandura, showing the belief that one is capable of performing in a certain manner to attain certain goals; in this case, mentors having the self-efficacy to influence a beginning teacher. The opposite scenario shows that teachers with low self-efficacy tend to believe they cannot attain goals, and

their attitudes can harm others in the job environment. Brudnik stated, “People will be more inclined to take on a task if they believe they can succeed” (p. 207). Bandura is supported by the idea from Brudnik that a person’s beliefs will affect their ability to perform a task. Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) also concurred that teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs are assumed to influence their instructional behavior and many other related outcomes.

Bandura (1993) identified four sources of information which contribute to teacher self-efficacy. The four sources are mastery experiences, physiological and emotional cues, vicarious experiences, and verbal feedback. In discussion, Bandura noted that self-efficacy could be built or increased by achieving any of the four sources. Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) agreed that verbal persuasion, such as encouragement or praise, can help create an expectation of future success, based on feedback from a trusted source. Jamil, Downer, and Pianta (2012) used Bandura’s four sources to improve or achieve higher self-efficacy as a basis of possible professional development to enhance teacher self-efficacy. Jamil et al. stated that it might be possible to focus on the four sources as targets of a professional development intervention to enhance teacher self-efficacy. Jamil et al. proposed that teachers collaboratively evaluate their teaching practice in a supportive environment. They use feedback from a qualified consultant to gain a greater sense of control over their own outcomes.

Coladarci (1992) identified several studies that had examined the effects of preservice teacher education on the formation of prospective teachers’ sense of efficacy. He identified Spector (1990) and Hoy and Woolfolk (1990), who discussed how to increase teacher efficacy. Spector found that personal efficacy among undergraduate students increased linearly during the 4-year undergraduate program which culminated

with student teaching. Hoy and Woolfolk reported that personal efficacy was higher among practicing teachers who had taken extra graduate courses in education. Coladarci stated that a teacher's sense of efficacy is emerging as an important variable in research on teaching and deserves the continued attention of investigators in this area of inquiry. The central finding of Coladarci's study was that personal and general efficacy were the two strongest predictors of commitment to teaching. This finding also suggested that teacher efficacy could help to offset the trends noted in teacher attrition. To clarify, the features of school organization that promote a teacher's sense of efficacy may, in turn, promote that teacher's commitment to the organization.

Research shows that when teachers attempt to implement new practices, their efficacy beliefs may initially be lowered, but they rebound to a higher level when the new strategies are found to be effective (Ross, 1994; Stein & Wang, 1988). Ross and Burce (2007) reported:

Teacher efficacy involves an appraisal of the difficulties of the teaching task, weighed against an assessment of personal competence. By increasing competence, we anticipated that teachers would be more successful in the classroom, according to teachers' usual criteria (e.g., student responsiveness to teacher prompts), which would enhance teacher efficacy. (p. 54)

Enhanced efficacy might motivate the search for new skill development opportunities. According to Ross (1994), encouragement and support are particularly important as change is implemented and temporary dips in efficacy occur. Ross also discussed that teachers need support and training to see them through the initial slump in efficacy beliefs as they attempt to implement new methods. Ross stated that teachers also need to see evidence of increased student learning before new, higher efficacy beliefs will

take root. Another strategy shows that if principals and supervisors focus on the positive results of teacher behaviors and talk about them in terms of factors under teachers' control (i.e., lesson planning), teachers will be more likely to make similar contributions. In general, Tshannen-Moran et al. (1998) clarified by stating that helping teachers feel a greater sense of control over their professional lives in schools will increase their sense of teacher efficacy and make for greater effort, persistence, and resilience.

Burley, Hall, Willeme, and Brockmeier (1991) and Hall, Burley, Willeme, and Brockmeier (1992) discussed efficacy beliefs of beginning teachers. Both found that successful novices indicated greater optimism that they would remain in the field of teaching. They found that efficacy beliefs of beginning teachers are related to stress and commitment to teaching, as well as satisfaction with support and preparation. Hall et al. indicated that confident new teachers gave higher ratings to the adequacy of support they had received than those who ended their year with a shakier sense of their own competence and a less optimistic view of what teachers could accomplish. Both Burley et al. and Hall et al. reported that efficacious beginning teachers rated the quality of their preparation higher and the difficulty of teaching lower than those who were less efficacious.

Hipp (1996) discussed the relationship of the principal's leadership behaviors to teacher efficacy in Wisconsin middle schools involved in building-level change efforts. Hipp found that modeling behavior, inspiring group purpose, and providing contingent rewards were significantly related to general teaching efficacy. *Models behaviors* and *provided contingent rewards* were significantly related to personal teaching efficacy (Hipp). Hipp also found eight additional leadership behaviors that reinforce and sustain teacher efficacy. The eight additional behaviors were empowerment, shared decision

making, managing student behavior, teamwork, collaboration, risk-taking, trust, and caring for teachers. Teachers were more willing to take risks and try new ideas based on trust and support from their principals. Hipp noted the link between teacher efficacy and student achievement that is well established in many areas of research. However, she identified that principal leadership behaviors can be used to promote student learning through teacher efficacy.

Self-efficacy plays a powerful role in perception of one's self. According to Bandura (1997), high self-efficacy leads to higher aspirations, and lower self-efficacy can lead to depression. Teachers also feed on self-efficacy while on the job. Building self-efficacy in beginning teachers through support is a powerful way to mold teachers. Bandura stated that people who believe in their efficacy create environments which they can control. In conclusion, Bandura reported that if people are persuaded to believe in themselves, they will exert more effort and increase their chances of success as well as the success of others around them.

Research Question

How does the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training impact the self-efficacy of mentor teachers in supporting beginning teachers?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview

Bowie and Gagen (2005) stated that mentors can provide critical support for a beginning teacher by establishing an environment of empowerment and by offering reassurance that the beginning teacher is capable of performing the job. Moir et al. (2009) indicated that when new teachers are paired with highly trained mentors, the pace of new teacher learning increases. According to Bowie and Gagen, one issue with quality mentoring is poor self-efficacy. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on the efficacy of certified mentors as they support beginning teachers in the classroom. Self-efficacy to support beginning teachers was gauged by responses to surveys and interviews by mentor teachers after completing the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training and serving as an assigned mentor to an induction teacher.

Bowie and Gagen (2005) supported the need for districts to find ways to train mentors to work with beginning teachers. One such avenue is the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. The researcher identified nine school districts in South Carolina that had mentors certified through the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. In these districts, mentors are selected by their respective school leadership to serve as mentor teachers. The teachers who completed the training and served as a mentor during the study timeline represent the study sample. A mixed-methods approach was used to conduct the research. The researcher used a combination of an electronic survey and in-person and telephone interviews to gather data to address the following research question: “How does the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training impact the self-efficacy of mentor teachers in supporting beginning teachers?”

Study Design

According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (p. 391). To clarify, self-efficacy is a person’s belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation. Bandura described these beliefs as determinants of how people think, behave, and feel. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has defined self-efficacy of the mentor teachers as the perceived thoughts of being able to support a beginning teacher. For this study, the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training was the method of training for certified mentors. This study utilized a mixed-methods design to gather both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis. The researcher collected data through surveys and interviews of mentor teachers to analyze the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training impact on the self-efficacy of mentor teachers as they worked with beginning teachers.

The CERRA office emailed the nine school districts involved in the study to compile a list of teachers who had been identified as mentor teachers by their respective school districts. After compiling the list of email addresses for identified mentor teachers, CERRA used an email to distribute a link to the mentor teacher survey on wufoo.com. The survey was emailed in the spring of 2013 to the trained mentors with a 2-week window for completion of the survey. The survey window was extended for 1 week with a reminder email to the mentor teachers to request completion of the survey.

The researcher also interviewed mentor teachers to gather data about the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. The interview questions were organized by examination of the data gathered from the surveys. The surveys provided key themes to examine, and the interview questions were developed around these key themes. The

interview questions were used to gather more in-depth information about the themes identified from the survey data.

Finally, the research allowed the researcher to evaluate the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training and its impact on mentor teacher self-efficacy. Results from the surveys and interviews will follow in Chapters 4 and 5.

Participants

The area of study for the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training consisted of a combination of nine school districts. The school districts of study reside in the midlands and upstate regions of South Carolina. Their composition embraces urban, suburban, and rural areas with an enrollment population of approximately 73,379 students and an employment population of 4,948 teachers in 126 elementary, middle, and high schools. The school districts partner with Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina, to enhance teacher training and development for beginning teachers and mentor teachers. SCDE has partnered with CERRA to plan and institute the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training to further assist school districts in training qualified mentors to work with beginning teachers in the school setting. The participants selected for survey and interviews were candidates who had completed the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training and had worked with a beginning teacher within the past 2 academic school years (2010-2011 or 2011-2012). The timeframe for working as an assigned mentor was used to narrow the search for more accurate accounts of the data reported by the study participants. The follow-up interviews were conducted with participants who voluntarily gave contact information while completing the survey.

Instruments

The researcher received permission from CERRA to use the survey instrument

and results. After analyzing the data collected from the survey, the researcher gathered data through interviews with participants who had completed the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training and mentored a beginning teacher within the study timeline (2010-2012 school years). The consent forms for interviews can be found in Appendix A. The South Carolina Initial Mentor Training has expected outcomes (Appendix B) that mentors should feel prepared to accomplish with beginning teachers after completion of the training. The components and expected outcomes (Appendix B) of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training allowed the researcher to structure the research question to focus on mentor self-efficacy after completion of the training.

The survey instrument (Appendix C) was divided into four sections with a total of 19 questions. The survey was created on the Wufoo website (<https://cerra.wufoo.com/forms/mentor-survey-2013/>) and distributed electronically by CERRA to certified mentors identified by their respective school districts. Section one of the survey asked participants for demographic information. Included in this information were the participants' names and email addresses (both optional) as well as their district of employment. If the participants provided their names and contact email addresses, they were considered candidates for the follow-up interview portion of the research. The second section of the survey used yes/no questions to identify eligibility for completing the remainder of the survey. The yes/no questions were used to determine if respondents had received the mentor training being studied and if they had served as an assigned mentor to a first-year teacher during the 2010-2011 or 2011-2012 school years. If the participant answered that they had not completed the initial 3-day mentor training, they were directed to the end of the survey. Likewise, if the participant answered that they had not served as an assigned mentor to a beginning teacher during the specified

timeframe, they were directed to the end of the survey. Any respondent answering no to a question in section two was not contacted for a follow-up interview.

In the third section of the survey, the participants used a Likert scale to rate the tools, resources, and concepts learned in the training. The Likert scale established six options for survey participants to use while responding to the questions. The six options given to participants were did not use, very helpful, somewhat helpful, unsure, somewhat unhelpful, and very unhelpful. These options were used to rank participant responses to questions and then to analyze the responses for prevalent themes that surfaced throughout the survey. The researcher used the tools, resources, and concepts as a framework to identify themes from survey responses. The researcher looked to identify through the themes those tools, resources, and concepts that impacted the mentor teacher's self-efficacy.

The final section of the survey employed one question with a Likert scale response and five open-ended questions to gain insight into the mentor teachers' thoughts and feelings regarding the mentor training. The Likert scale established five options for the participants to use (very effective; somewhat effective; unsure; somewhat ineffective; and very ineffective). The researcher used this question to gain insight into how the mentors felt about the impact of the training regarding their efficacy to work with first-year teachers. The open-ended questions asked participants to further explain their ratings of the tools, resources, and concepts, as well as their overall impression of the training on their ability to support and work with beginning teachers.

Along with the Likert scale responses, the researcher analyzed open-ended questions for supporting documentation of themes identified in section three of the survey. The open-ended questions gave participants the opportunity to explain their

responses in the previous sections of the survey. The data gathered from the open-ended questions allowed the researcher to formulate interview questions to further gauge the perceptions mentor teachers have about their self-efficacy in supporting beginning teachers.

As a final component of the study, the researcher interviewed a randomly selected group of participants to further identify themes based on the expected outcomes of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training and the mentor teachers' perceptions of the impact the training had on their self-efficacy in supporting beginning teachers. The themes identified in the survey allowed the researcher to devise a set of nine interview questions. After survey results were gathered, the researcher used the demographic information to formulate a list of possible interview participants. The researcher planned to interview 10 survey participants. In the event the researcher received more than 10 possible interview candidates, the researcher would use a random number generator to select 10 total participants.

An email was sent to those survey participants who willingly gave contact information to the researcher in the survey. The initial email to possible participants returned five incorrect email addresses. A follow-up email was sent to remind possible participants of the opportunity to volunteer for an interview. The initial email plus the follow-up email identified willing interview candidates. Since the researcher received more than 10 possible interview participants, each one was assigned a number to be entered into a random number generator. The random number generator application from the internet was set up to select 10 numbers (correlating to possible interview candidates) from the participant group. The selected participants were given consent forms for the interview (Appendix A), and the opportunity to participate or decline was noted.

The interview consisted of nine open response questions for each participant to answer. Five interview questions (1, 2, 5, 6, and 7) were designed to focus on the mentor training and the participants' perceptions of the training's usefulness. The remaining four questions (3, 4, 8, and 9) were used to focus on the mentors' use of the training (tools, resources, and concepts) and how it impacted the mentor teacher's self-efficacy. The interviews took place at various venues, by phone and in person, to accommodate the interview participants. During the interview, the researcher took notes and recorded participant responses. The recorded interviews were transcribed into a narrative and organized by themes, which were predetermined based on survey results. After the interview, the researcher looked for prevalent themes that correlated with the themes established by the survey responses.

Thematic analysis was used to determine the themes most important to help mentors' self-efficacy in supporting beginning teachers. These themes were coded and analyzed for number of responses to show effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the tools, resources, and concepts found in the training. The positive, neutral, or negative responses were related to interview responses to validate the training and its impact on mentor teacher self-efficacy in supporting beginning teachers.

Summary

In summary, the researcher collected data from mentor teachers by using surveys and interviews. The survey used a 6-point Likert scale, yes/no questions, and open-ended questions to gain insight into the data offered from respondents. The interview questions were formulated by looking at the responses to the surveys and organizing the responses into the themes identified in the survey using frequency distribution tables. The researcher used the responses from the study population to determine the impact of the

South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on mentor teacher self-efficacy in supporting beginning teachers.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on the efficacy of certified mentors as they support beginning teachers in the classroom. There was an expectation that the study would link the training mentors received to an impact on their self-efficacy in supporting beginning teachers. The research question posed was “How does the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training impact the self-efficacy of mentor teachers in supporting beginning teachers?”

The self-efficacy to support beginning teachers was gauged by responses to surveys and interviews by mentor teachers after completing the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training and serving as an assigned mentor to an induction teacher. The researcher identified nine school districts in South Carolina to represent the study sample.

In designing the study, Chapter 3 identified the methodology for the research as a mixed-methods approach. The researcher used a survey and interviews to gather data. The survey was administered to certified mentors who had served as mentors to beginning teachers during the study timeframe of 2 school years (2010-2011 and 2011-2012).

Interviews were also used to gather data for the study. The researcher contacted 10 survey respondents, all of whom voluntarily permitted contact, to gauge their interest in responding to interview questions. The random selection of the interview participants allowed for all grades and subject areas to be represented in the interview process. The interview questions were formulated after survey data were compiled to further investigate and clarify respondent opinions regarding the information they received during the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training.

The findings are displayed through various tables or quoted responses to report data for analysis during the research.

Participants

The participants in the study represented a large group of experienced teachers who were tracked by CERRA and identified as participating in the 3-day South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. The mentor teachers were from a combination of nine school districts in partnership with Winthrop University. Surveys were distributed to 205 certified mentors with a response rate of 56.1%, or 115 total respondents. This total, however, also included responses of those who may not have attended training or served as an assigned mentor. Only the surveys submitted by respondents who had completed the 3-day mentor training and served as an assigned mentor were taken into account for this study; therefore, the total number of participants was 69. The respondents were experienced teachers who had been trained as mentors in the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training and had served as assigned mentors to beginning teachers within the timeframe of the study (2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years).

Survey Data

Survey data are displayed in the following tables for data analysis. The number of surveys distributed and responded to are broken down by district. The tables show the totals from across the nine districts of study. The tables also show the various results from the Likert scale questions asked in section three of the survey.

Table 1 shows the total number of mentors eligible for the study by district. The eligibility requirements for the study were that the mentors had to complete the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training and had to serve as an assigned mentor to a first-year teacher during the established study timeframe (2010-2011 or 2011-2012 school years).

Table 1

Total Number of Mentors Eligible for Study

District	Number Eligible	Cumulative Eligibility
1	7	7
2	3	10
3	4	14
4	12	26
5	3	29
6	3	32
7	6	38
8	22	60
9	9	69 *

Note. A total of 115 mentors submitted a survey; however, only 69 were able to answer the questions regarding the training and its effectiveness/helpfulness.

The following tables show the data from the Likert scale survey questions referring to tools along with resources and concepts delivered in the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. The Likert scale established six possible responses for participants to use when responding to the questions. The possible Likert scale responses were did not use tool/resource/concept, very helpful, somewhat helpful, unsure, somewhat unhelpful; very unhelpful.

The tools identified in Table 2 are interactive journals, mentor language/mentor concepts, continuum of teacher development, individual learning plan, and collaborative assessment log. The interactive journal is a tool that allows the mentor and beginning teacher to communicate through dual journal entries between each participant. The mentor language/mentor concepts tool is an avenue for the mentor to start or introduce conversations with the beginning teacher and a protocol to follow throughout the process of discussion of the topic identified. The continuum of teacher development is a tool that

allows the mentor and beginning teacher to assess the beginning teacher's level of proficiency, set professional goals, guide the mentor's support, and provide a common language for open lines of communication between the mentor and beginning teacher. The individual learning plan is a tool that allows the beginning teacher and mentor to identify goals and areas of growth for the beginning teacher, aids the mentor in focusing their support to the areas of need for the beginning teacher, has a protocol for documentation, and allows the beginning teacher some control over the support the mentor teacher provides.

Table 2 shows the ratings of the tools used in the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training to help build mentor teacher self-efficacy. The number in parentheses is the number of mentors who either rated the particular tool or indicated that they did not use the tool while mentoring their assigned beginning teacher. The percentage is the percent of mentors who fell into each category. For example, 2.8% of mentors did not use the collaborative assessment log. However, of those who did use this tool, 72.4% of mentors said it was very helpful.

Table 2

Helpfulness of Tools to Build Self-Efficacy

Tools presented during the initial mentor training (n=69)	Did not use tool	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Unsure	Somewhat unhelpful	Very unhelpful
Interactive journal	33.3% (23)	36.2% (25)	21.7% (15)	2.8% (2)	2.8% (2)	2.8% (2)
Mentor language/mentor concepts	1.4% (1)	69.6% (48)	13.0% (9)	7.2% (5)	1.4% (1)	7.2% (5)
Continuum of teacher development	0% (0)	73.9% (51)	14.5% (10)	1.4% (1)	1.4% (1)	8.7% (6)
Individual learning plan	4.3% (3)	56.5% (39)	27.5% (19)	1.4% (1)	2.8% (2)	7.2% (5)
Collaborative assessment log	2.8% (2)	72.4% (50)	13.0% (9)	2.8% (2)	0% (0)	8.7% (6)

The resources and concepts identified in Table 3 are mentoring and induction guidelines, characteristics of beginning teachers, ADEPT professional teaching standards, five holonomous states of mind, professional norms, mentor roles, needs/attitudinal phases of beginning teachers, mentoring strategies for tailoring support, and formative assessment.

The mentoring and induction guidelines are resources that outline requirements the State of South Carolina set forth for school districts to follow for mentoring and induction for beginning teachers. The characteristics of beginning teachers resource outlines specific needs of various beginning teachers from a variety of certification areas

(traditionally prepared, lateral entry, internationally trained, career and technology, or other teacher training programs). A third resource mentors are trained to use is the ADEPT professional teaching standards. This is a set of outlined performance standards that involve professionalism, planning, management, assessment, and professional growth.

The mentor training also provides information about the five states of mind of a teacher. These states of mind include efficacy, consciousness, craftsmanship, flexibility, and interdependence. Also included in the training is guidance about the professional norms to which teachers and mentors should adhere. The professional norms are standard principles followed in the teaching profession and the various roles the mentor takes on when supporting a beginning teacher. Some of these roles include advocate, facilitator, problem-solver, resource, coach, and collaborator.

Another resource the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training offers mentor teachers is the needs/attitudinal phases of beginning teachers. This resource identifies attitudes of beginning teachers during specific time periods during the first year of teaching. This is a cycle that repeats from 1 year to the next. The training also gives mentors strategies for tailoring support for beginning teachers. These various strategies include listening and coaching strategies to support beginning teachers. The final resource the training offers to mentor teachers is strategies for formative assessment. The strategies help to focus on the beginning teacher's growth, help guide the work of the mentor, establish professional norms of inquiry and reflection, and help identify the key role of assessment in effective practice.

Table 3 shows the ratings of the resources and concepts used in the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training to help build mentor teacher self-efficacy. The number

in parentheses is the number of mentors who either rated the particular tool or indicated that they did not use the tool while mentoring their assigned beginning teacher. The percentage is the percent of mentors who fell into each category. For example, 2.8% of mentors did not use formative assessment. However, of those who did use this resource/concept, 68.1% of mentors said it was very helpful.

Table 3

Helpfulness of Resources/Concepts to Build Self-Efficacy

Resources/ concepts presented during the initial mentor training (n=69)	Did not use tool	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Unsure	Somewhat unhelpful	Very unhelpful
Mentoring and induction guidelines	1.4% (1)	78.3% (54)	11.6% (8)	1.4% (1)	0% (0)	7.2% (5)
Characteristics of beginning teachers	7.2% (5)	62.3% (43)	21.7% (15)	0% (0)	1.4% (1)	7.2% (5)
ADEPT professional teaching standards	1.4% (1)	79.7% (55)	10.1% (7)	1.4% (1)	0% (0)	7.2% (5)
Five holonomous states of mind	10.1% (7)	47.8% (33)	28.9% (20)	7.2% (5)	1.4% (1)	4.3% (3)
Professional norms	2.8% (2)	69.6% (48)	18.8% (13)	1.4% (1)	1.4% (1)	5.7% (4)
Mentor roles	0% (0)	85.5% (59)	5.7% (4)	1.4% (1)	0% (0)	7.2% (5)
Needs/attitudinal phases of beginning teachers	5.7% (4)	68.1% (47)	17.4% (12)	1.4% (1)	1.4% (1)	5.7% (4)
Mentoring strategies for tailoring support	2.8% (2)	71.0% (49)	17.4% (12)	1.4% (1)	1.4% (1)	5.7% (4)
Formative assessment	2.8% (2)	68.1% (47)	18.8% (13)	2.8% (2)	1.4% (1)	5.7% (4)

Mentor teachers also had the opportunity to rate the overall impact on their self-efficacy as a mentor teacher after receiving the training. Mentors were asked to rate the overall effectiveness of the training as it related to their ability to provide tailored support, feedback, and assistance to a beginning teacher. Table 4 lists the responses of mentors on the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on their efficacy in supporting beginning teachers.

Table 4

Impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on Self-Efficacy

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Unsure	Somewhat ineffective	Very ineffective
Effectiveness of the training in helping develop the skills needed to provide tailored support to first-year teacher (n=69)	76.8% (53)	23.2% (16)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Effectiveness of the training in helping develop the skills needed to provide feedback and assistance to first-year teacher (n=69)	82.6% (57)	17.4% (12)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)

After surveys were completed, an analysis of the responses was made to identify themes of study. To identify emerging themes from the survey, the researcher used various survey questions to look for key words or phrases to code. These coded key words or phrases were then separated into groups of data with similarities. The

researcher then used the key words and common phrases from the data to identify headings for the four themes that emerged from the data. The four themes of study that emerged were need for mentor training, most helpful tools and strategies, least helpful tools and strategies, and suggestions for mentor training program improvement. Theme 1 emerged from the analysis of the data gathered from survey questions 14 and 16. Theme 2 emerged from the analysis of the data gathered from survey questions 8, 10, 11, and 13. Theme 3 emerged from the analysis of the data gathered from survey questions 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 18. Theme 4 emerged from the analysis of the data gathered from survey questions 16, 17, and 19. These four themes allowed the researcher to create interview questions to clarify the data received by the survey.

Table 5 shows theme 1, the need for mentor training, for further study. The data collected from survey questions 14 and 16 allowed the researcher to gather data that led to the development of theme 1.

Table 5

Theme 1 for Further Study

Theme	Survey Questions Used to Identify Theme
The Need for Mentor Training	<p>14. Overall, how effective was the training in helping you develop the skills needed to provide tailored support to you assigned first-year induction teacher?</p> <p>16. Overall, how effective was the training in helping you develop the skills needed to provide feedback and assistance to your assigned first-year induction teacher that led to his/her improved instruction?</p>

Table 6 shows theme 2, most helpful tools and strategies, for further study. The data collected from survey questions 8, 10, 11, and 13 allowed the researcher to gather data that led to the emergence of theme 2.

Table 6

Theme 2 for Further Study

Theme	Survey Questions Used to Identify Theme
Most Helpful Tools and Strategies	<p>8. During the training, several tools designed to facilitate your role as a certified mentor were presented to you. For each tool you used as an assigned mentor to a first-year induction teacher, please indicate how helpful it was.</p> <p>10. Please identify any additional tools, beyond those presented during the training, that were especially helpful to you as a certified mentor.</p> <p>11. During the training, several resources and concepts designed to facilitate your role as a certified mentor were presented to you. For each resource/concept you used as an assigned mentor to a first-year induction teacher, please indicate how helpful it was.</p> <p>13. Please identify any additional resources or concepts, beyond those presented during the training, that were especially helpful to you as a certified mentor.</p>

Table 7 shows theme 3, least helpful tools and strategies, for further study. The data collected from survey questions 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 18 allowed the researcher to gather data that led to the emergence of theme 3.

Table 7

Theme 3 for Further Study

Theme	Survey Questions Used to Identify Theme
Least Helpful Tools and Strategies	<p>8. During the training, several tools designed to facilitate your role as a certified mentor were presented to you. For each tool you used as an assigned mentor to a first-year induction teacher, please indicate how helpful it was.</p> <p>9. If you rated any of the tools above as somewhat or very unhelpful, please explain your choice. If you did not, type in "N/A."</p> <p>10. Please identify any additional tools, beyond those presented during the training, that were especially helpful to you as a certified mentor.</p> <p>11. During the training, several resources and concepts designed to facilitate your role as a certified mentor were presented to you. For each resource/concept you used as an assigned mentor to a first-year induction teacher, please indicate how helpful it was.</p> <p>12. If you rated any of the resources or concepts above as somewhat or very unhelpful, please explain your choice. If you did not, please type "N/A."</p> <p>13. Please identify any additional resources or concepts, beyond those presented during the training, that were especially helpful to you as a certified mentor.</p> <p>18. Once you began serving as a certified mentor, were there any ways you felt unprepared to effectively support and assist your assigned first-year induction teacher? Please explain.</p>

Table 8 shows theme 4, suggested mentor training improvements, for further

study. The data collected from survey questions 16, 17, and 19 allowed the researcher to gather data that led to the emergence of theme 4.

Table 8

Theme 4 for Further Study

Theme	Survey Questions Used to Identify Theme
Suggested Mentor Training Improvements	<p>16. Overall, how effective was the training in helping you develop the skills needed to provide feedback and assistance to your assigned first-year induction teacher that led to his/her improved instruction?</p> <p>17. Please explain why you rated the training as somewhat or very ineffective.</p> <p>19. Now that you have experience as a certified mentor, what changes, if any, do you recommend that would improve the three-day training? Feel free to reference any aspect of the training, including materials, presentation, sequencing, duration, etc.</p>

Participants for the follow-up interview were selected randomly from the group of survey respondents who willingly gave contact information during the survey. After the researcher received more than 10 possible interview candidates, 10 total participants were selected by a random number generator. Respondents were given an assigned number, and these numbers were placed in a number generator which produced 10 randomly selected candidates by their assigned number.

Interview Data

The follow-up interviews from the survey data focused on the four themes that emerged from the survey data. Interview questions directly examined the tools and

resources mentors were trained to use to support beginning teachers. Interview questions were asked to clarify the mentors' efficacy when using the tools, resources, and strategies given to them in the mentor training program. At the close of the interview, participants were asked for any information that would allow improvements to be made to the training program to further prepare mentors to support beginning teachers.

Based on data from the survey, the researcher developed nine questions for the follow-up interviews (Appendix D). Data from the interviews further supported the four themes that emerged from the survey data gathered. The themes that emerged from the survey were the need for mentor training, the tools and strategies that were most helpful, the tools and strategies that needed improvement or were least helpful, and suggestions for mentor training improvements. The interview data were reported by theme through direct quotes from the randomly selected participants in the survey.

The first theme that emerged from the survey data was the need for mentor training. Interview participants supported this theme through responses when discussing their needs as a mentor. The mentors specifically discussed the tools, concepts, and resources they were trained in during their initial mentor training session.

Theme 1: Need for Mentor Training

Interview respondents offered insight regarding the impact of the training on their ability to support a beginning teacher. Interview Respondent 1 stated,

Initially I was needed to be a mentor for a specific area where there are few teachers in schools. When asked to be a mentor for the new teacher, my concern was that I had not been trained. I felt I needed to be trained in order to be an effective mentor. Several concerns I had were whether or not I could give them the detailed feedback they needed. I also wanted to be able to teach them how to

problem solve within their own classroom. I knew the steps I took to do this, but I did not know how to teach this skill to another person. I needed to be able to understand them and where they were in their development as a teacher.

While Respondent 1 showed a need for feedback skills, Respondent 3 showed a need for strategies to help the beginning teachers with classroom management and actual content delivery to the students. Interview Respondent 3 stated,

Districts or colleges should be able to provide the training to be able to assist the beginning teachers with the various aspects of their “own” classroom. The beginning teachers come into the profession with the content knowledge and my big concern is that I need to be able to work with them through the classroom management issues, and instructional methods they may not have experienced on their own as student interns. I needed the training to inform me of the techniques I could use to help the beginning teachers deliver their content knowledge to the students.

The previous two respondents were very specific in identifying observation and classroom assistance as their biggest needs. Respondent 4 approached the training in a different way and identified his/her needs as understanding the beginning teacher and what he/she needs help doing in the classroom. Interview Respondent 4 stated,

It is difficult to gauge exactly where they are professionally, and what they do or don't need. I don't want to insult them by offering too much help, but then again, I often forget to tell them things I should tell them. The training helped me in my area of need; how to identify the beginning teachers' needs and ways to build their independence in their own classroom.

Respondent 7 discussed the need for training in order to adapt the various tools and

techniques to the many different tracks of teachers entering the profession. Respondent 4 wanted to know where the beginning teacher was professionally and how to help him/her, and Respondent 7 wanted to be able to identify the tools, concepts, and resources to help all beginning teachers, no matter their background when entering the teaching profession.

Interview Respondent 7 stated,

I have had many beginning teachers I have worked with in the past. There are a variety of areas they have arrived from as beginning teachers. I have had alternative certification (PACE), traditional certification, and other areas that I have worked with (I have multiple certifications, K-12). I found it hard to work with teachers from different backgrounds as their needs changed. However, after the training, I realized the techniques from the training could be applied to all areas of beginning teachers within my certification and the training helped me become a better mentor and teacher across the board. Before the training I would find myself being overwhelmed when a beginning teacher had a problem that I could not help them solve. I needed the training to have more resources to use with beginning teachers.

A final statement regarding the training dealt with strategies to teach beginning teachers how to manage their time. Respondent 9 noted the need to be able to teach the aspect of time management to the beginning teachers. Respondent 9 identified this need as one he/she felt the training helped them the most. Interview Respondent 9 stated,

Time is important as a teacher. Beginning teachers feel stretched for time with everything they do in the classroom. The training helped me learn to teach beginning teachers strategies and techniques that help to manage their time. Also, learning about the beginning teacher and what they go through as first year

teachers was a refreshing training aspect for me. I have been in the profession and am far from “new” in respect to experience. The information I received in the training helped me to take a step back and realize these beginning teachers face a lot more than when I was trying to learn to be the best I could be. I was glad I attended the training, because it let me see that I needed to learn how to work with these beginning teachers and understand their point of view.

Interview participants discussed in great detail the tools and strategies that helped them be more supportive of beginning teachers. After being trained, most participants cited the many tools, resources, and strategies that were beneficial to them while supporting a beginning teacher. Specific tools mentioned were the reflective journal, interactive communication log, stages of beginning teacher, observation techniques/guidelines, SAFE-T training, and the mentor training manual. Many of the interview participants said they felt more capable and confident in their ability to support a beginning teacher with the tools, resources, and strategies they received at the initial mentor training.

According to interview respondents, the mentors’ needs were addressed through the training with most of the mentors reporting that they felt more prepared to support a beginning teacher after receiving the mentor training. Mentors mentioned various portions of the training as key components to help them grow stronger as mentors for beginning teachers.

Theme 2: Most Helpful Tools, Resources, and Concepts

The training was broken down by tools, resources, and concepts to help mentors support beginning teachers. Theme two is reported by tools, resources, and concepts that interview respondents identified as most helpful to improve their efficacy when

supporting a beginning teacher.

Reflective Journal

The tool identified during the interviews as the most helpful was the reflective (also called interactive) journal. Of the 10 interview participants, nine identified the reflective journal as helpful. Interview Respondent 1 stated,

The reflective journal is a way for me to see growth with the beginning teacher. I use their thoughts on their writing to reflect on lessons, management, and other areas to help them problem solve issues they are having. Another way we use the reflective journal is to celebrate the positives on the bad days. When all things seemed to go the wrong way, we can look back at an entry of a very good day and see that those days outweigh the bad every time.

Respondent 1 used the journal as a way to understand the thinking of the beginning teacher before, during, and after a lesson. Also, positive entries were used to boost confidence on the bad days. Respondent 2 also used the reflective journal in this way to build confidence with the beginning teacher. Respondent 2 mirrored the previous response by stating,

We use the reflective journal to keep up with how things go from day to day. The good days stay fresh in the journal and we can look back on the bad days and identify areas to improve upon.

Respondent 5 actively used the reflective journal with the beginning teacher. He/she used the journal for two-way communication after reflection on lessons was complete. Respondent 5 also noted the relationship building that came from the reflective journal, stating,

I work on the relationship with my beginning teacher and I read and reflect with

them. Most of the time the beginning teacher allows me to read and respond to their thoughts. I gain so much insight to the thought process they are using throughout the lessons and how they are trying to manage the classroom processes. When we read our thoughts to each other (not every entry, maybe once a week), we discuss what we were thinking and how to apply those ideas and thoughts to the classroom for improvement in both of our classrooms.

The reflective journal was also difficult to use in some ways, especially initially. Respondent 8 discussed the difficulty of using the journal but noted the positive aspects of the journal regarding his/her work with beginning teachers.

My beginning teachers I work with had trouble with the reflective journal at the beginning. However, when we discuss its use and how it helps us to work through problems, I find it is the most helpful piece for me to use with the beginning teachers.

Respondent 9 echoed the response above. The reflective journal is the most used tool in his/her relationship with beginning teachers. Respondent 9 stated,

The reflective journal piece of the mentor training is very strong and effective. It is my most used tool with beginning teachers. It helps me to teach them how to reflect on lessons, planning, management and their days in general. When we get the opportunity to look back, we learn from our mistakes and celebrate our victories. The reflective journal allows the teacher to see growth and maturity in their teaching ability. Knowing how to use this has greatly boosted my confidence in my mentoring skills.

Getting the beginning teachers to reflect on their practice was a strong tool for the mentors to use in the classrooms. Another tool mentors mentioned as being helpful was

the interactive communication log. Mentors used the reflection in some cases as communication tools, but the communication log also opened up avenues for conversations about the needs of the beginning teacher.

Interactive Communication Log

Interview respondents noted the positive benefits for communication with the interactive communication (also called assessment) log. Beginning teachers would have trouble explaining verbally their needs, and the mentors may have trouble interpreting those needs. The interactive communication log was a written log that made communication simpler for the beginning teachers and mentors. Interview Respondent 1 said,

The training in how to interact and communicate with the beginning teacher was most helpful. The (Mentor) training taught us things about how to work with the beginning teacher at different stages through various communication strategies. The conversation and feedback tools helped me feel more successful. Being able to speak with the beginning teachers gave me the opportunity to open up to them and allow them to see me as a teacher also.

Interview Respondent 5 also noted the understanding and clarity the interactive communication log allowed in the mentor/beginning teacher relationship. Interview Respondent 5 stated,

Being able to understand the questions the beginning teacher had was very helpful. The various strategies, including the interactive communication log, was a way to have comments and conversation daily. I was able to understand the beginning teacher's questions or difficult situations, and able to respond in a meaningful way after reflecting on the situation in detail. I found the more details

of communication we shared as a team, the easier it became to solve problems and answer questions about the teaching.

Interview Respondent 8 further elaborated,

Before mentor training I had trouble communicating with the beginning teachers. I felt the need to solve their problems for them, sort of a one-way conversation with me saying what the problem is and then offering the solution. That helped me feel validated as a mentor, but it did not help the beginning teacher. After mentor training I had tools to use to communicate with the beginning teacher. The interactive communication log was a handy tool for me. I was able to allow the beginning teacher to comment and ask questions that I could clarify with my own responses and experiences instead of just popping off with the answer. It gave me the opportunity to hear and see the needs of the beginning teacher and really know how to respond to help them in their classroom.

The following responses concerning the interactive communication log deal with giving feedback to the beginning teacher in a meaningful and beneficial way. Respondent 9 found the log to be very helpful in delivering feedback to the beginning teacher.

Interview Respondent 9 said,

I have always found talking to people easy. However, I find myself struggling to really listen and hear what they have to say. I also find it hard to not be harsh when delivering feedback. Maybe not harsh, but not always using the best tone or getting straight to the point. This hurts sometimes and beginning teachers need to be reinforced and not hurt. I mean, we have to have real conversations, but we have to be able to communicate our points in an effective way. After attending the mentor training, I had more tools available to me to help in communication. I

had listening techniques and conversation starters. I had the communication log to read the feelings and thoughts of the beginning teacher. I also had positive words and language training that allowed me to relay a point, but not be so harsh and to the point with the beginning teacher.

Interview Respondent 10 stated,

I have always had the ability to work with beginning teachers and build relationships. I showed care and compassion; I could talk with them. The feedback aspect of mentoring was made easier by the communication tools offered in the three day initial mentor training. I felt more confident in myself giving feedback, both positive and negative due to the various communication tools and strategies offered in the training. I really utilize the communication log most of all when expressing new ideas and methods with the beginning teacher.

From the communication aspect of the relationship of mentors and beginning teachers, we move to the stages of development of beginning teachers.

Stages of Beginning Teachers

The initial mentor training discussed in depth the stages of a beginning teacher's first year. Several respondents discussed the usefulness of this resource. Moir (1990) identified five stages beginning teachers move through in their first year as a teacher. She stated the need for mentors to be trained in identifying these five phases and strategies to help beginning teachers move through each phase. Mentors echoed the need to understand these stages and noted that they felt better prepared to support beginning teachers after being trained to identify and understand each stage. Respondent 2 stated,

The information on the stages beginning teachers move through during the first year of teaching was eye-opening. To see the emotional roller coaster they travel

over the course of the first year is amazing. The detail of the time and stage allows the mentor to assess where the beginning teacher is and handle the situation accordingly. The aspect of teaching can be delivered in a manner that allows the beginning teacher to be accepting while being in a state of mind that is difficult to deal with criticism, constructive or not. It was a great display to see because it took me back to my first year as a teacher and the ups and downs I experienced while learning to teach students in the real classroom environment. My emotional state was all over the place and after the training I understand what I was experiencing; now I can help beginning teachers. I understand that roller coaster and how to administer the help based on what I know they are experiencing.

Respondent 4 echoed the response of Respondent 2 in how understanding these stages benefited them in mentoring beginning teachers. Respondent 4 said,

I can't think of any one tool specifically except the stages of the beginning teacher. I kind of felt like the training was a bit much, but then we got to the stages of the beginning teacher and my interest was piqued by this information. It kind of reminded me of how I felt trying to mentor a beginning teacher before the training. We would go through the ups and downs and I would try to relate to the beginning teacher. After all, I had been there and gone through all those ups and downs. However, when we began discussing these stages and how to work with a teacher throughout the different stages, it all came together for me. Regardless of the tools I used, they all made more sense and I had more understanding of how and when to use them after being presented with these beginning teacher stages.

As mentioned by other respondents, the stages of beginning teacher tool was very helpful for mentors to support beginning teachers. The mentors, especially Respondent

7, noted a change in his/her ability to support beginning teachers. Respondent 7 stated,

The most beneficial piece to me was the stages of the beginning teacher. This timeline allowed me to tie the entire training together; the strategies, research, tools and resources all had a place to fit after we discussed this stage timeline. I think this made the difference in my ability to better support beginning teachers because I could fit it all together after the training and specify the areas of need of the beginning teacher.

Respondent 9 also had strong words regarding the document that described the stages of beginning teachers. Like respondents previously stated, this resource benefited this respondent in a profound way in how he/she supported beginning teachers.

Respondent 9 stated,

The phases of the beginning teacher tool was enlightening. I mean, I had the means of communication, but it seemed I missed it from time to time in delivery of information. I would look back at reflective and communication journals and see where I had content right, but it just seemed to not fit with the beginning teacher at times. After the training and the introduction to the phases of beginning teachers, I began to get it. I needed to be aware of the place the beginning teacher was emotionally when delivering information to them. If I understood their needs emotionally as well as physically, I could deliver any information in a manner that made sense and was well-received by the beginning teacher. Before the phases of beginning teacher resource, it was hit and miss at times. Now I try to evaluate where we are in the year and the attitude of the beginning teacher before I begin discussing the necessary information I have to pass on to the beginning teacher.

Observation Techniques/Guidelines

Another tool found to be helpful by the mentors was the observational training and techniques to observe the beginning teachers. Interview respondents discussed the observation training and the varying techniques to use for observation. Interview Respondent 3 stated,

The various observational techniques were good for me. These techniques and guidelines are helpful to me because it gives me specific things to look for during observations. From the understanding of how to do a walk-through observation to the full assessment observation, the mentor training helped me. I tried to give good observation feedback and I tried to do this through a variety of types of observations. I never really succeeded with the walk-through. Once I had the mentor training and truly understood how to use the walk-through, I could sit down with the beginning teacher and say what I was looking for in the walk-through. Once we set the tone of the observation, I could really discuss the outcome of the short focused walk-through. I found that using the walk-through was even more effective after pointing out areas to work on in formal observations. I discovered I could use the walk-through to reinforce what the beginning teacher needed to work on after the formal observations. That was a key component of the mentor training for me.

Respondents also noted the benefits of various types of techniques for observations. Not only did they note types, but the guidelines that drove the various observation tool helped mentors better support beginning teachers. Respondent 6 stated,

I gained much insight from the refreshing views of the observation techniques and guidelines set up in the training. The types of observations helped me to point out

areas to work on during formal observations; then check up on during other types of observations like the focused walk-through. I found myself being more comfortable during observations because I understood more of what to look for and how to use the observation tools to offer the necessary feedback to help the beginning teacher improve.

Again, learning how to utilize various types of observation tools allowed the mentor teachers to become more confident in offering feedback to support beginning teachers. Respondent 10 stated,

I learned how to use the observation to help my beginning teacher. I have always been comfortable with the SAFE-T or formal observations. I had more trouble with the shorter, more focused observation tool. The explanation of how and when to use the walk-through allowed me to identify areas from the formal observation for the beginning teacher to improve upon. Then, using the walk-through observation, I was able to give quick and specific feedback based on that specific area of need.

SAFE-T/Evaluation Training

Observation techniques are a key component of evaluation for beginning teachers. Mentors are trained to observe the beginning teachers using the SAFE-T evaluation program, which is a part of the ADEPT evaluation tool. SAFE-T is the formal evaluation tool that evaluators use to observe beginning teachers in the State of South Carolina. Seven out of 10 interview participants mentioned the inclusion of the SAFE-T/Evaluator training portion of the mentor training. The respondents discussed the SAFE-T/Evaluator training component in many ways. Respondent 4 stated,

My initial SAFE-T training was overwhelming and tough to complete. There

were questions I had at the time I used it with a beginning teacher. I struggled with being able to break down certain areas for the beginning teacher. Not because I did not understand them, but because it needed to be specific to performance dimensions where the teacher was struggling. After the explanation of the guidelines and application of SAFE-T during the mentor training, I was able to do a better job of using the standards and the SAFE-T tool help the beginning teacher.

Like Respondent 4, others also mentioned the need for clarification of the guidelines or routines of the SAFE-T process. Respondent 5 said,

The training, or clarification I could say, of SAFE-T I received during the mentor training was very beneficial. Being able to understand what the beginning teacher needed in respect to what I saw during observations opened my eyes to the use of the SAFE-T guidelines and tool.

Respondents 7 further stated,

The SAFE-T component explanation helped me to better prepare the beginning teacher for formal observation in their second year of teaching.

Respondent 9 echoed others, stating,

I found the combination of the mentor training and the SAFE-T training was very beneficial to me. Having the needs of beginning teacher identified in respect to the SAFE-T tool was very helpful to me. I was able to place needs with performance standards and dimensions. This was very beneficial and helped me to offer explanations to beginning teachers about the upcoming year of formal assessment.

Mentor Training Manual

Mentors stated throughout the interview the benefits of all the various tools, resources, and concepts they were trained to use. Many of the interview participants stated that one of the most beneficial resources was the training manual they used throughout the training. Respondent 1 stated,

My mentor training binder is my lifeline; almost like my mentoring bible. It has all I need to help me remain confident when working with the various tools and strategies to help a beginning teacher. Without it, I probably would not be able to remember all the tools or strategies and definitely would not be able to use the tools and strategies effectively.

Some mentors mentioned the need to organize and remember all of the tools, resources, and concepts presented in the training. Respondent 2 stated,

I am glad I still have my training manual. It helps me to remember all the tools and strategies that I use to be a mentor. Without it, I would not have the toolbox of strategies and tools to use or be confident in using those tools.

Respondent 8 reiterated the need for the binder and its place in his/her development as a stronger mentor. The binder was a resource that allowed this mentor to be successful in supporting the beginning teachers. Respondent 8 stated,

I use the binder every time I meet with a beginning teacher. It has all the tools and resources I need to support a beginning teacher. They also responded that the need to continue to use the training binder was important to their success when working with a beginning teacher. The reason my binder is so important is the variety of tools, resources and strategies organized into one location for me to reference when working with a beginning teacher.

Many respondents also mentioned the binder as their resource or guide in finding the right tool, resource, or concept to help a beginning teacher. Mentors used the manual to build their repertoire of tools and strategies to become better mentors to beginning teachers. The following two quotes show the training manual as a key support in the mentors' abilities to support a beginning teacher. Respondent 9 said of the training manual,

The training manual is very useful in my meetings. The tools, strategies and guidelines are very beneficial to me while working with the beginning teacher. If I have a need for a tool or strategy, I refer to the manual for help. I also use it when preparing for observations and conferences after the observations. There are great tips and strategies to help with all areas of me being a strong and positive mentor for a beginning teacher.

Respondent 10 stated,

I am thankful that I have the training manual. It helps me to remember the techniques, tools and strategies to be a better mentor for beginning teachers. With all these tools in one place, I have confidence in myself to help beginning teachers with their classroom and instruction.

Theme 3: Least Helpful Tools, Resources, and Concepts

Interview respondents were also given the opportunity to identify tools and strategies they considered least helpful. The four areas of least help as identified by the interview candidates were three very specific tools, resources, and concepts, and one overall negative aspect of the mentor training program. The three least helpful tools were the meeting documentation requirements, the interactive communication log, and the lack of specific training and recertification requirements for mentors; with one respondent

expressing concern for the entire training process.

Meeting Documentation

The meeting documentation requirements were discussed as follows. The need for the documentation is noted, but it is described negatively by the survey respondents. Respondent 3 stated,

Documenting the meetings has been hard to do. I realize it is very necessary to document performance, but I believe the amount of things in the mentoring process that we have to record is a bit much. Sometimes I felt as though I were trying to document the stuff before we had the meeting so I could stay focused on what the beginning teacher and I were talking about. I know there are pieces that need documentation, however, it takes so much more time away from the importance of the conversation pieces and planning that we could be doing in the place of me taking notes on our meetings. I had trouble justifying the use, other than necessary documentation, so I rarely use all of the specific pieces for documentation I was shown.

The documentation of meetings was noted to take too much time away from the mentoring piece of the program. Time was important for mentors to work with beginning teachers as noted below. Respondent 10 echoed Respondent 3, stating,

I want our time to be spent on the important things. I go back and document after the fact and I know I forget things. With planning periods that are not the same, I met with my beginning teacher after school. With obligations such as coaching and family, we both found it hard to focus on documenting each meeting. I know it is important to keep track of our conversations and meetings, it is just not practical in my opinion to document every little meeting when both of us have so

much that time is hard to find to do this. Needed, YES; practical, NO!

Interactive Communication Log

The interactive communication log was identified as both positive and negative in the interview. Respondent 6 stated,

I believe I had built the trust needed to have a strong relationship with the beginning teachers I attempted to use this tool with. I have tried to use it with two beginning teachers and it really did not help at all. While we could voice our feelings and concerns verbally, I did not get the sense they were being very open with me when using the log. I tried this technique for about five weeks with the first beginning teacher and three weeks with my second consecutive beginning teacher. Maybe I just did not truly understand how to use it, but when I began more verbal problem solving or sharing about what I needed to discuss with each beginning teacher, things began to improve. They were more open to trying my suggestions and took my advice better. Maybe it was just my way of communication through the interactive log, but it did not work for me at all. So, at the beginning of the year with my next beginning teacher, I will tell them from the start that open communication will be verbal as opposed to the suggested communication log from the mentor program.

Consumption of time seemed to be an issue for some respondents when they mentioned the use of the interactive journal. Time was precious in the mentor's relationship with the beginning teacher. Respondent 7 stated,

The interactive communication log was just too time consuming for me. Planning for me was the only time we could meet after second semester began. With a beginning teacher that coaches soccer we had plenty of time in the first semester

to work on things, but we cut the interactive journal due to the time it consumed once soccer began (both conditioning and season). This was one tool that while it helped, paled in comparison to the reflective journal, which we could use on our own time and discuss as needed. It also was not as important in my opinion as the stages of the beginning teacher that helped me understand and better meet the beginning teacher's needs. The biggest reason I say it is least helpful is the amount of time it takes in using it and keeping it up to date to work with the beginning teacher's needs or problems in the classroom.

Training and Recertification

The training and recertification in the mentor program was another point of contention with some certified mentors. Some felt they did not have the time to recertify or did not have the variety of trainings to interest them when needing to recertify as a mentor. Respondent 9 made a profound statement about the mentor training, stating,

This training, the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training, prepared me to handle and work with the beginning teacher better than I was before I attended the training. I will soon have to recertify and I don't know my options. I want to continue mentoring beginning teachers, but I don't want to have to sit through the same training again. Is there another training specialized to my needs?

The results identifying the training and recertification needs echo the above quote.

Respondent 5 stated,

I am in an area where there is not specific training. I am an elective teacher at a high school and it is difficult to apply the tools and techniques to my discipline. I have trouble finding areas to use all the tools with my beginning teachers. Also, the training leads us to collaborate with others. That is also tough to do as I am

one of few in the district that teaches my subject; the others are across town from me so it is hard to get their help when I am stuck with a beginning teacher (they were at one school while I was at another, and we had the same afterschool schedule with our large group of students). It is just hard to specialize the tools to meet the needs of beginning teachers in my discipline; could I use the tools? Yes, but it was hard. I think there needs to be more specialized training. I know there is Special Education update training and a few others, but those do not apply to me either. I just feel I need more training to get what I need to better specialize my tools and techniques to fit my discipline.

Some interview participants responded with a need for more rigorous and specialized training in the first training session. Respondent 7 stated,

I would like the first training to be even more specialized. It just seems to be more general in sharing things that can be applied in an umbrella effect. I think that there are distinct differences in how different levels of beginning teachers need to be supported. For example, I would not consider using a tool to help an early childhood teacher that is more suited to a secondary setting. To me there are specific areas to break up the training (early childhood, elementary, middle and high school). Then you could even be more specific in discipline, subject matter, and area of teacher certification. I know this is difficult to do, but there are areas that this training focused on that I could not use with elementary grades due to the nature of content the geared themselves to cover. The training also seemed more aligned with a high school layout with large common blocks of planning and common grade/subject bands. In elementary I teach one grade and I am not always guaranteed to have a same grade beginning teacher (like this year) and it is

hard to do my planning and then turn around and change gears to a different set of content standards and lesson plans. It just seemed this training geared more to the high school setting to me. Good stuff, just needs to be “differentiated” for me as an elementary person.

Overall Program Assessment

One survey participant had a hard time with the training in general. Respondent 4 mentioned the following concerns about the overall outcomes of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. The participant felt the training was very difficult to stay with and not necessarily aligned to working with a beginning teacher. The response is reported in the following section. Respondent 4 stated,

In general, I had a really tough time with the training. It was long and drawn out over three days. So, it was really overwhelming for me. Also, I felt like trying to use all the tools and techniques given to me was not beneficial. I had to sort through them and find the right one for my beginning teacher. However, I really did not get to a point of being comfortable with any of the tools with my beginning teacher. I truly felt that much of the training was more suited to a teacher cadet or student-teacher (a trainee that did not have as much control over the class, thus needing more of the supports offered). This training did help me in those areas, but I still struggled to use the training in working with a beginning teacher. The program to me, like I said was good information, but really, really overwhelming and maybe that is why I struggled with the application of the tools and techniques. It was just very difficult for me to use this approach with a beginning teacher when I had had success working with beginning teachers before I attended the training.

Theme 4: Suggestions for Mentor Training Improvement

The researcher also asked respondents to identify areas for improvement of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training to help build mentor efficacy. The responses are organized into three categories and reported by interview respondent. The three categories for improvement were follow-up and update training, administrative involvement, and district office involvement for support.

Follow-up and Update Training

Half of the interview participants discussed key points in needing to have follow-up meetings with trainers or supervisors. The mentors also discussed the need for new and updated training to benefit those who had already attended the initial training session. Respondent 1 stated,

I have attended all of the possible updates. There needs to be more advanced training to go along with this. The only thing left for me to do is to take the trainer training, which may not help me with a beginning teacher. I would love to see CERRA or the South Carolina Department of Education develop some update trainings for mentors throughout the year. Maybe some of the issues we mention after the training could be built upon to be included in a follow-up session of some sort.

While the lack of new or updated training was an issue for Respondent 1, the lack of specific trainings available was a problem for other mentors. Respondent 3 stated,

I need more time slots to be able to attend updates and to recertify for being a mentor. The update trainings are not always convenient for us as teachers and the amount of seat time to recertify can be difficult to attain. I think it would also be great to see each area have their own specified training. You have the general

training, but there is also a training for Special Education and maybe a few others; I can't say for sure, but I am positive there is a specific training for Special Education. I would be interested in taking this training as well due to the fact that I currently work in an inclusion setting and may gain some valuable insight of how to help train a beginning teacher to work in an inclusion situation.

The following response dealt more with the setup of the trainings and the networking aspect of the training during the initial session. Respondent 7 stated,

I would truly attend the scheduled update trainings because I find them beneficial. I think it should have a cohort type feel to it though. I felt a connection with the group I trained with from my district so it would be a great thing to try and schedule in district update trainings that we could all attend together. I see a network of connections forming between each of us that try to share with others. I truly feel this would help me to become an even stronger mentor because of all the support I would have in working with a beginning teacher. There is power in numbers, and in this case I think the more updates I can get to, the better mentor I become.

Being refreshed in the various aspects of the training is another avenue for improving the training sessions for mentors. The mentors feel the need to stay fresh in the tools, resources, and concepts in order to better support the beginning teachers.

Respondent 9 stated,

I strongly feel the need for a mentor update training. Sometimes I get out of touch and go back to the training manual. However, trying to think back to all that was discussed is hard. I think the outcomes have an intense effect on mentors to become more comfortable with the expectations they have as mentors. The

updates would only make us better. With the updates, there should be better thoughts of our schedules. Maybe set some groups up during the summer to update on new research and refresh us on the tools and strategies from our initial training. Also, trying to get those recertification hours in for the mentor certification is tough. Another piece I would love to see improve is to get mentors and beginning teachers in the classroom together earlier in the school year; say the days when teachers first report back to school. This is a relationship building timeframe and the longer we have the better we get (I suppose this is a district concern though).

Another issue mentioned was the amount of time spent covering the various tools, resources, and concepts in the initial training. The need for more time to better understand the tools, resources, and concepts led one respondent to discuss update training. Respondent 10 stated,

I served as a mentor during both years of the timeline in question. Even during my second go around of mentoring, I knew there were things I was not doing exactly right. I could use an update or refresher course on all of the tools and strategies. They make me a better mentor to the beginners, but they also helped me better work with students in my class. The updates would help me get even better for all involved with me as a teacher and mentor. Let's just schedule these at good times and maybe even some during the summer. Also, we need more help with the opportunities to recertify as mentors. I am willing to do it, but I have trouble getting the required hours. I guess that would also be covered by summer training opportunities.

Administrative Involvement

The need for a visible presence of administrators was noted during the interviews. During the training, mentors identified the absence of administrators attending the training as an issue that needed to be corrected. Respondent 2 stated,

Also, I feel the administration could better support us as mentors if they had attended the training. They would be familiar with the techniques and tools we were using and be able to offer tips and suggestions from the outside that we may not see to help the beginning teacher. This allows administration to support us as mentors and lets us know we have someone that can help us if we need it.

The need for administrators to be trained was key in the following response. The participant's response showed that mentors needed a level of support from administrators that could be provided by attending mentor training.

The next response noted a positive response to administrators attending the mentor training. The mentor found it "refreshing" to know that administrators were taking an active role in the training and learning how to support mentor teachers and beginning teachers. Respondent 7 stated,

In my training there were three administrators and they brought out some very key points for mentor teachers. It is refreshing to see administration take part in this training. I think the state of South Carolina or even CERRA should specialize a training aimed directly at administrators on how to support mentors as well as the beginning teachers. This training would be beneficial for administrators with all teachers, not just mentors or beginners.

While noting the need for administrators to attend the mentor training, the mentors stated that the training needed to be specific and pertinent to the administrators.

The mentors said the training is geared toward mentors and beginning teachers. The mentors suggested training for administrators who addressed supporting both the mentors and beginning teachers. Respondent 9 stated,

There needs to be specific training for administrators, maybe consisting of two parts. One part would be for supporting mentor teachers in the classroom and the other part could be about the support for beginning teachers. It was nice to see the few administrators in the training I attended; it allowed me to see their perspective on mentoring and supporting beginning teachers. I would also think administrators need to be trained in how to devote time to supporting mentors in their school. My time as a teacher is valuable and I know they deal with many other issues and do not always have the time they would like to coach us as mentors.

District-Level Support

The interview responses identified district-level support and training as an issue when addressing improvements to the mentor training program. Respondent 1 stated,

I have not seen anyone from my district office in the training. However, I know they have attended because they coordinate our mentors throughout the district. The district staff consists of two ladies, G and J that are spectacular with helping us as mentors. I am not sure if any other districts do this, but it is truly a strength of ours to have resources on staff in our district office that can answer our questions about mentoring to support beginning teachers. This needs to be support that all school districts have in their tool box at the district level.

Another participant spoke highly of the support received from their district-level administration. Respondent 2 also noted that he/she knew this was not the case for all

districts and responded with the following message.

We get strong support from our district office personnel when working with beginning teachers. We have at least three meetings a year to update and poll us as to what our needs are as mentors. My suggestion to any school district not training your district office personnel to work with mentors is to start training them. With respect to the training, I think it would need to be something more along the lines of having a support system for the mentors. I don't think the mentor training would necessarily be all the district staff would need. I think they need training to establish a system or network of support in the district for all the mentors working with beginning teachers; something like the new teacher groups we have in place for beginning teachers.

A third participant stated the need for district office personnel to be trained in the mentoring program. He/she stated that training district-level staff would make the mentoring process in their district more efficient for everyone involved in the process.

Respondent 4 stated,

I do not know of any specific training for district personnel. I feel comfortable talking to our district personnel director if I have questions, but if I knew they had training in how to support mentors I would feel even more comfortable with going to them to ask questions. As it stands right now, I rely on emails to teachers I attended mentor training with and even the trainers that taught me during the sessions. It would be more efficient if district office staff could answer these mentor support questions for me.

Again, efficiency in response to questions and procedures was noted as a reason for training district-level staff. Respondent 7 stated,

District office personnel should have a mentor support training. It would alleviate the wait time if I have questions in how to use a strategy or tool from the training to help a beginning teacher. I know they can help me, but they may not be able to answer specifics about my tools and strategies from the mentor training. I would like to see some type of district office mentor support courses offered to our personnel staff.

The findings of the study indicate a consistent, positive relationship between mentor efficacy and the training and support they received. Chapter 5 will further discuss the results and recommendations of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Results

Overview

The research explored the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on mentor teacher self-efficacy. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on the efficacy of certified mentors as they support beginning teachers in the classroom. Self-efficacy to support beginning teachers was gauged by responses to surveys and interviews by mentor teachers after completing the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training and serving as an assigned mentor to an induction teacher. The study population consisted of experienced teachers from nine school districts in South Carolina who completed the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training and served as an assigned mentor to a beginning teacher during the 2010-2011 and/or 2011-2012 school years. A mixed-methods approach was used to answer the following research question: “How does the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training impact the self-efficacy of mentor teachers in supporting beginning teachers?”

The researcher used surveys and interviews to gather data. Although the survey was administered electronically to district-identified certified mentors in the nine districts of study, only those who had served as mentors to beginning teachers during the 2010-2011 or 2011-2012 school years and completed all 3 days of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training were included in the study.

A follow-up interview was used to gather additional data for the study. The researcher contacted 10 survey respondents, all of whom voluntarily offered contact information, to gauge their interest in responding to interview questions. The random selection of interview candidates allowed for all grades and subject areas to be represented in the interview process. The interview questions were formulated after

survey data were compiled to further investigate and clarify respondent stances with regard to the training they received during the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training they attended.

The findings of the mixed-methods study were displayed through charts and quotes from interview participants to report data for analysis during the research. The remaining sections of this final chapter focus on conclusions, limitations, and recommendations.

Conclusions

Wong (2004) stated, “For a mentor to be effective, he or she must be trained to help a new teacher” (p. 42). Particular to this study, the question of mentor self-efficacy is studied after mentor teachers complete the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training and have the opportunity to serve as an assigned mentor to a beginning teacher. The South Carolina Initial Mentor Training established four expected outcomes. Educators who complete the training should be able to (1) create professional growth environments for new teachers grounded in the norms of continuous inquiry, ongoing assessment, and problem solving; (2) recognize and practice the attitudes, behaviors, and skills of effective mentors; (3) identify beginning teacher needs and modify support in response to those needs; and (4) use various tools that support an integrated system of formative assessment and support.

To gather data for this study, the researcher administered a survey to mentor teachers. The survey asked questions about the tools, resources, and concepts they learned during the training and how these ideas impacted their self-efficacy in working with beginning teachers. In analyzing the survey data, four themes emerged that showed the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on the mentors’ self-efficacy.

These four themes were (1) need for mentor training, (2) tools and resources that were most helpful, (3) tools and resources that were least helpful, and (4) district support after the initial training. Through use of a survey and 10 follow-up interviews, the following conclusions were made regarding the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on mentor teacher efficacy.

The Need for Mentor Training

Upon completion of the mentor training program, mentor teachers stated the need to be trained to work with beginning teachers. The results from the study by Riggs (2000) showed that a mentor with training is likely to have higher self-efficacy with regard to his/her own ability to mentor new teachers. Survey data from this study show that mentors believe they are better prepared and more confident to support a beginning teacher after the initial mentor training. According to the survey, 76.8% of mentors indicated that the training was very effective in helping them develop the skills needed to provide support to the beginning teachers. Another, 23.2% of mentors responded that the training was somewhat effective in helping them develop the skills needed to provide support to beginning teachers. No mentors indicated that the training was ineffective in building their confidence or skills to support a beginning teacher.

Interview data from this study affirm Riggs's (2000) conclusions. Interview Respondent 1 stated,

I now feel confident in myself to mentor beginning teachers. After the training I feel like I have more tools to work with and a better understanding of how to work with beginning teachers.

Interview Respondent 5 likewise stated,

I do a better job as a mentor because I have confidence in myself to offer the help.

Most of the tools, resources, and concepts have strongly impacted my ability to work with beginning teachers and this helps me to feel as though I do a better job.

Mentor teachers were trained in many techniques to support beginning teachers. Mentor self-efficacy was made stronger by the various aspects of the training that built their knowledge and comfort level when working with beginning teachers.

Guskey and Passaro (1994) supported the idea that mentors could pass on qualities of great teaching to beginning teachers more easily through the high self-efficacy traits they have been working to achieve. This study's survey and interview data support Guskey and Passaro's claim by identifying mentor training as a need to further prepare mentors to support beginning teachers.

Most Helpful Tools, Resources, and Concepts

Many tools, resources, and concepts were introduced to mentors in the initial mentor training. Some of the tools, resources, and concepts presented for mentors to learn and use were an interactive journal, reflection, communication techniques, continuum of teacher development, characteristics of beginning teachers, observation techniques, mentor roles, and needs of beginning teachers. Mentor teachers reported that many of the above-mentioned tools were significant to their work with beginning teachers. The importance of these tools is evident in the mentors' reports of how the various tools made it easier to relate to, communicate with, and coach the beginning teacher.

In a study by Scott (2001), mentor teachers most often reported on the effectiveness of reflection as a best practice to support the beginning teacher. Two specific tools, the reflective (also called interactive) journal and the interactive communication (also called collaborative assessment) log, were reported as significant

tools of use in the survey responses. Mentor teachers rated the interactive journal as very helpful or somewhat helpful (57.9%) in their work to support beginning teachers. The interactive communication log was rated as very helpful or somewhat helpful (85.4%) in the mentors' work with supporting beginning teachers. Follow-up interviews further supported the use of both tools to build mentor teacher efficacy to support beginning teachers. Interview Respondent 9 stated,

The reflective journal piece of the mentor training is very strong and effective. It is my most used tool with beginning teachers. It helps me to teach them how to reflect on lessons, planning, management, and their days in general. When we get the opportunity to look back, we learn from our mistakes and celebrate our victories. The reflective journal allows the teacher to see growth and maturity in their teaching ability. Knowing how to use this has greatly boosted my confidence in my mentoring skills.

The data from the survey and follow-up interviews supported Scott (2001) in stating the need for reflection in the building of mentor teacher efficacy to support beginning teachers.

Another concept of the training is communication. Field (1994) discussed communication as a role of the mentor teacher. One aspect of this role is the mentor teacher must be an effective communicator. Mentors must be trained to dialogue with the beginning teachers they are assigned to support. The mentors had to be trained to begin and promote professional conversations with beginning teachers who were not used to putting their thoughts on their practice into words on paper. Regarding the interactive communication log, Interview Respondent 1 stated,

The training in how to interact and communicate with the beginning teacher was

most helpful. The (Mentor) training taught me things about how to work with the beginning teacher at different stages through various communication strategies.

The conversation and feedback tools helped me feel more successful. Being able to speak with the beginning teachers gave me the opportunity to open up to them and allow them to see me as a teacher also.

Interview Respondent 10 reported,

I have always had the ability to work with beginning teachers and build relationships. I showed care and compassion; I could talk with them. The feedback aspect of mentoring was made easier by the communication tools offered in the three-day initial mentor training. I felt more confident in myself giving feedback, both positive and negative, due to the various communication tools and strategies offered in the training. I really utilize the communication log most of all when expressing new ideas and methods with the beginning teacher.

Another resource of the 3-day training involved training mentors in the needs/attitudinal phases of beginning teachers. Moir (1990) identified five phases beginning teachers move through in their first year as a teacher. Moir stated the need for mentors to be trained in identifying these five phases along with strategies to help beginning teachers move through each phase. The phases are anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, and reflection. Overall, a high percentage (85.5%) of mentors identified the information presented about needs/attitudinal phases of the beginning teacher as having a positive impact on their efficacy. Interview Respondent 4 stated,

I can't think of any one tool specifically except the stages of the beginning teacher. I kind of felt like the training was a bit much, but then we got to the

stages of the beginning teacher and my interest was piqued by this information. It kind of reminded me of how I felt trying to mentor a beginning teacher before the training. We would go through the ups and downs and I would try to relate to the beginning teacher. After all, I had been there and gone through all those ups and downs. However, when we began discussing these stages and how to work with a teacher throughout the different stages, it all came together for me. Regardless of the tools I used, they all made more sense and I had more understanding of how and when to use them after being presented with these beginning teacher stages.

Interview Respondent 7 echoed Interview Respondent 4 in stating,

The most beneficial piece to me was the stages of the beginning teacher. This timeline allowed me to tie the entire training together; the strategies, research, tools, and resources all had a place to fit after we discussed this stage timeline. I think this made the difference in my ability to better support beginning teachers because I could fit it all together after the training and specify the areas of need of the beginning teacher.

The results from the survey and follow-up interviews show that mentor efficacy was impacted by the initial mentor training. The results of this study show that the majority of the tools, resources, and concepts presented in the initial mentor training allowed the mentors to feel better prepared to support beginning teachers.

Least Helpful Tools, Resources, and Concepts

Survey respondents consistently identified documentation requirements, the interactive communication log, and the lack of specific training or recertification opportunities as weaknesses of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. All of these tools, resources, and concepts, when being utilized, seemed to pull the mentor away from

the beginning teacher when time was a valuable commodity. Mentors noted the time devoted to documentation, although necessary, was time that was not spent with the beginning teacher. Wright and Smith (2000) noted,

It appears that mentoring is less likely to be successful when mentors are given the task of mentoring in addition to all of their other professional duties. This often leads to mentors and mentees scrambling to find time to nurture this relationship in an environment that does not offer the necessary support. This typically leads to frustration for both parties. (p. 204)

Interview Respondent 3 stated,

Documenting the meetings has been hard to do. I realize it is very necessary to document performance, but I believe the amount of things in the mentoring process that we have to record is a bit much. Sometimes I felt as though I were trying to document the stuff before we had the meeting so I could stay focused on what the beginning teacher and I were talking about. I know there are pieces that need documentation; however, it takes so much more time away from the importance of the conversation pieces and planning that we could be doing in the place of me taking notes on our meetings. I had trouble justifying the use, other than necessary documentation, so I rarely use all of the specific pieces for documentation I was shown.

Likewise, Respondent 10 stated,

I know it is important to keep track of our conversations and meetings; it is just not practical in my opinion to document every little meeting when both of us have so much that time is hard to find to do this. Needed, YES; practical, NO! It is note taking and I could take notes before training.

Mentors identified the interactive communication (also called collaborative assessment) log as both helpful/unhelpful in the survey. One-third of mentors did not use the tool, while 5.8% of mentors found it to be somewhat unhelpful or very unhelpful.

The interview data supported the findings of the survey. Respondent 7 stated,

The interactive log was just too time consuming for me. It did not help me when trying to support the beginning teacher because I did not have the time. I can see its benefits, but it was time consuming.

Survey and interview data suggest that varying degrees of value are found in each of the tools, resources, and concepts, often with time for communication and reflection being the most vital component.

District-Level Support

According to Odell (1990), district-level staff play a key role in the support of mentor teachers through a training and support program. Odell also noted the need for district staff to maintain connections to the mentors and the beginning teachers they support. The data from this study's follow-up interviews support Odell. Mentor teachers asked for support from building-level administrators and district-level administrators when working with beginning teachers. In some cases, the mentors were asking specific questions regarding tools, resources, and concepts learned in the training. School administrators and district-level staff, in most cases, had not attended the mentor training and could offer no true assistance regarding the specifics of the tools used. Therefore, the suggestion from the mentors in follow-up interviews was for building administrators and district-level support staff to attend a specialized training. Interview Respondent 2 stated,

Also, I feel the administration could better support us as mentors if they had attended the training. They would be familiar with the techniques and tools we

were using and be able to offer tips and suggestions from the outside that we may not see to help the beginning teacher.

A teacher's sense of efficacy is related to a number of school-level variables, such as climate of the school, behavior of the principal, sense of school community, and decision-making protocols. When principals used their leadership to provide resources for teachers and to buffer them from disruptive factors, efficacy for teachers could develop (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Interview Respondent 9 stated,

There needs to be specific training for administrators, maybe consisting of two parts. One part would be for supporting mentor teachers in the classroom and the other part could be about the support for beginning teachers mentors attend. It was nice to see the few administrators in the training I attended; it allowed me to see their perspective on mentoring and supporting beginning teachers. I would also think administrators need to be trained in how to devote time to supporting mentors in their school. My time as a teacher is valuable and I know they deal with many other issues and do not always have the time they would like to coach us as mentors.

Limitations of the Study

This study used two avenues to collect data, a survey and 10 individual interviews with mentor teachers. A large window of time passed between the survey and follow-up interviews. The interview participants were able to talk in-depth about the tools, resources, and concepts. The lapse of time between the survey and the interview may have affected their responses due to the respondents trying to remember how they rated the tools, resources, and concepts during the survey.

While the potential study sample size was large (210 total mentors), the actual

study size was significantly smaller. The study used training attendance (which was mandatory for the study) and a 2-year window (2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years) to identify the study population. While the mandatory attendance was necessary to gauge the training's impact on mentor efficacy, the 2-year window may have limited the number of study participants (69).

Another possible limitation is that mentors may have been trained outside of the timeframe of the study. They were certified mentors, but they may not have had the most recent training. This lack of recent training may have affected the study results.

Finally, this study used a geographically small area to gather participants for the study. A study encompassing mentors from districts throughout the State of South Carolina, who had participated in the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training, could show differences in results.

Recommendations from the Study

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are made regarding the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. These recommendations focus on both the current training and the need for specialized training after a mentor has attended the initial training sessions.

The recommendations for the current training include continuous focus on the tools, resources, and concepts as the backbone of the program and the steps necessary to continue supporting mentors within a school district program. The findings from the study show that mentors are very satisfied with the variety of tools and the training to use the tools. One suggestion from the study is to adjust the timeline of the initial training to better fit a potential mentor's schedule. Additionally, mentors requested update trainings and regular support meetings in convenient locales. Therefore, it is recommended that

SCDE and CERRA offer more training at various times of the year in several locations to accommodate mentor teacher schedules.

A second recommendation emerged from the data that supported advanced training in specialized areas. Currently, the types of teachers and grade-level certifications are numerous within a school system, including early childhood, elementary, middle grades, and high school certifications. Within these certifications there are many subject disciplines which include core subjects; elective subjects; and support subjects, such as speech pathology, special education, as well as career and technology disciplines. It is the recommendation from this study that specialized trainings be developed for particular disciplines in the school setting. The core pieces of the training should be applicable across the entire teaching population, but it is recommended that specific tools, resources, and concepts be developed in the various areas for better mentor training for all disciplines within the school district.

A third recommendation relates to administrative- and district-level participation in the training. The recommendation involves developing a specialized training that would give the administrator the tools to support both beginning teachers and mentor teachers in their schools. Interview Respondent 2 stated,

I really would like to see more administrators take the training. In my building, there are only two trained mentors at the administrative level; one administrator and the curriculum coach (we have a principal, two assistant principals and a curriculum coach). This is kind of concerning to me knowing the number of teachers we have that started as beginning teachers this year. It would help to promote this as an opportunity to really learn how to support beginning teachers. The administration is key in getting these teachers the things they need to be

successful. What an amazing opportunity to support the beginning teachers with techniques and tools the mentor teachers will also be using.

Respondent 9 further elaborated on the need for specific training for administrators by stating,

There needs to be specific training for administrators, maybe consisting of two parts. One part would be for supporting mentor teachers in the classroom and the other part could be about the support for beginning teachers we attend.

This training is also recommended to extend to the district-level support staff in the teacher development office of the school district. The training update for district-level staff would focus on building a strong mentoring program within the district based on the expected outcomes of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. This training would inform and prepare district-level administrators to begin building a program to support mentors in the district. The intent of this training would be to inform district-level administrators how to update and reinforce the mentor training to continuously build mentor teacher efficacy in the district.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused on the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on mentor teacher self-efficacy. The study sample was from a small geographic area in South Carolina that encompassed nine school districts. For future studies, it is suggested that researchers take on a larger population for study, which would include other regions in the state or the statewide mentor population.

Another area of research would be a study gauging the efficacy of administrators regarding their ability to support both mentor and beginning teachers after completion of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training.

Summary

This study focused on the impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on mentor teacher self-efficacy. To become a certified mentor, experienced teachers had to complete the initial 3-day training offered by SCDE and CERRA. According to Bowie and Gagen (2005),

When a mentor is asked to support a new professional, the amount of assistance he or she is expected to give or feels prepared to give is highly variable. Often mentors believe that they are unable to offer the kind of assistance a new teacher may need. (p. 1)

Based on the results of this study, mentor teachers who have completed the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training have a much stronger sense of efficacy in their ability to support beginning teachers.

I feel confident in using the tools, resources, and concepts from the mentor training. Between the initial training and update trainings in my school district, I feel able to work through mentoring a beginning teacher. The impact from the training changed how I felt about being a competent mentor for a beginning teacher. (Interview Respondent 1)

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Agreement for Participants of Interviews

Informed Consent Agreement for Participants of Interviews

You are invited to participate in a research study titled *The Impact of the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training on Mentor Teacher Efficacy to Support Beginning Teachers*. This study will be conducted by Bryan K. Hullender, a doctoral candidate at Gardner-Webb University. You were selected as a participant for this study because you are a trained mentor or facilitator of training for the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training. Please read the information in this letter in its entirety and ask any questions you may have about the study before you decide to participate in this study.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions held by mentor teachers concerning the impact on the relationship between their self-efficacy to support beginning teachers and the training received during the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Sign this consent form.
- Participate in an interview which is approximately 30 minutes in length. The interview will be audio recorded.
- Review the researcher's interview notes for accuracy of transcription and the findings of the study for plausibility.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision to participate or not in this study will not affect your current or future relations with the school or district. If you decide to participate and then later wish to withdraw, you are free to do so without repercussions from the school or district. If participation causes you stress or anxiety, you may withdraw from the study at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions you feel are invasive or stressful.

Risks and Benefits of Being in this Study

The risks for participation in this study are minimal. It is possible that you may feel that some of the interview questions are invasive. The benefit of participation in this study is that you may gain a better understanding of the techniques that contribute to success as a mentor when supporting a beginning teacher.

Compensation

There is no compensation provided for participants in this study.

Confidentiality

All records of this study will be kept private by the researcher. In the event that a report of this study is published, the researcher will not include any information that will make identity of any participants possible. Records for this research study will be kept in a locked file.

Contacts and Questions

The researcher conducting this study is Bryan K. Hullender. The researcher's faculty advisor is Dr. Stephen Laws. If you have any questions concerning this study, please contact Bryan K. Hullender. Additionally, you may contact Dr. Laws if you have any questions.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Name of Participant: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

South Carolina Initial Mentor Training
Expected Training Outcomes

South Carolina Foundations in Mentoring Training Expected Outcomes

By the conclusion of this training, participants will be able to:

- Create professional growth environments for new teachers grounded in the norms of continuous inquiry, ongoing assessment, and problem solving;
- Recognize and practice the attitudes, behaviors, and skills of effective mentors;
- Identify beginning teacher needs and modify support in response to those needs; and
- Use various tools that support an integrated system of formative assessment and support.

Appendix C

Survey Questions for Mentor Teachers

Mentor Survey 2013

Please submit your completed survey by Friday, May 10, 2013. Thank you!

1. Name (optional)
2. Email (optional)
3. District
4. Have you completed the three-day initial mentor training?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

If respondents answered no or not sure in question 4, they were directed to the end of the survey.

5. When did you attend the three-day initial mentor training?
6. Since the training, have you served as an assigned mentor (on record) to a first-year induction teacher?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

If respondents answered no or not sure in question 6, they were directed to the end of the survey.

7. How many times have you served as an assigned mentor (on record) since the training?
8. During the training, several tools designed to facilitate your role as a certified mentor were presented to you. For each tool you used as an assigned mentor to a first-year induction teacher, please indicate how helpful it was.

	Did not use tool	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Unsure	Somewhat unhelpful	Very unhelpful
Interactive journal						
Mentor language/ Mentoring concepts						
Continuum of teacher development						
Individual learning plan						

Collaborative assessment log						
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9. If you rated any of the tools above as somewhat or very unhelpful, please explain your choice. If you did not, type in "N/A."
10. Please identify any additional tools, beyond those presented during the training, that were especially helpful to you as a certified mentor.
11. During the training, several resources and concepts designed to facilitate your role as a certified mentor were presented to you. For each resource/concept you used as an assigned mentor to a first-year induction teacher, please indicate how helpful it was.

	Did not use resource/concept	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Unsure	Somewhat unhelpful	Very unhelpful
Mentoring and induction guidelines						
Characteristics of beginning teachers (traditionally-prepared, PACE, international, CATE, other)						
ADEPT/Professional teaching standards						
Five holonomous states of mind (efficacy, consciousness, craftsmanship, flexibility, interdependence)						
Professional norms						
Mentor roles						
Needs/attitudin-						

al phases of beginning teachers						
Mentoring strategies for tailoring support (directive, collaborative, facilitative)						
Formative assessment						

12. If you rated any of the resources or concepts above as somewhat or very unhelpful, please explain your choice. If you did not, please type "N/A."
13. Please identify any additional resources or concepts, beyond those presented during the training, that were especially helpful to you as a certified mentor.
14. Overall, how effective was the training in helping you develop the skills needed to provide tailored support to your assigned first-year induction teacher?
- 5 - Very effective
 - 4 - Somewhat effective
 - 3 - Unsure
 - 2 - Somewhat ineffective
 - 1 - Very ineffective

If respondents answered somewhat or very ineffective in question 14, they were asked this follow-up question:

15. Please explain why you rated the training as somewhat or very ineffective.
16. Overall, how effective was the training in helping you develop the skills needed to provide feedback and assistance to your assigned first-year induction teacher that led to his/her improved instruction?
- 5 - Very effective
 - 4 - Somewhat effective
 - 3 - Unsure
 - 2 - Somewhat ineffective
 - 1 - Very ineffective

If respondents answered somewhat or very ineffective in question 16, they were asked this follow-up question:

17. Please explain why you rated the training as somewhat or very ineffective.

18. Once you began serving as a certified mentor, were there any ways you felt unprepared to effectively support and assist your assigned first-year induction teacher? Please explain.
19. Now that you have experience as a certified mentor, what changes, if any, do you recommend that would improve the three-day training? Feel free to reference any aspect of the training including materials, presentation, sequencing, duration, etc.

Appendix D

Interview Questions for Mentor Teachers

Interview Questions for Mentor Teachers

1. Have you been trained to be a mentor in the South Carolina Initial Mentor Training? If so, when? Have you served as a mentor in the past three school years?
2. What are some concerns you have as a mentor when supporting beginning teachers?
3. Which tools/techniques from the training have been most beneficial to building your self-efficacy (perceived ability) to support a beginning teacher? Why?
4. Which tools/techniques from the training have been least beneficial to building your self-efficacy (perceived ability) to support a beginning teacher? Why?
5. How are mentors selected to attend mentor training?
6. How are mentors assigned to work with beginning teachers?
7. How are mentor schedules designed?
8. What extended trainings or update trainings are provided for mentor teachers?
What suggestions do you have to improve the initial training or to add updates to extend your training as a mentor?
9. What assistance is provided to mentor teachers to aid them in the use of the tools provided by the South Carolina Initial Mentor training to support beginning teachers?