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Evaluating the Impact of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program on the Retention Rate of Beginning Teachers

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Evaluating the Impact of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program on the Retention Rate
of Beginning Teachers

by
Adriane Lenette Watkins Mingo

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
2012

Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Adriane Lenette Watkins Mingo 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

Evaluating the impact of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program on the Retention Rate of Beginning Teachers. Mingo, Adriane Lenette Watkins, 2012: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Beginning Teacher Support/Teacher Induction Program/Mentor Support/Teacher Retention/ New Teacher Induction/Teacher Attrition

This dissertation examined the Beginning Teacher Induction Program of a rural school system in North Carolina. The effects of mentoring, induction sessions, administrative support, ongoing staff development, and other support offered at the system level to beginning teachers were carefully analyzed.

The researcher used eight themes based on the objectives of the school system's Beginning Teacher Support Program: improving beginning teachers' skills and performance; supporting teacher morale; communications; collegiality; building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude; facilitating a smooth transition into the first and second years of teaching; putting theory into practice; preventing teacher isolation; building self-reflection; and retaining quality teachers. All data were categorized into four primary domains: personal, management, instructional, and socialization. The researcher found that mentoring, need-based professional development, and administrative support are critical for effective induction programs. Data were gathered from stakeholders through interviews, focus group discussions and surveys, and were analyzed for frequency of the themed responses.

Recommendations for further research are included based on an analysis of the data revealed in this study. Disaggregation of the data in this study determined support is successful in reducing the attrition rate for beginning teachers in the school system.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Annually, beginning teachers enter the complex, diverse, and exciting world of teaching. Unfortunately, few make it beyond their fifth year (Graziano, 2005). Education administrators, legislators, and community leaders across the country must pay attention to the staggering number for teacher turnover. This should prompt them to create policies for improving the efficacy of beginning teachers so that these teachers will carry the euphoria of the first day of school throughout their career. By retaining effective beginning teachers, we can build strong schools, communities, and ultimately a better, more educated society.

According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 2003), the ability to create and sustain high-quality teaching is not driven by teacher shortage, but by the inability to retain excellent teachers in the profession. Every year United States school districts hire over 200,000 new teachers (Graziano, 2005). By the end of the first year, 10% of these teachers leave (Graziano, 2005). These abysmal statistics do not improve for teachers who make it past the first year. According to Graziano (2005), about 30% of new teachers leave the profession after 3 years and 45% leave after 5 years.

In 1999-2000, school districts across the country hired approximately 2,300,000 new teachers, but by the end of the school year 287,000 had left the profession (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). Since the beginning of the decade, overall teacher attrition has increased 50%, with an annual increase of 20% and a significantly higher increase in urban schools (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).

There is a general expectation of turnover in all organizations. This *good* attrition is advantageous for promoting innovation and preventing stagnation in organizations

(Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). However, high levels of employee turnover are both a cause and effect of ineffectiveness and low performance in organizations (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek, and Morton (2007) agreed that some degree of teacher turnover in schools is both healthy and inevitable. However, huge numbers of beginning teachers leaving the profession over time diminish the overall capacity of school staff (Marvel et al., 2007). Because of the aforementioned, other challenges surface as well. For example, small schools, urban schools, and schools serving high-minority, high-poverty student populations are at an even greater risk of losing teachers (Marvel et al., 2007). This salient truth is seen throughout the research in education. However, minimal research has been conducted to evaluate the costs and consequences of high employee turnover in education. Though this is true, there are two prominent costs – fiscal and the impact on student achievement (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Today's marginal economy has caused widespread teacher layoffs, larger class sizes, and economic hardships for children (The Associated Press, 2010). According to research conducted at UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access, California's once exemplary public schools are becoming a thing of the past (The Associated Press, 2010). John Rogers, the institute's director, stated, "The economic downturn has caused budget cuts that have undermined recent academic gains (in the state's public schools) and increased the disparity between schools in rich and poor communities" (The Associated Press, 2010, p. 1).

Moreover, the current cuts can impede the school system's long-term progress due the reduction or elimination of summer school, the reduction of instructional materials, and the major cuts in professional development programs. The reduction in spending for professional development often means cuts to programs necessary to meet

the needs of beginning teachers (The Associated Press, 2010).

When teachers must forego training in comprehensive induction programs and other professional development, there are two notable costs – financial and student achievement (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Cost of Attrition

In 2003, according to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2005), a conservative estimate of the cost of replacing teachers in public schools around the nation averaged \$2.2 billion. A few years later, Graziano (2005) placed the average minimal cost to replace an individual teacher at \$11,000. This did not include indirect costs associated with knowledge lost by particular schools, curriculum, and monies spent on professional development (Graziano, 2005). A recent study in Texas stated that the annual cost of their 40% attrition rate for the teachers in their first year was modestly estimated at \$329 million per year (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). In 2005, the Alliance for Excellent Education attempted to put a price on turnover. Using the U.S. Department of Labor's calculation that attrition costs employers about 30% of an employee's salary, the cost to the nation of teachers leaving was a colossal \$4.9 billion annually (Dillion, 2009).

NCTAF conducted a study in 2007 and found the cost of a single teacher leaving urban school districts in Milwaukee and Chicago was at \$15,325 and \$17,872, respectively (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). The cumulative costs in these districts are estimated in the millions. In addition, other individual states' costs, North Carolina and New Mexico, range from \$8.5 million to half a billion (Barnes et al., 2007).

Tremendous financial costs represent only one of the major issues with teacher attrition. The impact of attrition on student achievement cannot be over exaggerated

(Dillion, 2009). Bob Wise, president of Alliance for Excellent Education, stated “when a teacher leaves after a few years, it is not only a waste of talent, time, and money. There are also wasted learning opportunities for children” (Dillion, 2009, p. 28). It takes 3 to 7 years for new teachers to meet and exceed performance related standards (Dillion, 2009). With the aforementioned statistics in turnover rates, some students rarely have the benefit of an experienced teacher. According to the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality in Chapel Hill, North Carolina (Graziano, 2005), low-performing schools in high-poverty areas cannot establish the critical mass of veteran teachers needed to effect significant change in student learning. Therefore, the high rate of teacher attrition adversely impacts the effectiveness of a district’s ability – and cumulatively a nation’s – to educate its children.

Noted educator Harry Wong stated that effectively trained teachers and a staff that works collaboratively are important for student achievement (Wong & Wong, 2007). Studies dating back to the mid-1990s have stated the major factor in improving student learning is knowledgeable, skillful teachers (Wong & Wong, 2007). Based on research conducted by Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2001), consistent, effective teaching for 4 or 5 years can close the gap in math performance between students from low-income and high-income households. Sanders’ research agreed with these findings by stating teacher effectiveness as the single largest factor affecting academic growth for students (Wong & Wong, 2007). Wong and Wong (2007) shared a statistic that a student taught by an ineffective teacher for 2 consecutive years can never regain the learning loss during those years. Therefore, effective teaching is an indispensable component of student achievement. Professional development in the area of effective lesson planning and student assessment, along with the implementation of comprehensive induction, helps

beginning teachers become more effective teachers and improves their instructional practices (Wong & Wong, 2007).

Until recently, thousands of new teachers were recruited but not supported, and many teachers left the profession (Wong & Wong, 2007). According to Wong (2007), few teachers begin teaching with a clear curriculum and thorough understanding of instructional expectations. Moreover, in a particular state, 87% of new teachers were assigned a mentor, but only 17% of those teachers' mentors observed them in the classroom (Wong & Wong, 2007). These discernable issues in teacher retention confirm when a new teacher is not successful, neither is the school because the classroom teacher is the most critical factor in student learning (Wong & Wong, 2007). Beginning teachers must learn to establish standards, evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction, tailor instruction to meet the students' specific learning needs, and learn to thrive in their school's culture (Wong & Wong, 2007). Comprehensive induction programs help to accomplish this.

As cited in Ingersoll and Smith (2004), research identifies a sense of community and cohesion among families, teachers, and students as key ingredients for the success of schools. Moreover, high attrition rates can inhibit the creation and maintenance of learning communities (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). With teacher turnover rates at the level indicated by research, adverse consequences abound. These consequences include 1) perpetuating inequity; 2) loss of high quality teachers; 3) loss of education dollars; and 4) reduced school capacity (Brill & McCartney, 2008).

Perpetuating Inequity

New teachers are disproportionately assigned to the most challenging schools and classrooms excessively populated by low-income and minority students (Carroll, 2007).

Although many of these new teachers are excited and have wonderful intentions, they have yet to develop their skills and knowledge (Carroll, 2007). As a result, they are oftentimes less effective in dealing with the many challenge associated with this population of students than their more experienced colleagues (Carroll, 2007). Thus, the students in need of the most qualified, experienced and knowledgeable teachers are less likely to be taught by them (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Loss of Highest Quality Teachers

Research also reveals another consequence of teacher turnover is the loss of the highest quality teachers. In many cases, it is not the least qualified teachers who leave the teaching profession, but the most promising who leave first (Henke, Chen, & Geis, 2000). Teachers with the highest scores on certification tests are twice as likely to exit the profession as candidates with the lowest scores (Henke, Chen, & Geis, 2000). The absence of guidance, support, and encouragement leads to frustration for our best and brightest teachers. Many of them walk out of the door before they reach their peak level of effectiveness (Johnson, 2007).

Loss of Education Dollars

School budgets are impacted significantly because of their inability to retain teachers. For example, Houston Public Schools loses \$35 million in costs related to teacher turnover, while New York City public schools lose about \$115 million each year. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future estimates that the nation loses \$7.3 billion annually due to teacher turnover (Carroll, 2007). Our inefficiencies in our systems and inability to retain teachers are quite costly and a tremendous loss for taxpayers.

The ability of a school to develop human capital, create strong instructional

programs, and create educational environments where children can thrive is made almost impossible with high rates of teacher turnover (Floder, Goertz, & O'Day, 1995). The education of all students is impeded greatly because high-quality educational opportunities are difficult to sustain with high rates of turnover of the best new teachers (Carroll, 2007). As indicated in the research, the consequences of high teacher turnover are a challenge, both financially and academically.

Administrative Support

Administrators play a key role in reducing high teacher attrition (Watkins, 2011). Retaining and developing beginning teachers must be a principal's priority (Watkins, 2005). Teacher surveys have long shown working conditions contribute greatly to a teacher's decision to switch schools or leave the profession (Hirsh, 2004). Under the leadership of Governor Mike Easley and the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission much work has been done to improve the understanding of how critical teacher's working conditions correlate with student learning and teacher retention (Hirsh, 2004). Data from surveys completed by both beginning and experienced teachers indicate improving teaching working conditions at schools, such as time to plan with colleagues, sustained, high quality professional development, leadership opportunities, empowerment, and facilities and resources will improve student learning conditions and will help retain teachers (NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey, 2010). Wynn, Carboni, and Patall's (2007) study indicated beginning teachers are much more likely to remain in the teaching profession if they are satisfied with their principal's leadership. Furthermore, a recent Duke University study also revealed that principal leadership as well as school climate warrant more attention in local school districts' efforts (Wynn et al., 2007). This study also found teachers were more likely to remain at a school where

they were satisfied with their principal's leadership and with the school climate (Wynn et al., 2007).

Administrators play a critical role in creating the atmosphere for beginning teachers' successes. This can be accomplished by creating time for induction and establishing a positive climate for teacher development in their buildings and the school system. It is imperative that administrators get to know novice teachers (Wong, 2005). Without clear articulation of effective strategies that support new teachers, their needs, and the importance of protecting induction activity time, principals may unintentionally dismiss the range of needs of beginning teachers (Wong, 2005).

Teachers' feelings about administrative support, resources for teaching and their input into decision making are major factors of whether or not they remain at a school or in the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2003). For both veterans and novices, competitive salaries matter; however, working conditions such as class size, teaching load, and the availability of materials are critical as well (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

Administrators can also help retain teachers by providing strong, supportive instructional leadership and collegial learning opportunities (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Supportive leadership may be evidenced by recruiting and hiring better prepared teachers. There are many payoffs and significant savings over the long-term because it lowers attrition and provides students with teachers who have higher levels of competency (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). As a principal once noted, when there are several new teachers on staff simultaneously, it is very difficult to have a strong knowledge base (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Moreover, there is less cohesion due to lack of trust from the staff (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). For this principal, it meant every year his staff had to repeat the same information in professional

development (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). When great school leaders create nurturing environments where accomplished teaching can flourish and grow, everyone wins (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002).

In California, the Legislature has committed itself to partially funding a statewide induction program for beginning teachers (Wood, 2001). The Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA) is a state induction program aimed at supporting beginning teachers. Along with the support of a mentor/coach, or advisor, the beginning teachers receive support in identifying their strengths and areas that need to be strengthened in their instructional practice. Beginning teachers also receive guidance in improving their ability to analyze their teaching practice. This skill is critical so beginners can continue growing as professionals after the support is no longer in place (Wood, 2001). A great strength of this model is the role of the principal. Along with Wood's (2001) research, Villani's research on induction programs included several ways principals can support beginning teachers to experience success (Dunne & Villani, 2002). They included:

1. Working with others to develop and support a comprehensive mentoring program in the school and/or district;
2. Encouraging master teachers to consider becoming mentors understanding that there are criteria and processes for mentor selection and training;
3. Making sure that new teachers are not given the most difficult teaching assignments, the most challenging schedule, or many different class preparations;
4. Supporting new teachers and mentors with:
 - a. Common planning time
 - b. Released time for observations and conferencing

c. Remuneration for mentors

5. Matching mentors with partners as soon as possible;
6. Involving the faculty and staff in supporting new teachers and understanding the comprehensive mentoring program in the district;
7. Encouraging new teachers to focus on teaching the first year or two and to refrain from coaching and extracurricular activities;
8. Respecting the confidentiality of the mentoring relationship;
9. Anticipating the additional challenges faced by a diverse teaching staff and implementing supports;
10. Involving families in supporting new teachers;
11. Informing prospective teachers about the district's comprehensive mentoring program during interviews; and
12. Supporting mentors who want to advance their skills as teacher leaders.

The loss of beginning teachers is taking a mammoth toll on our educational community (Moir, 2003). Effective administrators can help break this cycle. Hiring, retaining, and developing effective teachers must become a principal's priority (Watkins, 2005). Watkins reminds us that the primary focus for principals has been operations and management of day-to-day school responsibilities (Watkins, 2011). However, principals can help retain teachers by shifting more toward their role as educational leaders in their schools (Watkins, 2011). The positive impact of a caring leader who creates a workplace environment as a learning community focused on student achievement also creates an environment that supports all teachers – novice and experienced (Watkins, 2011).

Teacher Effectiveness

According to Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, and Keeling (2009), a problem exists

nationally in distinguishing great teachers from good, good from fair, and fair from poor. This is critical because a teacher's effectiveness is "the most important factor for schools in improving student achievement" (Weisberg et al., 2009, p. 4). Despite the criticality of teacher effectiveness, Weisberg et al. (2009) stated it is "not measured, recorded, or used to inform decision-making in any meaningful way" (p. 4).

Good teachers have a significant impact on student achievement. A student assigned to an excellent teacher for one school year can gain up to full year's worth of academic growth compared to a student assigned to a poor teacher (Weisberg et al., 2009). Moreover, according to Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005), when high-risk students are given highly effective teachers for 3 consecutive years, there is a high probability they will outperform students taught for 3 years by ineffective teachers. This performance differential can be by as much as 50 percentile points.

Decades of research demonstrate teacher effectiveness matters. However, according to Weisberg et al. (2009), prior research has operated under a flawed assumption – the assumption that teachers are "interchangeable parts" (p. 9). Weisberg et al. (2009) described this assumption as the *Widget Effect*. Some believe to have an accredited teacher in the front of the classroom adequately serves the educational needs of students (Weisberg et al., 2009).

In their research, Weisberg et al. (2009) found the Widget Effect pervasive throughout the nation's education system; however, they found its most salient impact in teacher evaluation. Twelve school districts in four states with over 15,000 teachers and 13,000 administrators participated in the study conducted by Weisberg et al. (2009). The first indication of the disregarding of performance differences was in the performance evaluation instruments. Five of the 10 districts studied used binary rating systems to

assess performance; they used *satisfactory* or *unsatisfactory* to describe teacher performance. Binary rating systems are unsatisfactory in describing the nuances in performance (Gatewood, Field, & Barrick, 2008). In districts using these systems, more than 99% of teachers received a satisfactory rating and only a fraction of a percentage point received an unsatisfactory rating (Weisberg et al., 2009).

According to the Widget Effect, evaluation systems with multiple ratings help capture the differences in employee performance. In the research by Weisberg et al. (2009), in all districts studied evaluators using multiple ratings systems rated the majority of teachers in the top category. For example, in the five districts using multiple ratings, 70% of tenured teachers received the highest rating and 24% received the second highest rating (Weisberg et al., 2009). Moreover, while districts using multiple rating systems have the opportunity to distinguish between teacher performance, the lowest two rating options were assigned in one out of 16 cases (Weisberg et al., 2009). In the aforementioned cases, the basic outcome remains the same: Whether a binary or a multiple rating evaluation system is used, very few teachers are assessed as providing unsatisfactory instruction.

According to Weisberg et al. (2009), these high-level teacher evaluations are a contradiction to student achievement. In the study by Weisberg et al. (2009), the Denver schools that did not make adequate yearly progress had more than 98% of tenured teachers receive a satisfactory rating – the highest rating. In addition, of the districts studied, on average 10% of failing schools issued at least one unsatisfactory rating to a tenured teacher. With a small number of teachers receiving unsatisfactory ratings, it can be difficult to recognize excellence.

Weisberg et al. (2009) found that truly outstanding teachers are hard to identify

when the highest performance rating is awarded to more teachers than can statistically fall into this category. This dilution of the highest rating is evidenced in teachers' and administrators' *definition* of the rating. Approximately 25% of administrators and 20% of teachers equate their district's highest rating with teachers who are merely effective or somewhat effective (Weisberg et al., 2009). This absence of a mechanism to identify and reward outstanding performers places the average effort as the mark of excellence. This can be problematic for both teachers and administrators. Excellence cannot be recognized or rewarded. Fifty-nine percent of teachers and 63% of administrators in Weisberg et al.'s (2009) study thought their district does not do enough to recognize, compensate, promote, and retain the most effective teachers.

Statement of Problem

Contrary to popular belief producing qualified teachers is not the problem (Ingersoll, 2003); retaining them is. The Federal Legislation No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act required all teachers to become *highly qualified*. Inner city and rural areas experience greater challenges in retaining teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003). The problem is not availability of teachers produced because our colleges, universities, and alternative licensing programs produce more teachers than are hired (Ingersoll, 2003). The challenge and major question is how do we retain the ones we prepare.

Studies have suggested that teachers considered the most talented – those who score highest on the SAT, the national teacher exam, and teacher certification tests – are among those who leave (Ingersoll, 2006). It is very disturbing to find that the teaching profession is losing many of its most promising prospects soon after they begin teaching (Villani, 2009).

Retaining teachers across the country is a challenge for most school districts.

Public education in the United States is faced with the challenge of keeping its teachers. Attrition rates continue to be disappointing with 50% of teachers leaving the field by the end of their fifth year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Teacher turnover is quite costly for those who recruit, interview, hire, and train. The cost is even greater for our students who suffer academically because of the teacher revolving doors in so many schools.

Researcher Richard Ingersoll has contributed to our understanding of the issues and how we must solve them. Ingersoll (2001) charted the cumulative percentage of K-12 public school teachers in the United States who left teaching as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

Cumulative Percentages of K-12 Public Teachers in United States Who Left Teaching

Experience of Teacher	Percent that left Teaching
1	14%
2	24%
3	33%
4	40%
5	46%

Setting

The Beginning Teacher Induction Program (BTIP) evaluated was located in one school system in the rural northwestern region of North Carolina. There were 35 schools in the district; eight high schools, seven middle schools, and 20 elementary schools. In addition to the traditional schools in the district, there were also several preschool

classrooms in various elementary schools. The district had over 2,700 certified staff members and about 20,000 students, according to 2008-2009 data. The Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator, indicated approximately 120 teachers were hired annually. The teacher turnover rate for 2008-2009 was 13.72%. This percentage includes those who left the school district completely. However, it does not include teachers who transfer from one school to another school within the district. Prior to the beginning of the school year, beginning teachers in this school district participated in the new teacher induction program. As a part of the induction program, beginning teachers were provided support through various activities which included new teacher orientation, induction sessions, classroom-based mentors, site support leaders, and high quality professional development.

Purpose of the Study

Further research of induction programs and their effect on teacher retention continues to be needed by states, districts, and schools. The purpose of this program evaluation was to examine the effectiveness of the teacher induction program for this school system. This study examined the components of an effective induction program, and how it supports and retains the high quality teachers who enter the profession.

Brief Description of Methodology and Research Design

A program evaluation of the teacher induction program was completed. Data were collected by interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys. Interviews were conducted with the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator. To gather additional meaningful data, focus group discussions with teachers completing their second, third, or fourth year of teaching were completed. Responses were transcribed and evaluated for their impact on retaining teachers.

Surveys were completed by beginning teachers, mentors, site support leaders, and principals. Various survey questions addressed each area of the induction program: components of the district's current induction program, mentoring, initial and ongoing professional development for beginning teachers, administrative support, and guidance from site support leaders and central office. The survey data were disaggregated to determine whether or not this induction program helps retain teachers.

Research Questions

There was one primary guiding question throughout the evaluation: What is the impact of the Beginning Teacher Support Program on retaining teachers?

Throughout the evaluation, additional questions focused on providing more specific information on the overall success of the Beginning Teacher Support Program.

1. What were the conditions that warranted an induction program?
2. What was the LEA doing to address teacher retention?
3. To what degree did the stakeholders of the district follow the induction program as designed?
4. How did the teacher induction program meet its objectives?

Definition of Terms

Induction. A comprehensive, coherent, and multi-year professional development process consisting of a carefully crafted array of people and activities designed to acculturate and train a new teacher to the goals and visions of a school or the school district. The goal of induction is to teach a new teacher effective teaching strategies and techniques that will improve student learning, growth, and achievement.

Mentoring. A developmental partnership through which one person shares knowledge, skills, information, and perspective to foster the personal and professional

growth of someone else.

LEA–local education agency (school system). There are 115 local education agencies in North Carolina.

Administrative support. Principals and assistant principals at local schools.

New teacher orientation. Beginning teachers (both initially licensed and lateral entry) attend a new teacher orientation prior to the start of the school year 4 to 5 days. Class sessions are held in reference to the focus areas included in the approved Initially Licensed Program Plan. Central office administrators participate in orientation by sharing information about the school system and its programs. Support mentors, site support leaders, and other veteran teachers facilitate class sessions. Community citizens do mini group presentations to share information about resources in the area. A late hire new teacher orientation is held in the fall of the year for four evenings from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. for teachers hired after the August orientation. Beginning teachers hired after mid December (those that will work less than 120 days) return to new teacher orientation the next school year.

Novice/beginning/new teacher. A teacher who has not received a continuing license.

Standard professional 1 license (SP1). The license valid for 3 years for a person who has completed an approved education program at a regionally accredited college or university or another state’s alternative licensure program, met the federal requirements to be designated highly qualified, and earned a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008).

Standard professional 2 license (SP2). License which is valid for 5 years and is provided to teachers who are full licensed and highly qualified in another state, have 3 or

more years of teaching experience in another state, and meet North Carolina's Praxis testing requirements or have National Board Certification (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008).

Mentors. Mentors are full-time teachers who also support beginning teachers. Most often mentors and beginning teachers have the same licensure area and are located at the same school. Support mentors visit the classrooms of beginning teachers on a regular basis to offer assistance, answer questions, and give suggestions. Informal observations with feedback are also provided for beginning teachers. Support mentors work with the site support leaders, mentors, administrators and the BT Coordinator to ensure the success of each beginning teacher's success.

Lead mentors. Retired mentors assigned to support beginning teachers and mentors at all schools. Additionally, lead mentors also assist the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator with various projects throughout the year.

Site support leaders. Each school administrator selects a veteran mentor teacher to serve as site support leader for their school. Site support leaders coordinate the beginning teacher program within their school. Monthly meetings are arranged by these teacher leaders for beginning teachers and their mentors. These meetings focus on reflections from new teacher readings: First Days of School, Winning Year One and Discipline Strategies. Beginning teacher and mentor requirements, events, and activities are also a focus for these monthly school site support meetings.

Beginning teacher support coordinator. The coordinator supports beginning teachers through classroom visits, responding to areas of concern expressed by beginning teachers' support mentors and administrators. Quality professional development activities are provided through the Beginning Teacher Support Department for beginning teachers

and those that work with beginning teachers: site support leaders, mentors, support mentors, and administrators.

Additional support. Additional support is provided for new teachers through district level departmental professional development activities. Curriculum coaches and literacy specialists provide professional development activities within each school for beginning teachers according to curriculum area.

Retention. The rate at which teachers remain in the education profession as calculated by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Attrition. The rate at which teachers leave the education profession.

Layered support. The support provided to beginning teachers from their classroom-based mentor, lead mentors, site support leader, principal, assistant principal, and central office personnel.

Summary

With 30-50% of beginning teachers leaving the profession within their first 5 years of teaching, education may become known as the profession with the constantly spinning revolving door (Darling-Hammond, 2003, as cited in Perrachione, Rosser, & Peterson, 2008). This is unacceptable. The teacher induction program in the district to be studied provided a teacher induction program for both initially licensed teachers and lateral entry teachers prior to the beginning of the school year. This 4-5 day orientation was designed to give teachers a jump start into the school year. Various professional development sessions are held that directly correlate and focus on areas as prescribed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

After evaluating the components of the induction program in this school district, there were data to support or determine whether teachers remain in the profession in part

because of support received.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A profession that “eats their young” is how education has been described due to the propensity for teachers to be devoured during the nascent stage of their career (Anhorn, 2008, p. 15). With 30-50% of beginning teachers leaving the profession within their first 5 years of teaching, education may become known as the profession with the constantly spinning revolving door (Darling Hammond, 2003, as cited in Perrachione et al., 2008). The costs of allowing the trend of turnover to continue unabated are too high. Churning teacher turnover keeps administrators scrambling to fill classrooms and negatively impacts student learning.

According to Brill and McCartney (2008), one of the primary objectives of public schools should be to build a corps of teachers who are committed to student learning. Moreover, the teachers and administrators in schools must develop a partnership between the school and the communities they serve. Unfortunately, the high rate of beginning teacher turnover is made more daunting by the 40-50% of teachers leaving the profession entirely within 5 years (Ingersoll, 2003). Moreover, studies indicate high-needs schools serving large proportions of economically disadvantaged and minority students are least likely to retain experienced, National Board Certified teachers (Berry, Daughtrey, Wieder, 2009). This incessant change may be an indirect contributor to the widening achievement gap. Berry et al. (2009) suggested the strong links between student achievement and teacher effectiveness may be more aptly described as “an effective teaching gap” (p. 1).

To help curb the national rate at which teachers leave the profession, an understanding of who stays, who leaves, and why they are leaving is essential (Dolan, 2008). The literature also addresses who moves; however, moving is not addressed here

because teachers who move remain in the profession. According to Dolan (2008), three areas influence teacher retention: 1) subject matter, 2) school characteristics, and 3) beginning teachers.

Some curriculum areas are more difficult to keep staffed than others. These areas include special education, foreign languages, math, and the sciences (Dolan, 2008). One argument for this phenomenon asserts the availability of more lucrative opportunities for these fields outside teaching (Dolan, 2008). Another argument states that these critical areas have highly demanding working conditions that may cause early burnout (Dolan, 2008). These working conditions may not only be facilitated by curriculum area, but by school characteristics (Dolan, 2008).

Schools with substandard working conditions, such as the lack of basic school resources, subpar physical facilities, school violence, and lack of administrator support, can contribute to a teacher's decision to leave teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Districts serving high-needs schools have difficulty retaining teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Moreover, districts with schools with high populations of students from low-income families and schools that pay lower wages also have a challenge recruiting and retaining teachers. These district factors may also coincide with other factors such as parental involvement, teacher autonomy, and student behavior that can influence a teacher's decision to leave or stay (Baldacci, 2006).

Longevity in the profession is one of the key factors in determining whether a teacher remains (Johnson, 2006). According to Dolan (2008), it is easy to retain teachers in the middle of their career. Darling-Hammond (2003) stated that beginning teachers are more likely to leave the profession due to salaries, working conditions, teacher preparation, and mentoring support. Statistics show that 14% of new teachers leave the

profession their first year, 33% leave within 3 years, and 50% leave after 5 years (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). Beginning teacher attrition costs school districts across the nation. Throughout the research, statistics are given regarding the cost of teachers leaving the profession. Nationally, the cost of teachers leaving the profession ranges from 20 to 150% of a teacher's salary (Brill & McCartney, 2008). These percentages convert to annual costs of \$2.2 billion to \$4.9 billion to recruit, hire, and train new teachers (Brill & McCartney, 2008). These costs are taxing financially and they also disrupt student learning and adversely impact student achievement. The retention of beginning teachers, within their first 5 years, will help stop this *hemorrhaging* of money, and help students become productive world citizens.

The literature is filled with possible remedies, including salary increases and incentives, work environment, professional development, induction, and mentoring programs. This study focuses on the evaluation and effectiveness of a southern school district's induction program. Therefore, increased salaries, incentives, and work environments are beyond the scope of this study. This literature review briefly examines the costs of teacher attrition, and more closely examines how induction programs are key factors to curbing attrition, particularly for beginning teachers. Moreover, it further explores how administrator support, mentoring, and induction programs help beginning teachers survive and thrive in their first years in the profession. The components of induction programs are examined and model programs shared.

Collegiality

Achieving collegiality for novice teachers can present quite a challenge. Compartmentalization is an intrinsic part of the design of most schools. According to Lortie (1975, as cited in Boreen & Niday, 2000) this "cellular nature of schools"

promotes independence and self-reliance instead of collaboration (p. 152). The “best practices” listed in a study by Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (1993, as cited in Boreen & Niday, 2000) suggest that a school staff should be “viewed more as a community and less as a hierarchy of leaders” (pp. 152-153). Moreover, first-year teachers require simultaneous socialization into the teaching profession and a particular school’s environment. Principals are key factors in creating an educational community and helping teachers become acclimated in their new career. School leaders also create nurturing school environments where teachers can flourish and grow (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

Administrator Support

A common theme throughout the literature is the critical role principals play in their interaction with and support of new teachers. VanderPyl’s (2007) research concluded that the result of strong principals is a strong staff. Quinn and D’Amato Andrews (2004, as cited in VanderPyl, 2007) stated that principals who are supportive of beginning teachers have staffs who are also supportive. This underscores the importance of principals being taught how to provide the best support for these new employees (Quinn & D’Amato Andrews, 2004, as cited in VanderPyl, 2007).

To demonstrate the key role of principals in inducting new teachers into the profession, Brock and Grady (1998) surveyed 75 beginning teachers and 75 principals. Beginning teachers shared their expectations for assistance from their principals, problems incurred during the first year, and components they felt important for first-year induction programs. Principals reported their expectations for beginning teachers, the problems they experienced with beginning teachers their first year, and methods used to assist beginning teachers during their first year. The results of this study showed beginning teachers and principals agreed on several issues. However, beginning teachers

identified two concerns not seen by principals—the importance of the principal’s role in the induction process and the need for assistance from the principal throughout the year. Wood’s (2005, as cited in VanderPyl, 2007) research on the importance of principals and the way their role in new teacher induction further emphasized how critical administrative support is in induction programs. The conclusions drawn from his study indicated more research is needed in the area of the role of a principal in the beginning teachers’ induction process (Wood, 2005, as cited in VanderPyl, 2007).

Induction

Though not a panacea, research shows that effective induction programs have been instrumental in how to keep beginning teachers in the profession (Kelley, 2004). The importance of effectively developing induction programs cannot be taken lightly. Many school districts provide meaningful assimilation into the profession to help retain novice teachers. However, existing induction programs vary in their substance and quality (Kelley, 2004). Darling-Hammond et al. (2005, as cited in Kelley, 2004) reported that almost half of all new teachers participated in some form of induction with many programs only providing superficial assistance such as mentoring only, orientation, and/or evaluation meetings (Doerger, 2003).

According to Wong (2005) induction is “a comprehensive process of sustained training and support for new teachers” (p. 41). Moreover, induction is an all-inclusive, coherent, multi-year professional development process that includes people and activities used to acculturate and to train new teachers in the goals and vision of a new school or school district (Wong & Wong, 2010a). Induction programs should not only provide assistance with technical and methodological educational issues; they should also provide beginning teachers with the opportunity to understand and assimilate into the school’s

culture (Doerger, 2003). Induction programs should also introduce new teachers to the education profession (Doerger, 2003). The support provided through quality induction programs helps beginning teachers take responsibility for the quality of their classroom instruction and accountability for the achievement of every student (Moir & Gless, 2001). In addition, beginning teachers must also take ownership of what transpires in the greater educational community of which they have become a part.

An investment in teacher quality begins at the nascent stages of a career and continues throughout a professional lifetime. Moir and Gless (2001) stated that the investment in induction is not only a catalyst for educational reform, but also an opportunity for veteran teachers to share their wisdom and expertise. Therefore, mere orientations or meetings, without planned, formal assistance leading to the accomplishment of professional goals are not a part of true induction programs (Lawson, 1992, as cited in Doerger, 2003). Successful, well-structured induction programs result in student achievement and higher teacher retention (Doerger, 2003).

The purpose of any school is the success and academic achievement of its students. To this end, schools that provide beginning teachers with well-developed induction programs that successfully inculcate them into the teaching profession should see a benefit of student achievement and high staff morale (Fetler, 1997, as cited in Doerger, 2003). Fetler (1997, as cited in Doerger, 2003) stated that schools with higher numbers of experienced teachers (due to retention) have higher student achievement rates. Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2001, as cited in Wong, 2004) found that having an effective teacher instead of an average teacher for 4 or 5 consecutive years could albeit close the gap in math performance between students from low-income communities and students from more affluent communities.

In 1999, a 3-year induction program was implemented for beginning teachers in the Public Schools of Islip, NY. This school district experienced concurrent improvements in student achievement that they contributed to improved teacher performance and retention (Breux & Wong, 2003, as cited in Wong, 2004). Before the induction program, there was a 40% diploma rate. After the induction program, the diploma rate improved to 70% (Wong, 2004).

According to McCann and Johannessen (2004), some of the major concerns of new teachers include relationships (with students, parents, colleagues, and supervisors), workload/time management fatigue, knowledge of subject/curriculum focus and framework, evaluation, and challenge to define their teaching persona. Many of these concerns are influenced by organizational factors. Ingersoll (2001, as cited in Doerger, 2003) reported that when teachers leave on their own accord it is often due to organizational factors. Thus, induction during the initial year can be crucial to the beginning teacher's decision to remain in the teaching profession. Furthermore, these concerns can be categorized in four major domains: management, personal, instructional and socialization (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2009). According to Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (2009) the management domain is related to classroom management. This is a major priority for beginning teachers. They understand early that it is hard to teach children when you do not have their attention. Secondly, the personal domain is a critical area for beginning teachers, but is often neglected. Many beginning teachers are starting their first full-time job after graduation, changing careers, or possibly relocating to another area. Surviving until the first paycheck, establishing financial arrangements, and paying off loans are among the personal concerns expressed by beginning teachers. New teachers are also meeting new people, making new friends,

and establishing a place in the school community and the neighborhood (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2009). Feeling certain about personal concerns is essential to novice teachers as they move into the profession. Beginning teachers often ask, how do I address all the needs of students in my class and how can I effectively plan and assess my students. Many beginning teachers struggle with organizational skills. The aforementioned are all part of the instructional domain (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2009). All beginning teachers want to be successful. The socialization domain is important so that new teachers begin to feel a part of the school community. Beginning teachers need to know and understand the *unwritten rules* at their school and in their school system (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2009). Many times mentors and other staff members can help teachers. New teachers want more than just a job. They truly want to grow professionally and experience success. To keep good teachers, educators need to realize and address the four domains (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2009).

Based on research by the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ, 2006), new teachers are often isolated from more experienced teachers, hired after school begins, and given the more challenging students. Up to 50% of new teachers quit the profession within their first 5 years (CTQ, 2006). There are specific needs unique to beginning teachers that must be met by effective induction programs that will retain novice teachers and ultimately impact student achievement. According to Doerger (2003), these needs include "1) getting students to cooperate, 2) improving instructional techniques, 3) understanding how to talk to parents, 4) understanding the working environment (Odell & Ferraro, 1992), and 5) dealing with academic or extra-curricular assignments" (Huling-Austin, 1992, p. 4). Additional barriers include large classes, unfamiliarity with curriculum,

language barriers, low compensation, and lack of respect for teachers (Goldberg & Proctor, 2000; Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. [RNT], 2000).

In addition to the aforementioned needs, research has found that beginning teachers need emotional support during their first year (Doerger, 2003). Odell and Ferraro (1992, as cited in Doerger, 2003) conducted a study where new teachers confirmed that emotional support was the most valuable support they received during their first year. In a study conducted by McCann and Johannesen (2004) during follow-up interviews a beginning teacher indicated the importance of academic and affective support. This support was needed from the department chair, the principal, and colleagues.

A beginning teacher's personal experiences as a student can also influence their needs during their induction year (Doerger, 2003). Weiner (2000, as cited in Doerger, 2003) demonstrated that new teachers are most comfortable teaching students similar to themselves in school settings familiar to the new teacher. Therefore, the more different the culture of the school is from the new teacher's experience, the greater the teacher's needs (Doerger, 2003). These needs can be addressed in the mentoring component of a well-structured induction program (Doerger, 2003; Wong, 2004).

Effective induction programs have several common components. According to Wong (2004), all effective induction programs have three basic parts: comprehensive, coherent, and sustained. According to RNT (2000) one of the most important components is that the program is viewed as covering more than 1 year and it is developmental. Additional components include administrators understanding the needs of beginning teachers, well-trained mentors, evaluations linked to school and district standards, and the appropriate technology to facilitate communication between beginning teachers, mentors, and university faculty (RNT, 2000). Wong and Wong (2010b) lists the following as

practices of effective induction programs:

- Long-term planning for improving teaching and learning, aligned with the instructional philosophy of the school
- Practices aligned with professional standards as well as state and local student learning standards
- A strong sense of institution commitment incorporating with strong administrator support and involvement
- Participation by all teachers, whether entering the profession from traditional or alternative pathways
- Input from beginning and veteran teachers on program design and structure
- A time frame that begins prior to, extends throughout, and continues beyond the new teacher's first year of teaching
- Opportunities for inductees to visit demonstration classrooms
- Study groups in which new teachers can network and build support, commitment, and leadership in a learning community
- Adequate time and resources for implementation
- Reduced workloads, release time, and placement in classes with less, rather than more, demanding students
- Quality mentoring, with careful selection, training and ongoing support for mentors
- Ongoing assessment to determine whether the program is having its desired impact. (pp. 13-14)

With all the benefits of induction programs, there are some weaknesses. In an

effort to get more school districts to provide mentoring and training for beginning teachers, some states have mandated induction programs. One of the salient problems with state-mandated programs is the one-size-fits-all approach to the design of induction programs (Lawson, 1992, as cited in Doerger, 2003). Schools have unique cultures and beginning teachers have distinctive needs that can be better addressed through programs specifically designed to manage them. According to Wong (2004), no two induction programs are exactly alike. Each program caters to the individual needs and specific culture of its school (Wong, 2004).

Funding is another problem in the implementation of induction programs. Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (2000) reported that in 1996, annual funding for programs ranged from \$150,000 in Virginia to \$80.2 million in California. With such a large disparity in funding, the quality of programs can vary widely from state to state (Doerger, 2003). Though many states require induction programs, some with the requirement do not provide the funding (Furtwengler, 1995; Sweeny & DeBolt, 2000, as cited in Doerger, 2003). The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2006) reported evidence that induction programs save money for school districts. Moreover, it has been estimated that for every \$1.00 invested in induction, an estimated payoff of approximately \$1.50 occurs (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2006).

Based on their research, McCann and Johannessen (2004) reported developing a teacher persona as a major difficulty for beginning teachers. Feiman-Nemser (2003, as cited in McCann & Johannessen, 2004) shared the same concern by stating “Each new teacher’s learning agenda is also intimately bound up with the personal struggle to craft a public identity” (p. 26). Moreover, before entering the classroom, beginning teachers

have accepted their roles as sons/daughters, students, and employees, but the role of teacher is new (McCann & Johannessen, 2004). This further complicates the induction process because of beginning teachers' desires to be the *perfect teacher* and the impact their beliefs and experiences have on how this manifests (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999, as cited in Doerger, 2003). New teachers' beliefs are critical in deciding what should be contained in the induction process and the issues that need to be addressed. Weiner (2000) stated that "countless articles and papers detailed the difficulty of changing teachers' attitudes and practices as they worked with students who were not white, middle class, and monolingual, as most teacher candidates are" (p. 388). This underscores the importance of induction being context specific. New teacher induction should be the strong link between the transmission of a specific educational culture and the success of the new teacher in that culture (Doerger, 2003).

Beginning teachers are often defined as novice teachers with less than 2 years of experience. These neophytes in the education profession are often overwhelmed by the sheer volume of all that has to be learned, and most of this learning is while one is charged with the responsibility of teaching children. The new teachers who leave the profession usually do so in their first 2 years (Gordon, 1991, as cited in Anhorn, 2008). Therefore, effective induction programs must contain components and demonstrate efficacy the first day of a teacher's career (Anhorn, 2008). The essential factors of effective induction programs can be grouped into three major categories—intensive mentoring, collaboration, and ongoing training and development.

Intensive Mentoring

Many of these successful programs described in the literature included mentoring programs. Odell and Ferraro (1992, as cited in Arnold-Rogers, Arnett, & Harris, 2008)

stated mentoring as the most common element of induction programs and demonstrates mentoring as a major factor in keeping new teachers in the profession. In a study conducted by Marable and Raimondi (2007), participants overwhelmingly identified mentors as the most supportive factor during their first year. Developing a quality mentor program is important because having no mentor program is better than having a bad one (McCann, Johannessen, & Ricca, 2005, as cited in Arnold-Rogers et al., 2008). Though McCann et al. (2005) found this to be true, participants in the non-mentoring group of Marable and Raimondi's study (2007) identified at least one person as their *mentor* while not participating in a formal mentoring program. This underscores the need for first year teachers for individual support and that this support will be sought out if not formally provided. Marable and Raimondi (2007) found that beginning teachers identified networking with other teachers and colleagues as a factor that would have been beneficial during their first year.

Mentorship is an important factor in education in the move toward successful teacher induction and retention. With nearly a third of beginning teachers leaving the profession within their first 5 years, mentorship as a part of new teacher induction can be one strategy for stopping the exodus (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2000, as cited in Vierstraete, 2005). According to Podsen and Denmark (2000), teacher mentorship can be defined as "helping novices speed up the learning of a new job or skill and reduce the stress of transition, improving instructional performance of novices through modeling by a top performer, and socializing novices into the profession of teaching" (p. 31). A mentoring relationship is special and cultivated between a mentor and protégé whereby the mentor counsels, guides, and helps the protégé to develop both personally and professionally" (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000). The purpose of mentorship

programs can range from new teacher orientation and induction to instructional improvement and changing a school's cultural environments (Podsen & Denmark, 2000). Because new teachers can sometimes feel alone and isolated, mentorship programs can provide special relationships early in their careers. According to Heath and Yost (2001, as cited in Vierstraete, 2005), "mentorships have been developed in schools throughout the nation in an effort to stem the departure of first year teachers" (pp. 383-384).

The importance of a teacher's first-year experience cannot be overemphasized. Of the factors impacting teacher retention in the first year of teaching, none has greater correlation to teacher retention than prior academic performance or the quality of the teacher preparation program (Boreen et al., 2000, as cited in Vierstraete, 2005).

Mentors are most effective when they receive both initial training and ongoing professional development and support. Additionally, for mentors to be effective, they need to be taught about their role (Villani, 2009). Critical professional development content that helps increase mentors' effectiveness in supporting beginning teachers includes:

- Research on the needs of new teachers and implications for a mentor's role
- Roles and responsibilities of participants in the mentoring program (mentors, new teachers, administrators, colleagues who are not mentors)
- Communication and collaboration skills
- Cultural competence
- Collaborative coaching skills, including questioning and conferencing techniques
- Coaching observation approaches and data gathering strategies

- Frameworks for examining teaching, learning, and assessing (Dunne & Villani, 2007).

Villani (2009) stated that mentors refer to various aspects of this knowledge base, depending on the level of knowledge skills and adult development of their new-teacher partners. Much like new teachers, mentors are at various stages of growth as well (Villani, 2009). Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1998) studied various ways to promote mentor skills. Helping mentors support beginning teaching in developing a delicate balance of the many responsibilities as a teacher, which include lesson planning, assessing student work, communicating with parents, participating in professional development, and the power of reflecting on their work, is challenging. Reflection can be documented in journaling, summarization of professional readings, role-playing or discussions (Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998). Reflection allows new teachers to benefit from critical analysis of their own teaching practices and experience (Wonacott, 2002). Assisting experienced teachers grow into being effective mentors requires identifying where mentors currently are in their own stages of development (Villani, 2007). Jean Casey and Ann Claunch (2005) identified stages of mentor development that can be useful in designing effective training for mentors, initially and ongoing, as displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Stages of Mentor Development

Stages of Mentor Development	
Predisposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks professional growth • Desires to assist and nurture others • Challenges self to improve • Practices effective interpersonal skills • Is open-minded and flexible
Disequilibrium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies skill of time management and organization • Shifts professional paradigm from teaching students to teaching adults • Has doubts, fears, and unclear expectations about mentoring roles • Has little self-confidence as a mentor • Experiences the “imposter phenomenon”
Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expands the understanding of mentoring roles • Expands knowledge base and vocabulary • Develops individualized mentoring strategies • Develops better questioning skills • Replaces personal agendas with the new teacher’s agenda • Develops trusting relationships with colleagues • Reflects on and clarifies personal philosophy and beliefs
Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands job expectations • Continues the development of mentoring strategies • Refines listening and questioning • Begins to dissociate from the protégés success • Finds a renewed sense of professionalism that included collaboration collegiality, and articulation • Trusts in his or her own beliefs • Begins to advocate for beginning teachers
Efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a personal mentoring style • Continues to reflect on and adjust multiple strategies • Recognizes personal strength as a mentor • Makes emotional shift to detachment and minimal response • Deepens the understanding of effective teaching • Moves from intuitive to intentional practice

Note: Casey, J., & Claunch, A. (2005).

Good mentoring begins with a good mentor (Doerger, 2003). Odell and Huling (2000) defined a mentor as an experienced teacher who, as part of his or her professional

assignment, mentors pre-service or beginning teachers as they learn to teach.

Characteristics of a good mentor include (1) willingness to be a mentor, (2) sensitivity to the needs of new teachers, (3) being helpful but not authoritarian (4) being diplomatic, (5) having the ability to anticipate problems, (6) being encouraging, (7) keeping beginner's problems confidential, (8) having enthusiasm about teaching, (9) being a good role model at all times, (10) having an understanding of school district policy, needs, and priorities, (11) having skill in classroom observations, (12) having experience working with adult learners, and (13) having the ability to provide timely feedback to keep new teachers apprised of successes (Huling-Austin, 1992; RNT, 2000; Schaffer, Stringfield, & Wolfe, 1992). For mentors to be effective and able to provide specific guidance that helps beginning teachers improve their teaching practice and impact student achievement, school systems must abandon bad mentoring practices/habits (Strong, 2005). To be effective, mentor programs must have a focus and structured framework for mentors (Holloway, 2001). The mentor program must include a rigorous mentor selection process based on qualities of effective mentors (Strong, 2005). Without a selection process, mentors may be chosen more frequently because of seniority or availability rather than their qualifications to engage in meaningful opportunities with novice teachers (Strong, 2005).

A mentor program that does not provide mentors with sufficient professional development prohibits mentors from receiving guidance and support from a professional community to help them support beginning teachers in developing effective practices and address the many challenges they face such as classroom management, parent conference, daily instruction, and evaluation (Strong, 2005).

Beginning teachers and mentors should be paired carefully. Anzul (2000) warned

that administrators need to be prepared to recognize personalities and to have a process to change the pairing. The pairing of the novice teacher and mentor is critical to the mentoring process (Vierstraete, 2005). If the match is not desirable, it can be detrimental and create numerous challenges in the mentorship. Mismatch pairings tend to fizzle out and leave the beginning teacher without much needed support (Boreen & Niday, 2000; Podsen & Denmark, 2000). DePaul (2000) suggested, “if the mentor mentee relationship isn’t working to the benefit of the beginning teacher, he or she should visit the principal about the concerns” (p. 16). Depending on the number of mentors and beginning teachers at a school, the principal may consider letting beginning teachers select the best suited mentor (DePaul, 2000).

To help beginning teachers grow and develop, mentors need protected quality time that allows them to focus on relationship building instructional practices, student achievement and professional development (Strong, 2006). Principals need to show their support for mentoring by providing release time for beginning teachers and mentors (Watkins, 2005). Borren and Niday (2000) suggested that the school find time for mentors and beginning teachers to confer, plan, and analyze instructional strategies by employing substitute teachers. Because both mentors and beginning teachers are already busy, the occasional “how are you doing?” or “we can meet whenever you’re available” is not sufficient time for fostering relationships and growth.

Mentoring beginning teachers for 1 year only may be good for providing individual support for first year teachers to simply survive; however, 1 year alone is not sufficient time to help a beginning teacher reach optimal effectiveness (Vierstraete, 2005).

First year teachers experience many chaotic days. Non-specific emotional support

alone from a mentor is not adequate to help beginning teachers improve their practice (Vierstraete, 2005). Without specific instructional feedback, mentoring cannot improve student achievement (Vierstraete, 2005).

To ensure mentor programs continue meeting the needs of mentors and beginning teachers, an evaluation of the mentor program is imperative (Vierstraete, 2005). Sadly, rarely do program evaluations occur because they get lost in the end-of-year rush. With no standardized evaluation, mentees and mentors lose the opportunity to share recommendations for programmatic changes (Vierstraete, 2005).

Mentors and principals can all learn both effective and non-effective ways to support and retain our novice teachers when listening to their feedback (Vierstraete, 2005).

Collaboration

In several studies, collaboration and networking were referenced as release time to observe mentors' classrooms (Algozzine, Gretes, Queen, & Cowan-Hatchcock, 2007). Wong (2004) also found that in addition to sharing with other teachers and colleagues, beginning teachers had a strong need to be listened to, and taken seriously. Beginning teachers want to contribute to the group – they want to make a difference (Wong, 2004). In addition, new teachers want to be valued for the information they bring to the table (Goldberg & Proctor, 2000). Because teaching is an isolated profession, collegial interchange must become the norm, particularly for beginning teachers (Wong, 2004).

The best induction programs provide connection because they are structured within learning communities where new and veteran teachers are brought together in a structured manner to share ideas (Wong, 2004). It is important that all are treated with appreciation and respect in these interchanges. A supportive community that meets on a

regular basis creates an environment where teachers reflect on activities, share common reading lists, book talks, and other collaborative learning activities (Eggen, 2007). In their study of 50 teachers in Massachusetts, Johnson and Birkeland (2003, as cited in Wong, 2004) concluded that schools are better served when they rely less on one-on-one mentoring and more on an information exchange between novice and veteran teachers.

Garet, Porter, Desmoine, Birman, and Kwang (2001, as cited in Wong, 2004) conducted a study with 1,027 public school math and science teachers. From this study they reported that teachers learn more in certain situations, such as teacher networks and study groups, instead of mentoring; professional development programs that are longer, sustained, and intensive verses shorter ones; opportunities for collective participation; and when the perception is that learning and development are part of comprehensive professional development program. Therefore, successful induction programs have networks that create learning communities, treat colleagues as valuable contributors, and demonstrate that quality teaching is not just an individual responsibility, but also a group responsibility.

Professional Development

Annually thousands of new teachers enter classrooms across the country. Many begin their career in education with the anticipation of remaining in the classroom for many years. For others, these new classroom assignments do not go well and lead novice teachers to exit the profession after just a few years on the job. National research data estimate attrition ranges from 30-50% of beginning teachers who leave the profession their first 3 to 5 years. Beginning teachers shared that inadequate preparation, lack of administrative support and low salaries all contribute to their leaving (Garet et al., 2001, as cited in Wong, 2004). We need new teachers to be as effective as possible in their

classrooms because children arrive to their classrooms daily counting on them. Gordon and Maxey (2000) identified the following high-priority needs of beginning teachers:

- Managing the classroom
- Acquiring information about the school system
- Obtaining instructional resources and materials
- Planning organizing, and managing instruction, as well as other professional responsibilities
- Assessing students and evaluating student progress
- Motivating students
- Using effective teaching methods
- Dealing with individual students' needs, interests abilities and problems
- Communicating with colleagues, including administrators, supervisors, and other teachers
- Communicating with parents
- Adjusting to the teaching environment and role
- Receiving emotional support. (p. 6)

With all these needs and more, it is apparent why beginning teachers need professional development and a well-planned approach to new teacher induction (Gordon & Maxey, 2000).

The costs of teacher attrition are too high (New Teacher Center, 2007). According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2005), the annual cost of teacher turnover in Maryland, including the cost of replacing teachers who leave the profession and the costs related to teachers transferring to another school surpasses more than \$114 million.

Recruitment, personnel processing and professional development as well as induction are included in this cost (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). The massive teacher exodus also creates other financial losses that are more difficult to measure and include disruptions to instructional programs and loss to organizational capacity and stability as teachers transition from one assignment to another.

Achieving the goal of keeping highly qualified, effective teachers in the profession is desired of all stakeholders (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). According to an in-depth study completed by the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council (Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council, 2009), this can best be achieved by beginning teachers actively participating in teacher induction programs that have the following characteristics:

- A thorough orientation to the profession
- Frequent and sustained interaction with a well-trained and skilled mentor
- Ongoing professional development specifically designed for new teachers
- Opportunities to observe skilled teachers
- Ongoing formative assessment of performance oriented to a set of teaching standards (This process may include teacher portfolios or similar assessment tools.)
- Summative assessment of performance oriented to a set of teaching standards.

(p. 4)

Additionally, some educators argue that an induction program should ensure new teachers have (a) reduced teaching loads, (b) few or no non-instructional responsibilities, and (c) no assignments to work with difficult groups of students (Maryland Teacher

Professional Development Advisory Council, 2009).

Research suggests that professional development from new teachers should begin with a comprehensive induction program where beginning teachers learn to “consider specific educational contexts, and acquire practices and beliefs that last throughout their career” (Glassford & Salinitri, 2007; Luft, Roehrig, & Patterson, 2003; Moir & Gless, 2001; Wong & Wong, 1998, p. 49). Attendance alone at professional development trainings does not meet the learning needs of beginning teachers (Hinds & Berger, 2010). For professional development to have a greater impact on beginning teacher practices, great focus must be in place on teacher learning and teacher capacity building which gives teachers additional opportunities to improve student learning and to be part of a professional learning community.

Unlike other professions, beginning teachers assume the same level of responsibility as a more experienced colleague (Sweeny, 2008). Regrettably, in some cases, beginning teachers are given more challenging assignments than their more experienced colleagues (Sweeny, 2008). It is not surprising that novice teachers are overwhelmed and feel inadequate (Villani, 2009). Beginning teachers experience a steep learning curve and are expected to quickly adjust to their work setting and learn fast (Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carter, & Yusko, 1990). As *reality shock* settles in, beginning teachers must also learn about local policies and procedures, curricula, locate resources and materials, and learn to work in the complex world of teaching, yet another reason beginning teachers need professional development specifically designed to meet their needs (Billingsley, 2005).

Effective induction programs contain an ongoing commitment to professional development. Breaux and Wong (2003, as cited in Anhorn, 2008) recommended that

effective induction programs offer a continuum of professional development through system-wide training over 2 years. Moreover, a key component of the successful Partners in Education Program (PIE) at the University of Colorado at Boulder is a 5-month teacher-as-researcher project in their classrooms (Kelley, 2004). PIE teachers also enroll in off-campus graduate courses to continue developing proficiency and expertise (Kelley, 2004).

Model Teacher Induction Programs

According to the Center for Teacher Quality (CTQ, 2006), knowledge of comprehensive, high quality induction programs and their impact on teacher attrition is not an anomaly. Research by CTQ (2006) has demonstrated that one of the most effective strategies for improving new teacher retention rates is the implementation of quality induction programs. A study by Smith and Ingersoll (2004) indicated teachers who participated in an induction program “were twice as likely to remain in teaching” (p. 38). However, this knowledge does not translate to behavior in school districts in most states (CTQ, 2006). Based on the information in a 2005 *Education Weekly* survey, only 16 states require and provide funding for mentor programs for beginning teachers (CTQ, 2006). Moreover, in states where programs were implemented, many lacked the critical elements of effective induction programs. Smith and Ingersoll (2004, as cited in CTQ, 2006, p. 2) “found that only one percent of beginning teachers nationally are receiving comprehensive induction supports.”

Though these statistics demonstrate room for improvement, Wong (2005) found several effective induction programs that incorporate all or many of the strategies needed to train, support, and retain beginning teachers. One of these programs is the Connecticut Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) program that began in 1985. This

comprehensive 4-year induction program outlines the strategies and detailed guidelines for hiring, supporting, and retaining new teachers. Administrators are given detailed principles for supporting beginning teachers. These principles are outlined in three main categories: mentoring, support, and evaluation and professional development. In the evaluation model, administrators and beginning teachers are given a potential evaluation plan for each year of the 4-year program. The overall structure of the induction program has been developed at the state level with school districts charged with creating effective induction programs that meet the statewide standards but also address the needs germane to individual schools. New teachers must complete the 4-year program before receiving their teaching certification (Youngs, 2003, as cited in Wong, 2004).

At the school level, BEST requires that districts provide each new teacher with a mentor or a team of mentors for the first year (Wong, 2004). During the second year, to demonstrate their pedagogical knowledge, beginning teachers must create a content-specific portfolio containing lesson plans, videotapes of instruction, samples of student work, student assessment and progress, and teacher reflections about their lessons (Wong, 2004). A team of teachers hired by the Connecticut Department of Education reviews and assesses the portfolios, granting licensure to teachers with passing grades (Wong, 2004). Teachers who do not receive a passing score on their second attempt do not receive their licenses and cannot teach in the Connecticut public schools (Wong, 2004).

The induction program in Lafourche Parish Public Schools in Thibodaux, Louisiana is an example of another exemplary program. Trainers are a key component for the Lafourche Parish Public Schools program. A goal of the program is to create an environment of lifelong learning for beginning teachers. Moreover, trainers help new teachers become a “cohesive, supportive instructional team” (Wong, 2002, p. 52).

Before school begins, new teachers participate in a comprehensive, 4-day training session. The induction program is supervised by three district-level curriculum coordinators who provide training for beginning teachers, principals, curriculum facilitators, and mentors. Important components of the Lafourche Parish Public Schools program are the demonstration classrooms that provide beginning teachers with the opportunity to observe high quality teaching and to develop collaborative relationships. Moreover, each new teacher gets a mentor and a curriculum facilitator.

Beginning teachers in the Lafourche Parish Public Schools are overwhelmingly enthusiastic, along with mentors, school and district administrators, school board members, and the community (Wong, 2002). Principals in the district also comment that “induction-trained teachers are much more classroom ready from day one” (Wong, 2002, p. 54). An additional indicator of the program’s success is the 99% completion rate of the Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program for the beginning teachers who participate in the induction program.

Before the implementation of the Lafourche Parish induction program, Lafourche Parish Public Schools had a 51% annual attrition rate (Wong, 2002). The rate immediately decreased to 15% upon implementation of the induction program (Wong, 2002). The success of the Lafourche Parish Public Schools induction program has made it a recruitment tool for the district and a model for the state of Louisiana (Wong, 2002).

Many studies have been conducted demonstrating the importance of induction programs for beginning teachers. The Excellent Schools Act, signed into law in 1997 by North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt, requires all teachers to participate in a 3-year induction period before receiving recommendation for continuing license (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1998, as cited in Algozzine, Gretes, Queen, & Cowan-

Hathcock, 2007). For years induction programs have been in place in 117 school systems in North Carolina and across the country. However, data on all aspects of the programs in North Carolina and nationwide have been anecdotal and prescriptive more than research-based and empirical (Roulston, Legette, & Womack, 2005, as cited in Algozzine et al., 2007). In a study conducted by Algozzine et al. (2007), researchers sought to examine various components of induction program activities by looking through the eyes of beginning teachers.

The study by Algozzine et al. (2007) selected 1,318 third-year teachers in 14 school systems of the Southwest Education Alliance of North Carolina. Demographically these teachers were 80% female and 20% male; 84% White, 14% Black, and 2% other (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2003, as cited in Algozzine et al., 2007). The researchers distributed a 66-item, cross-sectional survey to gather quantitative data. The survey focused on perceived effectiveness in three categories: (1) induction program activities; (2) assistance received in teaching and non-teaching areas; and (3) support received from mentor, administration, and other colleagues (Algozzine et al., 2007). The survey also included a few open-ended questions to obtain qualitative data. Of the 1,318 surveys distributed, 451 were usable. The demographics of usable respondents were only slightly different than the demographics of all who received a survey. Demographically the respondents were 84% female and 16% male; 90% White, 8% Black, and 2% other; 57% from elementary schools, 22% from middle schools, 20% from high schools, and 1% from preschools. The majority of participants, 46%, were from urban schools, with 35% from suburban schools and 18% from rural schools. Eighty-one percent of the respondents were initially licensed teachers and 19% were lateral entry.

The data collected examined induction activities, assistance, and support as they

relate to retention. Nineteen induction activities, 15 types of support assistance, and 29 types of support were studied. According to 69% of participants, induction program activities were effective. Over 80% of respondents participated in focused, individual, specific opportunities that included participating in formal evaluations or observations by administrators, developing an individual growth plan, having an assigned mentor, participating in a system-wide orientation, teaching in their licensure area, attending mandatory and optional in-service professional development sessions, participating in a school-specific orientation and being formally and informally observed by mentors. Fewer respondents reported being assigned to collective, group activities that included being assigned the same or fewer course preparations as veteran teachers, being assigned the same or fewer special needs students as veteran teachers, having release time to observe other teachers' or mentors' classrooms, having no extracurricular duties, or having a reduced teaching load.

Overall, participants in the Algozzine et al. (2007) study reported that focused individual activities were more favorable than global, district-wide opportunities (e.g. district-wide orientations and workshops). Moreover, positive outcomes were demonstrated in five of the 19 induction activities: formal observations by administrators, assignments in licensure areas, school-specific orientation, and formal and informal observations and evaluations by mentors (Algozzine et al., 2007). Negative outcomes were associated with opportunities to participate in cooperative planning, assignments to fewer preparations, release time to observe a mentor's class, and a reduced teaching load.

According to Algozzine et al. (2007) and other researchers, studies about the beginning teachers' experiences fall into three categories: reflective accounts of experiences, advice and guidance from experienced teachers, or research examining

beliefs about learning to teach and teaching. The study by Algozzine et al. (2007) reviewed a statewide induction program and the results supported many of the components of effective induction programs. Components of effective induction programs include mentoring by experienced teachers, release time for observing other teachers, peer mentors (same grade, same subject; different grade and different subject), seminars, and multiple opportunities for sharing experiences. Teachers in this study reported that mentorship programs provided opportunities for assisting beginning teachers in high needs areas, such as locating instructional materials, managing instructional time, planning and organizing instruction, and using varied teaching methods (Algozzine et al., 2007). In addition, teachers reported the importance of opportunities to observe master teachers and the need to reduce workloads. These are two critical areas of improvement for the state's induction program. The results from this study underscore the need for continued research that focuses on assessing the perceptions and outcomes of induction programs (Algozzine et al., 2007).

Summary and Conclusion

The literature is replete with studies about the importance of induction programs which include professional development for beginning teachers. However, more research-based investigation of the efficacy of induction programs is needed (Roulston et al., 2005, as cited in Algozzine et al., 2007). Many studies need to be replicated with larger sample sizes of first year teachers. Many studies also use qualitative methodologies to determine the impact of various factors on teacher retention. This provides an opportunity for quantitative studies and those with mixed methodologies. There is a salient need for studies documenting outcomes related to variations in the details of induction programs and activities. Continued research should also focus on evaluating

and assessing outcomes of induction programs and integrating this knowledge into the preparation of model programs.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The National Commission for Teaching America's Future (2007) found that an investment of an intensive model of teacher induction pays \$1.66 for every \$1.00 spent. Not only is the money a critical factor but, more importantly, the impact teacher turnover has on student achievement.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology used in this qualitative and quantitative program evaluation. Included in this chapter are the research design, research questions, study design, procedures, participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

Program Evaluation Model

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a beginning teacher induction program and its impact on retaining beginning teachers. This program was implemented in a rural school district in northwest North Carolina. A management-oriented program evaluation approach was used. Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation model provided the foundation for assessing the program's components (Stufflebeam, 2007). This evaluation process allowed district leaders to examine decisions being made with the program. The information obtained was used to make recommendations to improve the beginning teacher induction program. To assess the various aspects of the program, research participants included teachers in their second, third or fourth year of teaching and who completed the district's Beginning Teachers Support Program, mentors, administrators, site support leaders, the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator, and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. The researcher primarily collected qualitative data using surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Data were analyzed to assess the effectiveness of the beginning teachers program and its

impact on teacher retention. Moreover, data gathered were analyzed and then themes and domains reported.

Research demonstrated teacher quality is the single most critical factor in whether or not students are successful. However, efforts to improve teacher quality often have been thwarted by high rates of turnover (Ingersoll, 2003). High levels of attrition have significant consequences for the nation's schools (Carroll, 2007).

This study evaluated a beginning teacher induction program and its impact on retaining beginning teachers. As a result, this study was based on Stufflebeam's (2007) Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation model for assessing the current components of the program and to guide decision making for improvement.

According to Daniel Stufflebeam (2007), the four aspects of CIPP evaluation assisted the stakeholders in answering four basic questions: what should we do; how should we do it; are we doing this as planned; did the program work. The four aspects of Stufflebeam's CIPP model evaluation rationale are:

1. Context evaluation. This involves collecting and analyzing needs assessment data to determine goals, priorities and objectives.
2. Input evaluation. Input evaluation involves the steps and resources needed to meet the new goals and objectives and might include identifying successful external programs and materials as well as gathering information.
3. Process evaluation. The process evaluation component provides decision makers with information about how well the program is being implemented. By continuously monitoring the program, decision makers are able to document and assess program activities.
4. Product evaluation. Program evaluation determines to what extent the

program is achieving its goals. (Robinson, 2002, pp. 63-66)

The CIPP model has been used in numerous doctoral studies as a conceptual framework for program evaluations.

Context Evaluation

Using context evaluation, the Beginning Teacher Induction Program (BTIP) examined in this study determined the conditions within which the program operates. Both program goals and objectives were examined. Information was gathered by interviewing the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and the Beginning Teacher Support Program Coordinator regarding requirements for Beginning Teacher Induction Programs, specific needs of beginning teachers as outlined by the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator, the school district and state requirements, resources available for use within the program, and any challenges identified using the current program structure. All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. All transcriptions were colored coded and themes identified. The frequency of identified themes were tallied and analyzed according to their strength as displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Strength Codes and Frequencies

Strength Code	Frequency
Strong	Occurrences of 7 or more times
Moderate	Occurrences of 4 to 6 times
Weak	Occurrences of 1 to 3 times
No Relation	No occurrences

Additional information was gathered from surveying beginning teachers, mentors, site support leaders, and principals by using the Beginning Teacher, Mentor, Site Support Leader, and Administrator Survey (Appendix A). Responses from the surveys were related to the current conditions of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program being evaluated. The researcher used a Likert agreement scale from 1 to 4 with *strongly disagree* indicated by a 1, *disagree* indicated by a 2, *agree* indicated by a 3, and *strongly agree* indicated by a 4. The average of each survey response was calculated. Likert agreement scales are frequently used in surveys to measure respondents' attitudes by asking how strongly they agree or disagree with a set of questions or statements (Kumar, 2005). This type of evaluation method consists of using numbers which correlate with a person's view (Kumar, 2005). A correlation of average scores was given a strength value. An average score of 3.0 or 4.0 was considered strong, a score of 2.0 to 2.99 was considered a moderate response, and a score of 1.0 to 1.99 was considered a weak response.

Input Evaluation

The second step of the CIPP evaluation model process is input evaluation. This step helps stakeholders identify steps and which resources were available and/or used to meet the program's goals and objectives. Information gathered during input evaluation identified components of the beginning teacher induction program and the human and material resources needed. The Beginning Teacher Induction Program in this study had eight program objectives. Table 4 displays program objectives which the researcher used as themes throughout the study.

Table 4

Program Objectives and Key Themes

Objectives	Key Themes
A	Improving beginning teachers' skills and performance
B	Supporting teacher morale, communication and collegiality
C	Building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude
D	Facilitating a smooth transition into the first and second year of teaching
E	Putting theory into practice
F	Preventing teacher isolation
G	Building self-reflection
H	Retaining quality teachers

Research by Saskatchewan Institute reported that beginning teacher concerns can be categorized in four major domains: management, personal, instructional, and socialization. Survey items were categorized into these four domains as displayed in

Table 5.

Table 5

Four Major Domains of Beginning Teacher Concerns

Domains	
I	Management
II	Personal
III	Instructional
IV	Socialization

To gather data, separate interviews of the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources were conducted. Interviews and focus group discussions provided information on policies, procedures, and various components of the beginning teacher induction program. All interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Transcribed data were analyzed according to the frequency of responses mentioned throughout discussions and themes identified. Themes occurring seven times or more were coded as strong responses. A moderate response was an occurrence of four to six times, a weak response was documented as occurring one to three times. Themes not mentioned during interviews or focus group discussions were documented as no relation. Additional information was gathered about the salient features of the BTIP from Beginning Teacher, Mentor, Administrator, and Site Support Leader Surveys. These four-part, 33-item surveys were developed based on the themes of the BTIP as displayed on Table 4. Eleven professionals who work with Beginning Teacher Support Programs throughout North Carolina

evaluated each survey item placing each in one of the eight themes and four domains. These surveys were completed by second year teachers, third year teachers, and fourth year teachers, mentors, site support leaders, and principals. Part 1 of the survey included statements 3-10 and related to the Beginning Teacher Support Induction Sessions; part 2 of the survey, items 11-22 under Mentor Support, related to support from classroom-based mentors; part 3, items 23-30 under Principal Support, related to assistance beginning teachers received from their school administrator; lastly, part 4 of the survey, items 31-35 under Site Support Leaders, related to the support beginning teachers receive from their site support leaders. The average response for each survey item was calculated.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation is the third component of the CIPP evaluation process (Stufflebeam, 2007). This process allowed the researcher to determine the fidelity of how well the beginning teacher induction program was implemented. Responses from interviews, focus group discussions, and The Beginning Teacher, Mentor, Administrator, and Site Support Leader Survey, provided information about the implementation of the various Beginning Teacher Induction Program components.

Themes occurring seven times or more were coded as strong responses. A moderate response was an occurrence of three or six times; a weak response was documented as occurring one or three times. Themes not mentioned during the interviews or focus group discussions were documented as zero. Focus group discussion results were recorded and analyzed. The researcher transcribed and reviewed responses from focus group participants. Triangulation was used to determine the presence of the following domains: (1) are mentors, administrators and/or site support leaders providing support to beginning teachers with various management concerns; (2) are mentors, administrators

and/or site support leaders providing support to beginning teachers with various personal concerns; (3) are mentors, administrators, and/or site support leaders providing support to beginning teachers with various instructional concerns; and (4) are mentors, administrators, and/or site support leaders providing support to beginning teachers with various socialization concerns.

Product Evaluation

The last step of the CIPP model is product evaluation. During this step, the researcher collected information to determine whether or not the goals and objectives of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program were met (Stufflebeam, 2007). The primary question was, “are beginning teachers being retained as a result of their participation in the Beginning Teacher Induction Program.” Based on the North Carolina Report Card (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2010), the teacher retention rate for the school district evaluated in this study increased over the last 3 years. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. Data were analyzed to measure the overall effectiveness of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program. Recurring themes and domains from surveys, interviews, and focus groups were analyzed. Triangulation was used to validate data. Findings from all sources (interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys) were compared for their effects of the various themes on the Beginning Teacher Induction Program.

Stufflebeam (2000) stated the following about the CIPP model:

The model is intended for the use of service providers such as policy boards, program and project staff, directors of a variety of services, accreditation officials, school district superintendents, school principals, teachers, college and university administrators, physicians, military

leaders and evaluation specialists. The model is configured for the use in internal evaluations conducted by organizations; self-evaluations conducted by individual service providers, and contracted external evaluations. (p. 279)

This study is an evaluation of a beginning teacher induction program's impact on retaining beginning teachers. The participants in this study included teachers completing their second, third, and fourth years of teaching; mentors; site support leaders; and principals. The CIPP model was comprehensive enough to be used to evaluate a multi-faceted program focused on retaining teachers.

Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to evaluate a Beginning Teacher Support Program and its impact on retaining beginning teachers. This chapter is divided into the following sections: participants, instruments, procedures, and limitations. The primary research question throughout the study was, "what is the impact of the teacher induction program on teacher retention." For a new teacher in the focus school district, participation in the Beginning Teacher Induction Program is mandatory in order to fulfill necessary requirements to obtain a Standard II Professional License in North Carolina (North Carolina State Board of Education [NCSB], 2006). Throughout the study, more specific questions provided insight and information into the overall components of the teacher induction program.

1. What were the conditions that warranted an induction program?
2. What was the local school system doing to address teacher retention?
3. To what degree was the teacher induction program being followed as designed?

4. How did the teacher induction program meet its objectives?

Study Design

This study followed the CIPP model of examining the context, input, process, and product of this teacher induction program (Stufflebeam, 2007). A program evaluation was the most reasonable method for this study and provided useful and accurate feedback from individuals in this school system. Central office staff, teachers, mentors, and administrators shared their feedback based on various pre-determined themes in the study in an effort to improve various components of the teacher induction program to improve the district's retention rate. The researcher gathered data using the CIPP model as it allowed responses to be captured by surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Data were then analyzed and tabulated to determine recurrent themes.

Procedures

The data collection procedure for this program evaluation was to first formally contact the school system being evaluated by sending a letter directly to the superintendent (Appendix B). The researcher followed up with an email and telephone call. After the research proposal was approved, the researcher contacted the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator who agreed to assist with the program evaluation by providing the appropriate email addresses for all study participants – teachers completing their second, third, or fourth years of teaching; mentors; site support leaders; and principals. A letter of explanation and survey link was emailed to all participants (Appendix C). All teachers completing their second, third, or fourth years of teaching who participated in the school district's Beginning Teacher Induction Program, were invited to participate in the focus groups discussions (Appendix D). Additionally, all mentors and site support leaders were also invited to participate in focus groups

discussions.

Based on North Carolina Report Card data, the Annual Teacher Turnover Summary for the school system being evaluated is indicated in Table 6.

Table 6

Annual Teacher Turnover Summary 2007-2010

Year	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Total Number of Teachers Employed	1,450	1,450	1,147
Total Number Leaving	196	199	116
Teacher Turnover Rate	13.52%	13.72%	10.11%

Input data was gathered by interviewing the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator. Significant information was gathered during these interviews to help determine the actual procedures utilized by the school district to retain teachers. Responses from interviews and focus group discussions provided additional data on local policies, procedures, and various components of the Beginning Teacher Support Program. The researcher also collected data from completed surveys of teachers who are currently in their second, third, or fourth years of teaching who completed the Beginning Teacher Support Program in the school district being evaluated. All surveys were completed using Survey Monkey. The researcher conducted separate focus group discussions – two for beginning teachers, two for site support leaders, and two for mentors. Responses from interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys were analyzed. Corresponding themes were identified.

Participants

The school system is in a rural area of the northwest region of North Carolina. All

teachers in their second, third, or fourth years of teaching were invited to participate in the study. All mentors, site support leaders, and principals were also invited to take part in the study. Data collection was completed by facilitating interviews with the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator. Additional data were collected in focus group discussions of beginning teachers and mentors. All study participants were invited to respond to the survey which addressed each area of the beginning teacher induction program: effective components of induction sessions, mentoring, ongoing professional development for beginning teachers, administrative support, and guidance from site support leaders and central office staff. Data from interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys were collected and disaggregated into themes and domain. The results were used to determine whether or not the induction program contributed to retaining teachers.

Data Collection Procedures

A cover letter outlining the purpose of the study, indicating participation was voluntary and responses were anonymous, was sent to all second year teachers, third year teachers, and fourth year teachers, mentors, and site support leaders inviting them to participate in the study. The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator were interviewed separately. To gather data about the beginning teacher induction program, the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources was asked the following 6 questions:

1. What is the one main concern for beginning teachers?
2. How does the school system address the needs of beginning teachers?
3. What are the retention goals of the school system?
4. How are beginning teachers treated as professionals?

5. What attracts beginning teachers to your school system?
6. Explain the communication strength and weaknesses in your school system.

Additional data about the BTIP was gathered from an interview with the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator, who was asked the following nine questions:

1. What are the merits of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program?
2. What is included in the orientation?
3. How are mentors selected?
4. How are mentors assigned?
5. How are professional development opportunities selected for beginning teachers?
6. What networking experiences are provided for beginning teachers?
7. What assistance is provided to beginning teachers to ease the transition into the classroom?
8. How is self-reflection encouraged?
9. Tell me about the role of the site support leader.

The researcher invited beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders to participate in separate focus group discussions. Beginning teachers and mentors were given two different choices of dates to attend focus group discussions. Site support leaders were given four different dates to participate.

The researcher also administered a 4-part 33-item survey to gather necessary data to conduct the study. The researcher used the program objectives of the district's beginning teacher induction program to align themes. Each part of the survey related to the layered support beginning teachers receive while participating in the school district's beginning teacher induction program. Each part of the survey is briefly described below.

Survey results were tallied, analyzed, and reported in Chapter 4.

Beginning teacher induction sessions. Part 1 of the survey consists of support beginning teachers receive from induction sessions provided by the school district. Wong (2002) feverously advocated the need for teachers to become lifelong learners. He stated the “best way” to do this is through successful induction programs (Wong, 2002, p. 52). Successful induction programs include: a) a means for helping beginning teachers establish effective classroom management procedures, b) the integration of intensive mentoring, and c) opportunities for beginning teachers to collaborate with members of the entire learning community (Wong, 2002). While induction programs vary from school district to school district, they all share the cost benefit effective from induction programs as well as the positive impact on students (NTC, 2007).

Mentor support. Part 2 of the survey consists of assistance beginning teachers received from mentors their first few years of teaching. According to Flynn and Nolan (2008) new-teacher mentor programs provide beginning teachers an ease of transition into the profession, reduce teacher attrition, help beginning teachers become more effective earlier in their careers, and increase job satisfaction. The literature is replete with best practices for mentoring programs for beginning teachers. Mentor selection matching mentors appropriately with mentees, mentor program governance, and accountability are recurring factors contributing to the success of mentoring programs (Flynn & Nolan, 2008). These factors are important for “stand alone” mentoring programs, as well as mentoring programs that are a part of induction programs (Flynn & Nolan, 2008, p. 76).

Principal support. Part 3 of the survey consists of statements related to support beginning teachers received from their principals. The need for administrative support for

beginning teachers cannot be overemphasized. According to Ingersoll and Smith (2004), inadequate support from school administration is one of the top three reasons beginning teachers cite for leaving the profession. Principals can create a caring learning environment and set the stage for successful induction programs (Watkins, 2011). Moreover, principals can demonstrate advocacy for the value of new teachers, cultivate a collaborative relationship with mentors, and provide assessment for beginning teachers that promotes effectiveness and growth (Watkins, 2005). Moreover, principals can demonstrate advocacy for the value of new teachers, cultivate a collaborative relationship with mentors, and provide assessment for beginning teachers that promotes effectiveness and growth (Watkins, 2011).

Site support leader assistance. Part 4 of the survey asked respondents to address the support beginning teachers received from site support leaders. According to the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator, site support leaders provide ongoing professional development opportunities and assistance to beginning teachers.

The researcher coded survey items using a four-part Likert agreement scale ranging from 1, strongly disagree, to 4, strongly agree. This method is commonly used in research and measures respondents' attitudes by asking how strongly they agree or disagree with a set of statements related to a topic (Kumar, 2005). Collected data were used to determine the perception of beginning teachers, mentors, site support leaders, and principals about the beginning teacher induction program and its impact on retaining teachers.

Data Analysis

Interviews. Two primary interviews were conducted, one with the Assistant

Superintendent of Human Resources and the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator. Interview questions were designed to prompt a discussion about the program objectives of the beginning teacher induction program in this school system. These program objectives included improving beginning teachers' skills and performance; supporting teacher morale, communications, and collegiality; building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude; facilitating a smooth transition into the first and second years of teaching; putting theory into practice; preventing teacher isolation; building self-reflection; and retaining quality teachers. Interview responses were recorded, transcribed, colored coded, and analyzed. The frequency of interview responses were then categorized and placed into themes and domains. Strength codes were also assigned.

Document review. The Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator shared documents that outlined specific information about the current Beginning Teacher Induction Program. Current local and state board policies were outlined.

Focus groups. Focus group discussions were conducted with all beginning teachers in the school system. Mentors also participated in focus group discussions. Site support leaders were invited to participant. Focus group questions were designed to prompt discussion about the layered support beginning teachers received while participating in this school district's Beginning Teacher Induction Program. Focus group responses were recorded, transcribed, colored coded, and analyzed. The frequency of focus group responses were categorized and placed into themes and domains. Strength codes were also assigned.

Survey Results

Participants in the study included beginning teachers, mentors, site support leaders, and principals. All study participants were invited to complete a 33-item survey

that used a four-point Likert agreement scale. Survey statements were organized around the eight objectives of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program: improving beginning teachers' skills and performance; supporting teacher morale, communications, and collegiality; building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude; facilitating a smooth transition into the first and second years of teaching; putting theory into practice; preventing teacher isolation; building self-reflection; and retaining quality teachers. All surveys were submitted electronically via Survey Monkey. The researcher calculated the percentage of 3 (agree) and 4 (strongly agree) responses for all three groups surveyed for each survey item. The researcher also calculated the mean for each survey item. These results provided information about the central tendency of each survey group. The data were used to determine strength codes for all survey items.

Methodological triangulation was used by analyzing multiple data sources. Frequency of themes was identified and color coded. Results were tabulated using frequency tables from data collected in interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys. All data was analyzed and themes identified.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a Beginning Teacher Support Program and its impact on teacher retention. The participants were teachers completing their second, third, and fourth years in the profession in a northwestern district in North Carolina. The researcher distributed and analyzed the results represented in various themes and domains. Additionally, the researcher gathered data using focus groups and interviews. The more information districts have about Beginning Teacher Support Programs, the better able they are to make informed decisions about how to improve them.

Chapter 4: Results

Building strong schools, and communities that support them, fundamentally rests on a school district's ability to retain qualified teachers. According to Graziano (2005), school districts annually hire over 200,000 new teachers. By the fifth year of their tenure, almost half of these new teachers have left the profession (Graziano, 2005).

There are high costs associated with new teachers leaving the profession, with one of the greatest of these being student achievement (Carroll, 2007). Fiscal costs drain districts of much needed funding for improved facilities, targeted comprehensive teacher training, and increased salaries for outstanding teachers. Moreover, academic inequities are perpetuated when new teachers leave the more challenging schools where classrooms are often populated with low-income and minority students (Carroll, 2007).

Research has found beginning teacher induction programs to be instrumental in keeping new teachers in the profession (Kelley, 2004). Induction programs serve as an all-inclusive, multi-year professional development process that not only acclimates the beginning teacher to his/her school and district, but also provides assistance with technical and methodological educational issues (Wong & Wong, 2010b). According to Doerger (2003), successful, well-administered induction programs result in student achievement and higher teacher retention. These programs must demonstrate efficacy the first day of a teacher's career. Districts across the country have implemented beginning teacher induction programs. For example, a 3-year induction program implemented in Islip, NY resulted in improved student achievement and better teacher retention rates (Wong, 2004). Moreover, teachers participating in mentoring, an integral part of effective induction programs, stated it as a positive outcome of their induction experience (Algozzine et al., 2007). These examples underscore the need for beginning teacher

induction programs.

The purpose of this program evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program currently being used in a rural county school system located in North Carolina. A management-oriented program evaluation process was used based on Stufflebeam's CIPP model (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). The study examined the processes used in the current program to recruit, hire, develop, and retain beginning teachers. The data collected for this study were gathered in a variety of ways: (a) surveys distributed to teachers currently in their second, third, and fourth years of teaching; (b) surveys distributed to all mentors; (c) surveys distributed to all experienced teachers serving as site support leaders (SSL); (d) surveys distributed all principals; (e) focus group discussions with teachers currently in their second, third, or fourth years of teaching; (f) focus group discussions with current mentors and site support leaders; (g) a personal interview with the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator; and (h) a personal interview with the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources.

Research Questions

There was one primary guiding question throughout the study: What is the impact of the teacher induction program on teacher retention? Other research questions included:

1. What were conditions that warranted an induction program?
2. What was the LEA doing to address teacher retention?
3. To what degree did the stakeholders of the district follow the induction program as designed?
4. How did the teacher induction program meet its objectives?

Responses to questions and an analysis of the data are shared in this chapter.

Study Participants

All study participants were emailed a 33-item Likert agreement scale survey with directions for completion. To ensure all participants remained completely anonymous, teachers' responses were captured in Survey Monkey and their identities were unknown to the researcher. A total of 402 surveys were provided to beginning teachers completing their second, third, or fourth years of teaching; mentors; site support leaders; and principals. Two hundred and five surveys were completed with an overall response rate of 51%. One hundred and eighty-nine surveys were emailed to beginning teachers. Thirteen beginning teachers opted out and chose not to participate. Eighty-seven surveys were completed with a 46% response rate. One hundred and fifty-five surveys were emailed to mentors. Six mentors opted out and chose not to participate. Eighty-eight mentors completed the survey with a response rate of 57%. Fifty-eight site support leaders and principals were emailed surveys. One site support leader or administrator opted out. Thirty site support leaders and principals completed surveys with a response rate of 52%.

To populate focus groups, six different sessions were scheduled. This allowed each category of focus group participants the opportunity to select one of two different dates and times to provide input. Focus group discussions consisted of all teachers currently completing their second, third, or fourth years of teaching; mentors; and site support leaders. The invitations to all focus group participants explained the purpose of the discussion and reiterated that the reported results from the study would maintain their anonymity. The findings reported would refer only to the group (i.e. beginning teachers, mentor, site support leaders). To further demonstrate that names would remain anonymous, the researcher did not keep a record of attendance for focus group

discussions and name tags were not worn during sessions. The local library was chosen as the site for focus group discussions.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the information gathered from each participating group was organized according to the program objectives for the Beginning Teacher Induction Program as indicated in Table 7.

Table 7

Program Objectives and Key Themes

Program Objective	Key Themes
Improving beginning teachers' skills and performance	A
Supporting teacher morale, communication, and collegiality	B
Building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude	C
Facilitating a smooth transition into the first and second years of teaching	D
Putting theory into practice	E
Preventing teacher isolation	F
Building self-reflection	G
Retaining quality teachers	H

Research by Saskatchewan Teachers Federation (2009) suggested that beginning teachers' essential needs can be categorized into four major concerns or domains: management, personal, instructional, and socialization as displayed in Table 8.

Table 8

Four Domains of Beginning Teacher Concerns

4 Main Domains	
Management	I
Personal	II
Instructional	III
Socialization	IV

Transcripts from interviews with the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and the Beginning Teacher Support (BTS) Coordinator were used to begin analyzing the current practices of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program. Separate interviews were conducted and both participants were asked questions as to why the school system developed a Beginning Teacher Induction Program.

Interview with Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources shared that the major goal of the school system was to retain teachers at a rate of 90%. The school system implemented the Beginning Teacher Induction Program as the result of the state mandate from The Excellent School Act of 1997 (Public Schools of North Carolina, 1998). North Carolina's former Governor, Jim Hunt, approved The Excellent School Act in 1997 (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008) which aimed to improve student academic achievement and reduce teacher attrition. This Act also led the North Carolina State Board of Education to create policies for the Beginning Teacher Support Programs. State Board Policy TCP-A-004 outlines the expectations of what each local Beginning Teacher Support/Induction Program should include (North Carolina State Board, 2006).

The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources expressed the main concerns of beginning teachers as classroom management and appropriate lesson planning that incorporate the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. To help address this concern, the school system provides sessions on creating lesson plans and effective classroom strategies during the induction program that occurs at the beginning of each school year. Additionally, beginning teachers are provided with support in these areas throughout the school year.

When asked what attracted beginning teachers to the researched school district, the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources shared that the geographic location in the piedmont of North Carolina attracts teachers. Additionally, this school system is located in a small city with lots of community events for all to enjoy and feeling a “part of our community” is easy. When recruiting beginning teachers, the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources strongly emphasized the support beginning teachers receive from site support leaders. Additionally, potential beginning teachers are told of all the encouragement and support they will receive from the school system. In addition, technological enhancements have been made in the school system over the past couple years, which is attractive to many new teachers (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011).

The Site Support Leader Program was mentioned numerous times during the interview. The Assistant Superintendent of HR also shared, “The Site Support Leader Program is a real strength” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011). Site Support Leaders (SSL) in this district assist both beginning teachers and mentors at each school. They also serve as a liaison between their school and central office. To ensure that the needs of all beginning teachers are met, the Assistant Superintendent of

Human Resources and the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator work closely to resolve issues immediately. The two share an open, honest relationship and strive daily to support beginning teachers, mentors, site support leaders, and principals.

In the interview with the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, the theme of improving beginning teachers' skills and performance was noted eight times with a strength code of strong. Supporting teacher morale, communication, and collegiality were mentioned six times with a strength code of strong. Building a sense of professionalism and a positive attitude were shared seven times with a strength code of strong. Facilitating a smooth transition into the first and second year was referenced four times, giving it a strength code of moderate. Putting theory into practice and preventing teacher isolation were not mentioned and assigned a strength code of no relation. Building self-reflection was mentioned six times and given a strength code of moderate. Finally, retaining quality beginning teachers was mentioned nine times with a strength code of strong as displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

Responses from Interview with Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Themes	Frequency of Themes That Warranted Beginning Teacher Induction Program	Overall Strength Codes of Themes of Conditions That Warranted Beginning Teacher Induction Program
Improving beginning teachers' skills and performance	8	Strong
Supporting teacher morale, communication, and collegiality	6	Moderate
Building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude	7	Strong
Facilitating smooth transition into the first and second years of teaching	4	Moderate
Putting theory in practice	-	No Relation
Preventing Teacher Isolation	-	No Relation
Building self reflection	6	Moderate
Retaining quality teachers	9	Strong

Interview responses from the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources were also categorized into the four pre-established domains as previously described. The management domain was mentioned 10 times, giving it a strength code of strong. Referenced six times was the personal domain. A moderate strength code was assigned to this domain. The instructional domain was highlighted eight times and received a strength code of strong. Finally, the socialization domain was stated seven times and received a strength code of strong as indicated in Table 10.

Table 10

Frequency of Responses from Interview with Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Domains		
Management	10	Strong
Personal	6	Moderate
Instructional	8	Strong
Socialization	7	Strong

Interview with Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator. During the interview with the BTS Coordinator, questions centered on what warranted a beginning teacher induction program in the school district. The BTS Coordinator has a vested interest in the program's development and its success. The BTS Coordinator indicated North Carolina requires all beginning teachers to receive support for their 3 years of employment. Although requirements and expectations have changed over the years, beginning teachers are still required to participate in an induction program in the school system in which they are employed. This induction period must include a formal orientation, mentor support, observations, and an annual evaluation prior to the recommendation for a continuing license (Anonymous, personal communication, September 13, 2011).

Beginning teachers in this school system are valued and supported. A unique element of this district's program is the ongoing layered support beginning teachers receive. Beginning teachers receive support from their classroom-based mentor, a lead mentor, site support leader, assistant principal, principal, curriculum support staff, and central office. According to the BTS Coordinator, "when recruiting, we tell potential

hires it's hard to fail in our district because of all the support we have for our beginning teachers" (Anonymous, personal communication, September 13, 2011).

In this school system mentors are a critical part to the success of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program. Mentors are selected based on the policy established by the state. The Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator provided all principals with criteria of mentor qualifications. Because of the critical role of mentors, principals are required to sign-off on documentation indicating that they understand the expectations of central office regarding mentors. Principals are asked to be very selective when choosing mentors. Although beginning teachers need a mentor who is personable, they deserve to have someone who is competent in all areas of teaching such as lesson planning and delivery, student assessment, curriculum content, data analysis, and cultural sensitivity. This school system strives to pair mentors and beginning teachers in the same license area. This alignment provides greater opportunities for the mentor and mentee to plan, share instructional strategies, disaggregate assessments, discuss ways to differentiate instruction, and meet the needs of diverse students.

Transitioning into the teaching profession is important for beginning teachers (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011). The BTS Coordinator stated how her district makes this transition more amenable for beginning teachers. This school system has a systematic approach for helping retain beginning teachers and helping them to succeed in the classroom. All beginning teachers are given a checklist of monthly activities for the year, which highlights the school districts' initiatives, events, and celebrations (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011).

To assuage anxiety of beginning teachers and their initial observations, mentors and site support leaders observe them and provide meaningful feedback prior to an

administrator's observation. Also to ensure effective lesson planning, beginning teachers work closely with their mentors and other grade-level colleagues. This process provides support for beginning teachers struggling with classroom issues or concerns.

In addition to classroom-based mentors, this school district also has lead support mentors who work with the BTS Coordinator. These lead support mentors are three retired teachers – one for elementary and one assigned to middle and high schools. The third lead mentor assists the Beginning Teacher Coordinator and periodically visits schools to support beginning teachers. Lead mentors are another layer and *cushion* of support to help beginning teachers be successful.

During the interview, the BTS Coordinator shared reflection as an essential part of growing and improving teaching practices. A key responsibility of classroom-based mentors is to help our beginning teachers develop and enhance reflection skills (Anonymous, personal communication, September 16, 2011).

Site support leaders (SSL) are another layer of support for beginning teachers. All schools have a SSL in the building who serves as the liaison between their school building and central office. Some of the responsibilities of the site support leader include facilitating professional development for staff, assisting beginning teachers with completing licensure requirements, providing guidance for mentors and beginning teachers, as well as completing classroom observations.

Beginning teachers are provided numerous opportunities to work together. The BTS Coordinator is currently creating a Beginning Teacher Forum for teachers to share and discuss various concerns. This forum will be online and allow for easy accessibility for all teachers.

In the analysis of the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator interview, the

theme of improving beginning teachers' skills and performances was mentioned 10 times for a strength code of strong. Supporting teacher morale communication and collegiality was noted eight times for a strength code of strong. Comments about building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude were referred to eight times for a strength code of strong. Referenced 11 times, facilitating a smooth transition into the first and second years of teaching, was given a strength code of strong. Pointed out five times was putting theory into practice and was given a strength code of strong. Building self-reflection was mentioned seven times and was given a strength code of strong. Statements about retaining quality teachers were stated eight times giving it a strength code of strong as displayed in Table 11.

Table 11

Responses from Interview with Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator

Themes	Frequency of Themes That Warranted Beginning Teacher Induction Program	Overall Strength Codes of Themes of Conditions That Warranted Beginning Teacher Induction Program
Improving beginning teachers' skills and performance	10	Strong
Supporting teacher morale, communication, and collegiality	8	Strong
Building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude	8	Strong
Facilitating smooth transition into the first and second years of teaching	11	Strong
Putting theory in practice	7	Strong
Preventing teacher isolation	6	Moderate
Building self-reflection	7	Strong
Retaining quality teachers	8	Strong

Responses from the Beginning Teacher Coordinator's interview were also categorized into the four pre-established domains. The management domain was mentioned 14 times, giving it a strength code of strong. Personal domain was referenced to eight times and a strong strength code was assigned. The instructional domain was highlighted 12 times and received a strength code of strong. Finally, the socialization domain was stated nine times and received a strength code of strong as shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Frequency of Responses from Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator

Domains		
Management	14	Strong
Personal	8	Strong
Instructional	12	Strong
Socialization	9	Strong

Document review. The Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator provided documents about the district's Beginning Teacher Induction Program which was revised in June 2011. This documentation corroborated the information referenced by the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator. This district's program is aligned with the North Carolina State Board of Education: Policies on the Beginning Teacher Induction Program TCP-A-004. All teachers who held initial (Standard Professional 1) licenses after January 1, 1998, were required to participate in a 3-year induction period with formal orientation, mentor support, observations, and an evaluation prior to the recommendation for the continuing (Standard Professional 2) licensure. The Beginning Teacher Coordinator, in

conjunction with Licensure Specialists, verifies eligibility of beginning teachers for a continuing license.

The district's formal orientation for beginning teachers, with attendance required, is scheduled for 4 days prior to the opening of school. The orientation program is conducted by central office administrator staff and qualified/trained career teachers. To ensure all teachers are provided an orientation, if a teacher is employed during the school year, the orientation is conducted within the first 10 days of employment. The orientation provides the beginning teacher with an overview of the following:

- school system's goal
- policies procedures
- available services
- training opportunities
- Beginning Teacher Induction Program
- Process for achieving a Standard Professional 2 (continuing)license
- North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process
- North Carolina Standard Course of Study
- lesson planning
- classroom organization and management
- local curriculum/pacing guides
- safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint of students
- State's ABC's Program
- State Board of Education's Mission and Goals
- bullying

Annually, each beginning teacher is provided a training mentor. The mentor provides much needed support in helping improve the beginning teachers' skills and performance, develop effective instructional practices and ease the transition into teaching. The district follows specific guidelines for assigning mentors to its beginning teachers. Principals are informed of the mentor selection criteria. After a recommendation from the principal, the experienced teacher must agree to be a mentor and indicate a willingness to serve. All mentors are required to attend mentor training sessions prior to serving as a mentor or complete the required online course. A certificate of completion is issued at the end of the mentor training which affirms to the principal that the mentor can be assigned a beginning teacher. As much as possible, mentors and mentees are in the same licensure/subject area and have common planning times.

In compliance with the Excellence School Act and subsequently GS115C-333, each beginning teacher must be observed at least three times a year by a qualified school administrator or designee. Beginning teachers are also evaluated at least once annually by a qualified school administrator. Each in-class observation must be at least 45 minutes or one complete lesson. A post-conference is required after each observation (North Carolina State Board, 2006).

Each beginning teacher is required to develop a Professional Development Plan in collaboration with his/her principal (or principal's designee) and mentor. The plan is based on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards. The plan must include goals, strategies, and an assessment of the beginning teacher's progress in improving professional skills. Beginning teachers are also required to complete a self-assessment. The purpose of the self-assessment is to clarify performance expectations, guide

discussions about goal-setting, and professional development.

Focus group discussions. To gather additional data about the Beginning Teacher Induction Program in this school district, focus group discussions were facilitated at the local public library. Data gathered from these discussions provide answers to the second research question, “What was the LEA doing to address teacher retention.” This Beginning Teacher Induction Program provides beginning teachers with layered support. Good support improves the likelihood that new teachers remain in the profession (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).

Each discussion began with a brief description of the study. The researcher reminded participants that each session was recorded, however their responses would remain totally anonymous. Discussions were audio taped and later transcribed. Responses occurring five or more times were considered a strong response, a moderate response when occurring three or four times, a weak response occurred once or twice and had no relation in the interview.

Focus group 1–beginning teachers. Participants in this focus group were asked the following five questions:

1. In what ways did the Beginning Teacher Induction Program prepare you for your first year teaching experience?
2. Describe the relationship of your principal in regards to classroom management situations.
3. What program components did you find most helpful?
4. Has your mentor assisted you? How?
5. Talk to me about the site support leader at your school.

Most of the beginning teachers were eager to share their experiences with the

researcher. Many of the beginning teachers agreed that induction sessions were helpful in preparing them for the classroom. One teacher commented, “They went over a lot of curriculum stuff and expectations and where you could go to find certain answers” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 13, 2011). Several beginning teachers commented about how valuable their mentors were in helping understand the curriculum, providing support with classroom management and student assessment, and listening to their concerns. At least three beginning teachers indicated that having a mentor was the most beneficial part of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program. One teacher shared, “my mentor helped me with classroom discipline, assessments, parent conferences, report cards – everything. I actually had two mentors and both were very knowledgeable and helpful” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 13, 2011).

Administrative support was emphasized throughout the discussion. One participant commented, “just having your principal’s support means a lot” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 13, 2011). Two-thirds of the beginning teachers admitted classroom management was a *true* challenge the first year. Additionally, oftentimes the principal or assistant principal handled student behavior concerns. For one beginning teacher, her principal challenged her to think about managing student behavior differentially. He told her to ensure her lesson plans intentionally included time for students to interact and work together. He believed effective lessons minimize behavior problems. This beginning teacher now tries to resolve behavior issues on her own (Anonymous, personal communication, September 14, 2011).

Beginning Teacher Induction Sessions on classroom management was the most helpful program component for all beginning teachers. One beginning teacher stated

“behavior management was a weakness of mine. I really had to learn a lot in this area. Some days were awful” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 13, 2011). Another commented that “the school district offered a lot of different ideas of what you could do to manage behavior in the classroom” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 14, 2011). All the beginning teachers affirmed having ongoing professional development on classroom management is needed and appreciated. To monitor student behavior more effectively, beginning teachers have implemented many of the strategies they learned from their mentors or in professional development sessions. Some of these strategies include using various stickers, providing student behavior contracts that parents sign nightly, implementing of *talk time* (privileges) throughout the school day, *ticket* systems, etc.

The role of the site support leader was described as *significant* by one beginning teacher. Most beginning teachers agreed their site support leader was instrumental in providing professional development at their schools. One beginning teacher said, “the site support leader is most helpful if they are on your grade level” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 14, 2011).

Throughout the discussion, participants in Focus Group 1 also referenced the North Carolina Evaluation Process, self-reflection, staying in the teaching profession, and conferencing with parents.

The Focus Group 1 transcript indicates improving beginning teachers’ skills and performance was referenced eight times. A strength code of strong was assigned to this theme. Supporting teacher morale, communication, and collegiality was noted five times with a strength code of moderate. Building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude was mentioned seven times and received a strength code of strong. Facilitating a

smooth transition into the first and second years of teaching was stated 10 times giving it a strength code of strong. Both putting theory into practice and preventing teacher isolation were mentioned four times and each given a strength code of moderate. Building reflection was referenced eight times and assigned a strength code of strong. Retaining quality teachers was expressed seven times with a strength code of strong as displayed in Table 13.

Table 13

Responses from Focus Group 1 – Beginning Teachers

Themes	Frequency of Themes of Layered Support	Overall Strength Codes of Layered Support
Improving beginning teachers' skills and performance	8	Strong
Supporting teacher morale, communication, and collegiality	5	Moderate
Building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude	7	Strong
Facilitating smooth transition into the first and second years of teaching	10	Strong
Putting theory in practice	4	Moderate
Preventing teacher isolation	4	Moderate
Building self-reflection	8	Strong
Retaining quality teachers	7	Strong

Responses from the beginning teachers' focus group discussions were also categorized into the four pre-established domains. The management domain was mentioned 17 times, giving it a strength code of strong. The personal domain was referenced six times giving it a moderate strength code. The instructional domain was highlighted 12 times and received a strength code of strong. Finally, the socialization domain was stated seven times and received a strength code of strong as represented in Table 14.

Table 14

Frequency of Responses from Beginning Teachers

Domains		
Management	17	Strong
Personal	6	Moderate
Instructional	12	Strong
Socialization	7	Strong

Focus group 2. Focus group 2 was classroom-based mentors. Participants in this focus group were asked the following five questions:

1. How are beginning teachers doing at your school?
2. What concern do you have for beginning teachers?
3. What do beginning teachers need most from you?
4. Talk about the mentor/mentee relationship.
5. How has professional development helped beginning teachers?

Mentors were excited to share their perspective and provide feedback on the district's Beginning Teacher Induction Program. Most mentors agreed that beginning teachers were doing well (Anonymous, personal communication, September 14, 2011). At least two mentors indicated their mentees were athletic coaches. Oftentimes, beginning teachers over-extend themselves and later have difficulty maintaining classroom responsibilities. Despite this, many beginning teachers volunteer or agree to participate in time-consuming sporting events. This is a concern for mentors because beginning teachers are rarely available to meet after school and engage in professional development offerings during the season in which they coach. To redeem this, mentors

must meet with their mentees before school. Another mentor shared, “beginning teachers are doing okay, although they are having some classroom management challenges. Beginning teachers are improving and using more strategies to help manage student behavior” (Anonymous, personal communication, September 14, 2011).

Mentors indicated beginning teachers need a place to *vent*. Oftentimes venting sessions lead to great brainstorming sessions. Mentors agreed being available for their mentees regularly was critical in helping them reflect and solve problems. A few mentors indicated their mentees in the past struggled more with classroom management than some of the beginning teachers this year. One mentor indicated the benefit of having professional development at their schools by their site support leaders. Although beginning teachers are required to attend monthly professional development provided by the site support leaders, at least one-third of the mentors question the relevance of the staff development topics. One mentor stated,

professional development is very prescribed by the county office. I’m not sure it specifically addresses our school’s needs or the students we serve. Oftentimes I don’t see the direct benefit of the professional development or its connection to the classroom or teacher effectiveness. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 14, 2011)

When asked to describe the mentor/mentee relationship, the following adjectives were used: powerful, necessary, reciprocal learning experiences, an obligation, significant, advocacy, etc. (Anonymous, personal communication, September 14, 2011). Mentors expressed the importance of having a mentee on the same grade level. This provides better opportunities for common planning time and possibly teaching some of the same students. Another mentor shared how important it is for the principal to be

involved in helping beginning teachers grow and sometimes the mentor has to help with this process. Many mentors agreed a principal's support and encouragement makes a big difference for beginning teachers. Oftentimes, beginning teachers do not understand the multi-faceted role of the principal. Mentors can help give insight as to why he/she may not always be available, but how they can provide support when on campus, especially with classroom management concerns (Anonymous, personal communication, September 14, 2011).

During the focus group 2 discussion, mentors mentioned the need to help beginning teachers develop self-confidence, assisting beginning teachers to understand the evaluation process, providing morale support during parent conferences, the importance of professional development, and the need to retain teachers (Anonymous, personal communication, September 14, 2011).

The transcripts for focus group 2 indicate improving beginning teachers' skills and performance was referenced 10 times. A strength code of strong was assigned to this theme. Supporting teacher morale, communication, and collegiality was noted four times with a strength code of moderate. Building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude was mentioned eight times and received a strength code of strong. Facilitating a smooth transition into the first and second years of teaching was stated seven times, giving it a strength code of strong. Putting theory into practice was referenced four times, giving it a strength code of moderate. Preventing teacher isolation was mentioned three times and given a strength code of weak. Building reflection was referenced 10 times and assigned a strength code of strong. Retaining quality teachers was expressed nine times with a strength code of strong as displayed in Table 15.

Table 15

Responses from Focus Group 2 – Classroom Based-Mentor

Themes	Frequency of Themes of Layered Support	Overall Strength Codes of Layered Support
Improving beginning teachers' skills and performance	10	Strong
Supporting teacher morale, communication, and collegiality	4	Moderate
Building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude	8	Strong
Facilitating smooth transition into the first and second years of teaching	7	Strong
Putting theory in practice	4	Moderate
Preventing teacher isolation	3	Weak
Building self-reflection	10	Strong
Retaining quality teachers	9	Strong

Responses from the Beginning Teacher Coordinator's interview were also categorized into the four pre-established domains. The management domain was mentioned 23 times, giving it a strength code of strong. Personal domain was referenced to four times and a strong strength code was assigned. The instructional domain was highlighted 19 times and received a strength code of strong. Finally, the socialization domain was stated nine times and received a strength code of strong as shown in Table 16.

Table 16

Frequency of Responses from Classroom Based Mentors

Domains		
Management	23	Strong
Personal	4	Moderate
Instructional	19	Strong
Socialization	9	Strong

Focus group 3. Focus group 3 was planned for all site support leaders in the school district. This was a voluntary process and participants had to willingly provide feedback for the research. Twenty-seven site support leaders were invited via email to participate in focus group discussions. Of the 27, six respondents indicated they did not want to participate and opted out. After site support leaders attended either of the two initially scheduled focus group sessions, the researcher made yet another attempt to get their feedback. The researcher mailed each site support leader a paper invitation inviting them to participate in this study. However, 0% of the site support leaders chose to attend any of the four focus group sessions offered by the researcher.

Surveys

Research by Wonacott (2002) states a well-designed teacher induction program can improve teacher competence, performance, and effectiveness through ongoing personal support and assessment (including self-assessment and reflection). Moreover, Wonacott (2002) indicates that effective induction programs will include feedback on teaching performance and progress; continuing education that builds on pre-service education to meet current needs, and positive socialization into the profession.

Data collected from surveys provided answers to the third research question: Was

the Beginning Teacher Induction Program being followed as designed? Survey questions addressed the layers of support provided by the school district. The four major layers of support for beginning teachers include induction sessions, mentors, site support leaders, and principals. Beginning teachers also receive support from colleagues at their schools, curriculum and instruction staff members and central office personnel.

Of all study participants, beginning teachers are the only participants who provided feedback through actual engagement in the induction sessions. Beginning teachers attend induction sessions at the beginning of each school year and throughout the school year. Additionally, support sessions were facilitated at each school site and district wide to assist beginning teachers in becoming effective educators. In this study, all other participants—mentors, principals, and site support leaders – represent perceived responses through awareness and observation of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program objectives, which were captured in themes for this study.

Theme A represents improving beginning teachers' skills and understanding performance expectations. The percentage of three and four responses recorded by site support leaders and principals to all questions was 92.5% or greater as illustrated in Table 17. While beginning teachers responded with 75.5% to 92.8% of three and four responses, mentors' perceptions were higher at 88% to 98.4%. Table 18 illustrates the central tendencies for beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals. Central tendencies for responses by mentors, and site support leaders and principals were all greater than 3.0. However, item 4, explanation of North Carolina Teacher Evaluation, received a mean score of 2.77 from beginning teachers. Strength codes assigned to mean scores are indicated in Table 19.

Table 17

Responses to Survey Questions
Theme A – Improving Beginning Teachers’ Skills and Performance, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Percentage of 3 & 4 Responses		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
1. Ease transition	90.0	94.1	100
4. Expectations of NC Teacher Evaluation Process	75.7	97.0	100
6. Effective classroom strategies	87.2	94.0	100
7. Professional Development opportunities	82.9	95.5	100
14. Complete paperwork	87.1	97.0	100
18. Resources for students	87.2	97.0	100
19. Helps BT develop as educator	90.0	97.0	100
21. Continues professional growth	84.3	98.4	100
22. Instructional strategies	90.0	97.0	100
25. Observes 4 times a year	92.8	92.3	100
26. Feedback from observations	92.8	88.0	96.2
27. Classroom management	84.3	91.1	92.5
29. Support at school	92.8	96.8	100
31. Varied professional development	84.3	95.5	100
32. Assistance with professional development needs	82.8	94.0	100

Table 18

Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme A – Improving Beginning Teachers’ Skills and Performance, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Mean by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
1. Ease transition	3.08	3.19	3.66
4. Expectations of NC Teacher Evaluation Process	2.77	3.22	3.59
6. Effective classroom strategies	3.15	3.28	3.66
7. Professional Development opportunities	2.98	3.28	3.51
14. Complete paperwork	3.20	3.28	3.48
18. Resources for students	3.18	3.35	3.59
19. Helps BT develop as educator	3.25	3.34	3.62
21. Continues professional growth	3.10	3.34	3.55
22. Instructional strategies	3.18	3.26	3.55
25. Observes 4 times a year	3.35	3.25	3.66
26. Feedback from observations	3.20	3.16	3.40
27. Classroom management	3.05	3.13	3.37
29. Support at school	3.30	3.38	3.74
31. Varied professional development	3.11	3.32	3.59
32. Assistance with professional development needs	3.10	3.20	3.51

Table 19

*Strength Codes for Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme A – Improving Beginning Teachers’ Skills and Performance, by Specific Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Strength Code by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
1. Ease transition	Strong	Strong	Strong
4. Expectations of NC Teacher Evaluation Process	Moderate	Strong	Strong
6. Effective classroom strategies	Strong		Strong
7. Professional Development opportunities	Moderate	Strong	Strong
14. Complete paperwork	Strong	Strong	Strong
18. Resources for students	Strong	Strong	Strong
19. Helps BT develop as educator	Strong	Strong	Strong
21. Continues professional growth	Strong	Strong	Strong
22. Instructional strategies	Strong	Strong	Strong
25. Observes 4 times a year	Strong	Strong	Strong
26. Feedback from observations	Strong	Strong	Strong
27. Classroom management	Strong	Strong	Strong
29. Support at school	Strong	Strong	Strong
31. Varied professional development	Strong	Strong	Strong
32. Assistance with professional development needs	Strong	Strong	Strong

Theme B represents supporting teacher morale, communication, and collegiality. The percentage of 3 and 4 responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals is displayed in Table 20. Beginning teachers responded with 71.4% and mentors with 74.4% on survey item 3, state and local benefits and salaries. Site support leaders' and principals' perceptions were higher at 92.6%. Table 21 displays central tendencies for beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals. Central tendencies from beginning teachers range from 2.78 to 3.28, mentors from 2.80 to 3.44, and site support leaders and principals 3.04 to 3.70. Strength codes assigned to mean scores are indicated in Table 22.

Table 20

Responses to Survey Questions
Theme B – Supporting Teacher Morale, Communication, and Collegiality by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Percentage of 3 & 4 Responses		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
3. State and local benefits and salaries	71.4	74.7	92.6
12. Encouragement beginning of school	88.6	98.5	100
23. School orientation	82.8	85.1	81.4
30. Support throughout the school year	92.9	97.0	100

Table 21

*Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme B – Supporting Teacher Morale, Communication, and Collegiality by Specific
Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Mean by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
3. State and local benefits and salaries	2.76	2.80	3.14
12. Encouragement beginning of school	3.27	3.50	3.70
23. School Orientation	3.10	3.14	3.04
30. Support throughout the school year	3.28	3.44	3.70

Table 22

*Strength Codes for Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme B – Supporting Teacher Morale, Communication, and Collegiality by Specific
Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Strength Code by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
3. State and local benefits and salaries	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
12. Encouragement beginning of school	Strong	Strong	Strong
23. School Orientation	Strong	Strong	Strong
30. Support throughout the school year	Strong	Strong	Strong

Theme C represents building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude. Table 23 indicates the percentage of 3 and 4 responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals. Beginning teachers responded with 77.2% on item 8, understanding the district’s missions and goals. However, mentors’, site support leaders’ and principals’ perceptions were higher at 89.5% and 96.3%, respectively. Table 24 displays central tendencies for beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals. Central tendencies for beginning teachers ranged from 2.78 to 3.17. However, central tendencies for mentors and site support leaders and principals all were greater than 3.0. Strength codes assigned to mean scores are illustrated in Table 25.

Table 23

*Responses to Survey Questions**Theme C – Building A Sense of Professionalism and Positive Attitude, by Specific Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Percentage of 3 & 4 Responses		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
5. Policy on state information	85.7	97.0	96.3
8. District’s mission and goals	77.2	89.5	96.3
16. Develop relationships	88.6	97.0	100
28. Available to discuss concerns	90.0	91.1	96.3

Table 24

*Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme C – Building A Sense of Professionalism and Positive Attitude, by Specific Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Mean by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
5. Policy on state information	3.08	3.17	3.59
8. District's mission and goals	2.78	3.07	3.40
16. Develop relationships	3.15	3.40	3.59
28. Available to discuss concerns	3.17	3.13	3.51

Table 25

*Strength Codes for Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme C – Building a Sense of Professionalism and Positive Attitude, by Specific Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Strength Code by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
5. Policy on state information	Strong	Strong	Strong
8. District's mission and goals	Moderate	Strong	Strong
16. Develop relationships	Strong	Strong	Strong
28. Available to discuss concerns	Strong	Strong	Strong

Theme D represents facilitating a smooth transition into the first and second years of teaching. The percentage of 3 and 4 responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals are displayed in Table 26. Responses reported by site

support leaders and principals was 97.2% on survey item 2, information about the Board of Education, superintendent, and other school leaders at the district level, and 80.6% for mentors. However, beginning teachers reported 67.1% of 3 and 4 responses for the same survey item. Table 27 displays central tendencies for beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals. All central tendencies for site support leaders and principals were greater than 3.0. However, survey item 2 received a mean score of 2.27 from beginning teachers and 2.88 from mentors. Strength codes assigned to mean scores are indicated in Table 28.

Table 26

Responses to Survey Questions
Theme D – Facilitating a Smooth Transition into the First and Second Year of Teaching, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Percentage of 3 & 4 Responses		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
2. Information about Board of Education, superintendent, and other school leaders at district level	67.1	80.6	97.2
11. Regularly scheduled meetings	88.6	98.5	100
15. Professional expectations	92.9	97.0	100
24. Staff members at school	88.6	91.1	85.1

Table 27

Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme D – Facilitating a Smooth Transition into the First and Second Year of Teaching,
by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Mean by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
2. Information about Board of Education, superintendent, and other school leaders at district level	2.27	2.88	3.29
11. Regularly scheduled meetings	3.21	3.34	3.48
15. Professional expectations	3.30	3.40	3.70
24. Staff members at school	3.15	3.25	3.25

Table 28

Strength Codes for Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme D – Facilitating a Smooth Transition into the First and Second Year of Teaching,
Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Strength Code by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
2. Information about Board of Education, superintendent, and other school leaders at district level	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
11. Regularly scheduled meetings	Strong	Strong	Strong
15. Professional expectations	Strong	Strong	Strong
24. Staff members at school	Strong	Strong	Strong

Theme E represents putting theory into practice. The percentage of 3 and 4

responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals are displayed in Table 29. Responses reported by beginning teachers on survey item 10 were 80%. However, mentors' and site support leaders' and principals' perceptions were higher at 93.7% and 96.2%, respectively. The central tendencies for survey item 10 were greater than 3.0 for mentors, and site support leaders and principals. However, the central tendency for beginning teachers was 2.97 as indicated in Table 30. Strength codes assigned to mean scores are indicated in Table 31.

Table 29

Responses to Survey Questions
Theme E – Putting Theory into Practice, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Percentage of 3 & 4 Responses		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
10. Effective lesson planning	80.0	93.7	96.2

Table 30

Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme E – Putting Theory into Practice, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Mean by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
10. Effective lesson planning	2.97	3.32	3.44

Table 31

*Strength Codes for Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme E – Putting Theory into Practice, by Specific Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Strength Code by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
10. Effective lesson planning	Moderate	Strong	Strong

Theme F represents preventing teacher isolation. Table 32 indicates the percentage of 3 and 4 responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals. Responses reported by beginning teachers range from 82.8% to 87.2%. Mentors' and site support leaders' and principals' perceptions ranged higher at 92.5% to 100%, respectively. The central tendencies for all survey items were greater than 3.0 for beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals as indicated in Table 33. Strength codes assigned to mean scores are displayed in Table 34.

Table 32

*Responses to Survey Questions
Theme F – Preventing Teacher Isolation, by Specific Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Percentage of 3 & 4 Responses		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
9. Cooperative activities	82.8	94.1	100
13. Key personnel at school	87.2	94.0	100
20. Develop interpersonal skills	85.7	92.5	100

Table 33

*Central Tendencies of Survey Questions,
Theme F – Preventing Teacher Isolation, by Specific Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Mean by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
9. Cooperative activities	3.07	3.40	3.55
13. Key personnel at school	3.21	3.59	3.59
20. Develop interpersonal skills	3.18	3.16	3.51

Table 34

*Strength Codes for Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme F – Preventing Teacher Isolation, by Specific Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Strength Code by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
9. Cooperative activities	Strong	Strong	Strong
13. Key personnel at school	Strong	Strong	Strong
20. Develop interpersonal skills	Strong	Strong	Strong

Theme G represents building self-reflection. The percentage of 3 and 4 responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals are displayed in Table 35. Responses reported from mentors, and site support leaders and principals were 95.5% and 100%, respectively. However, beginning teachers reported lower ratings at 90% in the same survey item. The central tendencies for beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals were 3.20 or greater as indicated in Table 36. Strength

codes assigned to mean scores are displayed on Table 37.

Table 35

*Responses to Survey Questions
Theme G – Building Self-reflection, by Specific Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Percentage of 3 & 4 Responses		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
17. Solutions for problems and concerns at school	90.0	95.5	100

Table 36

*Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme G – Building Self-reflection, by Specific Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Mean by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
17. Solutions for problems and concerns at school	3.27	3.40	3.59

Table 37

*Strength Codes for Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme G – Building Self-reflection, by Specific Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Strength Code by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
17. Solutions for problems and concerns at school	Strong	Strong	Strong

Theme H represents retaining quality teachers. The percentage of 3 and 4 responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals are

displayed in Table 38. Responses reported by beginning teachers and mentors were 92.9% and 95.6%, respectively. However, site support leaders' and principals' perceptions were higher at 100%. The central tendencies for beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals were greater than 3.30 as indicated in Table 39. Strength codes assigned to mean scores are displayed in Table 40.

Table 38

Responses to Survey Questions
Theme H – Retaining Quality Teachers, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Percentage of 3 & 4 Responses		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
33. Support completing BT requirements	92.9	95.6	100

Table 39

Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme H – Retaining Quality Teachers, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Mean by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
33. Support completing BT requirements	3.30	3.38	3.70

Table 40

*Strength Codes for Central Tendencies of Survey Questions
Theme H – Retaining Quality Teachers, by Specific Groups*

Survey Statement Items	Strength Code by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
33. Support completing BT requirements	Strong	Strong	Strong

Domain I represents management concerns for beginning teachers. Table 41 represents the percentage of 3 and 4 responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals. Beginning teachers responded with 84.3% on survey item 27, classroom management. However mentors', site support leaders', and principals' perceptions were higher at 91.1% and 92.5%, respectively. Central tendencies for beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals were 3.0 or greater as indicated in Table 42. Strength codes assigned to mean scores are displayed in Table 43.

Table 41

Responses to Survey Questions, Domain I – Management, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Percentage of 3 & 4 Responses		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
6. Effective classroom strategies	87.2	94.0	100
15. Professional expectations	92.9	97.0	100
23. School Orientation	82.8	85.1	81.4
27. Classroom management	84.3	91.1	92.5

Table 42

Responses to Survey Questions, Domain I – Management, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Mean by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
6. Effective classroom strategies	3.15	3.28	3.66
15. Professional expectations	3.30	3.40	3.70
23. School Orientation	3.10	3.14	3.04
27. Classroom management	3.05	3.13	3.37

Table 43

Responses to Survey Questions, Domain I – Management, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Strength Code by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
6. Effective classroom strategies	Strong	Strong	Strong
15. Professional expectations	Strong	Strong	Strong
23. School Orientation	Strong	Strong	Strong
27. Classroom management	Strong	Strong	Strong

Domain II represents personal concerns for beginning teachers. Table 44 represents the percentage of 3 and 4 responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals. Beginning teachers reported 84.1% of 3 and 4 responses on survey item 21, mentoring relationships help beginning teachers set goals for continued professional growth. Mentors and site support leaders and principals reported higher perceptions at 98.4% and 100%, respectively. Central tendencies for beginning

teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals are indicated in Table 45.

Strength codes assigned to mean scores are displayed in Table 46.

Table 44

Responses to Survey Questions, Domain II – Personal, Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Percentage of 3 & 4 Responses		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
3. State and local benefits and salaries	71.4	74.7	92.6
5. Policy on state information	85.7	97.0	96.3
11. Regularly scheduled meetings	88.6	98.5	100
12. Encouragement beginning of school	88.6	98.5	100
17. Solutions for problems and concerns at school	90.0	95.5	100
20. Develop interpersonal skills	85.7	92.5	100
21. Continues professional growth	84.3	98.4	100
28. Available to discuss concerns	90.0	91.1	96.3
30. Support throughout the school year	92.9	97.0	100

Table 45

Responses to Survey Questions, Domain II – Personal, Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Mean by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
3. State and local benefits and salaries	2.76	2.80	3.14
5. Policy on state information	3.08	3.17	3.59
11. Regularly scheduled meetings	3.21	3.34	3.48
12. Encouragement beginning of school	3.27	3.50	3.70
17. Solutions for problems and concerns at school	3.27	3.37	3.66
20. Develop interpersonal skills	3.18	3.16	3.51
21. Continues professional growth	3.10	3.34	3.55
28. Available to discuss concerns	3.17	3.13	3.51
30. Support throughout the school year	3.28	3.44	3.70

Table 46

Responses to Survey Questions, Domain II – Personal, Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Strength Code by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
3. State and local benefits and salaries	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
5. Policy on state information	Strong	Strong	Strong
11. Regularly scheduled meetings	Strong	Strong	Strong
12. Encouragement beginning of school	Strong	Strong	Strong
17. Solutions for problems and concerns at school	Strong	Strong	Strong
20. Develop interpersonal skills	Strong	Strong	Strong
21. Continues professional growth	Strong	Strong	Strong
28. Available to discuss concerns	Strong	Strong	Strong
30. Support throughout the school year	Strong	Strong	Strong

Domain III represents instructional concerns for beginning teachers. Table 47 represents the percentage of 3 and 4 responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals. The percentage of 3 and 4 responses recorded by site support leaders and principals ranged from 96.2% to 100% while beginning teachers responses ranged from 75.7% to 92.9%. Mentors' perceptions were higher at 88% to 97%. Central tendencies for beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders, and principals are indicated in Table 48. The central tendencies for mentors and site support leaders, and principals were 3.0 or greater. However, survey items 4, 7, 8, and 10

received a mean score below 3.0 from beginning teachers. Strength codes assigned to mean scores are indicated in Table 49.

Table 47

Responses to Survey Questions, Domain III – Instructional, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Item	Percentage of 3 & 4 Responses		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
1. Ease transition	90.0	94.1	100
4. Expectations of NC Teacher Evaluation Process	75.7	97.0	100
7. Professional Development opportunities	82.9	95.5	100
8. District's mission and goals	77.2	89.5	96.3
10. Effective lesson planning	80.0	93.7	96.2
14. Complete paperwork	87.1	97.0	100
18. Resources for students	87.2	97.0	100
19. Helps BT develop as educator	90.0	97.0	100
22. Instructional strategies	90.0	97.0	100
25. Observes 4 times a year	92.8	92.3	100
26. Feedback from observations	92.8	88.0	96.2
29. Support at school	92.8	96.8	100
31. Varied professional development	84.3	95.5	100
32. Assistance with professional development needs	82.8	94.0	100
33. Support completing BT requirements	92.9	95.6	100

Table 48

Central Tendencies of Survey Questions, Domain III – Instructional, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Mean by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
1. Ease transition	3.08	3.19	3.66
4. Expectations of NC Teacher Evaluation Process	2.77	3.22	3.59
7. Professional Development opportunities	2.98	3.28	3.51
8. District's mission and goals	2.78	3.07	3.40
10. Effective lesson planning	2.97	3.32	3.44
14. Complete paperwork	3.20	3.28	3.48
18. Resources for students	3.18	3.35	3.59
19. Helps BT develop as educator	3.25	3.34	3.62
22. Instructional strategies	3.18	3.26	3.55
25. Observes 4 times a year	3.35	3.25	3.66
26. Feedback from observations	3.20	3.16	3.40
29. Support at school	3.30	3.38	3.74
31. Varied professional development	3.11	3.32	3.59
32. Assistance with professional development needs	3.10	3.20	3.51
33. Support completing BT requirements	3.30	3.38	3.70

Table 49

Central Tendencies of Survey Questions, Domain III – Instructional, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Strength Code by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
1. Ease transition	Strong	Strong	Strong
4. Expectations of NC Teacher Evaluation Process	Moderate	Strong	Strong
7. Professional Development opportunities	Moderate	Strong	Strong
8. District's mission and goals	Moderate	Strong	Strong
10. Effective lesson planning	Moderate	Strong	Strong
14. Complete paperwork	Strong	Strong	Strong
18. Resources for students	Strong	Strong	Strong
19. Helps BT develop as educator	Strong	Strong	Strong
22. Instructional strategies	Strong	Strong	Strong
25. Observes 4 times a year	Strong	Strong	Strong
26. Feedback from observations	Strong	Strong	Strong
29. Support at school	Strong	Strong	Strong
31. Varied professional development	Strong	Strong	Strong
32. Assistance with professional development needs	Strong	Strong	Strong
33. Support completing BT requirements	Strong	Strong	Strong

Domain IV represents socialization concerns for beginning teachers. The

percentage of 3 and 4 responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals are indicated on Table 50. The percentage of 3 and 4 responses recorded by beginning teachers ranged from 67.1% to 88.6%. Mentors', and site support leaders' and principals' perceptions were higher, ranging from 80.6% to 97% and 85.1% to 100%, respectively. The central tendencies for beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals are displayed in Table 51. Strength codes assigned to mean scores are indicated in Table 52.

Table 50

Responses to Survey Questions, Domain IV – Socialization, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Percentage of 3 & 4 Responses		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
2. Information about Board of Education, superintendent, and other school leaders at district level	67.1	80.6	97.2
9. Cooperative activities	82.8	94.1	100
13. Key personnel at school	87.2	94.0	100
16. Relationships	88.6	97.0	100
24. Staff members at school	88.6	91.1	85.1

Table 51

Responses to Survey Questions, Domain IV – Socialization, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Mean by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
2. Information about Board of Education, superintendent, and other school leaders at district level	2.27	2.88	3.29
9. Cooperative activities	3.07	3.40	3.55
13. Key personnel at school	3.21	3.59	3.59
16. Relationships	3.15	3.40	3.59
24. Staff members at school	3.15	3.25	3.24

Table 52

Responses to Survey Questions, Domain IV – Socialization, by Specific Groups

Survey Statement Items	Strength Code by Group		
	BTs n=87	Mentors n=88	SSL & Principals n=30
2. Information about Board of Education, superintendent, and other school leaders at district level	Strong	Strong	Strong
9. Cooperative activities	Strong	Strong	Strong
13. Key personnel at school	Strong	Strong	Strong
16. Relationships	Strong	Strong	Strong
24. Staff members at school	Strong	Strong	Strong

Summary

This program evaluation was conducted to determine the effectiveness of a beginning teacher induction program. Stufflebeam's (2007) CIPP model was used to examine the processes used to recruit, hire, train, and retain quality teachers. Data were collected from interviews, focus groups discussions, and surveys. Collected data were transcribed, coded, analyzed, and placed into various themes and domains. Results from this study can be used to improve other beginning teacher induction programs.

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusion

How do you fill a bucket with holes in the bottom? No, it is not a riddle. It is the rhetorical question one might ask education administrators, legislators, and teachers around the United States. How do we eradicate the current trend of double-digit teacher attrition? How do we improve the efficacy of beginning teachers so that they carry the euphoria of the first day of school throughout their career? What can be done to build strong schools, communities, and ultimately a better, more educated society? Though not a panacea, effective beginning teacher induction programs help to answer some of these questions, and move education, along with its key players and benefactors, in a better direction.

The startling fact that more than a third of beginning teachers leave the profession within their first few years has prompted many school districts across the country to implement Beginning Teacher Support Programs to help combat this statistic (Exploratorium Teacher Institute, 2008). Research indicates the single most effective way to curtail this mass exodus is by supporting beginning teachers in their early years in the classroom (Exploratorium Teacher Institute, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

This study examined a Beginning Teacher Induction Program (BTIP) currently in place in a rural school system in North Carolina to determine its effect on teacher retention. The school system strives to meet the needs of beginning teachers through a layered approach model. As soon as they are hired beginning teachers are assigned an effective, trained mentor in their schools. Each school has a site support leader, who provides another layer of support for beginning teachers, primarily in the form of professional development. The site support leader also serves as a liaison between the

school and central office. Additionally, principals provide guidance, feedback, and encouragement to beginning teachers throughout the school year. Finally, beginning teachers are provided multiple opportunities for professional development from the central office which includes effective lesson planning, formative and summative assessments, and differentiated instruction. The school district also has special recognitions, celebrations, professional learning communities, electronic forums, and discussion boards to help support beginning teachers. This layered support helps provide beginning teachers with tools needed for a high level of probable success.

The primary guiding question throughout this study was, “what is the impact of the teacher induction program on teacher retention?” Additional research questions included:

1. What were conditions that warranted an induction program?
2. What was the school system doing to address teacher retention?
3. To what degree did the stakeholders of the district follow the induction program as designed?
4. How did the teacher induction program meet its objectives?

Various methods were used to collect data for this study: (a) surveys distributed to teachers currently in their second, third, and fourth years of teaching, experienced teachers serving as mentors, experienced teachers serving as site support leaders (SSL), and all principals; (b) focus group discussions with teachers currently in their second, third, and fourth years of teaching and focus group discussion with current mentors; (c) personal interview with the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator; (d) personal interview with the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources; and (e) documentation of North Carolina State Board of Education Policy TCP-A-004 for Beginning Teacher

Support Program requirements.

Results

According to Cohen and Manion (1986), “triangulation is an attempt to map out or explain fully the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint” (Kennedy, 2009, p. 2). By combining multiple data sources, the researcher used methodological triangulation to increase the reliability and validity of the findings in this study. Based on the data collected in Chapter 4, conclusions will be summarized and findings for each research question addressed.

After reviewing the data analysis for this study, there is evidence that this Beginning Teacher Induction Program has impacted teacher retention. Interview and focus group responses, survey data, and documentation about the Beginning Teacher Induction Program demonstrated there was consistency in numerous areas. These areas included mentors supporting beginning teachers, beginning teachers communicating their need for administrative support, and professional development provided by site support leaders. All three data sources favorably indicated state guidelines were followed by the implementation of a Beginning Teacher Induction Program (BTIP). According to the Excellent School Act of 1998, all school systems across the state were required to provide support for beginning teachers. The studied school system, in compliance with the North State Board of Education, created a local Beginning Teacher Induction Program. To improve the retention rate, this school system implemented a Beginning Teacher Induction Program in the 1998-1999 school year.

Although school districts in North Carolina had flexibility in crafting a BTIP based on the needs of their teachers, the minimum state requirements were met in this district. The Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator and the Assistant Superintendent of

Human Resources shared one of the first levels of support by ensuring that beginning teachers, once hired, received thorough, comprehensive, ongoing induction training. These sessions were intended to improve the beginning teacher's effectiveness through detailed sharing of the district's mission, procedures, policies, and goals. Approximately 77.2% of beginning teachers agreed with the aforementioned. Almost a fourth of beginning teachers (23.8%) did not feel their effectiveness was improved by the sharing of the district's mission and goals.

Survey results indicated the perception regarding the district's mission, procedures, policies, and goals were very different between mentors, site support leaders, principals, and beginning teachers. Mentors and site support leaders and principals agreed beginning teacher's effectiveness was improved through detailed sharing of the district's mission, procedures, policies, and goals at a rate of 89.5% and 96.3%, respectively. Data provided through surveys administered to beginning teachers, mentors, site support leaders and principals indicated induction sessions also provided information about state and local benefits and salaries at a rate of 71.4% as reported by beginning teachers and 74.7% by mentors. However, 92.6% of site support leaders' and principals' perceptions were much higher on the same survey item. In addition to responses from the interview with the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator, survey responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals, all agreed at a high level that induction sessions help improve novice teachers' effectiveness through participation in cooperative activities with other new teachers, sessions on effective lesson planning, useful classroom management techniques, and information regarding state policies regarding the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators.

These findings are significant in recognizing practices that support beginning

teachers. According to Wong (2004), no two induction programs are exactly alike; however, effective programs share common elements. The most successful induction programs begin with a pre-school year workshop, offer a continuum of professional development over 2 or 3 years, incorporate a strong sense of administrative support, integrate a mentoring component, and provide opportunities for beginning teachers to visit demonstration classrooms (Wong, 2004). For example, the induction program in The Flowing Wells School District in Tucson, Arizona is exemplary. The program is an “incredibly designed, implemented, and focused plan of staff development” (Wong, 2004, p. 49).

The school district studied complied with state regulations in implementing an induction program. Moreover, they tailored the program to meet the needs of their district. The research question, “what were the conditions that warranted an induction program,” was answered by the triangulation of the data collected from interviews, survey responses, and documents reviewed:

1. In compliancy with The Excellent School Act and TCP-A-004, the state of North Carolina mandated each school district implement a Beginning Teacher Induction Program which includes guidelines for supporting beginning teachers.
2. The Beginning Teacher Induction Program was designed to retain beginning teachers.
3. The program goals and objectives focus on improving beginning teachers’ effectiveness in the classroom, which impacts student achievement.

Data collected from surveys from beginning teachers, mentors, site support leaders, and principals and information provided in focus group interviews helped confirm triangulation to answer the research question, “what was the school district doing

to address teacher retention.”

To confirm what the school district used to address teacher retention, the Beginning Teacher Induction Program goals were examined. These program goals provided the foundation for many survey items. Program goals included 1) hiring, training, and developing effective teachers using layered support; 2) providing experienced, master teachers with opportunities to share best practices and effective teaching strategies by mentoring; 3) assigning each beginning teacher a mentor in their licensure area; 4) helping beginning teachers improve their effectiveness through professional development at the school; and 5) retaining teachers in the profession.

Support beginning teachers received from induction sessions. The effectiveness of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program was confirmed based on data collected in surveys with questions addressing induction sessions and activities. Each of the survey items received a strength code of moderate or strong from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals. These responses are supported based on information shared in focus group discussions related to program objectives. As noted in Table 17 item 4, understanding expectations of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process was rated lowest by beginning teachers at 75.7%. Mentors and site support leaders and principals rated this survey item at 97% and 100%, respectively. Beginning teachers receive ongoing support regarding observations and the evaluation process from their mentors as well as site support leaders. One of the most recent responsibilities assumed by each SSL is to provide ongoing, sustained professional development on the new Teacher Evaluation Process. This truth was evidenced and further emphasized in the interview with the BTS Coordinator as well as focus group discussions with beginning teachers and mentors. Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000) recommended that beginning

teachers receive a formal orientation to the community, district, curricula, and school.

As evidenced in Table 20, Theme B, the percentage of positive responses for these survey items ranged from 71.4% to 92.9% for beginning teachers, 74.7% to 98.5% for mentors, and 81.4% to 100% for site support leaders and principals. Survey item 3, induction sessions help beginning teachers understand state and local benefits and salaries, received the lowest percentage of positive responses from beginning teachers at 71.4% and mentors at 74.7%. Site support leaders and principals rated this same survey item higher at 92.6%.

Table 23, survey item 8, understanding the district's mission, procedure, and goals, was rated lowest by beginning teachers at 77.2%. Mentors and site support leaders and principals rated this survey item at 89.5% and 96.3%, respectively. Beginning teachers are the only participants in this study essentially experiencing each aspect of the program; whereas mentors and site support leaders and principals are providing a perceived response to the implementation of program goals and objectives. Based on data in Table 26, all surveyed groups agreed support and encouragement are provided to beginning teachers throughout the school year.

Support beginning teachers received from mentors. Survey item 15 received the highest percentage of positive responses from all three groups, indicating mentors help beginning teachers understand professional expectations concerning classroom, grade level, and school responsibilities. Additionally, beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals viewed having a school orientation similarly. Moreover, they indicated orientation as an opportunity to provide an overview of the school's and district's philosophy, pinpoint important features of the curriculum, and share advice on classroom management (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Doerger

(2003) further advised that induction programs include a commitment to a formal and informal enculturation process. Beginning teachers are learning the culture of a new environment (school and community) and a profession. Orientation provides the means to begin this essential process.

Support beginning teachers received from administrators. Research indicates how critically important administrative support is for beginning teachers. Principals have the critical role of educational leader (Watkins, 2011). In a study conducted by Wood (2005), principals were shown to be central to the induction process. Novice teachers looked to their principals to develop supportive, non-judgmental relationships with them (Wood, 2005). Moreover, beginning teachers sought examples from their principals for professional behavior, clarification of their roles and duties as education professionals, and advocacy in helping them become successful professionals (Wood, 2005).

The importance of principal leadership is further supported by a study conducted by Hirsch and Emerick (2007). These researchers found more than half of teachers who left the teaching profession in 2004-2005 indicated they received better recognition from the administration in their new jobs (Hirsch & Emerick, 2007). Forty one percent of teachers who took jobs in non-instructional positions also indicated better recognition and support (Hirsch & Emerick, 2007). Principals set the stage for beginning teachers' and mentors' success in induction programs (Watkins, 2011). Principals must be aware of the challenges facing beginning teachers. They must remind their staff that new teachers are still learning. They must also value and articulate the vitality new teachers bring to their schools. Lastly, principals must understand the role of the mentor and clearly communicate the duties and expectations of the mentee and mentor in the mentoring relationship. Principals must provide new teachers with reduced teaching loads,

opportunities for collaboration and observations, and detailed development feedback during the evaluation process (Watkins, 2011).

In Table 41, survey questions 6, 15, 23, and 27, in Domain I, Management, specifically addressed support beginning teachers receive from their principals. Each of these questions received high percentages of positive responses as well as strong strength codes. Positive responses for these questions ranged from 82.8% to 92.8% for beginning teachers. Likewise, mentors agreed favorably to the same survey questions with positive responses ranging from 85.1% to 92.3%. Finally, site support leaders and principals affirmed agreement with positive ratings of 81.4% to 100%.

Support beginning teachers received from site support leaders. A requirement of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program is for novice teachers to engage in, document, and reflect on sustained, high quality professional development at their school site. An advantage of site support leaders being located at each school is the convenience of having professional development facilitated on each school campus across the district. Oftentimes beginning teachers are overburdened, overcommitted, and feel even more overwhelmed when asked to attend yet another meeting. Research indicates location is an important factor in promoting professional development and increasing attendance for beginning teachers (Exploratorium Teacher Institute, 2008). New teachers are more inclined to attend training at their school versus traveling across the district when it may take longer to drive to the meeting than the length of the meeting itself (Exploratorium Teacher Institute, 2008).

Support from site support leaders is yet another layer of assistance beginning teachers receive in this school system. In Table 47, questions 29, 31, 32, and 33 pinpoint survey items in which site support leaders provided support for beginning teachers. Each

of these questions received a high percentage of positive responses from beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals. Question 33, which directly speaks to site support leaders assisting beginning teachers in completing necessary requirements as novice teachers, received a rating of 92.9% from beginning teachers, 95.6% from mentors, and 100% from site support leaders and principals. Questions 31 and 32 related directly to site support leaders assisting beginning teachers with understanding professional development opportunities concerning classroom, grade level, and school responsibilities and site support leaders assisting beginning teachers with professional development needs. These two survey items received almost identical responses from all survey groups. Beginning teachers' ratings of positive responses for questions 31 and 32 were 84.3% and 82.8%, respectively. Mentors responded to the same survey items with 95.5% and 94%. Site support leaders and principals positively agreed to questions 31 and 32 at a rate of 100%.

During focus group discussions, both beginning teachers and mentors mentioned a need to have professional development opportunities more aligned to the specific needs of their schools, students, and communities. Currently, much of the professional development provided by site support leaders is prescribed by the school system and all schools receive the same training, whether effective or not. According to Edutopia (2010), teachers require ongoing professional development to keep them apprised of new pedagogical research, emerging technological tools for the classroom, and new curriculum resources. These professional development opportunities are also important for veteran teachers. Moreover, the *best professional development* is ongoing, collaborative, and connected to students and the specific culture of the teachers who serve them (Edutopia, 2010).

Triangulated data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups indicated that the Beginning Teacher Induction Program is successfully providing support to beginning teachers using layered support from mentors, site support leaders, and principals. Layered support for beginning teachers was studied from all perspectives – beginning teachers, mentors, and site support leaders and principals. Data collected from surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions indicated how layered support is a critical factor to this Beginning Teacher Induction Program. Additionally, each of the focus group discussions and interview sessions emphasized the significant role of the administrator in retaining beginning teachers.

All the data associated with the Beginning Teacher Induction Program showed:

1. The local school district currently has a Beginning Teacher Induction Program in place that effectively provides layered support for all beginning teachers.
2. Beginning teachers greatly benefit from having an effective, trained mentor and value his/her expertise and experience.
3. Site support leaders contribute to the success of beginning teachers by providing ongoing support through meaningful professional development opportunities.
4. A vital part of supporting beginning teachers comes from the school principal. Beginning teachers need and want constructive feedback on their performance from their administrator as evidenced in interviews, surveys, and focus groups.
5. Educators across this school system are following the Beginning Teacher Induction Program as designed with the leadership and direction of the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator.

Finally, the last research question was to determine how the school system was retaining more of its beginning teachers after they completed the induction program.

Over the past 3 years there has been an increase in the number of beginning teachers remaining in this school district as displayed on Table 53. In the 2010-2011 school year, 87.26% of beginning teachers returned to their classrooms in this school system. This information was supported in the focus group discussions with beginning teachers. Based on evidence and supporting data in this study, this school system is effectively meeting the goal of retaining beginning teachers. Table 53 displays this district's beginning teacher retention rates for 2008-2011. It should be acknowledged that other factors can contribute to a teacher leaving a school system and possibly the profession.

Table 53

Beginning Teacher Retention Rates for 2008-2011

Year	Total Number of Beginning Teacher	Number of Beginning Teacher Who Left	Turnover Rate
2008-2009	279	45	16.12%
2009-2010	217	33	15.27%
2010-2011	204	26	12.74%

Limitations

There were several limitations which may have affected this study. The researcher was not a part of the school system's staff. The researcher also served as the facilitator of the focus groups. To ensure the research data was not compromised, the researcher did not solicit assistance from school district staff in an effort to ensure study participants were not *swayed* to respond a certain way. Study data may not have been pure, but tainted if school staff would have encouraged participation. This could have been considered a

threat to the validity of the study.

Invitations for participation in focus group discussions were sent to all teachers currently in their second, third, and fourth years of teaching; all mentors; and all site support leaders in the school system. Less than 10% of invitees participated in focus group discussions. More participation from focus group invitees may have provided additional feedback regarding the various roles in supporting beginning teachers. Moreover, the researcher sent a second invitation via the United States Postal Service inviting all site support leaders to attend two additionally scheduled focus group discussions; however, no one attended (see Appendix E).

Another possible limitation of this study could be only female beginning teachers participated in focus group discussions. This represents an additional limitation of this study. Although this study was not specifically focused on the gender of teachers, further research may be done to examine if male beginning teachers have differing needs than their female counterparts.

The research was conducted at the beginning of the school year. The researcher wanted to capture data about the Beginning Teacher Induction Program immediately after the school system's initial induction sessions. This would allow beginning teachers to provide more accurate feedback about the beginning of school. However, this is an extremely hectic time of the year for everyone in the school system, including central office personnel. This may have affected the response rate.

Delimitations

This study is a replication of a study that used only first and second year teachers. The current study examined the experiences of second, third and fourth year teachers. The researcher wanted to gather data from participants who were currently in a local

Beginning Teacher Induction Program as well as teachers who had completed the induction program.

The participants for the study, teachers completing their second, third, and fourth year of teaching; mentors; principals; and site support leaders were all invited to participate in the study. No random samples were used. The researcher intentionally made this decision in an effort to gather as much data as possible from as many different participants as were willing to share their feedback.

Recommendations

Based on the data collected and the findings of this study, the researcher has noted several recommendations. This school system should continue providing beginning teachers with effective mentors. As noted in Chapter 4, over 90% of beginning teachers indicated they learned “a lot” from their mentors. Beginning teachers shared a better understanding of instructional strategies, appropriate ways to assess students’ progress, building relationships with students, staff members, and parents as well as successful approaches to classroom management. This information was also corroborated in survey results from site support leaders and building administrators.

The Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator should communicate and emphasize to principals how significant their role is in sharing expectations for the entire staff. In this school system, beginning teachers sincerely desired support and encouragement from their principals. The role of the administrator in supporting beginning teachers was referenced in the interview with the BTS Coordinator and both focus groups and received high percentages of positive responses on numerous survey items.

Research has shown the importance of teacher induction to help improve the retention of new teachers. According to Wong (2003), all effective beginning teacher

induction programs should not only be part of professional development for beginning teachers, but should also contain a professional development component. This professional development should have information pertinent to beginning teachers throughout the district. Moreover, principals and administrators should develop professional development programs that address the needs of the beginning teachers in their individual schools.

According to Birkeland and Feiman-Nemser (2009), professional development and the induction process should not be treated as separate initiatives. Birkeland and Feiman-Nemser (2009) recommended that both should be used to create a professional learning community. The induction process is one of enculturation, support, and development. Beginning teachers must be introduced to the structure and culture of the physical school in which they will be teaching, while also being introduced to the overall teaching profession. The introduction to the teaching profession outlines behaviors, expectations, and standards necessary to be successful as an education professional. Moreover, when principals and administrators develop effective induction programs, induction can be used to achieve professional learning communities. In professional learning communities, teachers regularly discuss teaching and learning with the purpose of reaching shared goals for student learning. Other components of professional learning communities include peer observations, opportunities to co-plan, and the collective review of student work (Birkelend & Feiman-Nemser, 2009).

Based on the researched Beginning Teacher Induction Program, this researcher recommends the school district include more specific professional development to address school-specific needs. Moreover, professional development specific to various career stages should also be outlined to help administrators and teachers remain mindful

of what teachers need to learn at different stages of their career. This shared understanding and commitment can begin to improve the current induction program with the new goal of building strong learning communities.

Recommendations for Further Research

A recommendation for further research that emerged from one of the limitations of this study is the need to have more focus group participants. Although there were numerous study participants who completed surveys, very few participated in the focus group sessions. It might be interesting to conduct a similar study which involved more focus group participants such as beginning teachers, mentors, site support leaders, and principals. Focus group discussions add an element of richness to the data.

Another recommendation for further research that was consistently threaded in the research was the importance of the administrator's role in creating a school culture that values, nurtures, and supports beginning teachers. Administrators must create a school climate where beginning teachers are continuously engaged in effective professional learning communities that focus on teacher development, problem-solving, and reflection.

Finally, further research could involve selecting a larger school district that has implemented *layered* support for beginning teachers. Findings from such a study may garner support for other school districts across the country to recommend the implementation of similar programs.

Summation Statement

This study was conducted because teacher turnover across the country is unacceptable, expensive, and preventable. Teachers are the lifelines in our classrooms (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Effective teachers are crucial to the success of our

students (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). Research indicates one-third of new teachers leave the profession within their first year on the job. More frightening is that almost 50% drop out before their fifth year. Beginning Teacher Induction Programs not only benefit new teachers, but help achieve the fundamental goal of all schools – the academic achievement of students (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008).

Survey items for this study were created using the objectives of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program in this district. Additionally, based on research by Saskatchewan Teachers Federation (2009), survey items were further disaggregated into four domains: personal, instructional, management, and personal. According to research by the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation (2009), beginning teachers' needs can generally be categorized into these four domains. By researching a school district that provides layered support for its beginning teachers, evidence exists that indicates program goals and objectives indeed retain teachers. A close examination of this Beginning Teacher Induction Program located in this northwestern, rural school district in North Carolina, allowed the researcher to identify and determine the effects of the program on retaining beginning teachers. Beginning teachers in the school system have numerous arms of support to help nurture and develop meaningful and useful skills and to grow as educators. Once hired, a beginning teacher is assigned an effective, trained mentor. The site support leader at each school also works closely with beginning teachers to provide necessary professional development. With the principal as the instructional leader in the school, he/she establishes the expectations of the staff concerning beginning teachers. Through modeling and the selection of nurturing, knowledgeable, and skilled faculty, the principal creates an atmosphere of support for beginning teachers. In this school district, the principal is responsible for selecting the support providers for

beginning teachers – mentors and site support leaders. A salient contributor in this study is the great deal of influence and role of the principal.

As with any new career, the first few years are filled with learning experiences and challenges. Effective induction programs help new teachers become acclimated to the profession and set the course for fulfilling careers as educators. Findings in this study indicate beginning teachers appreciate and feel supported by their mentors. They also receive ongoing feedback and support from their principals. Site support leaders assist beginning teachers in becoming effective, instructional practitioners through significant professional development offerings. The attrition rate in this school system is progressively decreasing as a result of the implementation of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program.

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Appendix A

Beginning Teacher, Mentor, Site Support Leader, and Administrator Survey

Beginning Teacher, Mentor, Site Support Leader, and Administrator Survey

This study is voluntary. I will participate.

Agree Disagree

What is your current role?

Beginning Teacher Mentor Administrator Site
Support Leader

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Beginning Teacher Induction Program

1. Induction sessions assist in easing the transition into teaching.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. Induction sessions provide information about the Board of Education, the superintendent, and other school leaders at the district level that contribute to the understanding of specific roles and responsibilities.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. Induction sessions provide information about state and local benefits and salaries.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. Induction sessions provide information regarding the expectations of the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Induction sessions provide information regarding state policies regarding the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. Teacher effectiveness is strengthened through training in effective classroom management techniques.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. Effectiveness for beginning teachers is enhanced through training in teaching techniques.
- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
8. The effectiveness of beginning teachers is improved through detailed sharing of the district's mission, procedures, policies, and goals.
- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
9. The effectiveness of beginning teachers is improved through participation in cooperative activities with other new teachers.
- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
10. The effectiveness of beginning teachers is improved through instruction in effective lesson planning.
- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Mentor Support

1. Mentors provide support through regularly scheduled meetings.
- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
2. Mentors provide encouragement during the first weeks of school.
- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
3. Mentors introduce beginning teachers to key personnel at the school.
- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
4. Mentors provide assistance in the development of the Professional Development Plan.
- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
5. Mentors help beginning teachers understand professional expectations concerning classrooms, grade level, and school responsibilities.
- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
6. Mentors help beginning teachers as they learn how to develop effective relationships with students, parents, and colleagues.
- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. Mentors help beginning teachers identify solutions to problems and concerns related to school.
__Strongly Agree __Agree __Disagree __Strongly Disagree
8. Mentors assist beginning teachers in understanding the school community and the available resources to meet the varying needs of students.
__Strongly Agree __Agree __Disagree __Strongly Disagree
9. Mentoring activities such as informal conferences, observations, learning opportunities at schools, and other activities such as the promotion of reflective practice help the beginning teacher to develop as an educator.
__Strongly Agree __Agree __Disagree __Strongly Disagree
10. The mentoring relationship helps the beginning teacher develop interpersonal and relationship skills.
__Strongly Agree __Agree __Disagree __Strongly Disagree
11. The mentoring relationship helps the beginning teacher set goals for continued professional growth.
__Strongly Agree __Agree __Disagree __Strongly Disagree
12. The mentoring relationship assists the beginning teacher in improving the use of effective instructional strategies.
__Strongly Agree __Agree __Disagree __Strongly Disagree

Principal Support

1. The principal provides a school orientation session prior to the start of school.
__Strongly Agree __Agree __Disagree __Strongly Disagree
2. The principal provides introductions of staff members that are key to operations at the school level.
__Strongly Agree __Agree __Disagree __Strongly Disagree
3. The principal, and/or his/her designee, observes instruction a minimum of four times throughout the course of the school year.
__Strongly Agree __Agree __Disagree __Strongly Disagree

4. The principal provides prompt feedback following observations that encouraged and challenged the beginning teacher to improve classroom instruction and delivery.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. The principal provides support with classroom management when needed.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. The principal is readily available to discuss concerns and questions related to the school concerns throughout the beginning teacher experiences.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Site Support Leaders

1. The site support leader provides support at the school level.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. The site support leader provides encouragement to beginning teachers throughout the school year.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. The site support leader helps beginning teachers understand professional development opportunities concerning classroom, grade level, and school responsibilities.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. The site support leader provides assistance with professional development needs.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. The site support leader provides assistance in the completion of beginning teacher requirements.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Appendix B

Letter of Permission to School District Superintendent

xxxx Badenoch Court
Charlotte, North Carolina xxxxx
August 10, 2011

Dear [REDACTED]:

I am requesting your support of a doctoral dissertation study I am conducting with Gardner Webb University. The study will be the Evaluation of the Effectiveness of your district's Beginning Teacher Induction Program and its Impact on Retaining Beginning Teacher.

Teachers completing their second, third, or fourth year teaching, mentors, site support leaders, and principals in your school system will be asked to complete a survey using Survey Monkey regarding the Beginning Teacher Induction Program. The aforementioned will also be invited to answer questions during separate focus group sessions. The Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources will be interviewed separately to provide additional information about the Beginning Teacher Induction Program as well. After receiving permission from you, all study participants will be contacted electronically with a cover letter and a link directing them to the brief survey. A sample copy of the survey and the participants' cover letter are enclosed for your review.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times throughout this process. All participants will remain anonymous throughout the duration of the study. Questions specific to position and experience are for assessment purposes only. The survey will take less than ten minutes to complete. The results of this study will be made available to you upon request.

Please complete the information on the second page of this letter and return this letter in the self-addressed stamped envelope by Monday, August 29. I sincerely appreciate your support of this request. If you have any questions, please contact me directly at (704) xxx-xxxx or amingo@gardner-webb.edu.

Sincerely,

Adriane W. Mingo
Doctoral Candidate
Gardner Webb University

I give permission for the teachers completing their second, third, or fourth year of teaching, mentors, site support leaders, and principals within [REDACTED] to participate in this study.

School System: _____

Superintendent's Printed Name: _____

Superintendent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Letter of Invitation to Participate in Study

Letter of Invitation to Participate in Study
for
Beginning Teachers, Administrators, Mentors, Site Support Leaders
Gardner-Webb University
College of Education

INSERTATION OF LINK FOR SURVEY

Adriane W. Mingo is a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University and inviting you to participant in this program evaluation.

The title of this study is A Program Evaluation of the Impact of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program on the Retention Rate of Beginning Teachers.

Your participation in this study will involve completing a brief and anonymous electronic survey by following the link at the top of this page. This survey should only take about ten minutes of your time.

Your participation in this study will not benefit you directly. However, your participation and feedback will assist school district leaders better understand the importance of effective induction programs.

If you choose to participate, please click on the link at to the top of this letter. You will be directed how to proceed. However, you may choose not to participate. If you decide not to participate, please click the appropriate button at the top of this letter and simply answer the first question.

If you have question about this study, feel free to contact me at 704-xxx-xxxx. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you can call Gardner-Webb University and speak with Dr. Douglas Eury at 704-xxx-xxxx.
Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Appendix D

Letter of Invitation to Participate in Focus Group

I am Adriane W. Mingo, a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University. You are invited to participate in my doctoral research study which has been approved by [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. The title of this study is A Program Evaluation of the Impact of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program on the Retention Rate of Beginning Teachers.

I would like to invite you to attend a 30-45minute focus group along with other site support leaders/mentors/teachers completing their second, third, or fourth year of teaching on: (day), (date) from (start time) to (end time) at (location and address).

Your participation in this study will not benefit you directly. However, your participation and feedback will assist school district leaders better understand the importance of effective induction programs. This focus group will be audio-taped; however, no participants will be publicly identified in the study results.

If you choose to participate, I look forward to seeing you on (date). However, you may choose not to participate. If you decide not to participate, please click the appropriate button at the top of this letter now.

If you have question about this study, feel free to contact me at 704-xxx-xxxx. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you can call Gardner-Webb University and speak with Dr. Douglas Eury at 704-xxx-xxxx.
Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Appendix E

Paper Invitation to Site Support Leaders

September 20, 2011

Dear Site Support Leader,

My name is Adriane Mingo and I am a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University. I am conducting a study of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program in your school system, which has been approved by [REDACTED], your superintendent. Again, I would like to invite you to participate in a 20-30 minute focus group discussion on Tuesday, September 27, 2011 and Wednesday, September 28, 2011 beginning at 3:30. We will meet in the [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED] located at 201 West Fisher Street. The discussion will be audio-taped so that I can accurately reflect your feedback from our time together. However, no names will be mentioned in the study results. Participation is anonymous. Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to.

I am happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at (704) xxx-xxxx or xxxxxxxxx@gmail.com.

Thank you for your consideration. Your feedback is critical in providing district leaders with information about your Teacher Induction Program. I look forward to seeing you next week.

With kind regards,

Adriane Mingo