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The Relationship Between Mentoring And Elementary Beginning Teachers' Intent To Stay In The Teaching Field

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTORING AND ELEMENTARY BEGINNING TEACHERS' INTENT TO STAY IN THE TEACHING FIELD

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this survey research study was to determine if a relationship existed between mentoring for beginning elementary teachers and teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. The key attribute analyzed was the significance of having or not having a mentor. Teachers' perceptions regarding mentoring were analyzed and teacher opinions of the most important elements of a mentoring program were discussed. Results indicated there was not a statistical significance between mentoring and teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. The qualitative portion of the survey revealed that beginning teachers felt availability, accessibility, and receptivity of the mentor were the three most important elements of a mentoring program. Data from the returned surveys were processed through SPSS Version 11 using a *t*-test and an analysis of variance (One-Way ANOVA). Based upon the findings, specific recommendations are made to administrators and district level personnel.

This cross sectional study was based on theories surrounding effective mentoring practices and job satisfaction leading to employment retention. Dr. Jeffrey Scott created the survey instrument and piloted it in West Alabama in 2004 where it was approved for use. Dr. Scott approved innovations made to the survey instrument.

The study was grounded in the theoretical framework of Maslow's Needs Hierarchy and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. A total of 71 elementary beginning teachers, out of a total of 135 (52.5%) from ten school sites in a community in Central Florida, completed and returned the anonymous questionnaire that was mailed to them. The ten school sites included both urban and non-urban student population classifications.

This research is dedicated to

my husband, H. Mitchell Partidge

who has sacrificed to allow me this pleasure

and who has been unfaltering in his support.

I would further like to dedicate this to my remaining support network:

my sons, J.J. and Patrick Partlow

my daughter-in-law Chandra Partlow,

my grandsons, Jamie and Noah Partlow

my mother, Agnes Rigney

And to my terrific family and friends,

whose love and patience are treasured immeasurably.

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CHAPTER ONE
ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

There is a national teacher shortage crisis that started in the early 1980s with a trend of increased teacher retirements (Resta, Huling, & Rainwater, 2001). In fact, at the start of the new century, about 30 percent or approximately one million of the nation's public school teachers were over age 50 and expected to retire by 2010 (NCES, 2002). Additional factors include new legislation that requires class-size reductions, ever-increasing student populations derived from increased birth and immigration rates, and high attrition rates among new teachers who leave the profession within the first five years of hire (Feistritzer, 1999; Johnson, 2006; Resta, et al., 2001; Voke, 2002). The teacher shortage has been more prevalent in inner-city schools, with at-risk and minority students, bilingual education, math and physical sciences, and students requiring special education (Feistrizer, 1994). Urban settings are showing the strain. Ng (2003) stated that beginning teachers are reluctant to accept positions with predominately minority and/or low-income children.

School systems are being held accountable for student progress monitoring and assessments that measure proficiency in the core subject areas of math, reading, and science (Voke, 2002). Federal mandates like President Bush's *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB*)* which includes, *Adequate Yearly Progress* (AYP), coupled with state assessment measuring instruments like the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), are exerting pressure on states, districts, and individual schools to hire fully qualified teachers (National Education Association, 2007). The requirements are stringent and under AYP special education children

must meet the same standards as children with no disabilities (Jehlen, 2006). Jehlen further stated that this requirement causes more schools to fail in meeting their AYP goal than any other student group.

Attracting, developing, and retaining effective teachers to meet these stringent demands has highlighted teacher supply and demand as an area of international concern (White & Smith, 2005). An investment in teacher quality needs to start at the earliest stages of a teacher's career and continue throughout a professional lifetime (Moir, 1999). Developing and retaining a professional takes many years and not only requires special attention at the beginning, but also support for an entire career (Odell, 1989; Odell & Ferraro, 1992).

Support in the form of mentoring is considered one of the broadest methods of encouraging human growth and can touch on every facet of a person's being if offerings are accepted and applied (Shea, 2002). When talented mentors work with novice teachers the integration of theoretical knowledge from the university and practical knowledge from the field can occur (Berlinger, 2000) and new teachers not only thrive, but also meet high standards (Moir, 1999). Mentors and first-year teachers should be involved in a seamless continuum of professional growth that benefits them both (McKenna, 1998).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between mentoring of beginning elementary teachers in a community in Central Florida and the teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. It explored teacher perceptions of the role specific components played in the mentoring process: time, relationships, teaching practices, mentor attributes, and

administration. In addition, this study sought to identify the most important elements of a mentoring program as perceived by beginning teachers.

Statement of the Problem

An impending teacher shortage in the 21st century schools makes it necessary for school districts to provide effective programs for support and development of beginning teachers. In one public school district, located in Central Florida, fifty percent of new teachers in Title I (urban setting) schools are leaving annually. District-wide, twenty-five percent have left within their first three years of teaching. An effective program must be instituted immediately that will foster growth of beginning teachers and create a sense of job satisfaction that will lead to improvement with beginning teachers' intent to stay in the educational field.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the difference in beginning teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field between teachers who were mentored versus teachers who were not mentored?
2. What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the mentoring process regarding specified components within the process?
3. What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the most important elements of a mentoring program?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to ensure uniformity, and to clarify expressions, organizations, and theoretical concepts referenced in this study. The researcher developed all definitions not accompanied by a citation.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): This refers to federal legislation mandating the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts and schools must achieve each year as they progress toward the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) goal of having all students reaching the proficient level on state tests by 2014 (National Education Association, 2007).

Annual Contract Status (AC): Teachers with AC status have less than three years *completed* experience and do not have a continuing contract, which is often referred to as tenure.

Beginning Teacher or Novice: An inexperienced teacher new to the field of education and in the first years of teaching (Woosley & Tiarks, 2003). Certified teacher in the educational setting who, for the purpose of this study, is within his/her first three years of teaching.

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT): Florida's measuring instrument administered annually in grades 3 through 8 and at least once in grades 9 through 12 to comply with federal requirements of testing and assessment (National Education Association, 2007).

Induction Program: A comprehensive program involving those practices used to help new and beginning teachers become competent and effective professionals in the classroom. Induction programs also help develop an understanding of the local schools, community, and culture (NWT Teacher Induction [Online]).

Intent to stay: proposed purpose or design with oneself to remain or be retained immediately in the teaching field

Mentor: An experienced teacher that is presumed to have expertise in the teaching field and the ability to communicate and assist in the growth and development of beginning teachers.

Mentoring: A comprehensive effort by the mentor teacher directed as a sustained effort to guide and assist the novice teacher in developing better teaching practices, curriculum, instructional techniques, and the enhancement of reflection (Woosley & Tiarks, 2003).

No Child Left Behind Act: A federal educational intervention signed into law by President George W. Bush in January 2002. The new law increases testing, reporting, and other requirements for schools (National Education Association, 2007).

Retention: for the purpose of this study, the term retention will used synonymously with 'intent to stay' which was identified as remaining in the teaching field

Title 1: In 1965, the U.S. Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESAA). Its purpose was to provide additional funding support to school districts and individual schools that service students in need of extra academic help and students that come from a large concentration of low socio-economic status families. Title I was originally known as Chapter I (School District of Escambia County, Title I, 2006, p.1). Within this study Title I schools are all synonymous with urban school sites.

Urban School Site: The concept of urban, like the term reform, has no inherent definition or meaning. Its meaning is derived from its' social context (Miron, 1996). However, for the purpose of this study, an urban setting refers to a school site whose student population has a large number of minority students with at least 50% of the students classified as free or reduced lunch

status. Most urban schools are considered Title I schools and within this study, all urban schools are considered Title I school sites.

Conceptual Frameworks

This study is based on theories surrounding effective mentoring practices and job satisfaction leading to employment retention. It is grounded in the theoretical framework of Maslow's Needs Hierarchy and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory.

Wren (1995) stated that employers or leaders should watch out for employee needs to help them attain higher levels. According to Maslow (1970), an individual must have a lower level need met before feeling motivated by the next, or higher, level. Maslow (1970) stated that the five basic needs driving people are: (a) physiological needs, (b) security needs, (c) belonging needs, (d) esteem needs, and (d) self-actualization needs. Self-actualizing behavior is a reaching out toward the environment with confidence that the interaction will be productive and is accompanied by strong self-concepts. The self-actualizing person interacts confidently, locates opportunities for growth and enhancement, and inevitably, contributes to the development of others (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2004).

In addition, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory states that a learner's self-efficacy influences the courses of action he/she will choose to pursue and the level of accomplishment he/she will realize (Driscoll, 2000). The construct of self-efficacy has its theoretical roots in social cognitive theory of human development that stresses the interplay of behavior, environment, and cognition. Self-efficacy beliefs are based on information gathered from four factors: (a) personal performance accomplishments; (b) vicarious learning; (c) social persuasion,

and, (d) physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1993; Larson et al., 1992; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002; Lent, Hill, & Hoffman, 2003).

Social Cognitive Theory is concerned with human agency, or the ways that people exercise some level of control over their own lives. The Social Cognitive Theory purports that human agency is mediated by our efficaciousness, and self-efficacy beliefs influence our choices, our efforts, our persistence when facing adversity, and our emotions (Pajares, 1997). Central to the exercise of control is one's sense of personal self-efficacy or belief in one's capability to execute an action in a required manner to produce a desired attainment (Bandura, 1997). Bandura stated that a learner's self-efficacy is influenced through vicarious experiences. If a learner (beginning teacher) sees a successful performance (by a veteran teacher), then the learner's self-efficacy will rise, and the likelihood of a successful task completion by the learner will be enhanced (McNeil, 1996; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). Consequently, as Bandura's theory stated, if beginning teachers experience successful application of strategies, then they should experience increased self-efficacy and obtain a greater level of satisfaction with their management accomplishments within their own classrooms.

Study Design

Elementary teachers with three or less years of experience were surveyed through use of a questionnaire mailed to and distributed by their principals at their school sites. The Teacher's Mentoring Program Survey contained forty-seven questions designed to provide information regarding: (a) assignment of mentors; (b) perceptions regarding the specific mentoring components entitled Time, Relationships, Teaching Practices, Student Learning, Mentor Roles

and Attributes, and Administration; (c) demographic information, (d) the role mentoring played in teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field; and, (e) opinions of participants regarding the most important elements of a mentoring program. The study was conducted at ten elementary school sites, inclusive of both urban and non-urban locations, in one Florida public school district. Identities were kept anonymous in the hope of receiving candid responses.

Limitations and Delimitations

1. There was a small response pool from which to draw conclusions.
2. The data are delimited to information provided by a portion of elementary teachers in one public school district so results might not reflect the opinion of all members of the included population.
3. Only a survey instrument was used so relevant input from interviews or focus groups were not obtained.
4. Surveying at the end of the year limited opportunities to document growth or attitude changes that occurred from the original date of hire to the survey date.
5. Responses were subject to the validity of self-perceptions regarding mentoring.

Assumptions

This research holds the following assumptions:

1.It was assumed that the participating public school district was concerned about supporting beginning elementary teachers and that this study would add to the existing research geared toward their support.

2. It was assumed that participants answered all survey questions candidly and to the best of their ability.

3. It was assumed that participants completed the survey instrument personally.

4. It was assumed that participants understood all items listed on the survey.

5. It was assumed that participants recognized the value of the study.

Significance of Study

Responses from this study may be used to assist school districts or individual school sites with strategic planning regarding their mentoring or induction programs for beginning teachers. The strategic planning assistance will foster the development of productive mentoring or induction programs that are not only valuable resources for beginning teachers but are ultimately teacher retention tools. Results enhanced existing literature and can be used to help identify and incorporate components perceived by beginning teachers as the most important elements of a mentoring program. Lastly, this study provided information that is valuable in obtaining what McKenna (1998) described as a seamless continuum of professional growth that benefits both the mentor and the beginning teacher.

Organization of the Study

Chapter One introduces the study and includes the problem statement and significance of the work. Chapter Two presents a review of relevant literature for this study. Chapter Three details the methodology and procedures used for data collections and analysis. Chapter Four

contains a description and analysis of the data. Chapter Five provides a summary and discussion of the findings of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

Summary

This chapter reported the purpose of this study, which was to determine if a relationship existed between mentoring of beginning elementary teachers in a community in Central Florida and the teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. It also provided the reason for undertaking the study, which was that an impending teacher shortage in the 21st century schools makes it necessary for school districts to provide effective programs for support and development of beginning teachers. In addition, the significance of the study was discussed. The significance is to utilize responses gathered from this study to assist school districts or individual school sites with strategic planning regarding their mentoring or induction programs for beginning teachers. The strategic planning assistance will foster the development of productive mentoring or induction programs that are not only valuable resources for beginning teachers but are ultimately teacher retention tools.

The three research questions were presented: (1) What is the difference in beginning teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field between teachers who were mentored versus teachers who were not mentored? (2). What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the mentoring process regarding specified components within the process? and (3). What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the most important elements of a mentoring program? The conceptual framework, which focused on Maslow and Bandura, the study design using a survey instrument, plus the limitations, and the assumptions were all presented.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The word mentor is derived from Greek mythology and implies a relationship for the purposes of imparting knowledge, support, and counsel (Summers-Ewing, 1994). Daloz (1986) stated that mentors are guides who lead us along the journey of our lives and should be trusted because they have been there before. We are at a time when the need for effective mentoring to guide our beginning teachers' journey is vital. There will be a demand for 2.2 million teachers in American classrooms in the next decade to serve as replacements for retiring teachers and teachers needed to comply with mandated class-size reduction reform (National Education Association [NEA], 2002; Southworth, 1999). In addition, beginning teachers will continue to fill vacancies created by those leaving the profession prematurely.

Of concern are statistics revealing that approximately one-quarter of all beginning teachers are leaving within their first four years of being hired (NEA, 2002; Rowan, Correnti, & Richard, 2002). Statistics revealing such a high loss of beginning teachers significantly heightens the need for quality mentoring or effective programs as a resource for support and retention of the estimated 2.2 million replacement teachers entering the teaching profession. As Wong (2002) so aptly quoted, "It is much better to train new teachers and risk losing them than not to train them and risk keeping them" (p. 54).

Beginning teachers are usually supported through conventional mentoring and/or induction programs. The mentoring programs supply assistance for beginning teachers by assigning a veteran teacher to the novice teacher with the understanding that the veteran teacher

will provide support and guidance with classroom management skills, content knowledge, and delivery methodologies (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Although this approach is not without merit, the novice teachers' ideas or views can be dismissed if a didactic approach develops. According to Danielson (1999), an effective mentoring or induction program benefits the mentor, the students, and the learning community while encouraging beginning professionals who will ultimately remain in the profession.

Beginning teacher mentoring or induction programs have begun to place greater emphasis on providing collaboration and moral support while helping beginning teachers combat feelings of isolation. One goal is to remain reciprocal in nature with a joint exchange of ideas between mentors and beginning teachers. Another goal is to invite engagement in an on-going inquiry regarding teaching while still continuing to provide encouragement (Chase, 1998; Southward, 1999; Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999).

Challenges for teacher mentoring and retention are augmented in an urban setting. As new professionals in urban settings begin implementing what they have learned about child development, teaching methods, and classroom management, they are also tackling the complexities of understanding the socio-historical context of race (Watson, Charner-Laird, Kirkpartick, Szczesiul, and Gordon, 2006). Because mentoring advocates collegial dialogue between beginning teachers and veteran teachers, it helps facilitate understanding and encouragement regarding the complexities encountered in teaching within an urban setting. Burnette (1999) stated that faculty members should be aware of and incorporate behaviors and strategies that exemplify standard practices of good teaching including those that affect the success of culturally diverse student populations. However, factors other than student

achievement in an urban setting are often the cause of teacher turnover (Quartz, Lyons, Masyn, Olsen, Anderson, Thomas, Goode, & Horng, 2004). Quartz, et. al., 2004) stated these factors included lack of supportive principals and colleagues, unreasonable teaching assignments and workloads, insufficient resources, large class size, inferior quality of facilities, lower salary, and lack of upward mobility.

Watson, et al. (2006) found that novice teachers need guidance in learning to develop pedagogies that target their individual students' needs and novice teachers also need to critically examine their beliefs about race and inequity and how it affects their teaching practices. "They need to be given opportunities to reflect on the specifics of their own classrooms with mentors who they are comfortable with and skilled in exposing how inequities influence their teaching" (Watson, et al., p. 407). However, there has been more than 25 years of research and theorizing on the topic of preparing teachers to work with diverse students, including urban settings, with limited success at tackling the task (Hollins & Guzman, 2005).

Mentoring builds collegial relationships aimed at creating a positive work environment. In turn, the positive and professional work environment created impacts job satisfaction and is a meaningful factor in teachers' decisions for remaining in the profession (Bogler, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 1998), one of the desired results of an effective mentoring program.

Components of the Literature Review

This review of literature contains research focusing on specific areas of mentoring and teacher retention in the educational setting. Research regarding the history of mentoring is detailed initially in this chapter. Secondly, recent research analyzing mentoring in the

educational sector is discussed. Next, the problem of teacher retention and strategies for teacher retention are reviewed. Finally, connecting teacher retention with mentoring is examined.

The History of Mentoring

Mentoring has a lengthy and distinguished history with roots dating back to ancient times. Homer's *Odyssey*, an epic poem from Ancient Greece thought to date back at least 3000 years, is frequently cited as the original source for the concept of mentoring (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995). The *Odyssey* tells the story of King Odysseus' return from the Trojan War after a lengthy absence and of his entrustment of his kingdom, Ithaca, and his then infant son, Telemachus, into the care of a trusted friend, Mentor. In addition, we are told of Athene, Goddess of War, who helps prepare the son, Telemachus, for the awaited reunion with his father, King Odysseus, and of her assistance in the regaining of the throne from those that had usurped Ithaca (Butcher & Lang, 1890).

Most descriptions of the Mentor character depict early literature's definition of mentoring in terms of the functions that should be performed and the expectation that the mentor possessed a visionary perception of the ward's true potential (Colley, 2002; Haensley & Parsons, 1993; Merriam, 1993; Tickle, 1993). Anderson and Lucasse Shannon (1995) stated that many regard Mentor as the trusted advisor or surrogate parent whose position was to nurture, protect, and provide role modeling. Stammers (1992) stated that others felt the goddess Athene, disguised at times as Mentor, had the active mentoring role. Athene carried out numerous functions that have been closely associated with mentoring, such as advising and advocating, and she has been regarded as willing to go that extra mile (Colley, 2002; Shea, 1992).

However, there was the absence of an emotional bonding in the impersonal relationship portrayed in the *Odyssey* between Telemachus and Athene. This absence is a contradiction of the modern idea of mentoring, which as Summers-Ewing stated is "the relationship that unfolds to support the young protégé's personal and professional development" (1994, p 3). Athene's agenda did not include Telemachus' personal development. Telemachus' professional development was considered necessary in order to further Athene's own central purpose (Colley, 2002).

In addition, Mentor's portrayal was by far not the wise and nurturing advisor that current scholars perceive a mentor to be. Merriam stated there should be a "powerful emotional interaction" and the mentor should be "trusted, loving, and experienced in the guidance of the younger" (1983, p 162). Telemachus' kingdom was not only in complete disarray but he was also experiencing a personal crisis and it was Mentor who presided over this havoc and was a public laughing stock (Colley, 2001). Mentor does not fulfill his role as a mentor to Telemachus in any meaningful way at all (Roberts, 1998).

Gilroy (1997) lists four stages that can be distinguished in the history of mentoring: (a) The Homeric Stage, (b) The Classical Stage, (c) The Victorian Stage, and (d) The Modern Stage. Numerous mentoring relationships have been based upon important cultural practices and historical eras, like those of the characters portrayed in the mythical *Odyssey* of The Homeric Stage. Other eras or stages contained mentoring relationships, such as, religious master-disciple relationship and the trade craftsman-apprentice (Gay & Stephenson, 1998). The stages do not, however, reflect a chronological order of positive relationships between mentor and charge.

The Homeric Stage dates back to the Ancient Greeks. Greek mythology reflects turbulence and struggles that dictate the necessity of a mentor, often to ensure the survival of the state. The role of the Gods was to intervene to prevent disorder (Reed, 1975). Athene intervened to further her central purpose, which was the restoration of Telemachus' father to the throne. The functions of mentoring occurred but there still remained that highly impersonal relationship.

The Classical Stage is when mentoring became primarily defined as a "quasi-parental relationship between exceptional individuals, like Socrates and Plato, or Haydn and Beethoven" (Colley, 2002, p 264). These mentoring relationships contained an element of emotional bonding. The mentor was helping shape the growth and development of the protégé. There was a relationship in which the older member was trusted and experienced in the guidance of the younger (Merriam, 1983). Although this stage does depict more personal relationships, a study conducted by Levinson (1978) reveals some contradictions. Only the wealthier members of his sample described successful relationships as crucial to their career and life development. Levinson concluded that this creates the thought that self-interest in self-reproduction may be the motivating factor for older people to mentor younger protégés.

The Victorian Stage transforms the essence of mentoring from an intra-class mechanism to a direct instrument of domination of one class over another (Colley, 2002).
Wide-scale poverty was affecting England's working class during this stage. The ruling-class initially responded with financial assistance through charity, but in the long run it was evident that this was an unsatisfactory solution. It was decided that the state of poverty was not caused by material conditions but by the working class' own financial habits. In response to this decision, the Charity Organisation Society (a significantly influential charity organization in

England) organized a massive, nation-wide program of voluntary work (Novak, 1988). Middle-class mentors were to befriend working-class families and mentor them in the art of thrift, diligence, and self-discipline. Mentor volunteers reported weekly progress to the Charity Organisation Society who then determined which families were the deserving poor and which were the undeserving poor. The deserving poor would be given charity with the ultimate goal of mentoring them back to independence. The undeserving poor were dealt with through the Poor Law System and were ultimately sent to the workhouse. However, due to vigorous resistance on the part of the working people, this powerful movement did fall to a fairly rapid demise (Novak, 1998).

The Modern Stage showed mentoring developing more as an intervention with a more personal relationship between the mentor and the mentee. Mentoring was viewed as a relationship that unfolded to support personal and professional development (Summers-Ewing, 1994). Bell (1996) stated a mentor relationship was unique and the mentor needed to be understanding, compassionate, and possess a willingness to share information. A number of states and school districts developed mentoring or induction programs, sometimes with both components integrated into one program and sometimes with either component alone (Education Commission of the States, 2005). Two types of mentors were identified: formal and informal. Formal mentors were designated to specifically facilitate a mentees' development and advancement. The greater majority of mentors fell into the second category, informal, and provided mentoring functions because they derived personal satisfaction from the mentoring relationship (Noe, 1988).

Ideas emerged regarding the most appropriate way to mentor. Freedman (1999), for example, argued that directive methods were counterproductive and that empowerment through less directive styles of mentoring should be emphasized. Skinner & Fleming (1999) brought light to the tensions encountered in balancing the role of friend in mentoring and the contracted goal of the mentoring project. Skinner and Fleming (1999) also addressed concerns with the qualifications of the mentors and sited reports which indicated volunteer mentors received either minimal or no training prior to undertaking the mentoring task. Noe (1988) noted that protégés could have multiple mentors and stated caution should be exercised in compiling logs of meetings mentors used to determine a mentee's progress as it broached The Victorian Stage with its accountability reporting to the Charity Organisation Society (Colley, 2002).

Daresh (2004) noted that mentoring in education has been cyclical. He stated that in the 1980s mentor programs were emphasized but showed a decrease in the early 1990s as many programs suffered from lack of resources. However, a reemergence surfaced again in the late 1990s. In January 2002, President Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act* requiring states to have highly qualified teachers in every public school classroom by the end of the 2005-2006 school year (National Education Association, 2007). When viewed in conjunction with this law required smaller class sizes (Voke, 2002), rising student enrollment, and accelerated teacher retirements, contributed to teacher shortages across the nation (Resta, Huling, & Rainwater, 2001). Alternative Certification Programs (AC) to attract candidates from fields outside of education were established to supplement traditional college education programs (Feistritzer, 2001) and mentoring has already proven to be a key factor contributing to AC teachers remaining in the field (Jorissen, 2002).

Recent Research Regarding Mentoring

Osgood and Self (2002) emphasized the importance of the role local mentors play in the development of new teachers as they advise, counsel, and guide beginning teachers. New teachers need a supportive collegial atmosphere as they look to their colleagues for advice and ideas to help them through the first months on the job (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002). The environment in which teachers work and their ability to survive and thrive within it is an important part of job satisfaction (Friedman & Kass, 2002). What happens to beginning teachers during their early years on the job determines whether they remain in teaching (Aldeman, 1991).

According to a review of the literature, teacher mentoring and induction programs are critical to the beginning teachers' development (Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver & Yusko, 1999). Novice teachers cannot focus on the impact of their instruction on pupils until their early concerns of survival as teachers are addressed (Evertson & Smithey, 2000). Accurate feedback about teaching from mentors is a crucial component of guiding novice teachers toward this instructional change (Frieberg, 2002). Due to mentoring support and guidance, new teachers are able to focus in on students' learning sooner, an important factor contributing to a school's overall student achievement (Black, 2001). Many districts consider the induction period to be the first three years on the job and provide formal induction programs and other types of support for two, if not three full years (Gordon, 1991; Paese, 1990; Schaffer, Stringfield & Wolffe, 1992). It is important that the support occurs from the first day of responsibility (McKibbin, 2001).

One of the major reasons for developing support programs for new teachers has been to address issues of retention (Gold, 1994). Research clearly shows the significance of having highly efficacious teachers in the classroom (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001) but an

increasing number of teachers leave the profession due to a perceived or genuine lack of support (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Studies show that support from veteran teachers results in higher job satisfaction and higher retention rates for beginning teachers (Dianda, Ward, Quartz, Tushnet, Radio, & Bailey, 1991). Stansbury and Zimmerman (2002) stated mentoring is one of the most important support measures veteran teachers supply because experienced colleagues can offer sympathy and perspective, serve as a sounding board, assure beginners that their experiences are normal, and provide advice to help reduce the inevitable stress.

Approximately 30 states now mandate some form of mentoring support for beginning teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 1996). However, effective programs to support beginning teachers are still few and far between (Renard, 1999; Weiss & Weiss, 1999) as too many programs lack what it takes to be effective in meeting beginning teachers' needs (Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997). Poorly designed mentoring programs contribute to higher rates of new teacher attrition and lower levels of effectiveness for those teachers that remain on the job (Black, 2001).

Rutherford (2005) identified eight specific areas as being potential challenges and concerns for any teacher new to a school or district. The eight potential challenges and concerns were: (1) personal, (2) professional, (3) curriculum, instruction, and assessment, (4) organizational systems, (5) students, (6) colleagues, (7) school/system, and (8) parents and community. Well-matched mentors provide the collegial support necessary to deal with these challenges and promote a heightened sense of job satisfaction.

Serpell (2000) stated that successful beginning teacher induction programs include: (a) a general orientation, (b) school handbooks, (c) training on curriculum and effective teaching, (d) opportunities to observe and be observed, (e) mentorship, (f) release time, and (g) reduction in

teaching loads. Serpell (2000) added that formal mentoring coupled with release time is reported to be the most important component of an induction program.

In creating induction or mentoring programs it is important to recognize that teachers, like their students, are individuals who have different learning styles, backgrounds, and needs (Gordon, 1991; Kestner, 1994; Lawson, 1992). Thought needs to be given to connecting the theories and teaching methods learned in college to actual classroom practice (Brock & Grady, 1998). Beginning teachers need teacher mentors or mentoring teams and should be afforded the opportunity to team teach with a more experienced educator (Huling-Austin, 1992: Kestner, 1994; Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997).

The majority of mentor teachers surveyed indicated mentoring improved their teaching skills and afforded opportunities to learn new strategies from their beginning teachers (Dana Center, 2001). It should be noted, though, that mentoring programs need not be limited solely to beginning teachers, but can include assistants, counselors, coaches, veteran teachers, and other staff members (Brewster & Railsback, 2001). Evidence indicates that principals would benefit from a formal mentoring program (Malone, 2001). Hobson (2003) found that mentoring programs not only helped school leaders, but also the mentor and the school.

Jorissen (2002) conducted a study examining teacher retention and reported that mentoring played a central role in teacher retention. Mentors provided multiple services including the promotion of personal and professional well being for participants. A good mentor was described as being accepting of beginning teachers and recognized that novice teachers needed practice and solid, caring guidance (Rowley, 1999). Other characteristics may include a desire and willingness to give up time to help others, possession of a positive but realistic

outlook, the demonstration of a strong desire for professional growth, an ability to provide constructive criticism if needed, and an adeptness at questioning and probing to discern information from the mentee (Mentors Forum, 2005).

Feiman-Nemser (1996) suggested pairing new teachers with mentors who were already reformers and would explore new approaches together with the beginning teacher. Brock and Grady (1998) cautioned against pairing new teachers with their department chair or immediate supervisor advising that the more closely mentoring is tied to evaluation, the less willing the new teacher may be as a risk taker or inquisitive learner. Mentors and mentees should have similar interests and outlooks on teaching and if possible, teach the same grade level or subject area (Brock & Grady, 1998; DePaul, 2000; Huling-Austin, 1992). Although regular times for mentors and mentees to meet is desired and should be built into the school schedule, release time is not always available and requires consideration of alternate solutions, such as hiring retired teachers as mentors (Brewster & Railsback, 2001; DePaul, 2000).

Quality support and training for the mentors of beginning teachers should be highly emphasized (Weiss & Weiss 1999). Even the most effective teachers need help to refine their mentoring skills. Mentors need training that should include: (a) program goals and purposes, (b) district philosophies, (c) methods of observing and providing feedback, (d) adult learning theories, and (e) effective communication for integrating subject matter into discussions (Halford, 1999; Huling-Austin, 1992). Although mentors felt fairly comfortable in their roles to assist protégés as they performed multiple services, the mentors reported that they felt uncomfortable in the role of observer/evaluator and experienced feelings of inadequacy (Osgood & Self, 2002).

Research shows that a trained support team and a research-based framework for mentoring have improved teacher retention and the quality of teaching for both beginning teachers and veteran teachers alike (Garza & Wurzbach, 2002). Alternative Certification Programs (AC), an unconventional way of recruiting teacher candidates outside the field of education, also highlights support from mentors as a successful common element (Heyman, 2002; Jorissen, 2002). Thompson (2002) reports that North Carolina has now mandated training for mentors that includes developing a trusting relationship, improving communication skills and, understanding the needs of and advocating for new teachers. California also has a rigorous mentor-training program and includes addressing the special needs of English language learners, considered critical for many California teachers (Moir & Baron, 2002).

In order to make mentors feel better about the time expended in the mentoring process, mentors should be paid, given release time, or otherwise be rewarded or compensated for participating (Halford, 1999). Mentor teachers should not be expected to replace the role of the administration. In fact, mentoring programs should have administrative support, adequate funding, and clear leadership (Halford, 1999).

Problems of Teacher Retention

New teachers are leaving the profession in record numbers, especially in low-income, low-performing schools (Birkeland & Johnson, 2002), commonly referred to as urban settings. Approximately 15 percent of new teachers leave teaching within the first year, 30 percent within three years, 40 to 50 percent within five years, and in addition, 15 percent of new teachers change school locations (Ingersoll, 2002; Smith & Ingersoll, 2003). The Alliance for Excellent

Education (2005) estimated the turnover cost to the schools was $4.9 billion per year. First-year teachers have consistently proven to be less effective than their more experienced colleagues, which compounds an already financially staggering cost into one of student learning, whose price tag is not so easily determined (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001; Johnson, 2006). " The majority of new teachers quickly learn to cope and become successful teachers, but their attrition rate is high, which leads to enormous costs both in human terms and in dollars expended" (Conyers, 1999, p. 124).

The Recruitment and Retention Project (2002) identified three major classes of factors influencing teacher retention and attrition: (a) external factors, including retirement incentives, alternatives outside of teaching, and salary, (b) employment factors, and (c) personal factors. Although external factors impacted teacher decisions to stay or leave, it was determined that personal factors and employment factors provided more compelling reasons.

Large, urban schools that serve low-income students have nearly twice the annual teacher turnover as large, suburban schools that serve fewer low-income students (Ingersoll, 2002). Research indicates that one of the problems is the working conditions (an employment factor noted by the Recruitment and Retention Project, 2002) of schools serving large numbers of low-income students and children of color, including: (a) much higher incidences of inadequate facilities than other schools, (b) evidence of vermin in the buildings, (c) unclean or inoperative bathrooms, (d) inadequate textbooks and resources for students to use at school and take home, (e) limited computers and Internet access, (f) limited science resources, (g) and more out-of-pocket expenses for teachers to supplement the resource inadequacies (Carroll, Fulton, Abercrombie, & Yoon, 2004).

Another reason for high turnover rates in low-income urban schools is a lack of support and guidance offered to new teachers when compared to more affluent schools (Johnson, 2006). Novice teachers' professional success and satisfaction is tied to the support found at the particular school and includes interaction with colleagues, growth opportunities, appropriate assignments, sufficient resources, and school-wide structures for student learning (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). These issues may be more acute for beginning teachers in low-income schools (Johnson, Kardos, Kauffman, Lie, & Donaldson, 2004). Truscott and Truscott (2005, p. 128) summed it up when they stated "beginning teachers in largely minority schools report lower job satisfaction, greater difficulty connecting with students, and more complex teaching environments".

Research shows the composition of a school's student body with regard to race, ethnicity, and poverty have all influenced teacher mobility and attrition (Guin, 2004; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001; Ingersoll, 2001; Kelly, 2004; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005; Shen 1997). Ng (2003) stated research indicated most preservice teachers are young, white females trained in traditional university programs that lack interaction with racially and culturally different individuals. Ng stated further that stereotypes and misconceptions about individuals occur due to a lack of understanding of races and cultures and make teachers reticent to teach in urban or inner-city schools. Ferguson (1991) found that more academically astute teachers were not as apt to teach in lower-socioeconomic schools, while teachers from selective colleges generally taught at schools with lower percentages of economically disadvantaged students (Ballou, 1996).

In most professional settings a common practice is to give inexperienced staff less responsibility and more veteran support. However, this has not proven true in education (Johnson, 2006). Beginning professionals assume the same exact responsibilities as the veterans, which creates a situation ripe for frustration (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). Too often beginning teachers find themselves responsible for the students with the greatest needs, assignments to grade levels in which students take state exams, or assignments that require traveling from classroom-to-classroom and/or from campus to campus (Hoerr, 2005; Johnson, 2006). In addition, the traditional sink-or-swim induction methods some schools often employ contribute to high attrition rates and to lower levels of teacher effectiveness (Garza & Wurzbach, 2002).

The principal is also central in shaping how and/or how well a school works (Murphy, 2002). Effective principals need to be visionary leaders who are committed to bring the stakeholders of a school together (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2002). In a study by Johnson (2006), teachers wanted administrators to be present, positive and actively engaged in the instructional life of the school, but administrators often failed to meet these expectations. Many teachers complained that administrators failed to adequately support them with discipline and were concerned that they would evoke disapproval for having students removed for behavioral reasons. Teachers in the study said most principals succeeded in some things but fell short in others and were viewed by some teachers as ineffectual, demoralizing, or even destructive, and were the reason some teachers left.

Research indicates that disruptive students, uninvolved parents and invasive bureaucracy are contributing factors to the demoralization of teachers and to the influencing of teachers

leaving the classroom (Inman & Marlow, 2004). “There is no more immediate and worrisome challenge for new teachers than establishing and maintaining order in their classroom” (Johnson, 2006, p 18). Johnson states further that teachers in her study talked about coping alone due to the absence of a school-wide discipline plan that was supported and implemented by both teachers and administrators. Public Agenda, an opinion research organization, stated 77 percent of teachers surveyed indicated classroom teaching could be more effective if teachers did not have to spend so much time dealing with the management challenges brought upon them by the diversity of the student populations and unruly, disruptive students (Chokshi & Fernandez, 2005; Glass, 2004). A study by Meister and Melnick (2003) stated 273 first and second year teachers reported that they believed they had enough pre-service exposure in the area of classroom management prior to entering the classroom but were far less confident after entering the classroom. Teachers felt inadequate and were frustrated at spending so much of their instruction time on reactive instead of proactive methods of management. Although findings support that family and/or personal reasons, such as pregnancy and child rearing or health problems are reasons for leaving the profession and quitting the workforce altogether (Murnane & Olsen, 1990), job dissatisfaction primarily due to poor salary, poor administrative support, and student discipline problems are once again the most frequently reported reasons teachers give for exiting the profession (Tye & O’Brien, 2002; Ingersoll, 2000; Macdonald, 1999). Some qualitative studies do suggest that general factors, including government policies, portrayal of teachers in the mass media, and community attitudes also influence teachers’ general esteem and status in society, which plays a large part in their professional commitment and morale (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2005). Teaching always ranks high when judged against other professions,

however a recent survey showed that a majority of college graduates who decided against entering the teaching profession believed teachers do not feel adequately respected or appreciated (Budig, 2006).

The options of today's prospective teachers are different from teachers that preceded them. Individuals who consider teaching now have an abundance of career opportunities available and many of the choices are at much higher salaries with better working conditions (Johnson, 2006). Teachers bear the burden of society's newer and ever increasingly higher expectations for schools as the public now expects them to meet unprecedented demands (Hargreaves, 2003). "Teaching in America's K-12 schools is one of the nations lowest-paid professions… and it is common for teachers with five or 10 years of experience to earn less than recent graduates who have embarked on other careers" (Budig, 2006, p. 114). A study in the early 1980's found that new teachers could be attracted to more challenging schools if salary incentives were in place (Bruno, 1981), but Budig (2006) stated that schools must now pay teachers appropriate salaries if America is still going to attract the best young minds to even enter into the field. American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President, Edward J. McElroy, stated "current salaries fail to reflect the professional qualifications, preparation and challenges that teachers must meet every day in the classroom" (2005, p.6). The AFT salary survey revealed that for the first time since the 1999-2000 school year, the average teacher salary failed to keep up with inflation.

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) reported that many school districts do little to retain quality teachers, treating them instead as an easily replaceable commodity. Not only do first–year teachers leave the profession, but veteran teachers as well

(Coppenhaver & Schaper, 1999). They suffer from what Friedman (1995) states is a syndrome that occurs when an individual perceives a significant discrepancy between effort and results and is commonly defined as burnout. Research does indicate that some attrition is normal and considered healthy as it can promote innovation in schools (Macdonald, 1999). However, turnover can negatively impact a school community by causing disruption of educational programs and professional relationships that are geared to improve student learning (Bryk, Lee, & Smith, 1990; Ingersoll, 2001).

Strategies for Teacher Retention

There are numerous possible factors identified in the literature that influence retention, but placement of those factors into the three categories (1) teachers, (2) schools, and, (3) the broader community will help identify them more easily.

Teacher Factors

Idealisms of teachers are important. Teachers with a strong service ethic are driven to teach out of the importance they will serve to society, but the school environment can provide less than sufficient guidance on the goals, means, and evaluation of their work, so they become easily frustrated and depart the profession (Miech & Elder, 1996). One strategy for remedying this is building a career ladder for classroom teachers so novice teachers have a supportive work environment when they are new and also have opportunities to grow once they have gained experience. Career ladders formalize roles of mentors, master teachers, curriculum developers, or professional development planners so both novice teachers and veterans have a well-organized

support system. Career ladders are generally organized for teachers collaboratively by districts and teacher unions (Johnson, 2006).

A major factor in a teacher's success and endurance comes from the ability to accomplish much in a limited timeframe despite the knowledge that learning to prioritize comes with time and experience. To expedite this learning process, support such as professional development and individual growth plans can help novice teachers do the following: (a) learn more about pedagogy and curriculum, (b) adapt to the school's climate and teaching context, (c) improve organizational skills, and (d) boost confidence with colleagues and other stakeholders (Hoerr, 2005).

Low wages are one of the leading causes of teacher attrition, especially when consideration is given to the number of years of higher education that the average state-certified teacher has completed (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2005). Compensation is the most important influence on the decision to remain in the teaching profession for male teachers and experienced female teachers (Gritz & Theobold, 1996). An effective way to bring about a change is to speak up and become involved. Time is generally limited for both novice and veteran teachers but joining local, state, and national teacher unions gives busy teachers a voice that can bring about change (Bates, 2004). In addition, many districts provide degree differentials for advanced degrees and states offer tuition discounts at state universities for teachers who work closely with pre-service teachers (FLDOE, 2007).

Pre-service preparation is another teacher factor. Studies show that teachers who graduate from traditional university-based programs have lower attrition rates than teachers with nontraditional forms of preparation (Harris, Camp, & Adkinson, 2003). Successful alternative

certification programs for teacher preparation need to: (a) utilize support from mentors, cohort groups, and seminars, (b) form collaborative efforts among the stakeholders (teacher educators, veteran teachers, and teachers in training), (c) use the strategies of modeling, coaching and experiential learning approaches, and (d) participate in pre-internship programs which have a compressed version of pedagogical preparation (Heyman, 2002). Another strategy is for teacher education programs to provide pre-service teachers ample opportunities to visit and interact with teachers and administrators in a variety of educational settings to gain better knowledge about the kinds of support each school offers to beginning teachers. (Inman & Marlow, 2004).

School Factors

Although salary is important, teacher preferences across a range of job and school conditions may be just as important (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). Teachers might be persuaded to take the lower salaries in exchange for better working conditions (Hanushek & Luque, 2000). For example, the overall quality of the school building may affect the quality of teacher lives and pupils' educational outcomes (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2005). The air quality, thermal comfort, classroom lighting, and ambient noise levels are all fundamental to good academic performance and overall health of both teachers and students (Earthman & Lemasters, 1998; Jago & Tanner, 1999; Lackney, 1999; Kennedy, 2001; Rosen & Richardson, 1999; Smedje & Norback, 1999). Teachers can improve many of these working conditions within their own classrooms by enriching the environment and establishing brain-compatible settings. Plants can be placed within a classroom to provide an oxygen rich environment, air purification systems can be brought into classrooms, small lamps can be added to improve

lighting and reduce dependency on overhead fluorescent lights, and inside noise levels can be minimized through behavior management strategies such as use of calming chimes for transitioning (Jensen, 2004; Kovalik, 1993; Pearson, 2005).

Wiley (2003) also suggests using the "fan on" trick for air ventilation. The 'fan on" means to keep the thermostat fan switch set at "fan on" whenever the room is occupied. He further suggests checking to see if exhaust ducts are working properly, especially near restrooms, by simply placing an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper on the exhaust. If the exhaust duct is working the suction will hold the paper. Last, request the maintenance department to change classroom filters regularly and to properly dispose of any molded materials.

Management of student behavior as well as the burden of non-teaching obligations are school factors that have shown to affect new teachers' commitment much more than experienced teachers (Hargreaves, 1994: Macdonald, 1995; Rosenhotz & Simpson, 1990). Organizing and developing effective classroom management strategies while juggling non-teaching duties, such as after school meetings and lunchroom duty, is a difficult task. Birkeland and Johnson (2002) suggest granting new teachers novice status by offering them reduced teaching loads, fewer administrative duties, and realistic expectations for gradually improving their teaching practice. They further suggest principals, teachers, and parents working together to develop and adopt a shared vision with common expectations and policies that have been clearly communicated to the students. It was pointed out that these common expectations and policies would ease the fears of new teachers about how they will manage. Stansbury and Zimmerman (2002) supported release time that provided protected time for beginning teachers to meet with mentors for discussion of issues, such as, behavior management. Release time is effective because it is a time

when fatigue does not interfere with teachers' abilities to focus. Stansbury and Zimmerman further stated release time is a wise use for substitutes and staff development days. Also helpful is the practice of assigning beginning teachers as few at-risk and low achieving students as possible during the first three critical learning years (Ross, 1995).

An effective way to soften the coarseness of the first year for beginning teachers is a successful induction/mentoring program that addresses a variety of issues ranging from classroom management to curriculum (Graziano, 2005). Graziano referenced Ingersoll's (2004) results of ten studies, as published in the *American Educational Research Journal,* that concluded having a mentor from the same field, regular collaboration with teachers in the same subject, and being a part of an external network of teachers greatly improves teacher retention figures. Mentors provide support to help both novice and veteran teachers as they undertake the roles of instructor, protector, advisor, evaluator, and coach (Costa & Garmston, 2002). Teachers become frustrated by issues including lack of resources (Tapper, 1995), accountability in relation to high-stakes and standards-based testing, and the associated drill and kill curricula that often accompanies high stakes testing (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Effective beginning teacher support systems can provide personal and emotional support for task or problem-focused challenges teachers experience (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002), such as resource location and testing strategies.

The Broader Community

A majority of teachers interviewed spoke angrily about confusion over politics, a lack of clear and accurate information, government budget cuts, repetitive plus costly licensing and certification procedures, and the demeaning brand of 'failing' if schools did not meet Annual Yearly Progress under the provision of No Child Left Behind legislation (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Figlio, 2001; Tapper, 1995). In addition, communities hold great expectations from education but teachers are not always accorded a high social status (Jones, 2001). Teachers report that they have had to constantly battle the public stereotype of teachers working only 9am-3pm with high salaries, numerous vacations, and jobs that are less difficult than other professions (Tye & O'Brien, 2002).

Once again, a successful induction or mentoring program can provide valuable support. Among common goals for such programs are promoting the personal and professional well-being of teachers, helping teachers satisfy mandated requirements for licensure and transmitting the culture of the school and system to teachers (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). Administrators play a key role and can improve teacher efficacy and feelings of success by providing opportunities for teachers to discuss related topics with peers (Cavers, 1992). "A school administrator's ministerial capacity--to listen, comfort, support, and inspire--is vitally important to the cultivation of an energetic learning community" (Graseck, 2005, p. 378). Through better understanding of the school culture and the student's cultural backgrounds and experiences, teachers can begin to understand culturally responsive teaching (Watson, Charner-Laiard, Kirkpatrick, Szczesiul, Gordon, 2006) and work together to build more satisfying relationships with the community.

The regimen of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act may help bridge funding gaps as the first federal NCLB appropriation of $2.85 billion (over the next two years) funds recruitment, development, and retention of highly qualified teachers. Currently a professional development website (www.paec.org/teacher2teacher) is available to assist teachers and features videos of workshops conducted by other teachers (Graziano, 2005).

Connecting Retention with Mentoring

Beginning teacher support programs, also called induction/mentoring programs, can improve teacher retention rates by enhancing new teacher satisfaction (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). The quality of induction and mentoring programs varies widely across the country, yet research has shown that when new teachers participate in comprehensive induction programs that include time for collaboration and a mentor who teaches the same subject, there is a reduced attrition rate (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). A positive effect is that a well-trained support team and a research-based framework for helping new teachers can increase levels of teacher effectiveness (Garza & Wurzbach, 2002).

The key is in the school's professional culture (Johnson, 2006). Johnson identified three distinct types of schools: (a) the first had a mix of veterans and novices, but teachers worked in isolation instead of collaboratively, (b) the second had a teaching staff comprised almost entirely of enthusiastic, but as yet, unskilled beginning teachers, and (c) the third had veterans and novices who were encouraged to work together. The third type of school encouraged sharing of ideas and expertise and ultimately had an 82 percent retention rate of new teachers compared to just 57 and 67 percent, respectively, of the other two types. Johnson (2006) added, novice

teachers continue to learn long after first entering the classroom and leaving them isolated to solve challenges is unnecessary since colleagues doing similar work can provide necessary mentoring support.

Isolation is the common thread and complaint among new teachers in U.S. schools (Wong, Britton, & Ganser, 2005). The lack of gradual, guided induction into teaching and the isolation that many novice teachers experience cause the beginning teachers to develop undesirable coping mechanisms that hinder their effectiveness and diminish opportunities for meaningful student learning (Ganser, Marchione, & Fleischmann, 1999). Mentoring is a strategy found to be an improvement over the abrupt and isolated entry many new teachers experience. Contemporary mentoring programs provide support for new teachers to combat feelings of isolation in their day-to-day teaching assignments (Chase, 1998; Southworth, 1999; Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999). It can be an effective retention strategy if linked to good teaching, is based on understanding of how teachers learn, and is supported by a professional culture that values the collaboration and inquiry among participants (Feiman-Nemser, 1996). Every state should be developing and funding mentoring programs that would provide beginning teachers access to the experience and wisdom of veteran teachers as these programs would have an early impact on instructional quality and teacher retention (Budig, 2006).

Ness (2000) felt many promising teachers depart prior to ever experiencing success in the classroom. According to Kosmoski (1997), a teacher may have high expectations of achieving a specific performance level, but if the performance level is perceived to be unattainable, then motivation will decrease. Mentoring programs like the Texas Beginning Educator Support System, established to combat teacher attrition rates, trains mentors and sets up a support team

for new teachers (Garza & Wurzbach, 2002). The mentoring team learns to recognize the developmental phases of beginning teachers identified by Moir (1999) as anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, and anticipation. Under the mentor's guidance the beginning teachers collect data, plan, teach, reflect, participate in professional learning, and then begin the cycle again (Garza & Wurzbach, 2002), creating an environment where teachers can have high expectations that are perceived as attainable.

Odell and Ferraro (1992) agreed on three goals of mentoring: (a) to provide guidance and support, (b) to promote professional development, and (c) to increase retention. These goals can be achieved through successful teacher induction programs, which, according to Dagenais (1996) have coordinators, well-trained mentors, and flexible structures designed to meet the needs of teachers. In 1982, Florida was the sole state with a mandated induction program, but by the late 1980s, several programs began to report success with improved retention rates (Odell, 1989). Omaha's teacher induction program included a peer group to share experiences with and added, more notably, a continuation of university coursework, as it aimed to improve teachers' job satisfaction (McGlamery, Fluckiger, & Edick, 2002). A five-year study showed nine out of 10 Omaha participants were retained in the teaching profession, a much higher rate than the 50% national average. Jefferson County, Alabama invited master teachers to take a one-year hiatus from the classroom and mentor three first-year teachers. The result was an attrition rate of 10%, compared to the national average of approximately 50%. Twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia have now instituted some form of mentoring (Jambor, Patterson, & Jones, 1997).

Schools with a culture of shared responsibility and support in which all or most of the school's staff contribute to the development of the new teacher will likely increase new teacher

retention. The support programs must, however, be created using sound theoretical frameworks in order for schools to be successful in reducing teacher attrition. Fostering professional cultures that encourage teamwork can impact the solution to staffing problems (Arnold, 1993; Bass, 2002; Black, 1996; Bobbitt, 1995; Bogler, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Lalley, 2001; Voke, 2002).

Mentoring and induction programs help develop teachers' sensitivity to and understanding of community, as well as their passion for lifelong learning and professional growth. Successful programs promote unity and teamwork among the entire learning community of a school as it acculturates them to the mission and philosophy of their school and district (Wong, 2002). Research suggests that mentoring and/or induction programs are highly successful strategies to: (a) ease the transition from teacher preparation programs to in-service teaching, (b) improve retention rates (Feiman-Nemser, 1996), and (c) increase student performance (Darling-Hammond, 1999).

Novice teachers begin to focus on the impact of their instruction on pupils only when their early concerns of survival as teachers are addressed (Evertson & Smithey, 2000). If beginning teachers experience stress they will often revert back to the more familiar teacher-centered instructional strategies (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990). Accurate feedback about training methodologies from mentors and positive interactions with colleagues are crucial components of guiding new teachers toward instructional change (Frieberg, 2002). The idea that teachers form their styles and approaches to teaching during their first years as teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998) emphasizes the importance of effective mentoring programs. According to Adelman

(1991), what happens to beginning teachers during their early years of teaching determines whether or not they will remain in teaching.

Relationship of Literature to Study

The preceding review of literature contained research focusing on specific areas of mentoring and teacher retention in the educational setting. Initially, research regarding the history of mentoring was detailed, followed by recent research analyzing mentoring in the educational sector. Next the problems of teacher retention plus strategies for teacher retention are reviewed. The final research focused on connecting teacher retention with mentoring. The review of all five topics was essential to foster an understanding of the importance of mentoring, the problems associated with mentoring, and the strategies that are currently being utilized to make mentoring a more effective resource in assisting with teacher support and retention in the field of education.

In designing this study the researcher perceived the history of mentoring as a tool to better understand where the terminology originated and how mentoring has changed or remained the same over the course of history. Providing and following a history allows understanding of current perspectives. These current perspectives were the reason the second area of review, recent research regarding mentoring, was examined. Since the history of mentoring has been brought to the present, knowing how and why mentoring is being used within the educational setting enables initial critiquing of its use. The critiquing involves questioning if mentoring is being used as productively as possible to support areas such as beginning teacher growth and teacher retention.

Upon seriously critiquing mentoring that is currently in use in the educational setting, problems and strategies associated with mentoring or induction programs aimed at supporting beginning teachers and positively impacting teacher retention becomes evident. Therefore, a review of existing literature that highlighted the problems and strategies associated with teacher retention was vital to understand how they are connected with mentoring and what other changes might be necessary, which was considered the heart in the design of this study.

Summary

This chapter presented the literature review and reasoning for inclusion of the five topic areas. The literature review contained research focusing on specific areas of mentoring and teacher retention or intent to stay in the educational setting. First, research regarding the history of mentoring was detailed, dating back to Greek mythology and the derivation of the word mentor. Next recent research analyzing mentoring in the educational sector was presented. Research indicated that what happens to beginning teachers during their early years on the job determines whether they remain in teaching (Aldeman (1991). Then the problem of teacher retention and strategies for improving teacher retention or intent to stay in the teaching field were reviewed and placed into three subcategories: (a) teachers, (b) schools, and (c) the broader community. Last, connecting teacher retention or intent to stay in the teaching field with mentoring was examined. Research discussed included the findings that although the quality of induction and mentoring programs varies widely across the country, research has shown that when new teachers participate in comprehensive induction programs that include time for

collaboration and a mentor who teaches the same subject, there is a reduced attrition rate (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the methodology and procedures used to determine if there was a difference between beginning teachers who did or did not receive mentoring and the teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. In addition, this study sought to explore teacher perceptions in relation to components of mentoring or induction programs and to solicit teacher thoughts regarding essential elements of a mentoring program. A survey instrument was used and participants were elementary beginning teachers with 0-2 years teaching experience. A statement of the problem, research questions, population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis are presented in the following sections.

Statement of the Problem

An impending teacher shortage in the 21st century schools makes it necessary for school districts to provide effective programs for support and development of beginning teachers. In one public school district, located in Central Florida, fifty percent of new teachers in Title I (urban setting) schools are leaving annually. District-wide, twenty-five percent have left within their first three years of teaching. An effective program must be instituted immediately that will foster growth of beginning teachers and create a sense of job satisfaction that will lead to improvement with beginning teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field.

Research Questions

1. What is the difference in beginning teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field between teachers who were mentored versus teachers who were not mentored?
2. What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the mentoring process regarding specified components within the process?
3. What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the most important elements of a mentoring program?

Population

A cluster random sampling procedure was used, as the researcher did not know individual teacher names. Individuals were included in the study according to group or cluster membership. Membership required that each participant was a beginning elementary school teacher with 0-2 years of experience and was employed by one particular Florida public school district. The Florida public district contained 37 elementary school sites that were classified as non-charter or special/alternative centers. Of these 37 elementary sites five were considered urban school (Title I) sites. These five, with approximately 90 AC teachers, were selected to participate in the study as well as five non-urban elementary school sites with a comparable number of 90, bringing the total number of participants to 180 elementary school teachers. One school site did not participate and seven principals had rounded-up their number of AC teachers reported to the researcher. In the end, a total of 135 elementary school teachers were actually presented with the survey instrument. There were 71 returned survey instruments (52.5%).

Participants in the study were 91% female and 9% male, with a racial composition of 87% Caucasian, 7% African American, and 6% Hispanic. Participants ranged in age with 35% less than 25 years of age, 49% aged 25-30, 10% aged 31-40, 3% aged 41-50, and 3% aged 51 years of age or greater. There were a reported 47% of the teachers classified as being in their first year of teaching, 25% were in their second year of teaching, and 28% were in their third year of teaching. Of that number, 78% reported that their current school is the only school at which they have taught and 22% reported they had taught at somewhere other than their current school location. Urban school sites (Title I) comprised 60% of the school sites included in this study and 40% were non-urban school sites. In summary, results indicated a vast majority of the participants were Caucasian females between the ages of 25-30 who were in their first year of teaching at an elementary school and were teaching at an urban (Title I) school site.

Instrumentation

This study was a Survey Research Design and contained both quantitative and qualitative data. It was developmental in purpose and cross sectional in classification. The survey structure was close-ended questions with ordered response categories and open-ended questions. The method used was a questionnaire and the instrument was Scott's Mentor Program Survey. Scott's Mentor Program-Survey was pilot studied in West Alabama in 2004 and approved for use. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section I consisted of questions regarding elements of the mentoring process and was based on a four point Likert scale with 4 indicating Strongly Agree, 3 indicating Agree, 2 indicating Disagree, and 1 indicating Strongly Disagree.

Section II consisted of general questions to obtain basic demographic or background

information. Questions included information regarding gender, age, racial/ethnic background, years teaching, school demographics (urban or not), and intent to remain in the teaching field. This information was used to describe the sample participating in this study (see Table 1).

Table 1
Demographic Data of Participants (n=71)

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Female	65	91.5
Male	6	8.5
Age		
Less than 25 years	25	35.2
25-30	35	49.3
31-40	7	9.9
41-50	2	2.8
51 or greater	2	2.8
Ethnic Background		
African American	5	7.0
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	.0
Caucasian	62	87.3
Hispanic	4	5.6
Native American	0	.0
Other	0	.0
Years Teaching		
First	33	46.5
Second	18	25.4
Third	20	28.2
Schools Taught		
First and Only	55	77.5
More Than One	16	22.5
Employed at an Urban Site		
Yes	42	59.2
No	29	40.8
Plans to Continue Teaching		
at an Urban School	38	53.5
at a non-Urban School	32	45.1
do not plan to teach	1	1.4

Section III contained open-ended questions that allowed participants an opportunity to supply their opinions of the most important elements of mentoring or a mentoring program and to provide explanatory information. Alterations to Scott's Mentor Program Survey were guided by Dillman's (1999) Tailored Design Method and included questions to determine if a participant had or had not been mentored and if the participant had or had not chosen his/her own mentor. Additional demographic information was added to determine if the school site was an urban or non-urban. The original designer, Jeffrey Scott, approved all changes.

Scott's Mentor Program-Survey was selected based upon its compatibility with the study design envisioned by the researcher. Scott's Mentor Program-Survey contained mentoring questions necessary for obtaining similar data needed by this researcher. The format lent itself easily to simple alterations or innovations of Scott's open-ended questions regarding the essential components of the mentoring process.

Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to beginning the study, the researcher completed all institutional requirements for the research and The Institutional Review Board (IRB) formal approval letter has been documented in Appendix D. Principals at the ten participating schools were contacted by the researcher via telephone and permission was obtained to forward the survey packet to their annual contract (AC) teachers fitting into the category of 0-2 years teaching experience. The survey packets were hand delivered to the principals at the ten school sites with a follow-up letter included reminding each principal of the distribution and return procedures discussed earlier. The Principal's Cover Letter is evidenced in Appendix B. Principals at each school site were

asked to only distribute the survey packet to the 0-2 years experienced AC teachers. The participating teachers would be mailing the completed questionnaire portion of the survey packet back to the researcher using the United States Postal Service. Returning the questionnaire by the postal service was a measure to help protect the anonymous integrity of the study. Survey packets included an informed consent cover letter (see Appendix D) describing the study and requesting voluntary participation from the teacher. In addition, the survey packet included the 47-item questionnaire to be completed voluntarily by the participating teachers, a preaddressed, postage paid, 10x13 envelope for return of the questionnaire, and a small token of appreciation (a mini bag of M&M's chocolate candy). Questionnaires were returned to the researcher and the data collection process was completed. The questionnaires were not coded, confidentiality was secured, and individual data was not published.

Data analysis for the quantitative portion of this study was conducted using the statistical analysis Software Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 11.0 for Windows. The analysis of data relied on descriptive statistics, an independent *t*-test, and ANOVA. Research question number one, "What is the difference in beginning teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field between teachers who were mentored versus teachers who were not mentored?" had the following null hypotheses: No statistically significant difference exists between the mean of teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field of those teachers who received mentoring and the mean of teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field of those teachers who did not receive mentoring. These two samples were from randomly assigned groups and were independent of each other. An independent *t*-test was used to determine if a statistical difference existed. The researcher believed a difference existed but did not wish to specify the direction of the

hypothesis tested therefore it was nondirectional. The standard by which to evaluate the null hypothesis was an alpha or significance level of .05. The independent variables for the *t-test* were mentored or not mentored and the dependent variable was the teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field.

The second research question, "What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the mentoring process?" was also explored in a quantitative manner. The null hypothesis was: No statistically significant difference exists among teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field with respect to mentoring as measured by time, teaching practices, mentor roles and attributes, and administration.

Teachers were asked to rank their perceptions of components related to mentoring on a Likert scale from one to four with 4 indicating Strongly Agree, 3 indicating Agree, 2 indicating Disagree, and 1 indicating Strongly Disagree to see what impact they had upon teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. These components included Time, Relationship, Teaching Practices, Mentor Role and Attributes, and Administration. Each factor had several directly related questions upon which teachers could rank their perceptions. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the proportion of variability attributed to each of the factors. An ANOVA was selected because a determination of the proportion of variability attributed to each component can be accomplished while reducing the inflation of the Type I error rate that would increase the researchers chance of drawing an inappropriate conclusion (Cronk, 2004). The standard used again by which to evaluate the null hypothesis was an alpha or significance level of .05. The dependent variable remained teachers' intent to stay. It should be noted that the ANOVA hypothesis is treated as nondirectional.

The final research question, “What are beginning teachers’ perceptions of the most important elements of a mentoring program?” was the qualitative portion of the study. Teacher’s perceptions of the most important components of mentoring or a mentoring program were solicited and divided into comparable categories for reporting results.

Instrument Reliability and Validity

Cronbach’s reliability (alpha coefficient) was used to check the internal consistency of the instrument used in this study. It was assumed that all items were normally distributed and measured on an interval scale. Item-total correlations should always be positive with an item-total correlation of greater than 0.7 considered desirable. Item-total correlations of less than 0.3 should be removed from the scale (Cronk, 2004). Reliability for the ranked questionnaire items yielded Cronbach’s alpha that ranged from .61 to .82. Specific correlation results were: (a) time, .61, (b) relationship, .81, (c) teaching practices, .82, (d) student learning, .78, (e) mentor role and attributes, .72, and (f) administration, .76.

A factor analysis was completed for the purpose of investigating the factor structure underlying the mentoring item responses in the SPSS data set. Factor analysis has as its key objective reducing a larger set of variables to a smaller set of factors; fewer in number than the original set, but capable of accounting for a large portion of the total variability in the items. The identity of each factor is determined after a review of which items correlate the highest with that factor. Items that correlate the highest with a factor define the meaning of the factor as judged by what conceptually ties the items together. A successful result is one in which a few factors can

explain a large portion of the total variability and those factors can be given a meaningful name using the assortment of items that correlate the highest with it.

In the context of this study, when such success was attained, we may say that we have validity evidence supporting the conclusion that the scores from this instrument are a valid assessment. We can feel confident when adding similar items up for total scores to represent the different dimensions of mentoring included (each factor represents a dimension). This kind of validity evidence, called internal structure evidence, suggests that items line up in a predictable manner, according to what thematically ties them together conceptually. The descriptive statistics of the item responses are presented (see Table 2). It may be observed that the standard deviations are smaller than the respective means but there is one standard deviation, Q42, which stands out upon gross examination as remarkably smaller than the other variables. It should also be noted that Q23 had an unusually high mean due to skewed scores. A printing error for Q23 omitted the Likert scale numbers for circling. All but six of the returned questionnaires completed the scale manually, but the other six omitted the question so the data were blank.

The maximum likelihood estimation procedure was used to extract the factors from the variable data. Kaiser's rule was used to determine which factors were most eligible for interpretation because this rule requires that a given factor is capable of explaining at least the equivalent of one's variable variance. Nine factors were extracted and they were capable of explaining 29.7% of all variable variances. The proper solution was attainable through maximum likelihood and it was capable of converging in 25 iterations. The printout did not warn that the results were nonpositive definite, so one important condition for proceeding with the interpretations was met.

Another portion of the results was to inspect the table of communalities. Communalities indicate the degree to which the factors explain the variance of the variables. In a proper solution, two sets of communalities are provided, the initial set and the extracted set. Sometimes when the maximum likelihood procedure has poorly conditioned data, the values of one or more communalities can exceed 1.00, which is theoretically impossible because explaining more than 100% of a variable's variance is impossible. In this study, the communalities were fine, providing further evidence that the results were appropriate for interpretation.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics (n=71)

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q2	3.30	.595
Q3	3.14	.761
Q4	2.80	.689
Q5	3.35	.588
Q6	3.82	.390
Q7	3.80	.401
Q8	3.77	.453
Q9	3.52	.582
Q10	3.73	.446
Q11	3.10	.658
Q12	3.24	.643
Q13	3.34	.608
Q14	3.49	.531
Q15	2.99	.707
Q16	3.23	.540
Q17	3.41	.575
Q18	3.21	.607
Q19	2.46	.908
Q20	3.66	.506
Q21	2.48	.673
Q22	3.44	.670
Q23	12.54	28.806

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q24	2.96	.764
Q25	3.31	.689
Q26	3.03	.676
Q27	2.39	.597
Q28	2.86	.568
Q29	3.08	.470
Q30	2.86	.743
Q31	3.01	.765
Q32	3.48	.557
Q33	3.15	.577
Q34	3.51	.606
Q35	1.08	.280
Q36	1.89	.903
Q37	2.92	.579
Q38	1.82	.850
Q39	1.23	.421
Q40	1.41	.495
Q41	1.48	.531
Q42	1.04	.203
Q43	1.13	.335
Q44	1.77	.421

Summary

This chapter provided the methodology and procedures used to determine: (a) if there was a difference between beginning teachers who did or did not receive mentoring and the teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field, (b) teacher perceptions in relation to components of mentoring or induction programs, and (c) teacher thoughts regarding essential elements of a mentoring program. The population results were presented which indicated a vast majority of the participants (n=71) were Caucasian females between the ages of 25-30 who were in their first year of teaching and were at an urban (Title I) school site. In addition the instrumentation was discussed. This study was a Survey Research Design and contained both quantitative and qualitative data. It was developmental in purpose and cross sectional in classification. The survey

structure was close-ended questions with ordered response categories and open-ended questions. The method used was a questionnaire and the instrument was Scott's Mentor Program Survey.

Data collection was also discussed. It was a process whereby principals at ten participating schools were hand delivered a survey packet, which contained the questionnaire to distribute to their 0-2 years experienced AC teachers. The forty-seven-item questionnaire was completed voluntarily by the participating teachers and was returned by mail to the researcher, thus completing the data collection process. The data analysis section detailed how the quantitative portion of this study relied on descriptive statistics, an independent *t-test*, and ANOVA and research question three relied on open-ended responses and descriptive statistics.

CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents a description and an analysis of data relevant to the research questions. Section I answers research question number one and determines who has or has not been mentored and presents results of the teachers' response to whether or not mentoring had an impact on their intent to stay in the teaching field. Section II answers research question number two and presents teachers' perceptions regarding mentoring in the areas of time, teaching practices, mentor roles and attributes, and administration. Section III discusses the qualitative data regarding participant's opinions of the most important elements of mentoring or a mentoring program and suggestions for improvement of the current program.

Section I:
Research Question One

Research Question:

(1) What is the difference in beginning teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field between teachers who were mentored versus teachers who were not mentored?

Null Hypothesis:

No statistically significant difference exists between the mean of teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field of those teachers who received mentoring and the mean of teachers' intent to stay of those teachers who did not receive mentoring.

Research question number one sought to discover if there was a difference between a teachers' intent to stay teaching and their mentoring experience, more precisely, whether the teacher had been mentored or not mentored during the first three years of teaching. Descriptive statistics were used to produce the Crosstabulation which showed that of the (n=71), only 12 participating teachers had been formally assigned a mentor, 33 did not receive a mentor, and 26 decided to select his/her own mentor.

An independent *t*-test was conducted using SPSS Version 11.0 and the data collected from returned questionnaires. An independent *t*-test was chosen because the researcher wanted to compare the means of two samples that were independent of each other. The teachers' intent was coded as the dependent variable and whether or not the teachers had been mentored was coded as the independent variables. The standard by which to evaluate the null hypothesis was an alpha or significance level of .05.

The independent samples *t* test calculated a comparison between the mean score of subjects who identified themselves as having received a mentor to the mean score of subjects who did not identify themselves as having received a mentor. No statistically significant difference was found between the means of the two groups (t (61) = -1.148, p> .05). The mean for intent of subjects who received mentoring (m = 1.73, sd = .45) does not exceed or was not significantly different from the mean of subjects who did receive mentoring (m = 1.85, sd = 37). In conclusion, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis or stated in a different fashion, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Section II:
Research Question Two

Research Question:

(2) What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the mentoring process regarding specified components within the process?

Null Hypothesis:

No statistically significant difference exists between teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field with respect to mentoring as measured by Time, Relationship, Teaching Practices, Mentor Roles and Attributes, and Administration.

Questions two through thirty-four (Q2-Q34) on the questionnaire asked teachers their perceptions of several components within the mentoring process. These components were: (a) Time, (b) Relationship, (c) Teaching Practices, (d) Student Learning, (e) Mentor Role and Attributes, and (f) Administration. Teacher perceptions were ranked using a Likert scale from one to four as follows: 1 indicated the teacher Strongly Disagreed, 2 indicated the teacher Disagreed, 3 indicated the teacher Agreed, and 4 indicated the teacher Strongly Agreed. Each component contained several directly related questions for teachers to reflect upon and provide their response using the Likert scale provided.

Using an analysis of variance (One-Way ANOVA) a determination of the proportion of variability attributed to each component was accomplished. The standard by which to evaluate the null hypothesis was an alpha or significance level of .05. The dependent variable remained teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field and the ANOVA hypothesis was treated as nondirectional.

Questions 2 through 5 (Q2-Q5) were directly related to the component entitled Time. Given that both the assumptions of equal variances and group size were met, ANOVA was deemed a suitable procedure for the data. A statistically significant difference among the group means was not found, suggesting that the assumption that the null hypothesis is true was a valid assumption. As shown in Table 6, Time Question Two $F(2, 68) = .70$, $p = .50$, Time Question Three $F(2, 68) = 2.61$, $p = .08$, Time Question Four $F(2, 68) = .31$, $p = .74$, and Time Question Five $F(2, 68) = .30$, $p = .74$, were found to have no statistically significant difference in teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. Inspection of the empirical power estimates suggests the sample size used in this study (below .80) may not have been large enough to detect the effect in question, if indeed there were an effect (Sivo, 2006). Also shown (see Table 3) are the empirical powers for the component time, Q2 through Q5: .16, .50, .10, and .10, respectively.

Questions 6 through 10 were directly related to the component entitled Relationship and had similar findings as the Time component. A statistically significant difference among means was not found suggesting that the assumption that the null hypothesis is true was a valid assumption. As shown in Table 7, Relationship Question Six $F(2, 68) = .29$, $p = .75$, Relationship Question Seven $F(2, 68) = 1.39$, $p = .26$, Relationship Question Eight $F(2, 68) = 1.86$, $p = .16$, Relationship Question Nine $F(2, 68) = .72$, $p= .49$, and Relationship Question Ten $F(2, 68) = 2.22$, $p = .12$, were found to have no statistically significant difference in teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. Inspection of the empirical power estimates suggests the sample size used in this study may not have been large enough to detect the effect in question, if indeed there were an effect. Also shown (see Table 3) are the empirical powers for the component Relationship, Q6 through Q10: .10, .29, .37, .17 and .44, respectively.

Questions eleven through eighteen were directly related to the component entitled Teaching Practices. Similar findings as noted in Time and Relationship were discovered. A statistically significant difference among means was not found suggesting that the assumption that the null hypothesis is true was a valid assumption. As shown in Table 8, Teaching Practices Question Eleven $F(2, 68) = .89$, $p = .41$, Teaching Practices Question Twelve $F(2, 68) = .98$, $p = .38$, Time Question Thirteen $F(2, 68) = .29$, $p = .75$, Time Question Fourteen $F(2, 68) = .18$, $p = .84$, Teaching Question Fifteen $F(2, 68) = .19$, $p = .83$, Teaching Question Sixteen $F(2, 68) = 1.16$, $p = .32$, Teaching Question Seventeen $F(2, 68) = .31$, $p = .73$, and Teaching Question Eighteen $F(2, 68) = 1.04$, $p = .36$, were found to have no statistically significant difference in teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. Inspection of the empirical power estimates suggests the sample size used in this study may not have been large enough to detect the effect in question, if indeed there were an effect. Also shown (see Table 3) are the empirical powers for the component Teaching Practices, Q11 through Q18: .20, .21, .09, .08, .08, .25, .10, and .22, respectively.

Questions nineteen through thirty-one were directly related to the component Mentor Role and Attributes. With the exceptions of question nineteen and twenty-one similar findings as noted in the components Time, Relationship and Teaching Practices were discovered. With the noted exception of questions nineteen and twenty-one a statistically significant difference among means was not found suggesting that the assumption that the null hypothesis is true was a valid assumption. As shown (see Table 3), Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty $F(2, 68) = .93$, $p = .40$, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Two $F(2, 68) = .59$, $p = .56$, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Three $F(2, 61) = 2.43$, $p = .10$, Mentor Role and

Attributes Question Twenty-Four F (2, 68) = .67, p= .52, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Five F (2, 68) = .46, p = .64, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Six F (2, 68) = 40, p = .67, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Seven F (2, 68) = .38, p= .69, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Eight F (2, 68) = .47, p = .63, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Nine F (2, 61) = .51, p = .60, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Thirty F (2, 68) = .02, p= .98 , and Mentor Role and Attributes Question Thirty-One F (2, 68) = .42, p = .66, were found to have no statistically significant difference in teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field.

Inspection of the empirical power estimates suggests the sample size used in this study may not have been large enough to detect the effect in question, if indeed there were an effect. Also shown (see Table 3) are the empirical powers for the component Mentor Role and Attributes, Q20, and Q22 through Q31: .21, .14, .47, .16, .12, .11, .11, .13, .13, .05, and .12, respectively. It should be noted that question 23 was (n=64) instead of (n=71), the total expected. There were 6 questionnaires that were returned with this question left blank. Teachers' perception of agreement regarding the requirement that mentors have a minimum of four years experience before being assigned as a mentor was requested. The survey instrument appeared to have a printing error that did not supply the Likert scale numbers for these participants to circle on this question only. Although a statistical significance was not noted, the mean provided on the descriptive statistics and the standard deviation are much greater than the other questions due to the reduced number of participants.

Mentor Role and Attributes Questions Nineteen and Twenty-One (Q19 and Q21) had a statistically significant result with a small effect size. An effect size of .25 and above is

considered large (Sivo, 2006) and both question results obtained an effect size below .25. Mentor Role and Attributes Question Nineteen had an effect size of .21 and Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-One had an effect size of .11. Given that the assumption of equal group size was met, ANOVA was deemed a suitable procedure for these data, despite the fact that the homogeneity of variance assumption was violated.

A statistically significant difference among the group means was found suggesting that the data are unlikely, assuming that the null hypothesis is true for Mentor Role and Attributes Question Nineteen $F(2, 68) = 8.98$, $p =< 01$ and Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-One $F(2, 68) = 4.14$, $p = .02$. We therefore reject the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative, which states that a difference exists among the group means in the population.

Overall, the model fits poorly, as an examination of the effect size, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Nineteen (R squared = .209) and Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-One (R squared = .109) reveals that the statistical difference among the group means is trivial. This result suggests that the independent variable explains a moderately weak effect size of 20.9% for Q19, and a weak effect size of 10.9% for Q21 of the variation in dependent variable's scores. Although the results are stable (i.e., statistically significant), the results are not impressive enough for follow-up analysis. The attainment of statistical significance is most likely to be attributable to the sample size alone. Consequently, the post hoc test results will not be interpreted.

The remainder of the Likert scale questions was directly related to the component, Administration. Similar findings as noted in the components Time, Relationship, Teaching Practices, and Mentor Role and Attributes with the two noted exceptions of Q19 and Q21 were

discovered. A statistically significant difference among means was not found suggesting that the assumption that the null hypothesis is true was a valid assumption. Administration Question Thirty-Two $F(2, 68) = 1.24$, $p = .30$, Administration Question Thirty-Three $F(2, 68) = .80$, $p = .45$, and Administration Question Thirty-Four $F(2, 68) = .82$, $p = .45$ were found to have no statistically significant difference in teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. Inspection of the empirical power estimates suggests the sample size used in this study may not have been large enough to detect the effect in question, if indeed there were an effect. Also shown (see Table 3) are the empirical powers for the component Administration, Q32 through Q34: .26, .18, and .18, respectively.

Table 3
Observed Powers

Component & Question	Observed Power
Time	
Q2	.16
Q3	.50
Q4	.10
Q5	.10
Relationship	
Q6	.09
Q7	.29
Q8	.37
Q9	.17
Q10	.44
Q11	.20
Teaching Practices	
Q12	.21
Q13	.09
Q14	.08
Student Learning	
Q16	.28
Q17	.10
Q18	.22
Mentor Role and Attributes	
Q19	.97
Q20	.21
Q21	.71
Q22	.14
Q23	.47
Q24	.16
Q25	.12
Q26	.11
Q27	.11
Q28	.13
Q29	.13
Q30	.05
Q31	.12
Administration	
Q32	.26
Q33	.18
Q34	.18

Section III:
Research Question Three

Research Question:

(3) What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the most important elements of a mentoring program?

Questions forty-five through forty-seven (Q45-Q47) focused on teacher perceptions or opinions of the most important elements of mentoring or a mentoring program. Teachers were asked: (a) what three elements they considered to be the most important parts of a mentoring program, (b) what were some areas of a mentoring program that they have known about or been a part of that they considered to be the least beneficial, and in closing, (c) teacher comments were solicited regarding changes or suggestions for improvement of the mentoring process.

Naming the three most important elements of a mentoring program was the first of the three open-ended questions (Q45). Of the total number of participants (n=71), fifty-five participants or 77%, responded with their opinion. There were a variety of answers but several appeared repeatedly as elements the teachers perceived as most important. The most frequently provided responses were: (a) availability (including time) and accessibility of the mentor (b) having a mentor on the same grade level or one that understood the curriculum and behavioral expectations of the assigned grade level, (c) having a friendly and professional relationship, and (d) help with lesson planning and curriculum instruction. Availability and friendliness (receptiveness of the mentor) were stated by forty-eight of the participants (87%), followed by assignment to or understanding of the same grade level by forty-two of the participants (76%).

Other opinions provided but listed less frequently included: (a) reflective support to improve in weak areas, (b) having clearly defined roles, (c) open communication, (d) help with parents, (e) staff relations, (f) setting up the classroom, (g) sharing of ideas, (h) regular meetings, (i) dedication to teaching and to the mentee, (i) organization, (j) help with testing including data interpretation, (k) ability to help outside the classroom, (l) community of school, and (m) resource guidance. Some of the above stated opinions, such as, ability to help outside the classroom, were listed only once.

The second open-ended question asked what were some areas of a mentoring program that the teacher had knowledge of or had been a part of that were least beneficial. Thirty-one participants responded (56%). Of the thirty-one respondents, the largest grouping was the 9 who indicated they had never been assigned a mentor or had no knowledge of the mentoring process (29%). This group of 9 included one teacher who specified exceptional education (ESE) as having no mentors available.

The second largest grouping contained five participants (16%) who's common bond was the comment that the least beneficial part of the mentoring program was the lack of time spent with their mentor due primarily to the mentor being too busy to spend more time with them. There was a tie for the third grouping with each group having 4 participants (13% each). One grouping indicated that the least beneficial part of the mentoring program was meeting in large groups instead of one-on-one, especially large group meetings directly after school when they felt overwhelmed with required work to complete. The other grouping that tied with 4 participants wrote that they felt all areas of a mentoring program were beneficial, considering some help better than no help at all.

The remaining nine respondents contained 2 teachers that listed not having a mentor in the same grade level as the least beneficial part of a mentoring program, and 2 teachers who felt that the program in place had no formal set up or wasn't being carried out in a formal fashion. The final five responses were; (a) closed-minded mentors, (b) when a mentor becomes too controlling over the mentee it can break the relationship, (c) lack of communication, (d) when a teacher forces their teaching style on another teacher, and (e) keeping you up to date.

Question forty-seven (Q47) was the final open-ended question. It solicited comments for changes and/or suggestions for mentoring. Fifteen teachers responded (n=55, 27%). Of the fifteen responses, one-third of the suggestions (5 respondents) stated the mentoring program needed to be mandatory. The remaining responses included: (a) multiple mentors for one person to add additional perspectives, (b) respecting what the new teachers bring to the school-site, (c) selecting mentors that have time to mentor, (d) having mentors specifically for ESE teachers, (e) making mentoring voluntary and based on personality and teaching styles, (f) having a supportive administration, (g) financially compensating mentors, (h) introducing mentors to new hires immediately after being welcomed to the school, (i) having mentors who are willing partners, and (j) matching new teachers with mentors who remember what it was like to be a beginning teacher.

Summary

An independent *t*-test was performed to determine if there was a difference in beginning teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field between teachers who were mentored versus teachers who were not mentored. The conclusion was that there was no statistically significant difference

and the null hypothesis was not rejected Teachers were also asked their perceptions regarding the specific components of (a) Time, (b) Relationship, (c) Teaching Practices, (d) Student Learning, (e) Mentor Role and Attributes, and (f) Administration. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to make a determination of the proportion of variability attributed to each specified component. A total of thirty-three questions encompassing all of the aforementioned components were asked. Thirty-one questions were found to have no statistically significant difference in teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. Inspection of the empirical power estimates suggested the sample size used in this study might not have been large enough to detect the effect in question. Two questions under the specific component of Mentor Roles and Attributes had a statistically significant result with a small effect size. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected in favor of the alternative, which stated that a difference exists among the group means in the population. Last, beginning teachers' perceptions of the most important elements of a mentoring program were solicited. The majority of opinions valued availability, accessibility, and receptivity of the mentor. Participants felt the least beneficial part of a mentoring program was not being assigned a mentor and not having enough time to work with their mentor. Participants suggested making mentoring a mandatory process.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter reviews the purpose of the research study, the population, instrumentation, data collection and analysis. A discussion of the findings and the implications of these results are detailed. This chapter also provides the limitations of this research study, the recommendations for future research pertaining to mentoring and teachers' intent to stay, and the conclusion.

Summary

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between mentoring of beginning elementary teachers in a community in Central Florida and the teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. It sought to explore teacher perceptions of the role specific components entitled Time, Relationship, Teaching Practices, Mentor Attributes, and Administration played in the mentoring process. In addition, this study also sought to identify the most important elements of a mentoring program as perceived by beginning teachers. Such research may help to explain why district-wide, twenty-five percent of the beginning teachers have left within their first three years of teaching and fifty percent of new teachers in Title I (urban setting) schools are leaving annually. This research might also explain what role mentoring plays in the decisions of elementary teachers to remain in the teaching field, and what changes might be made to better support beginning teachers in an attempt to influence their intent to stay in the teaching field.

Population

Individuals were included in the study according to group or cluster membership. Membership required that each participant be a beginning teacher with 0-2 years of experience and be employed by one particular Florida public school district. A total of 135 teachers were presented with the survey instrument from 10 elementary school sites. Five school sites were considered urban school (Title I) sites and five were non-urban (Title I). Seventy-one questionnaires were returned (52.5%). Participants in the study were 91% female and 9% male, with a racial composition of 87% Caucasian, 7% African American, and 6% Hispanic. Participants ranged in age with 35% less than 25 years of age, 49% aged 25-30, 10% aged 31-40, 3% aged 41-50, and 3% aged 51 years of age or greater. Urban school sites (Title I) comprised 60% of the school sites included in this study and 40% were not Title I school sites.

Instrumentation

This study was a Survey Research Design and contained both quantitative and qualitative data. It was developmental in purpose and cross sectional in classification. The survey structure was close-ended questions with ordered response categories and open-ended questions. The method used was a questionnaire and the instrument was Scott's Mentor Program Survey. The questionnaire was divided into three sections.

Section I consisted of questions regarding elements of the mentoring process and was based on a four point Likert scale with 4 indicating Strongly Agree, 3 indicating Agree, 2 indicating Disagree, and 1 indicating Strongly Disagree. Section II consisted of general questions to obtain basic demographic or background information. Questions included information

regarding gender, age, racial/ethnic background, years teaching, school demographics (urban or not), and intent to remain in the teaching field. This information was used to describe the population participating in this study. Section III contained open-ended questions that allowed participants an opportunity to supply their opinions of the most important elements of mentoring or a mentoring program and to provide explanatory information.

Alterations to Scott's Mentor Program Survey were guided by Dillman's (1999) Tailored Design Method and included questions to determine if a participant had or had not been mentored and if the participant had or had not chosen his/her own mentor. Additional demographic information was added to determine if the school site was an urban or non-urban. Scott's Mentor Program-Survey was pilot studied in West Alabama in 2004 and approved for use.

Data Collection

Principals at the ten participating schools were contacted by telephone and permission was obtained to forward the survey packet to their annual contract (AC) teachers fitting into the category of 0-2 years teaching experience. The survey packets were hand delivered to the principals at the ten school sites. Principals at each school site were asked to only distribute the survey packet to the 0-2 years experienced AC teachers. The participating teachers would mail the completed questionnaire portion of the survey packet back to the researcher using the United States Postal Service. Survey packets included an informed consent cover letter describing the study and requesting voluntary participation from the teacher, the 47-item questionnaire to be completed voluntarily by the participating teachers, a preaddressed, postage paid, envelope for

return of the questionnaire, and a small token of appreciation. On the questionnaire, participating teachers were asked to rank their perceptions of components related to mentoring on a Likert scale from one to four with 4 indicating Strongly Agree, 3 indicating Agree, 2 indicating Disagree, and 1 indicating Strongly Disagree to see what impact they had upon teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. These components included Time, Relationship, Teaching Practices, Mentor Role and Attributes, and Administration. Each factor had several directly related questions upon which teachers could rank their perceptions. Questionnaires were returned to the researcher and the data collection process was completed.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for the quantitative portion of this study was conducted using the statistical analysis Software Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 11.0 for Windows. The analysis of data generated from the questionnaire relied on descriptive statistics, an independent *t*-test, and an analysis of variance (One-Way ANOVA). The data used for the qualitative portion of this study was also generated from the questionnaire and analysis was based upon teachers' written perceptions or opinions regarding mentoring or the mentoring process.

This study was guided by the following three research questions.

1. What is the difference in beginning teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field between teachers who were mentored versus teachers who were not mentored?

2. What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the mentoring process regarding specified components within the process?

3. What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the most important elements of a mentoring program?

Discussion of Findings

Research Question One

What is the difference in beginning teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field between teachers who were mentored versus teachers who were not mentored?

Research question number one sought to discover if there was a difference between a teachers' intent to stay teaching and their mentoring experience, (during their first three years of teaching). An independent *t*-test was used to determine if a statistical difference existed. No statistically significant difference existed between the mean of teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field of those teachers who received mentoring and the mean of teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field of those teachers who did not receive mentoring (t (61) = -1.148, p> .05). The mean for intent of subjects who received mentoring (m = 1.73, sd = .45) did not exceed or was not significantly different from the mean of subjects who did receive mentoring (m = 1.85, sd = 37).

Findings suggest that teachers' intent to remain in the profession will be decided based on factors that do not solely depend upon their having received support from a mentor. This assumption is strengthened by the Crosstabulation which revealed that 26 of the (n=71), totaling 37% of all participants, indicated that they had not been assigned or selected their own mentor to assist during the time they had been employed, yet 78% reported that having or not having a mentor still did not influence their intent to return (47% of the teachers were classified as being

in their first year of teaching, 25% were in their second year of teaching, and 28% were in their third year of teaching).

However, the findings that 33 or 46% of the respondents self-selected a mentor indicated that almost half of the participants felt the need for mentoring support and thus chose to seek someone themselves to provide assistance for their needs. This finding indicated to the researcher that the need for mentoring existed, it was just not perceived as the major determining factor in the majority of cases for teachers' intent to remain in the profession. Seeking a mentor by the participants lends support to Maslow's (1970), theory that an individual must have a lower level need met before feeling motivated by the next, or higher, level. The beginning teachers in this study desired to have their basic needs met: (a) physiological needs, (b) security needs, (c) belonging needs, and, (d) esteem needs, on their journey toward the last need listed by Maslow, (e) self-actualization. Self-actualizing behavior is a reaching out toward the environment with confidence that the interaction will be productive and is accompanied by strong self-concepts. The self-actualizing person interacts confidently, locates opportunities for growth and enhancement, and inevitably, contributes to the development of others (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, (2004). As the literature review previously stated, due to mentoring support and guidance, new teachers are able to focus in on students' learning sooner, an important factor contributing to a school's overall student achievement (Black, 2001). The researcher views a teacher who has progressed to a self-actualization level as an asset to the teaching profession due to the perceived impact their growth will have upon student learning.

Research Question Two

What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the mentoring process regarding specified components within the process?

Research question two sought to discover if a statistically significant difference existed between teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field with respect to mentoring as measured by the components: (a) Time, (b) Relationship, (c) Teaching Practices, (d) Mentor Roles and Attributes, and (e) Administration.

An analysis of variance (One-Way ANOVA) was used to determine the proportion of variability attributed to each of the factors. Questions 2 through 5 (Q2-Q5) were directly related to the Time component. Time Question Two $F(2, 68) = .70$, $p = .50$, Time Question Three $F(2, 68) = 2.61$, $p = .08$, Time Question Four $F(2, 68) = .31$, $p = .74$, and Time Question Five $F(2, 68) = .30$, $p = .74$, were found to have no statistically significant difference in teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field.

Inspection of the empirical power estimates suggested the sample size used in this study (below .80) may not have been large enough to detect the effect in question, if indeed there were an effect (Sivo, 2006). The empirical powers for the component time, Q2 through Q5 were: .16, .50, .10, and .10, respectively.

Questions 6 through 10 were directed related to the component entitled Relationship. Similar findings were noted. Relationship Question Six $F(2, 68) = .29$, $p = .75$, Relationship Question Seven $F(2, 68) = 1.39$, $p = .26$, Relationship Question Eight $F(2, 68) = 1.86$, $p = .16$, Relationship Question Nine $F(2, 68) = .72$, $p= .49$, and Relationship Question Ten $F(2, 68) =$

2.22, p = .12, were found to have no statistically significant difference in teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field.

Inspection of the empirical power estimates again suggested the sample size used in this study might not have been large enough to detect the effect in question, if indeed there were an effect. The empirical powers for the component Relationship, Q6 through Q10 were: .10, .29, .37, .17 and .44, respectively.

Questions eleven through eighteen were directly related to the component entitled Teaching Practices. Similar findings as noted in Time and Relationship were discovered. Teaching Practices Question Eleven F (2, 68) = .89, p = .41, Teaching Practices Question Twelve F (2, 68) = .98, p = .38, Time Question Thirteen F (2, 68) = .29, p = .75, Time Question Fourteen F (2, 68) = .18, p= .84, Teaching Question Fifteen F (2, 68) = .19, p = .83, Teaching Question Sixteen F (2, 68) = 1.16, p = .32, Teaching Question Seventeen F (2, 68) = .31, p = .73, and Teaching Question Eighteen F (2, 68) = 1.04, p = .36, were found to have no statistically significant difference in teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field.

Once again, inspection of the empirical power estimates suggested the sample size used in this study might not have been large enough to detect the effect in question, if indeed there were an effect. The empirical powers for the component Teaching Practices, Q11 through Q18 were: .20, .21, .09, .08, .08, .25, .10, and .22, respectively.

Questions nineteen through thirty-one were directly related to the component Mentor Role and Attributes. With the exceptions of question nineteen and twenty-one similar findings as noted in the components Time, Relationship and Teaching Practices were discovered. Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty F (2, 68) = .93, p = .40, Mentor Role and Attributes

Question Twenty-Two F (2, 68) = .59, p = .56, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Three F (2, 61) = 2.43, p = .10, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Four F (2, 68) = .67, p= .52, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Five F (2, 68) = .46, p = .64, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Six F (2, 68) = 40, p = .67, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Seven F (2, 68) = .38, p= .69, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Eight F (2, 68) = .47, p = .63, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-Nine F (2, 61) = .51, p = .60, Mentor Role and Attributes Question Thirty F (2, 68) = .02, p= .98 , and Mentor Role and Attributes Question Thirty-One F (2, 68) = .42, p = .66, were found to have no statistically significant difference in teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field.

Inspection of their empirical power estimates continued to suggest that the sample size used in this study might not have been large enough to detect the effect in question, if indeed there were an effect. The empirical powers for the component Mentor Role and Attributes, Q20, and Q22 through Q31 were: .21, .14, .47, .16, .12, .11, .11, .13, .13, .05, and .12, respectively.

Mentor Role and Attributes Questions Nineteen and Twenty-One (Q19 and Q21) did have a statistically significant result but the ANOVA produced a small effect size. An effect size of .25 and above is considered large (Sivo, 2006) and both question results obtained an effect size below .25. Mentor Role and Attributes Question Nineteen had an effect size of .21 and Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-One had an effect size of .11. Given that the assumption of equal group size was met, ANOVA was deemed a suitable procedure for these data, despite the fact that the homogeneity of variance assumption was violated.

A statistically significant difference among the group means was found suggesting that the data were unlikely, assuming that the null hypothesis is true for Mentor Role and Attributes

Question Nineteen F (2, 68) = 8.98, p=. 00 and Mentor Role and Attributes Question Twenty-One F (2, 68) = 4.14, p= .02. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative, which stated that a difference existed among the group means in the population.

Overall, the model fit poorly, as an examination of the effect size of both Mentor Role and Attributes Questions Nineteen and Twenty-One revealed. The statistical difference among the group means was trivial. This result suggested that the independent variable explained 20.9% for Q19, and 10.9% for Q21 of the variation in dependent variable's scores. So, although the results were stable (i.e., statistically significant), the results were not impressive enough to make contribution to theory or practice. The attainment of statistical significance was most likely to be attributable to the sample size alone. Consequently, the post hoc test results were not interpreted.

The remainder of the Likert scale questions was directly related to the component, Administration. Similar findings as noted in the components Time, Relationship, Teaching Practices, and Mentor Role and Attributes with the two noted exceptions of Q19 and Q21 were discovered. Administration Question Thirty-Two F (2, 68) = 1.24, p = .30, Administration Question Thirty-Three F (2, 68) = .80, p = .45, and Administration Question Thirty-Four F (2, 68) = .82, p = .45 were found to have no statistically significant difference in teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. One final time in this study, inspection of the empirical power estimates suggested the sample size used in this study might not have been large enough to detect the effect in question, if indeed there were an effect. The empirical powers for the component Administration, Q32 through Q34 were: .26, .18, and .18, respectively.

Mentor Role and Attributes Question Nineteen asked the teachers' perception of agreement with the statement, "I reflect more on my teaching practices due to my mentoring

experience." Mentor Role and Attributes Question Number 21 asked the teachers' perception of agreement with the statement, " Mentors should only help when asked for assistance by the beginning teacher." The most probable explanation for the significant results produced was that respondents were asked to reflect upon their teaching practices based upon their mentoring experiences when 37% of the respondents had already indicated that they were excluded from a mentoring experience due to non-assignment of a mentor or non-self-selection of a mentor.

Findings indicated that none of the specific components selected for this study: (a) Time, (b) Relationship,(c) Teaching Practices, (d) Student Learning, (e) Mentor Role and Attributes, or (f) Administration independently made a difference in the teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field. However, in using their descriptive statistics, three questions, Q6, Q7, and Q10, did stand out as evidenced by their means and standard deviations. They had the compatibility of the highest means with the lowest standard deviations (with the exception of Q23 which, as explained, had skewed information due to omission of Likert scale numbers on the questionnaire).

All three questions were listed under the component, Relationship, with Q6 soliciting teachers' perceptions of agreement that mentors should be accessible for new teachers. Q7 stated that beginning teachers need a mentor they can relate with, and Q10 stated that the mentoring relationship impacts the effectiveness of the mentoring. These three questions were the only three that had a minimum score listed at 3 (agree) on the Likert scale of 1 to 4 and a maximum of 4 (strongly agree). Numerous questions reported a maximum score of 4 but these three were again, the only ones that listed a minimum score of 3. From this data it would appear that teachers' perception of the importance of a mentor being accessible and being someone they can

relate with was an area of agreement in importance among them. This finding is compatible with the literature review which stated that mentors and mentees should have similar interests and outlooks on teaching and if possible, teach the same grade level or subject area (Brock & Grady, 1998; DePaul, 2000; Huling-Austin, 1992). This finding also supported the statement that regular times for mentors and mentees to meet is desired and should be built into the school schedule, (Brewster & Railsback, 2001; DePaul, 2000). Findings also indicated that teachers felt the mentor-mentee relationship does impact the effectiveness of the mentoring. As stated in the literature review, it is important to recognize that teachers, like their students, are individuals who have different learning styles, backgrounds, and needs (Gordon, 1991; Kestner, 1994; Lawson, 1992). What happens to them during their early years on the job determines whether they remain in teaching (Aldeman, 1991).

Research Question Three

What are beginning teachers' perceptions of the most important elements of a mentoring program?

Questions forty-five through forty-seven (Q45-Q47) focused on teacher perceptions or opinions of the most important elements of mentoring or a mentoring program. Teachers were asked: (a) what three elements they considered to be the most important parts of a mentoring program, (b) what were some areas of a mentoring program that they have known about or been a part of that they considered to be the least beneficial, and in closing, (c) teacher comments were solicited regarding changes or suggestions for improvement of the mentoring process.

The first of the three open-ended questions, Q45, asked participants to name the three most important elements of a mentoring program. Seventy-seven percent responded with their opinion and a variety of answers were provided. However, several opinions appeared repeatedly as the elements teachers perceived as most important. The most frequently provided responses were: (a) availability (including time) and accessibility of the mentor (b) having a mentor on the same grade level or one that understood the curriculum and behavioral expectations of the assigned grade level, (c) having a friendly and professional relationship, and (d) help with lesson planning and curriculum instruction. Availability and friendliness (receptiveness of the mentor) were stated by forty-eight of the participants for an impressive 87%, followed by assignment to or understanding of the same grade level by forty-two of the participants for an equally impressive 76% of participant's answers.

Other opinions were provided but were listed with far less frequency. Teachers listing of the importance of availability, accessibility, and receptiveness are comparable to the high marks given to the Relationship factor in the quantitative portion of the questionnaire. The Relationship component supports the definition of a mentor provided at the onset of this study; the word mentor is derived from Greek mythology and implies a relationship for the purposes of imparting knowledge, support, and counsel (Summers-Ewing, 1994). Beginning teachers want a mentor they can feel comfortable working with and they need the mentor to be available for support when questions arise.

The second open-ended question asked what were some areas of a mentoring program that the teacher had knowledge of or had been a part of that were least beneficial. Thirty-one participants responded (56%) and of the thirty-one respondents, the largest grouping was the 9

who indicated they had never been assigned a mentor or had no knowledge of the mentoring process (29%).The next largest grouping contained five participants (16%) who's common bond was the comment that the least beneficial part of the mentoring program was the lack of time spent with their mentor due primarily to the mentor being too busy to spend more time with them. Once again, time and its' importance are made known. Time is directly related to availability as it was noted by some respondents that their mentor was not available due to a lack of time to meet with them.

Question forty-seven (Q47) was the final open-ended question. It solicited comments for changes and/or suggestions for mentoring. Fifteen teachers responded (n=55, 27%). Of the fifteen responses, one-third of the suggestions (5 respondents) stated the mentoring program needed to be mandatory. Some of the remaining responses included: (a) multiple mentors for one person to add additional perspectives (b) selecting mentors that have time to mentor, (c) making mentoring voluntary and based on personality and teaching styles, (d) having a supportive administration, and (e) having mentors who are willing partners.

The central constant theme was having a mentor who was both available and receptive to the mentoring relationship so that the beginning teacher could be comfortable in requesting and receiving support. The assumption is that the beginning teacher will feel confident in requesting assistance and would receive support from the mentor in areas that were mentioned on the questionnaires; (a) curriculum, (b) behavioral expectations, and (c) lesson planning. It is also the assumption that the mentee would receive the support through the actions of oral explanations, visual examples, and concrete modeling. This finding is compatible with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory that states a learner's self-efficacy influences the courses of action he/she will

choose to pursue and the level of accomplishment he/she would realize (Driscoll, 2000). The construct of self-efficacy stresses the interplay of behavior, environment, and cognition based upon information gathered from four factors: (a) personal performance accomplishments; (b) vicarious learning; (c) social persuasion, and, (d) physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1993; Larson et al., 1992; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002; Lent, Hill, & Hoffman, 2003). As Rowley (1999) stated in the literature review, a good mentor is accepting of beginning teachers and recognizes that novice teachers need practice and solid, caring guidance.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Implications

The following are implications gathered from results of both the rated portion of pre-selected components and the opinion portion of this study:

1. Beginning teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field is not determined by whether or not they have a mentor, however teacher comments strongly suggested the support of a mentor is desired.
2. If a mentor is not assigned, many beginning teachers will seek out their own mentor.
3. Beginning teachers strongly agree upon the value of a mentor that is both available and accessible to them for support with a variety of needs that are not limited to but include curriculum, behavioral expectations, and lesson planning.
4. Beginning teachers strongly agree upon the need to have a mentor they can relate with and are more comfortable with a mentor teacher who is assigned to the same grade level as them or has expert knowledge of that grade level assignment.

5. Beginning teachers desire a mentor that is receptive to supporting them with their needs and would consider receptivity one of the three essential elements of any mentoring process.
6. Beginning teachers strongly agree that the mentor-mentee relationship impacts the effectiveness of the mentoring.
7. Support from administration is desired to make the mentoring program effective.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations based upon implications determined from results of this study:

1. Administrators need to work with willing mentors to establish guidelines for an effective mentoring program that is related directly to the individual school-site and its' climate. For example, in Florida, National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) often seek out mentoring hours to satisfy requirements of a monetary bonus they can qualify for and would find some of the administrative and mentoring assignment duties an attractive prospect. NBCT's have completed a rigorous program that lends itself well to mentoring other teachers. However, limiting to just NBCTs excludes a wealth of other on-site mentoring support that can come from teachers familiar with the grade level that beginning teachers are assigned to and are seeking support with.
2. Mentors and mentees need to be paired at the onset of the school year and need to have time made available for meeting other than during planning time. Early release days could have a mentorship component written in so that meeting either as an independent

pair or with other beginning teachers in a cohort group becomes part of professional development plans.

3. To further explore meeting time, planning time given to a mentee could be counted toward bonus hours for a Florida NBCT since they will still have to do the work missed during planning at some other time. Compensational leave time for non-instructional hours could also be provided as an alternative to non-NBCT teachers making their planning time available for mentoring during their planning. These two alternatives could make meeting during planning time a mutually beneficial proposal and provide attractive incentives for non-compensated mentors who are willing to mentor but feel the pressure to complete activities during their own planning period.
4. Each trimester or quarter a substitute could be provided for a half day in the morning for one mentor to visit his/her mentee's class for observation and support, then the substitute could cover for a second mentor in the afternoon so that a second mentor could spend time observing, reflecting and supporting another beginning teacher. This substitute sharing reduces the expensive cost of requiring substitute teachers while allowing the mentors inside the mentees' class for quality time teamwork
5. Planning of room assignments would help to place a novice teacher with an experienced teacher either next door or where the experienced teacher is more easily accessible. Having a mentor within the same grade level allows for greater accessibility due to the same scheduling times, thus limiting the obstacle that the experienced teacher would not be in his/her room when an immediate question arises pertaining to a grade level question or concern.

6. Beginning teachers should have the support of administration in allowing re-assignment of a mentoring teacher if there is not a comfort level in receptivity and/or in the ability to relate. Beginning teachers felt strongly that the relationship between the mentor and mentee impacted the effectiveness of the mentoring. Therefore, there needs to be a level of comfort provided so the relationship is beneficial. Without the necessary guidance of expert teachers, beginning teachers struggle with classroom demands, often leading to beginning teachers adopting a survival approach to teaching which in turn negatively impacts student learning (Everston & Smithey, 2000). Although mentoring support is not the defining reason teachers' intent to stay is influenced, providing accessible support helps reduce the chances that non-support can be a contributing factor to their early departure.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in order to obtain that seamless continuum of professional growth that benefits both the mentor and the beginning teacher (McKenna, 1998) a formal approach to establishing a mentoring program should be undertaken with a personable attitude toward matching mentors and mentees. This study indicated that teachers' intent to stay in the teaching field was not directly related to their mentoring experience, but that the desire to have the mentoring support existed. In a solid effort to positively impact teachers intent to remain in the profession, mentoring programs should be validated with the major elements sought by beginning teachers effectively integrated into them: (a) availability, (b) accessibility, (c)

receptiveness, (d) assignment to a mentor in the same grade level or with expert knowledge of the subject/grade, and (e) administrative support.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations are based on research findings and conclusions drawn from this study. These recommendations are meant to contain suggestions regarding follow-up studies or replications studies.

1. Participants were receptive to the open-ended questions and valuable information was garnered from this source. Therefore, the researcher feels that additional and pertinent information could be obtained in future studies with the inclusion of interviews and focus groups.
2. To increase the rate of returns, it is suggested that the survey instrument not be sent out during the final few weeks of school, thus allowing for more reminder follow-up time. Additionally, the survey instrument might be sent out during the first semester and then the second semester to document any growth or change in perspectives.
3. The survey instrument used should be slightly altered due to questions nineteen and twenty-one that request a rating regarding a mentoring experience when some participants will have already indicated they did not have a mentoring experience. This will help prevent skewing the data and will allow all participants to input equally for data results interpretation.
4. To limit the generalization of thought regarding mentoring and intent to stay in the teaching field, future studies should use a sample drawn from a larger population,

regional, state, or national. This should help create a desired increase in the sample size to at least of a minimum of .80 for clearer detection of the effect (if indeed there were an effect).

5. Respondents could be further broken down to determine if age, gender, race, assignment location (Title I or not), number of years teaching (up to three), or other demographic information has an impact on perceptions. These findings could be another insight into how to tackle the problem of teacher retention by providing more information as to perceptions by specific categories for review, comparison, follow-up, or remediation.
6. Studies could further develop teacher perceptions regarding the profession and intent to stay in the teaching field between teachers who were formally assigned a mentor and those that self-selected a mentor.
7. Since teachers in this study did not indicate that mentoring had the main impact on their intent to stay in the teaching profession, further research is needed to determine what other variables are impacting the high rate of teacher attrition.
8. Due to the tremendous importance of student outcomes within the school settings a recommended study would be an exploration of student outcomes based upon the mentoring experiences of teachers.

APPENDIX A: TEACHER'S MENTORING SURVEY

Teacher's Mentoring Program Survey

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►**I am at least 18 years of age and completing this survey constitutes my informed consent.**

START HERE: Indicate your answer by marking the appropriate box with an X.

1. **I was formally assigned a mentor.** □ **Yes** □ **No**
   (a) **My mentor was in the same grade level.** □ **Yes** □ **No**

   I selected a mentor myself. □ **Yes** □ **No**
   (a) **My mentor was in the same grade level.** □ **Yes** □ **No**

   I did not have a mentor. □ **Yes** □ **No**

Instructions: Please read each statement and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree, with 4 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. **Circle your responses.**

	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)
Time				
2. Time spent with the mentoring teacher is the most important element of the mentoring process.	1	2	3	4
3. There needs to be more time devoted to formal mentor/beginning teacher meetings during the week.	1	2	3	4
4. Mentoring programs should focus on student improvement most of the time.	1	2	3	4
5. Mentor teachers should spend time helping improve teaching practices.	1	2	3	4
Relationship				
6. Mentors should be accessible for new teachers.	1	2	3	4
7. Beginning teachers need a mentor they can relate with.	1	2	3	4
8. Having a friendly relationship with a mentor is important.	1	2	3	4
9. The mentoring experience makes teaching less stressful.	1	2	3	4
10. The mentor-mentee relationship impacts the effectiveness of the mentoring.	1	2	3	4
Teaching Practices				
11. Mentors should influence teaching practices.	1	2	3	4
12. Classroom management and transitions are two areas that mentors should influence.	1	2	3	4

▶Please Continue

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
		SD	D	A	SA
13.	Mentors need to assist with curricular planning.	1	2	3	4
14.	Mentors need to demonstrate proper instructional practices.	1	2	3	4
	Student Learning				
15.	Student learning is the most essential element of the mentoring process.	1	2	3	4
16.	Mentoring programs can help improve student assessments.	1	2	3	4
17.	Mentors need to demonstrate construction, interpretation, and use of student assessments.	1	2	3	4
18.	Beginning teachers need lesson plan development assistance from mentors to improve student learning.	1	2	3	4
	Mentor Role and Attributes				
19.	I reflect more on my teaching practices due to my mentoring experience.	1	2	3	4
20.	Mentors should be professional partners (committed, informative, dependable, and supportive).	1	2	3	4
21.	Mentors should only help when asked for assistance by the beginning teacher.	1	2	3	4
22.	Mentors need to be highly skilled with teaching practices.	1	2	3	4
23.	Mentors should have at least four or more years experience to be assigned as a formal mentor.	1	2	3	4
24.	Mentors should be formally assigned.	1	2	3	4
25.	Mentors need to be assigned to the same grade level as the beginning teacher.	1	2	3	4
26.	Mentors should have follow up training after initial certification.	1	2	3	4
27.	Mentors should be available only during school hours.	1	2	3	4
28.	Mentors should provide their interpretation of the school culture.	1	2	3	4
29.	Mentors should help develop teacher improvement plans.	1	2	3	4
30.	Mentors should attend beginning teacher's meetings with administration.	1	2	3	4
31.	Mentors should do informal observations in the beginning teacher's classroom.	1	2	3	4
	Administration				
32.	Support from administration is essential for a mentoring program to succeed.	1	2	3	4
33.	The school administration should oversee the mentoring program.	1	2	3	4
34.	Administrators should allow beginning teachers to change mentors if they feel the current mentoring is ineffective.	1	2	3	4

Part II

Instructions: Indicate answers for 38-44 by marking the appropriate box with an X.

►Please Continue Here

35. What is your gender?

- □ Female
- □ Male

36. What is your age category?

- □ less than 25 years
- □ 25-30
- □ 31-40
- □ 41-50
- □ 51 or greater

37. What is your racial/ethnic background?

- □ African American
- □ Asian or Pacific Islander
- □ Caucasian
- □ Hispanic
- □ Native American
- □ Other _____

38. This is my ____ year of teaching.

- □ First
- □ Second
- □ Third

39. This is the only school in which I have taught.

- □ Yes
- □ No

40. I work at an urban school site? (contains high proportion of minority students and greater than **50% free or reduced lunch status)**

- □ Yes
- □ No

41. I plan to continue teaching next year

- □ In an urban school
- □ In a non-urban school
- □ I do not plan to continue teaching next year

42. Do you plan to continue to teach for five years?

- □ Yes
- □ No

43. If you leave teaching for educational or personal reasons do you plan to return to teaching at some later date?

- □ Yes
- □ No

►Please Continue on the Back

44. Did mentoring play a role in your decision to either continue or not continue to teach?

- □ Yes
- □ No

Comments:_____

_____

45. What three elements do you consider to be the most important parts of a mentoring program?

1._____

2._____

3._____

46. What are some areas of a mentoring program that you have seen or been a part of that were the least beneficial?

_____

_____

_____

47. Any additional comments, including changes and/or suggestions for mentoring, are welcomed.

_____

_____

_____

Your assistance in completing this questionnaire is greatly appreciated.
Your response contributes to the design of programs that are responsive to teacher needs.

APPENDIX B: PRINCIPAL CONTACT LETTER

April 16, 2007

Dear Principal (names will be inserted),

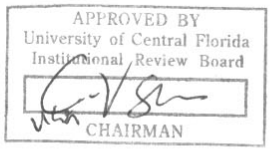
Recently I phoned and requested your permission to deliver a survey packet to your school for your annual contract teachers (beginning teachers with 0-2 years of experience). This survey is the research instrument for my doctoral dissertation regarding the relationship between mentoring and teachers' intent to stay (teacher retention). The purpose of the study is to determine if having or not having a mentor has any effect on teachers' intent to remain in the teaching field.

Enclosed please find a survey packet for each of your annual contract teachers (0-2 years experience). Would you be kind enough to ensure each of your annual contract teachers receives a survey packet? Each packet contains: a cover letter of informed consent, a survey that takes 10-15 minutes to complete, and a token candy attachment. The packet also contains a 10 x13 self-addressed, stamped envelope for participants to seal their completed survey into and mail back to me. By sealing the completed survey into the envelope and returning directly back to me, the anonymous integrity of the data will be protected.

Please note that I have included a copy of permission from Dr. Pinnell's office, Seminole County Public Schools, stating that permission is granted for conduction of my research. Your attention to this matter is truly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Deborah J. Partridge
Pine Crest Elementary
(407) 320-5467
deborah_partridge@scps.k12.fl.us



APPENDIX C: DR. JEFFREY L. SCOTT'S CONSENT LETTER

Mrs. Partridge,
>
>I am writing to give you written consent to use the survey from my dissertation for the purpose of gathering data for your doctoral research. This is done with the understanding that the survey's original creator will be mentioned within the written report and the dissertation will be referenced in your bibliography.

I wish you all the best and look forward to hearing about your results. Just have fun with it. If you need anything else please ask.
>
>
>Sincerely,
>
>
>
>
>Jeff Scott, Ph.D.
>Walker County Schools
>

APPENDIX D: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

University of Central Florida

Office of Research & Commercialization

April 20, 2007

Deborah J. Partridge
2814 S. French Avenue
Sanford, FL 32773

Dear Ms. Partridge:

With reference to your protocol #07-4385 entitled, "The Relationship between Mentoring and Beginning Teachers' Intent to Stay," I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office. **This study was approved on 4/19/2007. The expiration date for this study will be 4/18/2008.** Should there be a need to extend this study, a Continuing Review form must be submitted to the IRB Office for review by the Chairman or full IRB at least one month prior to the expiration date. This is the responsibility of the investigator.

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board through use of the Addendum/Modification Request form. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

Joanne Muratori

Joanne Muratori
IRB Coordinator
(FWA00000351 Exp. 5/13/07, IRB00001138)

Copies: IRB File
Cynthia Hutchinson, Ed.D.

JM:jm

12201 Research Parkway • Suite 501 • Orlando, FL 32826-3246 • 407-823-3778 • Fax 407-823-3299

Informed Consent

Please read this consent document carefully. Completion of this document indicates your permission.

You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

Project title: The Relationship between Mentoring and Teachers' Intent to Stay

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to determine if having or not having a mentor has any effect on a beginning teachers' intent to remain in the teaching field.

What you will be asked to do in the study: Complete the attached survey as directed and return in the preaddressed envelope.

Time required: Approximately 10-15 minutes.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks associated with this survey.

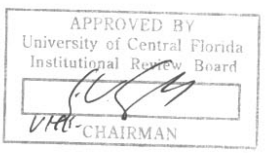
Benefits/Compensation: There are no direct benefits for you but attached you will find the chocolate candy as a token compensation for your participation in this survey.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept completely anonymous. There are no coded surveys to identify you and all answers will be analyzed in aggregate form, as individual answers will not be published. Only the researcher has access to this information and all records will be kept locked in the researcher's file cabinet.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. You do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. Completion of the survey indicates your permission.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study: Deborah Partridge, Graduate Student, Curriculum & Instruction, College of Education, (407) 320-5467, deborah_partridge@scps.k12.fl.us or Dr. Hutchinson, Faculty Supervisor, College of Education at (407) 823-3532 or email at hutchins@mail.ucf.edu

Whom to contact about your rights in the study: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF). For information about participants' rights please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.



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