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Novice Teachers' Perception of Mentoring and Teacher Retention

Alissa Sasser

NOVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF MENTORING

AND

TEACHER RETENTION

by

ALISSA HANRAHAN SASSER

(Under the Direction of Teri Denlea Melton)

ABSTRACT

Acclimating to the field of education, particularly during the first five years, is significantly challenging for novice teachers. In order to ease the transition into the field with the hopes of supporting retention, novice teachers are usually assigned a mentor. Typically, mentors are veteran teachers who have demonstrated a high level of proficiency as an educator and are assigned to the novice teacher in order to provide technical support in areas such as classroom management and lesson planning, as well to provide social and emotional support to novice teachers. An abundance of research exists to support the effectiveness of mentoring and the impact that it has on retaining novice teachers in the field. However, little, if any, research exists that specifically indicates the value novice teachers place on the mentoring component of teacher induction programs. Therefore the purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the components of a viable mentoring program that novice teachers perceive as necessary to promoting teacher retention.

Findings indicate that novice teachers consider the perceived benefits and outcomes of the program as the most effective component of the program. Therefore, it is

evident that novice teachers place value on participating in the mentoring program because they perceive it as being beneficial to their professional practice as an educator. These findings will be used to support the existing teacher induction program in the district in which the study was employed and the fidelity of its implementation. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher will build on the current teacher induction program by working with district officials to construct a monitoring plan for the teacher induction program, as well as to make revisions or additions to the program for the purpose of promoting teacher retention.

INDEX WORDS: Mentoring, Novice teacher, Teacher attrition, Teacher induction, Teacher retention

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ALISSA HANRAHAN SASSER

B.S., Brewton-Parker College, Mt. Vernon, GA, 2000

M.Ed., Walden University, Minneapolis, MN, 2007

Ed.S., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA, 2013

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Major Professor: Teri Denlea Melton
Committee: Antonio Gutierrez de Blume
                   Paul Brinson

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated first and foremost to God, who makes all things work together for His good. I also dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother, Gladys Elizabeth Hanrahan, to my husband Shane Derek Sasser, and to my dissertation chair Dr. Teri Denlea Melton.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

While over 200,000 people enter the teaching field each year, the field of teaching itself has become increasingly unstable, with the attrition rate particularly high among teachers with five or fewer years of experience, also referred to as *novice teachers* (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). Perpetual teacher attrition in a school or school system can have a devastating impact on school culture and student achievement. This is especially true for schools who serve low performing and African American students (Loeb, Ronfeldt, & Wyckoff, 2013). Georgia has not been immune to the teacher attrition crisis. In fact, 47% of novice teachers leave the profession within five years just within the state alone (Owens, 2015). Based on a state-by-state cost analysis of teacher attrition, the state of Georgia loses up to $82 million each year as a result of teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 2011). Nationwide, 44% of novice teachers leave the field in the first five years, with 50% of those teachers being minority (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2013). Novice teachers cite a variety of reasons for their permanent departure from the field. Ultimately, this population of teachers blames their departure from teaching on inadequate administrative support, lack of input in school wide decision-making, student discipline, and poor salaries (Douglass, 2016). For novice teachers to endure the challenges that they will encounter, particularly during the first years, they must not work in isolation. It is the responsibility of school leaders to create a culture that places great value on teacher planning and problem solving for the purpose of student achievement.

In order for novice teachers to acclimate to their school and to the field, they must feel a sense of belonging and a connection to the school organization. In addition, they

must feel as if they have attained a certain degree of success within those first few years of teaching, regardless of the obstacles they encounter. If novice teachers do not experience adequate administrative and peer support, they leave the field. High levels of attrition within a school contributes to a disruptive and unstable learning environment, which has a negative impact on student achievement (Curtis, 2012). Also, when schools have to allocate a large amount of funding and time to training large numbers of recruitment, hiring, and training of new teachers each year due to a high level of attrition, this limits the amount of funding for professional development in other areas of need for veteran and novice teachers alike (Curtis, 2012). One means by which to help novice teachers acclimate is through mentoring.

The practice of mentoring new teachers first began in the 1980s. Since the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, the sense of urgency for schools to hire and retain high quality teachers has placed an even greater importance on the role of teacher induction programs that include a mentoring component. This law stated that teachers had to be "highly qualified," which meant that teachers were certified and demonstrated proficiency in given content areas (Klein, 2015). While any teacher who graduates from an accredited teacher education program and passes a state licensure exam is designated as highly qualified, this does not necessarily guarantee their success as a novice teacher.

The state of Georgia has not been immune to the attrition crisis from among its population of novice teachers. In order to combat this issue, the Georgia Department of Education in 2016 released specific teacher induction guidance guidelines for schools for the purpose of supporting and retaining novice teachers. Georgia's Teacher Induction

Guidance includes seven domains for districts to include within their teacher induction

programs. These domains include the following: descriptions of the roles and

responsibilities of district and school leaders; guidance in regard to the leadership and

organizational structures that must be in place in order to support a comprehensive

teacher induction program; the criteria for a successful new teacher orientation;

guidelines for a mentoring component of the induction program; a description of how to

acclimate teachers to the Teacher Keys Evaluation System as well as to the curriculum

and assessment expectations; professional learning to support the novice teacher; and,

finally, a component for an annual program evaluation (GaDOE, 2016).

School systems across the nation have given greater attention to the development

of strong teacher induction programs that include on-going mentoring and support for the

purpose of improving the retention of new teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Matlach &

Potemski, 2014). Research has suggested that providing a new teacher with a mentor who

teaches in their same subject area and shares a common planning time as a part of the

new teacher induction program is the most effective method in helping new teachers

acclimate to the profession and has the greatest impact on student achievement (Barlin,

Burn, Goldrick, & Osta, 2012; Haynes, 2014; Matlach & Potemski, 2014).

It is generally accepted that mentors have a positive impact on new teachers

(Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; McCollum, 2014). Traditionally, the most effective mentoring

programs pair a strong veteran teacher with a novice teacher for the purpose of assisting

the novice teacher in acclimating to the profession. The most common components of this

type of mentoring include collaboration, lesson planning, and one-way observations in

which the mentor observes the novice teacher and then provides the novice teacher with

feedback (Harris, 2015). While much has been written about the impact of mentoring on novice teachers, the search for research that presents findings in regard to novice teachers and their perceptions of the necessary components of mentoring programs that promote retention in the field has been unsuccessful.

Recently, a needs assessment was conducted at the researcher's school of employment in preparation for the re-accreditation process. Data from this needs assessment acknowledged that a mentoring system was indeed in place, but the structure for implementation was not formalized nor monitored very effectively. The turnover rate at the school was considerably high during the 2015-2016 school year, further justifying the need for a comprehensive teacher induction program that would provide the support needed for a mentoring model that would be employed with fidelity. While not all of the teachers who left the school were novice teachers, a comprehensive teacher induction program that included a mentoring component may have possibly supported the retention of novice teachers.

Therefore, the purpose of this study will be to ascertain what components of a mentoring model novice teachers value and what components of the mentoring model are associated with their intent to remain in the teaching profession. School districts have utilized a variety of mentoring models in their efforts to acclimate novice teachers to their school and to the profession. However, the efforts to develop and employ these mentoring models have relied only upon the expertise and research of veterans in the field instead of soliciting the input of novice teachers. Little, if any, research exists about what novice teachers deem as necessary components of mentoring models that would assist in acclimating them to the field and to the profession.

The current body of literature suggests that teacher attrition is a problem facing many schools in the nation, particularly as it relates to teachers who are new to the profession (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). Further, the research previously presented has suggested that school systems that implement a strong new teacher induction program with quality supports can increase the retention of new teachers (Matlach & Potemski, 2014). One component of an effective new teacher induction program is the implementation of a peer mentoring model where qualified veteran teachers mentor novice teachers for the purpose of acclimating them to the school and the profession (Harris, 2015). However, there is limited research available in regard to novice teachers' perception of the support provided by the mentoring component of a teacher induction program and their decision to remain in the field of education.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher attrition rates, particularly among novice teachers, have steadily increased in the past 20 years. In order to provide support to this population of educators for the purpose of retaining them in the field, school districts across the United States have developed intensive new teacher induction programs, many of which contain a mentoring component. Mentoring of new teachers is not a new concept, but with the increasing accountability placed upon teachers as well as administrators, in conjunction with the increased attrition of novice teachers, greater attention has been given to providing support to this population. Existing research has established that new teachers need support to acclimate to the profession. However, there is limited research available to determine the components that novice teachers identify as most critical in supporting their retention in the profession.

Therefore, the purpose of this descriptive study was to determine novice teachers' perceptions of the components necessary for a mentoring program conducive to teachers' needs. In response to the data gathered and the findings generated by the researcher using the *Oregon Mentoring Program: Beginning Teacher Mentor Survey*, the researcher will use the perception data gathered from the research to make recommendations to the school system for the purpose of developing a more viable mentoring program that supports teacher retention.

Research Questions

This study involved surveying a non-random sample of novice teachers currently employed in Bulloch County. Survey participants only included novice teachers in the system who actively participated in the district's mentoring program for new teachers. Participants were asked to measure the degree of importance that they place on the various components of a mentoring program. From this, the researcher has answered the following overarching question: What do novice teachers perceive as the necessary components of a viable mentoring program to promote retention? For that purpose, the following sub-questions were used to guide the study:

1. What components (i.e., support for professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship) do novice teachers consider to be most effective in a mentoring program?

2. What components (i.e., support for professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship) do novice teachers consider to be least effective in a

mentoring program?

3.   Do components of a teacher-driven mentoring program (i.e., support for professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship) predict novice teachers' intention to remain in the field of education?

Significance of the Study

During the fall of 2016, the school system in which the study took place conducted a needs assessment in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Teachers had to determine whether mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning. A review of the provided data indicated a need for a more systematic approach for providing mentoring and support to novice teachers.

A formalized mentoring program was first introduced in Bulloch County during the 2015-16 school year. Novice teachers were paired with veteran teachers at their school who would provide them support throughout the school year. Additionally, novice teachers at each school had to attend monthly face-to-face professional development sessions at the Board of Education where they were presented information on topics such as teacher evaluation, professional learning communities, effective collaboration, classroom management, and the prioritization of curriculum. At the end of the year, principals in the district were surveyed about topics of priority that should be included in the mentoring program for the 2016-17 school year; however, the novice teachers were not surveyed about the topics they believed were most valuable. While the data from the principals were taken into consideration, it was not used to deliver specific professional

development sessions for novice teachers.

During the 2016-17 school year, novice teachers (mentees) were again paired with veteran teachers (mentors). Instead of attending monthly face-to-face sessions at the Board of Education for the purpose of professional development, Bulloch County chose instead to embrace a model where face-to-face meetings between mentor and mentee would be held every other month. During the months where face-to-face meetings were not held, novice teachers and their mentors had to watch videos and complete readings together and then complete reflections in response to these activities. Again, no feedback was solicited from novice teachers about the effectiveness of this model and/or what they considered to be an effective part of the current mentoring model.

Therefore, the results of this study will be used to inform Bulloch County and other school districts about the value of implementing the mentoring component of a teacher induction program with fidelity for the purpose of retaining teachers. The data collected from novice teachers could further inform school districts about the types of support included within the mentoring component of a teacher induction program that is deemed as most effective in supporting their successful transition to the profession. School districts have utilized a variety of mentoring models in their efforts to acclimate novice teachers to their school and to the profession. However, the efforts to develop and employ these mentoring models have relied only upon the expertise and research of veterans in the field instead of soliciting the input of novice teachers.

Procedures

This descriptive study entailed surveying 29 of 45 novice teachers in Bulloch County School District utilizing a revised version of the *Oregon Mentoring Survey:*

Beginning Teacher Mentor Survey. The survey was anonymous as no personal identifiers were collected. A minimum sample size of 18 was sought. In their research on survey response rate levels and trends, Baruch and Holtom (2008) stated, "In 2005, among the 157 studies at the individual level, the average RR (response rate) was 52.7 percent with a standard deviation of 21.2" (p. 1148). Therefore, a mean response rate of 40% (n = 18) was sought, making the response rate of 29 more than adequate. Data were collected via Qualtrics™ software; the survey was available for a total of four weeks. Data have been analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics and simple regression; findings are presented via tables and charts and explained via the supporting narrative.

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following key terms are defined:

Mentoring: In mentoring, one colleague supports the skill and knowledge development of

> another, providing guidance to that individual based on his or her own
>
> experiences and understanding of best practices (Hudson, 2012).

Novice Teacher: Teacher with five or fewer years of experience is designated as a novice

> teacher (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014).

Teacher Attrition: Teacher Attrition refers to leaving teaching altogether, either to take

> another job outside of teaching, for personal reasons as child rearing, health
>
> problems, family moves, and retirement (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006)

Teacher Induction: Induction level teachers have three or fewer years of experience.

> During this early stage of their career, induction teachers have a reduced number
>
> of course preparations, a helpful mentor in the same field, a seminar tailored to
>
> the needs of beginning teachers, strong communication with administrators, and

time for planning and collaboration with other teachers (Ingersoll, 2004).

Teacher Retention: Teacher retention is a field of education research that focuses on how

factors such as school characteristics and teacher demographics affect whether

teachers stay in their schools, move to different schools, or leave the profession

before retirement (Hughes, 2012).

Chapter Summary

The retention of novice teachers is essential to providing students with a quality

education. New teacher induction programs that are employed by school districts vary

according to purpose and fidelity of implementation. Additionally, the mentoring models

included within the teacher induction models differ as well. Research supports that

retention of novice teachers nationwide is a looming crisis and also supports that novice

teachers benefit from peer support and feedback to ease their transition into the field.

However, little, if any, research exists that specifically indicates the value novice teachers

place on the mentoring component of teacher induction programs. Therefore, the purpose

of this study was to answer the following overarching question: What do novice teachers

perceive as the necessary components of a viable mentoring program to promote

retention? The researcher administered an anonymous online survey to novice teachers in

the Bulloch County School district to determine which components (i.e., support, contact,

type and level of communication, support, and outcomes) novice teachers considered to

be most and least effective in a mentoring program and in determining their intention to

remain in the field of education. This study will strengthen the existing research on

mentoring and will provide school level and district level leaders with substantiated data

as it relates to viable components of a mentoring program toward the goal of increasing

the retention of novice teachers.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

An increasing teacher shortage seems inevitable based on the current attrition trends of teachers, particularly among novice teachers. Because of this, school systems have implemented a variety of approaches to the induction process for novice teachers, and are seeking more effective approaches to improving the fidelity of their teacher induction programs. Therefore, there is a need to know if the mentoring components of these teacher induction programs are effective in improving the retention of novice teachers.

Research has suggested that novice teachers benefit from a strong mentor, particularly during their first year of teaching; however, the empirical research focusing on novice teachers' perceptions of mentoring is limited. This study strengthens the existing research on mentoring and provides school-level and district-level leaders with substantiated data as related to the viable components of a mentoring program with the ultimate goal of increasing the retention of novice teachers.

As such, the literature review for this study involved an exploration of the theoretical model that guided this study—Knowles' Theory of Androgyny, as well as types of mentoring to include the following mentoring models: Peer Mentoring, Group Mentoring, Virtual Mentoring, and Supervisory Mentoring. In constructing the literature review, the researcher utilized the following databases: Galileo, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Search words and terms included: novice teachers; teacher attrition; teacher induction programs; and, mentoring models.

Theoretical Framework

For school leaders to promote sustained change within their organization, they must empower teachers by providing them with learning experiences and professional development that is self-directed and that can be applied in context. Additionally, by providing the adult learners with professional development experiences that afford them the opportunity to be self-directed in their learning, school leaders partner with their teachers in promoting sustained and on-going school improvement efforts as related to teaching and learning. Therefore, it is essential for school leaders to make a delineation between the pedagogy that is effective for teaching adults and the pedagogy that is necessary for teaching children and then create a culture that is conducive to learning for both groups.

Malcolm Knowles coined the term *andragogy,* which he described as, "the art and science of helping adults learn" (Knowles, 1980, p. 43). According to Knowles (1980), the theory of androgyny is grounded in the following five assumptions:

1. Self-concept moves from being a dependent personality to one of being a self-directed human being.

2. Adults accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.

3. Readiness to learn becomes increasingly oriented to the developmental tasks of his social roles.

4. Perspective changes due to the immediacy of application.

5. Orientation toward learning shifts from subject centered to problem centered. (Knowles, 1980, p. 43-45)

Novice teachers are emerging in their development of the mental shift from student to full time professional. The first year in the classroom can be a challenge in that there is not the directed and on-going guidance with pedagogy and content that they received from their university professors while matriculating through the teacher education program. The absence of the safety net of support can be difficult as novice teachers must independently develop their proficiency in their ability to be reflective and self-directed in their learning. Novice teachers have not yet acquired the self-actualization needed to comprehend their understanding of their profession as a social role, nor have they obtained a variety of experiences in this context to do so. Therefore, a mix of directive and self-directed learning is most appropriate to support their successful transition to the profession and to promote long-term retention in the field.

The role of the mentor is particularly crucial to developing novice teachers as adult learners in making the transition from being subject-centered in their learning to being problem- solving oriented. The theory of androgyny supports that adult learners need to acquire the ability to assess their strengths and weaknesses in order to improve job performance. Self-actualization is essential in promoting growth and development for the adult learner (Knowles, 1980). As students, novice teachers applied their knowledge in a limited number of contexts while receiving consistent and on-going support and feedback. As professionals, the context in which learning is applied grows exponentially while the support and guidance diminishes. When adults experience success as a result of the immediacy of application, combined with the growing reservoir of experience, their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles (Knowles, 1973). In the field of education, novice teachers have abundant

opportunities to immediately apply what they learn in a relevant context while developing

their professional identity at the same time. Therefore, the role of the mentor is

instrumental in assisting the novice teacher in his or her ability to identify their areas of

strengths and opportunities for growth for the purpose of developing goals for

improvement.

In his seminal work, Knowles (1980) had asserted that there are three phases of

adult learning:

1. The learner constructs a model of competencies.

2. Adult educators lead the adult learner in assessing the strengths and

    weaknesses of their performance.

3. The adult learner acquires the ability to measure the gaps between their present

    competencies and the required or desired level of competency to develop a

    plan for growth. (Knowles, 1980, pp. 46-49)

Knowles (1980) further asserted that because adults are intrinsically motivated as

learners, adult educators who serve as guides in leading adult learners through this

process from pedagogy to andragogy can serve as powerful change agents for their

organizations as they help adults reach their full potential in their professional

competencies. Mentors can be instrumental in bridging the gap for novice teachers in

their ability to develop as reflective practitioners who are able to assess their own

performance and then develop a plan for growth.

Critics of Knowles' theory of andragogy asserted that Knowles' perspective on

adult learners is limited. For instance, according to Hartree (1984), Knowles' theory

characterizes good practice as it relates to the learning process, but these characteristics

are not only applicable to adult learners. Hartree (1984) posited that some adults need structure and learning experiences that are directive and self-oriented in nature. He also asserted that some children are most suited to learning experiences that are self-directed and that many children benefit from learning experiences that are problem-centered with opportunities for immediate application. While the theory of andragogy describes adults as learners, the theory provides limited detail in regard to clarifying the adult learning process (Pratt, 1993). According to Hartree (1984), Knowles also failed to acknowledge the context in which learning occurs as well as to the agents of socialization that contribute to the adult learning process.

While critics (e.g., Hartee, 1984; Pratt, 1993) cited that Malcolm Knowles' theory of androgyny is limited in its scope as related to the adult learner, it does promote the idea that authentic change for the individual occurs when they develop the cognitive tools necessary for reflection, self-directed learning in context, and the ability to make the mental shift in their learning from subject centered to problem centered (Knowles, 1980). These are skills necessary for novice teachers to successfully acclimate to the teaching profession. Effective mentors can perform as gate keepers in providing novice teachers with the guidance in cultivating the cognitive processes necessary, based on Knowles' theory of andragogy, to successfully acclimate to their school and to the profession.

Teacher Attrition

Teacher education programs have seen a sharp decline in the number of people who are choosing to enter the field of education, thus impacting the number of teacher candidates available to fill teaching positions (Carver-Thomas, Darling-Hammond, & Sutcher, 2016). This severe shortage resulted from a variety of culminating factors.

According to Carver-Thomas, Darling-Hammond, and Sutcher (2016), enrollment in teacher education has fallen 35% in the past five years, the attrition rate is at an all-time high nationwide, and the demand for teachers has increased as the economy improves and schools can afford to hire more teachers. Teacher attrition also remains high at 8% annually. In order to help combat the downward trend in recruiting and retaining people in the profession, school districts should work to build upon the development received by new teachers in their teacher education programs by implementing a comprehensive mentoring program that provides novice teachers with a reduced teaching load and a shared planning time with their mentors (Darling-Hammond, 2015). While these two factors alone are not the only components of a comprehensive teacher induction program, they are perhaps the most critical.

Empirical research has established that a contributing factor to the retention of novice teachers is administrative support and the teacher's perception of the school leadership (Ladd, 2011; Marinell & Coca, 2013). Harris (2015) had posited that principals and assistant principals can be instrumental in positively impacting the retention of novice teachers, particularly first-year teachers. School leaders can support the novice teachers by creating a school culture that values collaboration and by providing feedback on a regular basis in order to assist the novice teacher with his or her growth and development. In addition to providing personalized support, school leaders should also include novice teachers in a comprehensive induction program that includes a mentoring component. The skilled mentor can further support the growth and development of the novice teacher, while also helping the new teacher acclimate to the profession (Harris, 2015; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). Moreover, schools that

demonstrate stability in the retention of their teaching staff are characterized by a culture where the principal and teachers are learning partners in promoting school improvement and student achievement (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). When school leaders create a culture of collaboration and support, particularly for novice teachers, there is a greater chance of retaining this critical group of educators in the profession. Mentors who are assigned to novice teachers can provide these teachers with the support necessary to engage deeply in collaboration for the purpose of promoting growth. While the engaging in collaboration with their peers supports professional growth and development, it also meets a social and emotional need necessary for retention.

The challenges encountered by teachers who are new to the profession are undeniable, particularly during this current era of high stakes testing and the increasing public spotlight on teacher accountability. In fact, these challenges can be so daunting that novice teachers leave the field due to the lack of support structures provided by local schools and districts that would help them more effectively transition to and remain in the field of education. According to the literature, a vast overhaul of existing mentoring programs utilized by schools and districts must occur in order to lower the ever increasing rates of teacher attrition, which are as much as 50% in high poverty schools (Ingersoll, 2016). Deep and sustained change as it relates to the mentoring of new teachers must occur if schools hope to retain high quality teachers. A deep sense of urgency has been created as schools across the nation have experienced the impact of the rising teacher attrition rate, and Georgia is no exception. A report released by the Learning Policy Institute (2016) stated that in 2016, 12.7% of teachers in the state left their schools or the profession.

It is already evident that greater attention on the part of schools and districts needs to be given to developing comprehensive and rigorous mentoring models that support novice teachers. New teachers enter the teaching profession motivated to make a difference in the lives of students entrusted to their care; however, feelings of isolation, frustration, stress, and failure during those first few years in the classroom can be overwhelming (Alexander & Alexander, 2012; Feiman-Nemser, 2012). The greatest obstacles faced by new teachers are effectively employing classroom management strategies, cognitively engaging students in the lesson, and explicitly teaching an objective and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). Unfortunately, many new teachers become disillusioned with the overwhelming demands of meeting the diverse needs of students and, as a result, abandon the teaching profession in the first five years (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2014). The problems encountered by new teachers such as classroom discipline, student motivation, student assessment, dealing with the individual learning needs of students, and insufficient planning time can contribute to a new teacher's feeling of inadequacy, often resulting in high levels of teacher attrition (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2012). To provide adequate support to novice teachers, a variety of teacher induction programs have been adopted by school systems across the United States to promote the sustained retention of this critical group of educators, all with varying degrees of success.

Novice Teacher Attrition

Educational leaders at the district and school level across the nation are experiencing a sense of urgency as they focus their efforts to retain and support novice teachers. Approximately 44% of newly employed teachers leave the field in the first five

years, with 50% of those teachers identified as minority. These numbers are even greater

in districts with a high poverty rate. Attrition rates of this magnitude cost districts two

billion dollars a year and have a significantly negative impact on student achievement

(Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). In schools with large numbers of minority students,

the impact of attrition rates of this magnitude can have a devastating impact on student

achievement (Loeb, Ronfeldt, & Wyckoff, 2013).

      The reasons for teachers leaving the field vary. However, novice teachers who do

leave the field cite lack of administrative support, demands for testing and accountability,

lack of influence and control over their own classrooms, poor compensation, and lack of

instructional support as the main reasons as to why they leave the profession (Ingersoll,

Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). Ingersoll, Merrill, and Stuckey (2014) also found that the most

critical factors contributing to this existing crisis are the decrease in the number of

college students graduating from teacher education programs, the increase in the student

enrollment in schools, and perhaps most alarming, is the increase in the attrition rate of

novice teachers, particularly among the minority population of teachers who enter this

field for the first time. While the loss of highly effective veteran teachers due to

retirement is a challenge faced by schools across the nation, Perda (2013) posited that the

greater challenge faced by schools and districts is the high rate of teacher turnover among

novice teachers, particularly those who are just starting out in the profession.

      Typically, first year teachers face a variety of challenges that are overwhelming in

spite of the preparation they received from their college teacher education programs. In

fact, these challenges can prove to be so overwhelming that as many as 40 to 50% of

teachers leave the profession within the first five years. Schools and systems across the

United States have identified this looming crisis and have worked to create new teacher induction programs that include a mentoring component (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

New Teacher Induction and Mentoring

Induction programs that are most successful in supporting and retaining novice teachers are comprehensive and multi-tiered with the inclusion of a mentoring component. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) posited that comprehensive induction programs that are most successful in supporting novice teachers include high quality mentoring for novice teachers to include rigorous criteria used to select mentors, scheduled common planning time to support regular interaction with other teachers, participation in seminars and intense professional development for novice teachers, and ongoing communication and support from school leaders.

The Georgia Department of Education (2016) has defined a mentor as a highly committed professional who supports the growth of novice teachers. The mentor provides guidance, shares knowledge and experiences, and supports the novice teacher in making an impact on student growth and achievement. Because of the increased attrition among novice teachers, schools and districts are working to implement comprehensive teacher induction programs. As a result, the role of teacher mentors is becoming increasingly important. In fact, new teachers who work with a strong mentor as a part of a well-organized teacher induction process have greater success with classroom management, lesson planning, content delivery, and student engagement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Potemski & Matlach, 2014). While the practice of mentoring has been given an increasing amount of attention in recent years, the concept has been utilized as an important tool in acclimating new teachers to the field long before the recent increase in

attrition rates among novice teachers.

Research has demonstrated that four critical components are necessary in retaining novice teachers. These critical components are: comprehensive induction programs, a mentoring component within these programs that provides novice teachers with a skilled mentor, supportive administrators, and helpful colleagues (Harris, 2015). Breaux and Wong (2003) stated that induction refers to a range of support structures, programs, strategies, and trainings specifically designed to assist new teachers during their first years in the profession. According to Harris (2015), effective induction programs are specific and targeted to meet the needs of novice teachers, particularly those just entering their first year of teaching. Although induction programs may have many declared goals, they most often serve three basic purposes:

1. To provide effective instruction in classroom management and effective teaching techniques;
2. To ease the difficulty of the transition into teaching; and
3. To maximize the retention rate of new teachers.

Undoubtedly, school level administrators play a critical role in supporting novice teachers. Harris (2015) further stated that the retention of novice teachers, particularly during their first year of teaching, is more likely when school administrators work to create a collaborative culture where teachers are integrated into the school culture, and support and guidance is provided by a veteran teacher. To further support this effort, school administrators should ensure that organizational structures are employed in order to promote sustained learning and support for novice teachers.

New Teacher Mentors

Mentors can be instrumental in providing necessary support to new teachers, particularly during the first year in the classroom. Existing research has noted that teacher attrition is especially high during the first few years on the job (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; McCollum, 2014). Because of this growing problem, there has been an emerging trend within school systems across the nation to provide some type of mentoring within new teacher induction programs. The assignment of mentors to new teachers must be given careful consideration. For the support provided by the mentor to be meaningful and effective for the new teacher, several things should be considered. First, research has demonstrated that assigning mentors to new teachers within the same content area where the mentor teacher and new teacher share a common planning time has proven to be the most effective (Ingersoll, 2012). Additionally, the mentoring must be content focused, involve training for mentors, and allow time for one-to-one meetings (Grossman & Davis, 2012). Finally, Harris (2015) found that skilled mentors can be the most influential factor in retaining new teachers. Therefore, teachers designated to act as mentors should exemplify the following characteristics: a positive demeanor; a positive view of the teaching profession; strong listening skills; an ability to demonstrate professionalism, flexibility and openness to new ideas; reliability and follow-through on commitments and promises; and, a non-judgmental attitude in interactions with colleagues.

Recognizing the need to employ a statewide intervention to address the issue of teacher attrition, the GaDOE released a Teacher Induction Guidance document in 2016 that provided explicit rationale and guidance for systems in the state about how to implement new teacher induction programs within systems across the state. According to

GaDOE (2016), "Research shows that intensive, mentor-based induction programs can significantly reduce teacher turnover and help teachers to focus on improving instruction" (p. 1). As stated previously, a critical component of these induction programs is the new teacher mentor. GaDOE (2016) explained that a mentor is highly committed to supporting the personal growth of the induction phase teacher. The mentor provides guidance, shares knowledge and experiences, and supports the induction phase teacher in making a positive impact on student growth and achievement. The duties and responsibilities of a mentor in the state of Georgia, according to the GaDOE (2016), are as follows:

1. Provide instructional, professional, and personal support to induction phase teachers;

2. Utilize effective communication and collaboration skills to support induction phase teachers;

3. Assist with coordination/facilitation of interventions and professional learning experiences to guide growth and development of induction phase teachers; and,

4. Serve on the Induction Phase Teacher Support Team.

The new teacher, also known as *the induction phase teacher*, has duties and responsibilities as an equal participant in this process as well. GaDOE (2016) stated that induction phase teachers must do the following:

1. Accept the responsibility to be open and candid concerning needs for positive growth and development;

2. Participate in all facets of the induction program to ensure teacher

effectiveness and to positively impact student growth and achievement; and,

3. Serve on the Induction Phase Teacher Support Team.

While the mentor and the induction phase teacher have great responsibility, the shared facilitation of an effective teacher induction program is a joint effort between the district and building level administrators. District level administrators should work to train and recruit effective mentors for the purpose of effectively supporting novice teachers. In order for the mentoring component of the teacher induction program to be effective, the mentoring component must be well developed and mentors must be well-trained in order to properly support and train new teachers (Wong & Wong, 2012). Building level administrators must support the new teacher induction process. School leaders at both levels are in an optimal position to capitalize on investing in the building of capacity of mentor and novice teachers for the purpose of achieving the goals and mission of the organization (Schieman, 2014). Therefore, leaders, particularly building level administrators have a responsibility to develop working conditions for the purpose of building capacity within their organization. Teachers who participate as viable contributors and recipients in the teacher induction process have the opportunity to do just that. According to Hughes (2012), "Teachers want to work in schools where they have greater autonomy, higher levels of administrative support, and clearly communicated expectations" (p. 247). While the relationship between the mentor and the new teacher is instrumental in the new teacher's effectiveness, particularly during the first year, administrative support in the new teacher induction process is critical to teacher retention as well.

School Leadership and Teacher Retention

The adjustment of transitioning from a teacher candidate can be rather overwhelming. An additional source of stress can result from a lack of support from their building administrator (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Therefore, administrative support is a critical element in supporting the retention of novice teachers. In addition to timely and on-going feedback from their administrator as it relates to instruction and managing student behavior, there is also a positive correlation between the job satisfaction of novice teachers and high level of trust with their administrator (Lytle, 2013) Administrators can build relationships with novice teachers by providing consistent feedback and opportunities for reflection throughout the school year. Novice teachers who experience positive relationships with their peers and administrators, particularly during the first year of teaching, are more likely to remain in the school and in the profession (Dias-Lacy & Gurguis, 2017). However, teachers' lack of administrative support combined with low salaries and isolation from co-workers results in teacher attrition (Curtis, 2012).

The leadership style of the administrator can have a direct impact on the retention of novice teachers. Transformational leaders are inspirational, intellectually stimulating and seek to satisfy the intrinsic needs of their followers (Burns, 1978). This type of leadership style can have a powerful impact on sustaining change within an organization. However, Aydin, Savier and Uysal (2013) determined that there is a negative correlation between transformational leadership and the retention of novice teachers. This results from the superficial expression of loyalty during the first stages of commitment. In other words, since leaders who utilize this approach general invoke strong emotion from among their followers, once the emotion recedes the loyal following may as well.

According to Burns (1978), transactional leadership involves a reciprocal exchange between the leader and the follower. While most employees value autonomy, studies show that novice teachers value this type of leadership style as it is directive and the transaction in the relationship occurs when the organization pays team members in return for their effort and compliance. While this type of leadership style does not lend well to creativity or innovation, this hands-on managerial approach has proven to be effective in supporting the needs of novice teachers (Aydin, et.al, 2013). Novice teachers benefit from on-going and continuous feedback and support from their school leaders. This feedback, in conjunction with the feedback that they receive from their mentor, can be instrumental in preventing the attrition of this group of teachers from the profession, as well as greatly assist them in developing their professional identity.

Mentoring Models

The practice of mentoring has been utilized in every occupational field. Traditionally, mentoring involves two individuals: a novice who is inexperienced and a veteran who is usually older and more experienced (Zachary, 2012). The benefit for both is reciprocal in that the mentor provides the novice with the emotional support and the guidance necessary to navigate the norms of the organization, while the mentor gains technical and psychological validation by supporting the novice employee (Kram & Isabella, 1983). However, due to the changing needs of millennial employees and the emergence of technology as a tool to enhance professional learning, the types of mentoring models that are employed to assist and support novice employees may vary. Effective mentors are instrumental in supporting the effective implementation of the various mentoring models used by schools and districts to support teacher induction

programs. While there are a variety of mentoring models in existence, the novice teachers' perception of the effectiveness of the peer mentoring model will be analyzed for the purpose of this study.

Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring is the most commonly used form of mentoring utilized within teacher induction programs to support novice teachers. The type of support generally received through the employment of the peer mentoring model is typically face-to-face and can be formal or informal (Zachary, 2012).This model provides the mentor and the novice teacher the opportunity to collaborate, write lesson plans together, and to observe one another. When peer mentoring is used effectively, it typically pairs a novice teacher with a veteran teacher whose classroom is in close proximity to the novice teacher and who teaches the same content as the novice teacher (Haynes, 2014; Matlach & Potemski, 2014). Ideally, when this model is employed effectively, the peer mentor is a veteran teacher who has demonstrated proficiency in the profession and has just a few years more of experience than the novice teacher. In order for peer mentoring to work, individuals within the peer mentoring model must have a great deal of similarity so that they will be more likely to form a professional bond. The resulting relationship between a novice teacher and the mentor teacher is reciprocal in nature. The key to the effectiveness of this model is for the mentor to act as a coach and as an advocate in helping the novice teacher acclimate to the profession, as well as to the school. Thus, the novice teacher receives guidance and support for the purpose of forming a professional identity, while the mentor gains validation of his or her professional practice and also gains the respect of peers within the organization who recognize the mentor's efforts to develop young talent for

the organization (Kram & Isabella, 1983). Additionally, novice teachers benefit from a supportive professional relationship with a peer. This working relationship can be especially helpful if the novice teacher has a peer mentor who teaches the same subject, as the peer mentor can be especially helpful in assisting novice teachers to navigate the challenges they may experience early in their careers (Risser, 2013).

Veteran teachers who adequately fulfill the role of mentor should be effective communicators, trustworthy, non-judgmental, sympathetic, and respectful (Hall, Hughes, & Thelk, 2017). In addition to displaying characteristics of supportive behaviors, mentor teachers also need to be proficient in providing meaningful and frequent feedback to the novice teacher as well as challenging the novice teacher when appropriate; in addition, mentor teachers need to promote self-reflection on the part of the novice teacher (Cottingham, DiBartolo, Battisoni, & Brown, 2011; Hall, Hughes, & Thelk, 2017).

There is some debate as to whether peer mentoring is more effective when the model is formal in nature as opposed to when peer mentoring is informal. When formal peer mentoring is employed, a peer mentor is assigned to the novice teacher as part of a teacher induction program endorsed by the school district (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011). Proponents of this model suggest that when peer mentoring is formalized, it is more focused due to the greater level of accountability required by the school organization (Nguyen, 2013). As a result, the support provided to the novice teacher is intentional. On the contrary, advocates of the informal mentoring model assert that this model is less structured, self-directed, and not recognized by the organization, but no less effective in supporting novice teachers (Desimon, Hochberg, Polikoff, & Porter, 2014). Whether the peer mentoring model is formal or informal, both models create a relationship where

novice teachers are provided with emotional and moral support from a peer mentor. The mentoring relationship, whether formalized or not, should last for more than one school year to effectively ensure that the novice teacher is provided with adequate support (Harris, 2015).

Critics of peer mentoring question the role of the mentor in promoting professional growth and self-reflection from the novice teacher to whom they are assigned. And, not all veteran teachers are suited to fill the role of mentor. A recent study conducted by Hobson and Malderez (2013) found that there are a multitude of flaws within this model. The most glaring of these flaws is when the mentor assumes a stance of judgement rather than support when interacting with the novice teacher; therefore, when the mentor adopts the role of judge and too readily reveals their evaluations of the novice teacher, the benefits that can result from the peer mentoring model can be seriously hindered. Furthermore, when peer mentoring is driven by the concept of judgment rather than support, the potential for professional growth and the overall socioemotional well-being of the novice teacher is compromised (Hobson & Malderez, 2013).

Group Mentoring

In today's work environment, traditional one on one mentoring may not sufficiently support the complex professional needs of novice teachers. Group mentoring is defined as a methodology for individual development that utilizes multiple experts (mentors) and learners (mentees) to help novice employees in a group setting. The purpose of this model is to help novice employees meet individual learning goals (Carvin, 2011). The defining element of group mentoring is that the learning is more reciprocal in

nature than the traditional mentoring model, where the transmission of knowledge is usually one way. Characteristics of group mentoring that is effective include, but are not limited to:

- Mentees have their own learning objectives that are fundamental to the group purpose and function;

- Group purpose is driven by the learning needs of the participants;

- The group is conducive to safe and open dialogue where mentees and mentors explore and share personal challenges;

- Mentors act more as a facilitator than a guide;and,

- Mentoring groups provide psycho-social support and facilitate the transfer or knowledge.

  (Carvin, 2011; Zachary, 2011).

In this format, mentors provide on-going support through established meeting times throughout the school year. Mentoring groups explore career development, provide psycho-social support, help build networks, and facilitate professional dialogue around topics of interest (Heikkinen et al., 2012). Typically, the type of group mentoring described in this model is face-to-face, although with the growth of online communities and forums for professional development, group mentoring can also be virtual (Carvin, 2011).

Critics of group mentoring assert that mentoring can result in the perpetuation of conventional norms and practices rendering beginning teachers less likely to employ progressive and learner-centered approaches to teaching and learning and more likely to conform to standard pedagogy (Hobson & Malderez, 2013).

Virtual Mentoring

An emerging alternative is virtual mentoring or developmental networks where novice teachers gain rich insight from a variety of esteemed professionals who support the professional growth and development of the novice teacher online. As in any mentoring model, mentors should be properly trained in order to support the novice teacher by providing meaningful feedback, promoting the novice teacher to self-reflect and to model effective instructional and professional practice (Davies & Gibbs, 2011). E-mentoring, also known as *virtual mentoring*, has emerged as an alternative to face-to-face mentoring (Cinkara & Arslan, 2017). This model varies from group mentoring in that the interactions are done virtually, as opposed to face to face in a group setting. According to Kram and Yip (2016), members of a developmental network are described as developers and their relationships with the focal individual as a developmental relationship. Moreover, a significant body of research has established that people learn and develop with the support of multiple developmental relationships (Chandler, Kram, & Yip, 2016; Dobrow, Chandler, Murphy, & Kram, 2012). Technology provides a forum where networking, or more specifically virtual mentoring, can be employed with fidelity and where professional relationships can grow and develop through the assistance of a virtual platform.

Critics of virtual mentoring state that the virtual mentoring model can hinder the richness of the face-to-face interactions and that there is a greater potential for loss of commitment to online interactions, particularly if expectations for communication is not initially established. Also, mentoring events like shadowing and observing one another teach can be challenging to arrange in a virtual relationship as these experiences lose their

authenticity in this context (Zey, 2011).

Supervisory Mentoring

Supervisory mentoring is when an employee is mentored by his or her supervisor. In the realm of education, typically a novice teacher is not mentored by his or her direct supervisor. In this type of model, the employee may experience difficulty in being vulnerable and candid during reflective conversations about job performance. However, emerging research indicates that this model may be effective for novice teachers who are able to bypass the role conflict experienced by mentors who also serve as supervisors in that supervisors are accessible to novice teachers and can more readily remove barriers to success for this group of teachers since they are working interdependently within the same school organization (Nowacki, 2015). Contradictory research exists in regard to the effectiveness of this model. One perspective asserts that supervisory mentoring is not ideal as this type of mentoring can be problematic since novice teachers may not feel that they can be open and honest about their struggles and failures with a mentor who also serves as their school administrator (Zachary, 2012). According to this perspective, mentors would encounter difficulty supporting career development objectively, but would also experience difficulty in providing the psychological support that would come naturally from an unbiased mentor (Nowacki, 2015). However, the opposing perspective supports that the supervisory mentoring model is indeed effective. Novice teachers value opportunities for career growth and potential for promotion. Role modeling and continuous and on-going feedback from their supervisor can provide opportunities for growth, development, and retention that is not readily available from other mentoring models (Haggard, et.al, 2011). Under the supervisory model of mentoring, novice

employees have continuous access to mentors who understand the organizational context and the skill set necessary for success. Due to the frequent opportunities to interact, novice employees and their supervisory mentors develop a more intimate and trusting relationship due to their accessibility to one another. This mentoring relationship lends to more rapid career development for the novice employee (Nowacki, 2015).

Bulloch County Mentoring Model

Presently, Bulloch County uses the peer mentoring model. Novice teachers are assigned a mentor who helps provide support with curriculum, assessment and instruction. Mentors also provide the emotional support that novice teachers need in order to successfully navigate those first few years in the profession. For the purpose of this study, peer mentoring and the support provided through this model were explored in order to determine if the support provided through this model has an impact on teacher retention.

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Chapter Summary

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Current research indicates that teacher induction programs support the retention of novice teachers as they acclimate to the profession of teaching. The mentoring component of comprehensive induction programs can have a positive impact on the retention of novice teacher. In fact, novice teachers who experience a lack of support are more likely to leave teaching altogether. However, there is limited research available to determine the components, specifically as related to the mentoring component of teacher induction programs that novice teachers identify as most critical in supporting their retention in the profession. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine what novice teachers perceive as the necessary components of a viable mentoring program for

the purpose of promoting teacher retention in the field.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree of importance that novice teachers place on various components of a mentoring program (i.e., support, contact, type and level of communication, and outcomes), and which components have a relationship with teacher's retention intention. Findings from the study will be used to strengthen the existing teacher induction program in the Bulloch County School District (BCSD). This study was quantitative utilizing a correlation descriptive study design.

Research Questions

This study involved surveying a non-random sample of novice teachers employed in BCSD who actively participated in the district's mentoring program for new teachers. Participants were asked to measure the degree of importance that they placed on the various components of a mentoring program. From this, the researcher used data collected to answer the following overarching question: What do novice teachers perceive as the necessary components of a viable mentoring program to promote retention? In addition, the following sub-questions were used to guide the study:

1. What components (i.e., support for professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship) do novice teachers consider to be most effective in a mentoring program?

2. What components (i.e., support for professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship) do novice teachers consider to be least effective in a

mentoring program?

3.   Do components of a teacher-driven mentoring program (i.e., support for

professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication, and

benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship) predict novice teachers'

intention to remain in the field of education?

Research Design

The researcher used a quantitative correlational design to collect and analyze data

using descriptive analyses. Descriptive research is used to describe characteristics and/or

behavior of a sample population (Creswell, 2014). For the purposes of this study, data

were collected and analyzed from novice teachers in Bulloch County. Creswell (2009)

has asserted that quantitative research employs strategies of inquiry such as experimental

and surveys, and collects data on pre-determined instruments that yield statistical data.

This research design is most appropriate for this study as it examined the degree of

importance that novice teachers place on various components of a mentoring program.

Thus, the researcher sought to examine the perceptions of this sample as they exist in

their current state.

Population and Sample

The target population was novice or induction-level teachers in one rural

southeast school district. According to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement

(2016), the BCSD had a total of 616 full time teachers for the 2015-16 school year. Of

these teachers, 549 were white and 534 were female. Of the 616 teachers, 174 had ten or

fewer years of experience; 45 were induction level teachers in the district. Baruch and

Holtom (2008) stated that among the 157 studies at the individual level, the average

response rate was 52.7% with a standard deviation of 21.2 for an online study. Therefore, a mean response rate of 40% (*n* = 18) was sought; the survey garnered 29 respondents, for a response rate of 64%. The Director of Professional Learning for the school system in which the study took place served as the gatekeeper for the study by emailing the questionnaire link to potential participants

Instrumentation

The instrumentation for this study was a moderately revised version of the *Oregon Mentoring Program: Beginning Teacher Mentor Survey* (2013). In 2007, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 2574 authorizing the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to establish a beginning teacher and administrator mentoring program. Initially, the ODE relied on a survey provided by the New Teacher Center to gather data on the effectiveness of the state's mentoring program. However, this survey proved to be too large and too difficult to use and eventually the state of Oregon created its own survey instrument entitled *Oregon Mentoring Program: Beginning Teacher Mentor Survey* (2013). Oregon uses the data collected from this survey to track teacher retention, to determine the relationship between student and achievement and mentoring, and to improve teacher and leader practices (T. Friesendahl, personal communication, January 11, 2018). The response rates from the surveys are very high which has increased the validity of the data collected. However, much of the data collected from this survey instrument is perception data and therefore a limitation (A. Ryerson, personal communication, January 11, 2018).

As previously stated, slight modifications were made to the instrument by the researcher. These modifications included changes to the question about the age group the

novice teacher works with, the rating scale used for each question, and the number of questions in the survey. The modified version utilized by the researcher was abbreviated and concludes with questions about the novice teacher's intention to remain in the field of education (see Appendix A). Since the psychometric properties of the instrument are unknown, Cronbach's alpha was utilized to measure the internal consistency of the instrument in order to further support the validity and reliability of the instrument, while the construct validity was determined through factor analysis since the researcher made minor modifications to the survey questions.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered electronically using Qualtrics™ to all novice teachers in the district via email by a designated person at the district office who served as the gatekeeper for survey administration. Potential participants were guaranteed individual anonymity, were assured that no identifiers would be collected, and were assured that no specific responses would be shared with school or district level supervisors.

Data Analysis

Data gathered from this instrument was downloaded to SPSS and analyzed to answer the research questions. Measures of central tendency such as mean, median and standard deviation were used to analyze the data gathered from the survey instrument. Data were first screened for univariate outliers and evaluated against requisite statistical assumptions according to the procedures outlined by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) via SPSS version 23. Data were also tested for univariate normality using histograms with the normal curve overlay and skewness and kurtosis statistics. Furthermore, data were

evaluated for assumptions including multicollinearity (all correlations need to be $< r =$ .85), linearity, and homoscedasticity.

The first and second research questions, as well as the overarching research question, have been answered using exploratory descriptive statistics; the third research question has been answered by using a standard multiple linear regression analysis with components of the teacher mentoring program as predictors and intent to remain in the education as the criterion (outcome). In this analysis, teacher perceptions of the different aspects of teacher mentoring as part of a teacher induction program served as predictors and retention intent served as the criterion. The effect size is reported as R^2. Cohen (1988) specified the following interpretive guidelines for R^2: .010-.299 as small; .300-.499 as medium; and $\geq$ .500 as large.

Presentation of Findings

Findings are presented in order of research question. Narrative explanations are supported by data tables.

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

Since a descriptive study design was used, there were no limitations to the study. First, since the purposive sample was drawn from novice teachers only in Bulloch County, the generalizability of the study is minimized; however, since the goal of this study is to strengthen the teacher induction program in Bulloch County, generalizability was not the intent of the study. Descriptive statistics have been used to summarize the perception data from the sample. This type of statistical analysis summarizes a data set but does not correlate data or create any type of statistical modeling relationship among multiple variables; therefore, lending to an additional limitation of the study. A final

limitation of the study is that the validity of the responses when people self-report. Survey participants generally present themselves in a positive manner when answering survey questions; thereby, diluting the validity of their responses (Mischel, 2013).

A delimitation of the study is the confinement of participants who are novice teachers and who are employed in BCSD. However, as this is a dissertation of practice, the focus should be on practices in the researcher's district. Another delimitation of the study was the use of an online survey instrument. This method of data collection was chosen to give participants anonymity, which may have served to increase participation. The researcher made the assumption that the Oregon Mentoring Program Survey instrument accurately measured novice teachers' perceptions in order to determine the components necessary for a viable mentoring program to promote teacher retention. In addition, it was assumed that participants responded openly and honestly to the survey statements.

Chapter Summary

This descriptive study entailed collecting and analyzing data from 29 novice teachers in Bulloch County School District utilizing the Oregon Mentoring Survey: Beginning Teacher Mentor Survey. Data collection was conducted via Qualtrics™ software; the survey was anonymous as no personal identifiers were collected. Data were analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics and simple regression. Findings are presented via tables and charts and explained via the supporting narrative.

CHAPTER IV

REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the degree of importance that novice teachers place on various components of the mentoring program (i.e., support, contact, type and levels of communication, and outcomes). As noted by Creswell (2009), quantitative research is the process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and writing the results of the study. Quantitative research is most appropriate for this study because the data collected by the researcher, based upon participants' responses, sought to create meaning of novice teachers' perceptions of mentoring as it was uncovered in the collected data. The researcher also wanted to determine if the components within a teacher mentoring program predicted novice teachers' intentions to remain in the field of education. Participants were asked to measure the degree of importance they placed on various components of a mentoring program. From this, the researcher answered the following overarching question: What do novice teachers perceive as necessary components of a viable mentoring program to promote retention? The following sub-questions were used to guide the study:

1. What components (i.e., support for professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship) do novice teachers consider to be most effective in a mentoring program?

2. What components (i.e., support for professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship) do novice teachers consider to be least effective in a

mentoring program?

3. Do components of a teacher-driven mentoring program (i.e., support for professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship) predict novice teachers' intention to remain in the field of education?

The researcher used a correlational descriptive design to collect and analyze data using descriptive analyses. Data for this study were collected and analyzed from novice teachers in the Bulloch County School District (BCSD). The instrumentation for this study was a revised version of the *Oregon Mentoring Program: Beginning Teacher Mentor Survey* (2013), which was electronically administered via Qualtrics™.

This chapter details the results of the study that are organized to demonstrate the demographic profile of the respondents, the results of the data analysis used to measure internal consistency and construct validity, and finally the results of the statistical analysis used to analyze the research sub-questions as well as the overarching research question. The results are summarized at the conclusion of the chapter.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Of the 45 novice teachers who were invited to participate in the study, 29 completed the questionnaire, for a response rate of 64%. The survey respondents consisted of novice teachers, teachers with five or fewer years of experience, from elementary, middle, and high schools in Bulloch County. Table 1 shows the demographic details of the survey respondents. As indicated in the data represented in Table 1, the greater percentage of respondents were elementary teachers who were white and female.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Sample

Variable	*N*	Percent
Respondent School Level		
Elementary	16	55.17%
Middle	5	17.24%
High	7	24.14%
Other	1	3.45%
Gender		
Male	5	17.24%
Female	24	82.76%
Race		
White	22	75.86%
Black or African American	4	13.79%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	6.90%
Hispanic or Latino	1	3.45%
Other	0	0

Preliminary Findings

Although there were a total of 29 respondents, five of the respondents did not respond to all questions. Therefore, a missing values analysis was conducted to ensure that the five cases of missing data were random and not non-random. A χ^2 test was conducted to ensure that the distribution of missing data was due to chance. The non-significant value of .931 verified that the data were at random. It should also be noted that

the researcher used a modified abbreviated version of the *Oregon Mentoring Program:*

Beginning Teacher Mentor Survey (2013). Specifically, these modifications included

changes to the question about the school level within which the novice teacher works, the

rating scale used for each question, and the number of questions in the survey; this

modified version utilized by the researcher concludes with questions about the novice

teacher's intention to remain in the field of education. In order to further support the

validity and reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's alpha was utilized to measure the

internal consistency of the instrument.

Findings

The following narrative supported by data tables reflects data analyzed according

to each research sub-question in order of the questions, and concludes with findings

representing the response to the overarching research question that provided the

foundation for the study.

Most Effective and Least Effective Mentoring Components

The first research sub-question asked participants what specific components (i.e.,

support for professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication,

and benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship) they considered to be the

most effective component in a mentoring program, while the second research question

asked about which of those same components participants found least effective. Both of

these research questions were answered using exploratory statistics, specifically

frequencies and percentiles. Findings indicated the component that novice teachers

perceived as most effective in a mentoring program is the perceived benefits and

outcomes of participation in the program, while their perceptions about the frequency of

communication was perceived as the least effective component of a mentoring program.

Cronbach's Alpha was used to analyze survey responses on section four of the survey, which asked respondents to determine how effective mentoring is in supporting novice teachers in various areas such as classroom management and developing a variety of teaching strategies. Cronbach's Alpha measured .954, indicating that respondents were consistent in their responses to the items that purportedly measured the constructs. Additionally, an analysis of the data in regard to support for professional learning indicated that survey respondents perceived mentors as being most effective in providing support with classroom management, while they perceived mentors as being least effective in helping provide strategies to cope with job related stress.

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentiles of Most and Least Effective Components

	Mean	**Median**	**Standard Deviation**
Perceptions of Support for Professional Learning	3.34	3.27	.068
Perceptions of Effective Communication	3.22	3.24	.738
Perceptions of Frequency of Communication	3.01	2.96	.425
Perceptions of Benefit/Outcome	3.73	3.60	.715

Mentoring Components and Retention Intention

The third research question queried: Do components of a teacher-led mentoring

program (i.e., support for professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of

communication, and benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship) predict

novice teachers' intention to remain in the field of education? The research question was

answered using multiple linear regression. Results of the ordinary least squares regression

revealed that the combined predictors significantly predicted intent to remain in the

profession, $F(4, 23) = 6.36$, $p = .001$, R^2 adjusted $= .44$.

Table 3

Omnibus Results of the Standard Linear Regression with Intent to Stay in the Teaching Profession as the Criterion

Model	Df	F	Sig.
Regression	4	6.361	.001[b]
Residual	23	23	

However, only perceptions of forms of communication (b=.66, [$CI_{95\%}$ = .13, 1.18];

β=.43) and perceptions of benefit and outcome of the mentor-mentee relationship

(b=.-1.18, [$CI_{95\%}$ =-1.70, -.657]; β=.-752) were significant predictors for intent to remain

in the profession. Perceptions of effective mentoring and perceptions of frequency of

communication were not significant predictors (all p values >.06). More specifically, for

every 1 unit increase in perceptions of effective communication, the intent to remain in

the profession increases by .43 standard deviations. Conversely, for every one unit

increase in benefit outcome, intent to stay in the profession decreases by .75 standard

deviations.

Table 4

*Results of the Standard Linear Regression Analysis with Intent to Stay in the Teaching
Profession as the Criterion*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B.	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Constant	6.663	1.514		4.400	000	3.530	9.765
Perceptions of Support for Professional Learning	.135	.262	.082	.515	.612	-.407	.677
Perceptions of Effective Communication	.661	.254	.435	2.598	.016	.135	1.187
Perceptions of Frequency of Communication	-.866	.433	-.328	-2.001	.057	-1.761	029
Perceptions of Benefit/Outcome	-1.180	.253	-.752	-4.671	.000	-1.702	-.657

The over-arching research question for this study sought to determine the
necessary components of a viable mentoring program that novice teachers perceive as
necessary to promote retention. The findings presented in Table 4 suggest that the
correlation between the intent to remain in the field and the perceived effectiveness of
mentoring as well as the perceived effectiveness of communication show a weak
correlation. However, the correlation between the perceived benefits and outcomes of
participation in the mentor-mentee relationship and novice teachers' perceptions of this
component as necessary to promote retention is positive. Therefore, schools and districts
would be well-served to invest in a robust mentoring component to include within teacher

induction programs for the purpose of mentoring novice teachers.

Summary of Findings

In this quantitative descriptive study in one rural school district in southeastern Georgia, the researcher sought to determine the components of mentoring that novice teachers found most and least valuable. In addition, the factors related to the novice teachers' intention to remain in the profession were also determined. Findings indicated that novice teachers perceived the benefits and outcome of participation in the mentor-mentee relationship as the most effective component, while their perception about the frequency of communication was perceived as the least effective component of a mentoring program. The components of a mentoring program that novice teachers' perceived as significant predictors for intent to remain in the profession were their perceptions of effective communication with their mentor and their perceived benefits and outcomes of the program. Moreover, the correlation between the perceived benefit and outcome and novice teachers' perception of this component as necessary to promote retention was positive.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of the Study

Current research indicates that teacher induction programs, which are comprehensive and include a mentoring component, support the retention of novice teachers as they acclimate to the profession of teaching. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) posited that that comprehensive teacher induction programs that are most successful in retaining novice teachers include rigorous criteria to select mentors, scheduled common planning time to support regular interaction with other teachers, participation in seminars and intense professional development for novice teachers, and ongoing communication and support from school leaders. Vast literature and research exists that validates the practice of mentoring in the field of education. However, there is limited research available that describes the perspective of the novice teacher and the value they place on various components of mentoring. Additionally, limited research is found to determine the components specifically related to the mentoring component of induction programs that novice teachers identify as most critical in supporting their retention in the profession. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine what novice teachers perceive as necessary components of a viable mentoring program for the purpose of promoting teacher retention in the field.

This study was a dissertation of practice in that the applied research was used to strengthen an existing practice in the school district in which the researcher is employed. The purpose of this study was to determine the degree of importance that novice teachers place on various components of a mentoring program (i.e., support for professional

learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and

outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship). The findings of the study will be used to

strengthen the existing teacher induction program in the Bulloch County School District.

Therefore, the overarching goal of this study was to determine what novice teachers

perceive as necessary components of a viable mentoring program to promote retention.

For that purpose, the following sub-questions were used to guide the study:

1.   What components (i.e., support for professional learning, forms of

        communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and outcomes of the

        mentor-mentee relationship) do novice teachers consider to be most effective in a

        mentoring program?

2.   What components (i.e., support for professional learning, forms of

        communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and outcomes of the

        mentor-mentee relationship) do novice teachers consider to be least effective in a

        mentoring program?

3.   Do components of a teacher-driven mentoring program (i.e., support for

        professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication, and

        benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship) predict novice teachers'

        intention to remain in the field of education?

        The researcher obtained permission from the Bulloch County superintendent to

conduct a study with novice teachers in the school district. The instrumentation used in

the study was a revised version of the *Oregon Mentoring Program: Beginning Teacher

Mentor Survey (2013)* which was utilized to gather perception data on the following

components of the mentoring program: support for professional learning, forms of

communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship and whether or not these factors contributed to novice teachers' decision to remain in the field of education. The following demographic information was also collected from the novice teachers who participated in the survey: the level at which they taught, their self-identified gender and their self-identified race. The researcher used a correlational descriptive design to collect and analyze data using descriptive analyses. Frequencies and percentiles were used to answer the first and second research sub-questions, which sought to determine which components of a mentoring program novice teachers considered to be most and least effective. Cronbach's Alpha was used to analyze survey responses on section four of the survey, which asked respondents to determine how effective mentoring is in supporting novice teachers in areas such as classroom management and developing a variety of instructional strategies. This method of data analysis was also used to answer the following overarching question: What do novice teachers perceive as the necessary components of a viable mentoring program to promote retention? Standard multiple linear regression was used to answer the third research sub question which sought to determine if components of a mentoring program predicted novice teachers' intention to remain in the field of education.

Analysis of Research Findings

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the degree of importance that novice teachers place on various components of the mentoring program (i.e., support for professional learning, forms of communication, frequency of communication, and benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship). The researcher also sought to

determine if the novice teachers' perceptions of the components within a teacher mentoring program predicted their intention to remain in the field.

Findings indicated the component that novice teachers perceived as most effective in a mentoring program is the perceived benefits and outcomes of participation in the program. Perceived benefits and outcomes include assisting novice teachers with professional growth and their ability to work collaboratively with other teachers. However, their perceptions about the frequency of communication was perceived as the least effective component in a mentoring program. Yet, survey respondents reported that while this component was designated as the least effective component in a mentoring program, they preferred communication with their mentors one to two times per week as opposed to monthly communication, and that the preferred mode of communication was face-to-face as opposed to other means of communicating such as email or Google hang out. The components of a mentoring program that novice teachers perceived as significant predictors for intent to remain in the profession were their perceptions of effective communication with their mentor and their perceived benefits and outcomes of the program. However, a negative correlation exists between novice teachers' intent to remain in the field and effective communication with their mentor.

Discussion of Research Findings

Teacher attrition has been a growing problem faced by many districts and schools, with the attrition rate highest among teachers with five or fewer years of experience, also referred to as novice teachers (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). For novice teachers, the first few years in the classroom can be particularly challenging. A variety of factors influence novice teachers to leave the field of education. However, research supports that

novice teachers who do leave the field cite the lack of administrative support, demands

for testing and accountability, lack of influence and control over their own classrooms,

poor compensation, and lack of instructional support as to why they leave the profession

(Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). As a result, school districts have worked to

implement intensive supports for this population of teachers in order to ease the transition

into the profession.

School systems most commonly support novice teachers in acclimating to the

field and to the profession through the implementation of strong teacher induction

programs, which include on-going mentoring and support for the retention of new

teachers. New teachers who work with a mentor as a part of a well-organized teacher

induction process have greater success with classroom management, lesson planning,

content delivery, and student engagement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Matlach &

Potemski, 2014). The characteristics of mentoring models employed by school districts

vary; however, the most commonly used model is the peer mentoring model. The type of

support generally received by novice teachers through this mentoring model is typically

face-to-face and can be formal or informal (Zachary, 2012). This model provides the

mentor and the novice teacher with the opportunity to collaborate, write lesson plans

together, and to observe one another.

Additionally, research supports that assigning novice teachers to mentors who

teach the same content area and share a planning period has proven to be most effective

(Ingersoll, 2012). While content and support in the form of professional development are

important, teachers who serve as mentors should exemplify the following characteristics:

a positive demeanor; a positive view of the teaching profession; strong listening skills; an

ability to demonstrate professionalism, flexibility and openness to new ideas; reliability

and follow through on commitment and promises; and, a non-judgmental attitude in

interactions with colleagues (Harris, 2015). These characteristics demonstrated by a

proficient mentor are necessary in assisting the novice teacher in developing her or his

ability to be reflective and self-directed in learning.

Section four of the questionnaire, a revised version of the *Oregon Mentoring*

Program: Beginning Teacher Mentor Survey (2013), prompted respondents to determine

the effectiveness of mentoring in supporting professional development in a variety of

areas for new teachers. An analysis of the data based on the highest mean scores in regard

to support for professional learning indicated that survey respondents perceive mentors as

being most effective in providing support with classroom management while they

perceive mentors as being least effective in helping provide strategies to cope with job

related stress. These findings support the idea that new teachers who work with a mentor

have greater success with classroom management (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Potemski &

Matlach, 2014). One possible explanation for this score is that supporting novice teachers

with classroom management is one of the requirements for mentors as they work with

novice teachers, and classroom management was also a professional development topic at

one of the monthly teacher induction sessions in which attendance for all novice teachers

is required. However, a gap in the literature exists in regard to the impact of job-related

stress on novice teachers and the importance of the role of mentors in providing strategies

to promote self-care. As the role of mentor evolves and develops, mentors should work

toward helping novice teachers not only develop their educator skill set, but also in

helping them refine their ability to reflect and to embrace their profession as a new social

role. For instance, the mentor teacher can assist the novice teacher in managing job related stress by providing them with strategies to develop emotional resilience and work life balance.Thus, mentors should not only focus on providing support with pedagogy and content, which could be described as the science of teaching, but also with the art of teaching, which is the essence of relationships with students and the preservation of the quality of the teacher which can only be maintained through appropriate stress management and self-care.

Malcom Knowles theory of *andragogy*, which he describes as, "the art and science of helping adults learn" (Knowles, 1980, p. 43), is an ideal framework for mentoring in that mentors who are most effective in assisting novice teachers in acclimating to the field and to the profession must be well-rounded in their knowledge on how to provide social and emotional support, as well as in their ability to convey knowledge on pedagogy and content knowledge. Effective mentors create this type of learning experience for novice teachers when they provide directive support, while also providing novice teachers with opportunities to be self-directed in their own learning.

Findings indicated that the component that novice teachers perceived as most effective in a mentoring program was the perceived benefits and outcomes of the program, while their perceptions about the frequency of communication was perceived as the least effective component of communication. There is a multitude of research that supports that novice teachers who work with mentors as part of the teacher induction process experience a greater level of success in transitioning to the profession (Harris, 2015; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Potemski & Matlach, 2014). This perception may be attributed to the perpetuation of the effectiveness of mentoring that is

advocated by the Georgia Department of Education ([GaDOE] 2016) and by the

mentoring model that is utilized by the school system in which this study was conducted.

The GaDOE (2016) explained that, "Research shows that intensive, mentor-based

induction programs can significantly reduce teacher turnover and help teachers to focus

on improving instruction" (p. 1). Therefore, schools and districts should give careful

consideration to the development of mentors for the purpose of supporting novice

teachers and to implementing a robust mentoring component of a teacher induction

program in order to also support the growth and development of the mentor-mentee

relationship.

Additionally, the effective employment of the peer mentoring model in the district

in which the study was conducted most likely contributed to the perception data about the

perceived benefits of mentoring collected from novice teachers. When the peer mentoring

model is employed effectively, a novice teacher is paired with a veteran teacher who

teaches the same content, has demonstrated proficiency in the profession, and has more

years of work experience than the novice teacher (Haynes; 2014; Matlach & Potemski,

2014). In order for the peer mentoring model to work, the veteran and novice teacher

must have a great deal in common so that they can form a professional bond. Thus, the

novice teacher receives guidance and support for the purpose of forming a professional

identity. Additionally, the peer mentoring model also supports Malcolm Knowles theory

of andragogy in that the mentor does not serve the novice teacher in a supervisory

capacity and can, therefore, act as a gatekeeper in cultivating the cognitive processes

necessary for novice teachers to develop their proficiency with reflection and their ability

to be self-directed in their learning. There is some debate about whether the formal peer

mentoring model, which provides the novice teacher with intentional support, thus lending to more frequent communication, is more effective than an informal model, which is less structured, self-directed, and not mandated by the school district. Since data collected from this study supports that novice teachers least value the frequency in communication with their mentor, more research could be conducted about the effectiveness of informal mentoring, which does not require mentors and novice teachers to communicate based on the district requirements for the mentoring program.

The data collected in this study to determine if components of a mentoring program predict novice teachers' intentions to stay in the field indicated that the perceptions of the forms of communication and perceptions of benefits and outcome of the mentor-mentee relationship were significant predictors for intent to remain in the profession. Respondents indicated that the most effective form of communication was face-to-face communication, while the least effective form of communication was Google Hangouts. Most school districts use a peer mentoring model where veteran teachers are paired with a novice teacher to support successful acclimation to the field and to the profession (Matlach & Potemski, 2014). Conversely, while society is utilizing virtual and digital communication, data collected from the study supports that novice teachers still prefer face-to-face communication even in the digital age. Additionally, while virtual mentoring affords people the opportunity to develop a multitude of professional networks, there is significant research to support that the virtual mentoring model can hinder the richness of face-to-face interactions and there is greater potential for the loss of commitment to online interactions (Zey, 2011). A gap exists in the

literature regarding novice teachers and the effectiveness of virtual mentoring for this population.

The overarching research question for this study sought to determine the necessary components of a viable mentoring program that novice teachers perceive as necessary to retention. The correlation between the perceived benefit and outcome of participating in the mentoring program was positive. It is generally accepted that mentors have a positive impact on novice teachers and support their retention in the profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; McCollum, 2014). The existing body of research on this topic in addition to data collected from the survey respondents support that a relationship exists between mentoring and the retention of novice teachers in the field. The school year prior to this research being conducted, a needs assessment was conducted in the district in which the study was conducted. Data from a needs assessment acknowledged that a mentoring system was indeed in place, but that the structure for implementation was not formalized nor monitored very effectively. Therefore, the data collected during the current school year on the current mentoring program supports that novice teachers see benefit in participating in a more structured program and due to this will more likely remain in the field of education.

Conclusions

Data collected from the survey instrument indicated that novice teachers consider the perceived benefits and outcomes of the program as the most effective component of the program. Therefore, it is evident that novice teachers place value on participating in the mentoring program because they perceive it as being beneficial to their professional practice as an educator. Findings also indicated that novice teachers consider the

frequency of communication to be the least effective component of the program. Interestingly, while the novice teachers who participated in this study did not consider frequent communication with their mentor to be a valuable component of this study, there is an abundance of research (e.g., Harris, 2015; Ingersoll, Merrill & Stuckey, 2014) which supports that frequent communication between the mentor and the novice teacher is critical to not only the success of the novice teacher, but also to promoting the retention of novice teachers in the field.

An analysis of the data collected on section four of the survey, based on the highest mean scores, indicated that survey respondents perceived mentors as being most effective in providing support with classroom management, while they perceived mentors as being least effective in helping to provide strategies to cope with job related stress. Therefore, while it would reason that mentors are effective in assisting novice teachers with technical skills necessary to the profession like classroom management, perhaps more could be done on the part of the mentor to help novice teachers with the process of reflection and self-actualization in order to help this population of teachers more effectively cope with job related stress.

Research participants also indicated that forms of communication and perceptions of benefit and outcome of the mentor-mentee relationship were significant predictors for intent to remain in the profession. Conversely, perceptions of effective mentoring and perceptions of frequency of communication were not significant predictors. However, survey respondents indicated that they preferred to communicate with their mentors one to two times per week as opposed to monthly communication and that the preferred mode

of communication was face to face as opposed to other means of communicating such as

email or Google hang out.

Implications

With respect to data collected from respondents on the *Oregon Mentoring Program: Beginning Teacher Mentor Survey (2013)*, analysis supports that novice teachers place great value on the perceived benefits and outcomes of a mentoring program. This further supports that novice teachers perceive the support provided by participation in a mentoring program as having a positive impact on their professional practice as well as their retention in the field. Therefore, findings of this study imply school and district leaders would be well-served to invest in a viable mentoring program and to implement a monitoring tool to measure the fidelity of implementation. This would ensure that novice teachers continue to see the benefit in participating in the mentoring program. Respondents also perceived mentors as being most effective in providing support with classroom management, while they perceived mentors as being least effective in helping to provide strategies to cope with job related stress. This indicates that while technical support for novice teachers is necessary, mentoring programs may need to consider ways to support the social and emotional needs of novice teachers as well. Finally, forms of communication and perceptions of benefit and outcome of the mentor-mentee relationship were significant predictors for intent to remain in the profession. These findings indicate that while virtual communication is emerging as an easier way to communicate, traditional face-to-face communication is a more effective means of forming support relationships, particularly in the workplace. Additionally, findings indicated that because novice teachers place value on the benefits and outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship, schools should work to develop work

environments that are conducive to developing the relationship between the novice

teacher and the mentor in order to sustain teacher retention.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Implementing the Results

1. Findings from this study could be used to inform the mentoring component that is
    included within the Bulloch County School District's Teacher Induction Program. For
    instance, since support with classroom management techniques from mentors was
    perceived as valued by novice teachers, sessions to support this aspect of the
    mentoring program could be refined.

2. Novice teachers indicated that they received the least amount of support from their
    mentor in coping with job related stress. This is a component that is not included as
    part of the mentoring component within Bulloch County School District's Teacher
    Induction Program. Therefore, this component needs to be included in the future in
    order to support the retention of novice teachers.

3. A robust criteria needs to be in place to recruit and select mentors for the purpose of
    mentoring novice teachers. In order for novice teachers to continue to value the
    benefits and outcomes of participation in a mentoring program, they must be
    supported by veteran teachers who have demonstrated success in the field and who
    want to support the mentoring of a novice teacher.

4. Presently, the mentoring program employed by the BCSD does not include regular
    support sessions for mentors. In order for mentors to develop the skills necessary for
    supporting novice teachers in successfully transitioning to the field, they must receive
    on-going support to refine their proficiency with this.

5. District leaders should work with building leaders to make certain that mentors and the novice teachers they are to support are in close proximity to one another, teach a common grade level or subject area, and have a common planning time.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Further studies need to be conducted with a larger sample size in order for the results to be more generalizable.

2. In order to do this, future research would need to include multiple school districts and school setting to include additional rural, as well as urban and suburban districts as opposed to isolating the sample size to one school district.

3. Future research should seek to include qualitative data to better understand the meaning behind participants' responses.

4. An alternative survey instrument could be used to solicit additional perception data from the novice teachers in regard to their perceptions of mentoring and which of the components most support teacher retention.

5. Further studies could explore the types of strategies and support that mentors could provide to novice teachers in order to assist them in coping with job related stress.

<div align="center">Impact Statement</div>

In addition to the decrease in the enrollment in teacher education programs, educational leaders at the district and school level across the nation are experiencing a sense of urgency as they focus their efforts to retain and support novice teachers. Approximately 44% of newly employed teachers leave the field in the first five years, with 50% of those teachers being identified as minority. The findings from this study will be used to inform the district leaders about the areas of support that novice teachers deem

as valuable for the purpose of planning monthly teacher induction sessions for this

population of teachers. The Bulloch County School District will also use the findings

collected from this study for the development of a monitoring plan that will further

ensure that the district's teacher induction plan has been implemented with fidelity.

Revisions to the existing teacher induction will be made based on the perception data

collected from novice teachers in the district during this study. The findings were of

particular benefit to the researcher in that she works in a support role with novice

teachers at her school. Not only will she support the district's efforts for the continual

development of a teacher induction program that is robust in providing an optimal level

of support for novice teachers, but she will also work to learn how to better coach

mentors in assisting novice teachers in coping with job related stress.

Dissemination

Since this study was a dissertation of practice, there are several possibilities for

dissemination of the research findings. First, since there are novice teachers at the school

where the researcher is employed, the researcher would share the research findings with

her school principal and the other administrative staff in order to inform the placement of

mentors and novice teachers. The research findings would also be used to support novice

teachers for the purpose of more adequately supporting their successful transition to the

field and to the profession. Next, the researcher would present her findings to the

Professional Learning Director and the Superintendent of the Bulloch County School

District in order to assist in refining the district's current mentoring program. The

researcher will also use data from this study to partner with the Professional Learning

Director of the Bulloch County Schools to develop a monitoring plan for the district's

teacher induction program in order to fulfill the recommendations put forth by the accreditation team that visited the district in spring of 2016. Finally, with the permission of the Bulloch County School District Superintendent, the researcher would present the findings to the school board. One of the district's initiatives is minority recruitment effort. The findings from this research could help inform the district's efforts in supporting this initiative. In addition, the researcher will seek to have this work published in an appropriate journal in order to add to the current literature. Lastly, the dissertation will be published in Georgia Southern University's dissertation data base.

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APPENDIX A

OREGON MENTORING PROGRAM:
BEGINNING TEACHER MENTOR SURVEY

(Revised)

Mentoring as a Component of Teacher Induction

1. At what level do you teach?

   - o Elementary
   - o Middle
   - o High

2. What is your self-identified gender?

   - o M
   - o F
   - o Other

3. What is your self-identified race?
   - o White.
   - o Hispanic or Latino.
   - o Black or African American.
   - o Native American or American Indian.
   - o Asian / Pacific Islander.
   - o Other

4. How effective is mentoring in supporting the following for induction level teachers:

	1-Least Effective	2-Somewhat Effective	3-Effective	4-Very Effective	5-Most Effective
Classroom Management support	O	O	O	O	O
Resources and materials to improve teaching	O	O	O	O	O
Developing a variety of teaching strategies	O	O	O	O	O
Support in developing content knowledge	O	O	O	O	O
Support in developing and using formative	O	O	O	O	O

assessments					
Assistance with short and long term lesson planning	O	O	O	O	O
Strategies to analyze student work	O	O	O	O	O
Support in learning how to differentiate instruction	O	O	O	O	O
Support in creating an equitable classroom	O	O	O	O	O
Strategies to analyze student performance data	O	O	O	O	O
Effective parent communication	O	O	O	O	O
Strategies to help with job related stress	O	O	O	O	O
Emotional support	O	O	O	O	O
Strategies to meet district requirements of novice teachers	O	O	O	O	O

5. How effective are the following forms of communication between a mentor and novice teacher:

	1-Least Effective	2-Somewhat Effective	3-Effective	4-Very Effective	5-Most Effective
Phone Conversations	O	O	O	O	O
Email Conversations	O	O	O	O	O
Virtual Conversations (ie. Google	O	O	O	O	O

Hangout)					
Text Conversations	O	O	O	O	O
Face to Face Meetings	O	O	O	O	O

6. How often should a novice teacher and a mentor teacher communicate:

	1-Least Effective	2-Somewhat Effective	3-Effective	4-Very Effective	5-Most Effective
Daily	O	O	O	O	O
1-2 times per week	O	O	O	O	O
Weekly	O	O	O	O	O
Monthly	O	O	O	O	O

7. How would you rate the benefit/outcome of a mentor and novice teacher relationship with the following:

	1-Least Effective	2-Somewhat Effective	3-Effective	4-Very Effective	5-Most Effective
Helps novice teachers to remain in the field of education	O	O	O	O	O
Helps novice teachers with professional growth	O	O	O	O	O
Helps novice teachers work collaboratively with other teachers	O	O	O	O	O
Helps novice teachers to remain at the school	O	O	O	O	O
None of the above	O	O	O	O	O

8. If you were part of a teacher induction program that incorporated the components you have rated as most effective, to what degree would that impact your decision to remain in the teaching profession for the next five years?

Greatly impact my decision	Somewhat impact my decision	Would impact my decision	Somewhat impact my decision	Would not impact my decision at all

9. Is there anything else about mentoring that has not been asked that you would like to add?

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH FROM SUPERINTENDENT OF

BULLOCH COUNTY SCHOOLS

BULLOCH COUNTY SCHOOLS

150 WILLIAMS ROAD, SUITE A
STATESBORO, GA 30458

PHONE
912/212-8500

FAX
912/212-8529

INTERNET
www.bulloch.k12.ga.us

EMAIL
boe@bulloch.k12.ga.us

September 18, 2017

Human Subjects - Institutional Review Board
Georgia Southern University
P.O. Box 8005
Statesboro, GA 30460

To Whom It May Concern:

Alissa Hanrahan Sasser has requested permission to collect research data from induction teachers employed by the Bulloch County School District through a project entitled Novice Teachers' Perception of Mentoring and Teacher Retention. I have been informed of the purposes of the study and the nature of the research procedures. I have also been given an opportunity to ask questions of the researcher.

As a representative of the Bulloch County School District, I am authorized to grant permission to have the researcher recruit research participants and to utilize data from our school district. Alissa Hanrahan Sasser is also permitted to collect research data during school hours. The researcher has solicited the assistance of the Director of Professional Learning for Bulloch County schools to serve as the gate keeper for this study. Therefore, the researcher will have no direct contact with the research participants. If you have any questions, please contact me at 912-212-8500.

Sincerely,

Charles G. Wilson, Jr.
Superintendent

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH FROM

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

	Georgia Southern University	
	Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs	
	Institutional Review Board (IRB)	
Phone: 912-478-5465		Veazey Hall 3000
		PO Box 8005
Fax: 912-478-0719	IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Sasser, Alissa Hanrahan; Melton, Teri

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Approval Date: 11/6/2017

**Subject:** Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered **H18121** and titled **"Novice Teachers' Perception of Mentoring and Teacher Retention"** it appears that your research involves activities that do not require full approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) according to federal guidelines. In this research project research data will be collected anonymously.

According to the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46, your research protocol is determined to be exempt from full review under the following exemption category(s):

B2   Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (I) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (II) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Any alteration in the terms or conditions of your involvement may alter this approval. *Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that your research, as submitted, is exempt from IRB approval. No further action or IRB oversight is required, as long as the project remains the same. If you alter the project, it is your responsibility to notify the IRB and acquire a new determination of exemption. Because this project was determined to be exempt from further IRB oversight, this project does not require an expiration date.*

Sincerely,

Ele Haynes
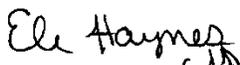
Eleanor Haynes
Research Integrity Officer