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BENEFICIAL INDUCTION SERVICES FOR GEORGIA TEACHERS

by

MABLE WEBB ANDERSON

(Under the Direction of Abebayehu Tekleselassie)

ABSTRACT

The teaching profession has a historically high rate of attrition occurring especially in those teachers in the first five years of their careers. This high attrition is costly to the school systems and deprives the neediest students of the quality education that teaching experience brings. Induction programs have been initiated as a promising strategy posed to decrease this high attrition rate. The purpose of this study was to identify induction services that were available for beginning teachers and to assess how these services were beneficial for teachers during their induction. Specifically this study sought to identify the induction services as a coordination of efforts between principals and mentors.

This study was conducted in a small suburban school district located in the Middle Georgia area. The study involved 15 participants of whom five were beginning teachers, five were mentors, and five were principals. Two beginning teachers along with their mentors and principals represented the elementary school level and two beginning teachers along with their mentors and principals represented the middle school level. There was one high school level beginning teacher representative along with his mentor and principal.

Findings of the study were congruent with the literature in terms of the identification of induction services that are needed by beginning teachers. Most beginning teachers felt that the support that they were provided through mentors, principals, administrative teams, grade level teams and the entire staff helped them to have a successful and satisfying first year. Induction services that were needed but not provided were identified by the new teachers, mentors and principals.

Recommendations of beginning teachers, mentors and principals for enhancing the induction program at the school level include developing formal policies/procedures to ensure continuity, consistency and quality induction activities; allocating time for mentor/mentee collaboration and communication; approaching new teacher induction proactively; mandatory Teacher Support Specialist training for administrators and development of a formal Individual Induction Plan for each new teacher.

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

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STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2008

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May 2008

DEDICATION

In recognition of all of the years of sacrifice and devotion to their children and their grandchildren, I hereby dedicate this dissertation to my mother and late father

Mrs. Addie Jo (Brown) Webb

Mr. Rudolph Valentino Webb, Sr.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God for all of His wonderful blessings and for allowing me to maintain beautiful fellowship with Him as I sought to reach one of my earthly goals. His grace, mercy and blessings have been never-ending and for this, I am extremely grateful.

I would like to acknowledge my immediate family who has endured this process with me. Thank you for your support and understanding when I had to work on this project. Much love to my husband, Lonnie Anderson, Jr., and my children, Melvin Ashley and Lonnie Joseph.

As I have journeyed through this arduous task, I have been assisted by some very gracious people. To Dr. Tekleselassie, my committee chairperson, you have been a constant source of support and encouragement. Thank you for all of your time and effort. To my family, my committee members, my friends and my coworkers, you have provided me with assistance, support, and love that I will never forget.

I want to acknowledge one of my special sisters, Betty Jo Blackwood, for your endless words of encouragement and your belief in me, which was sometimes more than my belief in myself. To my dedicated and devoted brother, Timothy Webb, who stuck by momma during her illness while I attempted to reach this goal.

To my coworkers Charm Pace and Miriam Scott, who reviewed by work even when your own plates were full. To my mentor and friend, Zanthia Sutton, it is because of your initial confidence in me and your encouragement that I have continuously reached for higher heights. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 7

LIST OF TABLES 12

CHAPTER

I INTRODUCTION 13

Statement of the Problem 17

Research Questions 18

Significance of Study 19

Overview of Research Procedures 19

Delimitations of the Study 23

Limitations of the Study 24

Definition of Terms 24

Summary 25

Organization of the Study 25

II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 27

Introduction 27

Teacher Attrition 27

Challenges Facing Beginning Teachers 35

Benefits of Teacher Retention 42

Induction Program Initiatives 44

Benefits of Induction Programs 46

Components of School Level Induction Programs 49

Induction Program Weaknesses 62

Differences in Schools.....64

Exemplary Induction Program Models 66

Summary 70

III RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 71

Introduction 71

Research Questions 71

Research Design 72

Population.....74

Participants 75

Instrumentation.....76

Data Collection.....77

Data Analysis 79

Trustworthiness 80

Summary 84

IV REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS 86

Introduction 86

Research Questions 86

Participant Information.....87

Beginning Teachers' First Year Experiences.....91

Induction Services Available.....94

Support 97

Mentors' Perspectives on Induction Services 107

Principals' Perspectives on Induction Services 111

Beneficial Induction Activities 124

Beginning Teachers' Perceptions 124

Differing Services Based on School Levels 130

Elementary Schools 131

Middle Schools 135

High Schools 139

Induction Services Needed but not Provided 143

Beginning Teachers' Perceptions of Induction Services Needed 143

Mentors' Perceptions of Induction Services Needed 148

Principals' Perceptions of Induction Services Needed 152

Summary 155

V SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATOINS 158

Introduction 158

Summary of Research Findings 160

Discussion of Research Findings 163

Conclusions 174

Implications 176

Recommendations for Further Research and Practice 177

REFERENCES 180

APPENDICES 200

A APPROVAL FROM THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD 201

B PERMISSION LETTER FROM SUPERINTENDENT 203

C INFORMED CONSENT LETTER 206

D MENTEE EMERGING INTERVIEW GUIDE.....210

E MENTOR/PRINCIPAL EMERGING INTERVIEW GUIDE 212

LIST OF TABLES

Page

Table 1: Summary of Participants (pseudonyms).....90

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In order to achieve organizational effectiveness and adequate yearly academic improvement, schools must become more astute at attracting and retaining qualified teachers (Ingersoll, 2003; Johnson & Kardos, 2005). Beginning teachers face many challenges when entering the profession (Harris Interactive Inc., 2005; Brock & Grady, 1998; Veenman, 1984). Studies document the critical support that principals can take part in while helping beginning teachers to overcome these challenges and, thereby, increase teacher retention (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). A stable and experienced staff, which can be the result of retention, has been shown to positively affect student achievement (Ferguson, 1991, Hanushek, 1989; Kain & Singleton, 1996).

Teachers are leaving the education profession at an alarming rate of 8.4% annually (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2004; National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). Fourteen percent of beginning teachers leave at the end of their first year. A third of newly hired teachers leave during their first three years and almost half leave during the first five years (NCTAF, 2003). This leaves the education profession with a shortage of qualified teachers to adequately educate the rapidly growing population of school-aged children (NCTAF, 2002). This shortage is not only based on too few teachers entering the profession, but also on too many teachers deciding to leave the profession (Ingersoll, 2001). Most of the time, teachers leaving the profession often do so in their first five years of teaching (Jerald & Boser, 2000; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2006). This is evident by the high rate of beginning teacher turnover and

attrition (NCTAF, 2002). These rates are even higher for high poverty districts (NCTAF, 2003; Johnson, et al., 2005; Neild, et al., 2003); for teachers who entered the profession through an alternative teacher preparation program (Decker, et al., 2004) and for the brightest novice teachers, as measured by their college entrance exams (Schlechty & Vance, 1981; Jerald & Boser, 2000). This type of turnover results in lack of stability for students and makes it difficult to build a culture of success and improvement over time (NCTAF, 2003). Several studies document the corresponding negative impact on student achievement in schools and districts with high levels of teacher turnover, teachers teaching out of their subject area and/or uncertified personnel (Berry, 2004; Lankford, et al., 2002; Plecki et al., 2005). The financial costs related to teacher attrition such as hiring costs, recruitment costs (Sargent, 2003), and training costs (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000) are estimated to be more than $2.6 billion annually (AEE, 2004).

The first three to five years are critical years for most teachers to decide whether to continue in the teaching profession (GPSC, 2006; Jerald & Boser, 2000). When entering the education community for the first time, many teachers become overwhelmed and disenchanted with their chosen profession. They do not feel adequately prepared to meet the challenges when they encounter their own classrooms (Berry, 2005; Public Education Network, 2003; Harris Interactive Inc., 2006; McCarthy & Guiney, 2004). Beginning teachers are especially vulnerable to feelings of isolation (Baker, 2003) and loneliness (Brock & Grady, 2000) which contribute to stress and burnout. This stress and burnout lead to ineffective teaching and ultimately teacher attrition (Stroot et al., 1999). Researchers maintain that the most prevalent factors which cause beginning teachers to leave the profession include the following: lack of administrative support (Ingersoll,

2001; Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990; Quinn & Andrews, 2004; Harris Interactive Inc., 2006); student discipline problems (Ingersoll, 2002; Public Agenda, 2004); lack of teacher input in school decision making (Harris Interactive Inc., 2006); school working conditions (NCTAF, 2003; NCES, 2005; Harris Interactive Inc., 2005) and salaries (NCTAF, 2003).

In recognition of the critical nature of providing purposeful and sustained professional support of teachers during the beginning years of their careers, schools and districts are implementing induction programs as a way to maintain a strong, stable workforce and to improve student achievement (AEE, 2004; Berry, 2004; Johnson et al., 2005). Research reveals that about 50 percent of beginning teachers do not participate in induction programs beyond a one-time orientation and only one percent of the new teacher workforce participates in the comprehensive program recommended by researchers (AEE, 2004; Johnson et al., 2005). Beginning teachers who participated in comprehensive induction programs developed teaching skills and capacities more rapidly; minimizing the time it takes to perform as efficiently as experienced teachers (AEE, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2001). There is data to confirm the belief that schools, which provide high levels of support for beginning teachers, do retain more teachers (Moir, n.d.; Weiss & Weiss, 1999; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Henke, et al., 2000). Induction programs vary in their frequency and intensity from formal, high structured programs to informal ones (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000; Wayne, et al., 2005). An essential component of the induction program is assigning of mentors to each beginning teacher (AEE, 2004; Bartell, 2004; Sargent, 2003).

A promising solution to the problems associated with teacher attrition that has received considerable attention in the literature is the development of mentoring programs (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). The literature highlights the importance of assigning the beginning teacher with a mentor who will provide professional and social assistance to the beginning teacher (AEE, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith; 2004; Gilbert, 2005). Research suggests that mentoring programs have the potential to improve the quality of teaching through improvement of beginning teachers instructional skills (NCES, 1999). Mentoring is positively associated with beginning teacher satisfaction and hence the ability to retain beginning teachers (Kardos, 2004). One of the five most valued strategies reported by beginning teachers involved in induction programs was the assignment of a mentor (Gilbert, 2005). In an analysis of the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey data, beginning teachers who were assigned mentors experienced decreased attrition (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Although induction programs have the potential to support beginning teachers and improve retention rates, it can be ineffective if principals view the program as a substitute for their responsibility to support and provide guidance to beginning teachers (Bloom & Davis, 1998).

An essential element of a quality comprehensive induction program is strong principal leadership (AEE, 2004). Principals can make or break a beginning teacher experience (Public Education Network, 2003). The principal's influence on beginning teachers is significant, if not profound (AEE, 2004; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Beginning teachers look to the principal for support and guidance on how to perform at school (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Richards, 2004). When this support and guidance are not received, beginning teachers encounter problems in teaching and tend to feel frustrated

and abandoned. It is at this time that they may decide to leave the school or the profession (Brock & Grady, 1997; Angelle, 2002; Colley, 2002). The literature identifies the principal's roles as they relate to teacher induction as builders of the school culture that embeds induction activities (Colley, 2002; AEE, 2004); instructional leaders (Brock & Grady, 1997); coordinator/facilitator of mentors (Bartell, 2004; Wood, 2005); beginning teacher recruiters (Wood, 2005), and beginning teacher advocate/retainer (Brock & Grady, 1997; Richards, 2004). As culture builders, principals demonstrate high regard for induction, as a result, organize, and support institutional activities that promote professional relationships between beginning teachers and experienced teachers (AEE, 2002; Colley, 2002; Tushnet et al., 2002). As instructional leaders, principals give regular, systematic feedback to beginning teachers on instructional approaches, content knowledge, and classroom management strategies (Brock & Grady, 1997; Richards, 2004). As coordinator/facilitator of mentors, principals initiate, facilitate, support, and assess the mentor's training and delivery services to beginning teachers (AAE, 2004; Bartell, 2004; Brock & Grady, 1997; Wood, 2005). As beginning teacher recruiters, principals are often the first person the beginning teacher knows at the school. This principal-teacher relationship can influence beginning teacher commitment and retention in the profession (Wood, 2005). As beginning teacher advocate/retainer, principals can provide time for professional growth and professional development training (Brock & Grady, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Wood, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Research indicates that teachers are leaving the education profession at a rate that makes it difficult to develop and maintain a stable learning environment, which fosters

academic achievement. On the other hand, the literature implies that beginning teachers will remain in the education profession if they are adequately supported by their school district, school-based administrators and teachers.

Although there is extensive literature on reducing the teacher attrition rate, there were limited studies that addressed the types of support that beginning teachers indicate were most beneficial during their induction years. Few studies in the education, training, and development of principals mention the role of the principal in beginning teacher induction programs. Although the literature implies a strong need for beginning teacher support, induction services typically occur with the major support being provided by the mentor with little direct involvement of the principal. While prior studies indicate that the major component of induction programs has been services centered on mentoring, there is a need for a better understanding of induction services as a coordination of efforts between principals and mentors.

The present study intended to identify induction services available for beginning teachers and to assess how these services were beneficial for teachers during their induction.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study were as follows:

1. How do beginning teachers describe their first year teaching experiences that make induction necessary?
2. What are the factors that support the induction process?
3. Which induction activities do beginning teachers, mentors and principals consider beneficial?

4. What are the types of induction services that are provided to beginning teachers in elementary, middle and high schools?
5. What induction services do beginning teachers, mentors and principals identify as missing but needed in the induction process?

Significance of Study

This study was significant because principals can utilize the information gathered to inform daily professional practice as they seek to support their beginning teachers. With an adequate knowledge of beginning teachers' needs and expectations, other school leaders and stakeholders can coordinate their efforts as they work together to induct beginning teachers into the profession.

Although research literature implies a strong need for support by beginning teachers, limited studies address the responses from teachers concerning services in their induction process. Results from this study serve to increase the research base needed on the types of induction services that beginning teachers consider important and the support that they currently receive. This information should help support providers determine how to better support teachers during the induction process.

Overview of Research Procedures

Design

The researcher employed a qualitative research design. Qualitative methods facilitated an understanding of how beginning teachers, mentors, and principals perceived their experiences and roles during the beginning teacher induction process (Creswell, 1994). This approach was appropriate to explore participant response to fully explain the experiences of the participant. The information concerning beginning teachers', mentors',

and principals' perceptions and opinions regarding support issues must be gathered in order to answer the research questions. The qualitative approach served to provide a deeper understanding of the support services that were most beneficial in beginning teacher induction. The researcher will employ ethnographic research study methods (Creswell, 2003) using thematic analysis to cluster and chunk data in general themes. Five purposefully selected elementary, middle and high school teams, each consisting of a beginning teacher, a mentor, and a principal will serve as the population for this study.

Population

The population for this study consisted of first year teachers, their principals and mentors from one suburban school district located in the Middle Georgia area. There were five school sites. These five school sites consisted of two elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. This variety of schools gave a range of experiences, which varied by school size, socioeconomic status, and school level.

Sampling

Since this study investigated the perceptions of beginning teachers, purposeful sampling was necessary to include first year teachers in one Middle Georgia public school district. Purposeful sampling occurs when individuals are selected who possess the characteristics or attributes of interest to the study (Berg, 2001). This sample was derived from the personnel director located in the school district. Selection criteria for beginning teachers at school sites included (a) no previous teaching experience, (b) completion of initial two-day induction professional development training, and (c) assignment of a mentor and (4) school level.

Once all first year teachers were identified, the researcher elicited volunteers to participate in the study as the district's beginning teachers attended a mandatory beginning teacher induction meeting. After those beginning teachers who were willing to participate in the study were identified, a randomization method was used to select participants who would represent the elementary, middle and high school levels. The sample consisted of five certified beginning teachers, their mentors and principals from elementary, middle and high schools. The mentors and principals were identified based on the beginning teacher's school destination. This process was utilized to select five first year teachers, five mentors and five principals for the interview process.

Instrumentation

Interviews were the primary data of the study. The interviews provided description, detail, and context of the induction services provided during beginning teacher induction from the perspectives of the principals, mentors, and the beginning teachers. The common use of interviews in qualitative research allows the gathering of data on perceptions, feelings, and attitudes towards a topic (Glesne, 2006). Qualitative interviewing gives an open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life experiences of the interviewee (Charmaz, 2002).

Prior to the initial interviews, an inventory of questions, which would elicit the interviewee's views was inspected and approved by a panel of experts in the area of beginning teacher induction. Feedback from the panel of experts was utilized in order to ensure the clarity and understanding of specific views the researcher was seeking to examine. An interview protocol served as a reference guide as the researcher questioned the participants. Semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility whereas emerging ideas

can be explored and can be immediately pursued during the interview process (Charmaz, 2002).

Data Collection

The researcher conducted one-on-one 60-90 minute beginning teacher interviews in a private setting at each school site. The items on the interview protocol for the beginning teacher sought to obtain information concerning the types of support that have been provided throughout the induction process. It also obtained information on services that were considered valuable during the induction process. The beginning teachers were encouraged to elaborate or give any additional comments about the induction services and the support provided by principals and mentors. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Principals and mentors at the five school sites were interviewed in one-on-one semi-structured 60-minute sessions. The items on the semi-structured interview protocol for the mentors and principals obtained information regarding their perceptions of the induction program, their roles, and services in it and the perceived effects of the induction program on beginning teacher's practices. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using thematic analysis to cluster and chunk data in general themes. Responses from these interviews provided data for analysis and interpretation, which led to a better understanding of the actual practices provided in beginning teacher induction.

Permission to conduct research and to interview principals, mentors, and beginning teachers was obtained from the Superintendent. Permission from Georgia Southern University's Institutional Review Board to complete the study was obtained prior to beginning data collection. Interviews were held at the participants' school site at

an agreed upon time. The participants signed an informed consent letter that assured anonymity and identified the conditions of the interview. The interviews were transcribed for analysis and stored in a secure location by the researcher. Tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Data Analysis

The goal of this research was to attain a deeper understanding of the beneficial induction activities that were provided to beginning teachers. The qualitative nature of this ethnographic study required the researcher to identify themes that emerged from the data derived from the interviews. Interview responses were organized and main topics were clustered with similar topics. Thematic analysis was used to analyze interview responses for themes and issues (Stake, 1995). The researcher developed 'coding' categories as patterns emerged from the data. Creswell (1994) explained that qualitative data analysis requires that the researcher is comfortable with developing categories and making comparisons and contrasts. Through the discovery of these patterns, ideas, explanations, and understandings, the researcher summarized the data. A descriptive summary of the data was presented and interpretation was devised.

Delimitations of the Study

1. This study included first year teachers, their principals, and their mentors employed in one suburban Middle Georgia public school district.
2. Although beginning teachers may encounter supports from various providers such as district level personnel, principals, mentors, students' parents, and students, this study focused on the types of support that beginning teachers specifically received from principals and mentors.

Limitations of the Study

The qualitative nature of this study limits the ability to generalize the findings to other schools in the state of Georgia. Generalizations were also limited by the limited number of participants—five beginning teachers, five mentors and five principals. However, the study can provide important information on the induction services provided in this suburban school district.

Definitions of Terms

The following key terms were defined for purposes of this study:

1. Beginning Teacher/New Teacher/Novice Teacher-A teacher in his or her first year of teaching having completed a traditional or alternative teacher preparation program. Beginning teacher, new teacher and novice teacher will be used interchangeably.
2. Induction-The process of preparing, supporting, and retaining new teachers and includes all of the things done to support these teachers. This support includes assimilation into the teaching culture, aiding in first day success and introducing them to district and school philosophies, responsibilities and missions (Wong, 2003).
3. Mentoring-The assistance provided to a beginning teacher by a colleague or team of colleagues for the purposes of support and guidance.
4. Mentor-an experienced teacher designated to assist a beginning teacher.
5. Administrator-An educational leader (principal or assistant principal) who promotes the success of all students by advocating nurturing and sustaining a

school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth (Foundation for Education Administrations, 2006).

6. Support services-The methods used by the district, administrators, mentors, and colleagues to help the beginning teacher adjust to his or her new profession.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify induction services that were available for beginning teachers and to assess how these services were beneficial for teachers during their induction years. The high attrition rate of beginning teachers is of great concern for America's schools. This high attrition rate is costly for the community, the school district, the faculties, and the students. An important step in decreasing beginning teacher attrition is to ensure a comprehensive beginning teacher induction program which includes induction services from several support providers. Once this is achieved, our schools can benefit from stable learning environments where every child can experience instruction from qualified educators.

Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters followed by a list of references and appendices. Chapter I included an introduction to the study, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, five specific research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitations and limitations inherent in the study, the procedures used during research, and the definition of terms. Finally, the organization of the study was explained.

Chapter II presented a review of the literature and research related to this study. This review of the literature provided: 1) an overview of teacher attrition and its causes in

America and Georgia, 2) an examination of components related to the implementation of induction programs, and 3) examples of exemplary induction programs.

Chapter III explained the methods and procedures for conducting all aspects of this research. It began with an introduction of the research design, explained the procedure for selecting participants, and reviewed the process of collecting and analyzing data. It concluded with an assurance of trustworthiness. Chapter IV described the context, the participants, and an analysis of the data. ChapterV presented a summary of the findings along with conclusions, implications and recommendations for further research and practice.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The high attrition rate of teachers has caused great concerns. The ability of the educational system to adequately educate this nation's growing student population depends on the ability to recruit and retain quality teachers. Their high attrition rate may undermine the very achievement that is federally mandated by the *No Child Left Behind Act*. High teacher attrition combined with the growing student population leave the educational system with questions such as "Where are the teachers?" or "Who is educating our students?"

Researchers maintain that teacher attrition is more prevalent in the beginning years of teaching. The first three to five years are pivotal years for many teachers. When entering the educational community for the first time, many teachers become overwhelmed and disenchanted with their chosen profession. These beginning teachers complain of feeling isolated and helpless. Many fail to make lasting connections with other teachers and administrators and therefore lose their enthusiasm for teaching. Their greatest concerns revolve around administrative support, professional development, and classroom management.

Teacher Attrition

A National Concern

Teachers are leaving the education profession at an alarming rate of 8.4 percent annually (Darling-Hammond 2003; National Center for Education Statistics, 2005; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). This leaves the

education profession with a shortage of qualified teachers to adequately educate the rapidly growing population of school-aged children. A 2002 report issued by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 2002) revealed that the shortage of qualified teachers is not an issue that is based on too few teachers entering the profession, rather on too many teachers deciding to leave the profession (Ingersoll, 2001). This is evident by the high rate of teacher turnover and attrition. Historically, the turnover rate among teachers has been significantly higher than for other careers (NCTAF, 2002). Many of these teachers make that decision early in their teaching careers. Most times, in the first five years, teachers decide to leave the profession (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2006; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Jerald & Boser, 2000). The ultimate consequences of teachers leaving the education profession are left on the students. Teacher quality is the single most influential school-based factor toward improving student achievement (AEE, 2004; NCTAF, 1996, 2002). This student achievement is hindered when there is constant turnover of beginning teachers who miss the chance to become highly experienced.

The high attrition rate of teachers has plagued the United States for many years. Mark and Anderson (1985) reported that 40 to 50 percent of all new teachers left the teaching profession after the first 7 years. In the 1990s, Odell and Ferraro (1992) determined that one third of beginning teachers were leaving the profession within two years of teaching. In 1998, The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that 9.5 percent of public school teachers left the profession within their first year of teaching, while 20 percent stopped teaching within three years and another 30 percent left the profession within five years (Darling-Hammond, 1999). This occurrence

continues to be a concern as some reports document 40 to 50 percent of beginning teachers leaving the profession within the first five years (Ingersoll, 2001; NCTAF, 2003). These rates are even higher for lower socioeconomic and minority schools located in rural and urban areas (Johnson, et al., 2005; NCTAF, 2003; Neild, et al., 2003). The teachers that enter the profession through an alternative teacher preparation program have an even higher attrition rate of 60 percent (Decker, et al., 2004).

In 2000-2001, almost 15 percent of public school teachers left their school district, another 50 percent moved to another school while 50 percent left the teaching profession (NCTAF, 2003). These rates are even higher in high poverty districts where 20 percent move or leave while low poverty districts have 13 percent to move or leave (Johnson, et al., 2005). This type of turnover results in lack of stability for students and makes it difficult to build a culture of success and improvement over time (NCTAF, 2003). According to the findings from the *No Dream Denied* report, teacher turnover problems are more strongly influenced by salary levels and school working conditions than by the student population (NCTAF, 2003).

The demand for teachers in the United States as well as other countries has risen to a great degree (Sinsialio, 2002). Student enrollment projections in the United States have been reported as high as 54.3 million in 2007, which includes 4.3 million more students than those enrolled in 1995 (Texas State Board for Educator Certification Panel [SBEC], 1998). By 2012 an estimated two million more teachers will be needed to teach this rapidly growing student population.

Richard Ingersoll (2002) after analyzing national data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that most of the demand for teachers has been

driven by pre-retirement teacher turnover. Ingersoll's findings suggest that the teaching occupation has relatively large flows in, through, and out of schools. The most affected teachers are those that are in their first five years of teaching. Reasons stated for the teacher turnover were lack of job satisfaction, the desire to seek better jobs or other careers. Ingersoll (2002) found the four important factors related to high rates of attrition were low salaries, lack of support from school administration, student discipline problems, and lack of teacher input in school decision making.

The number of teachers anticipating retirement has compounded the need for teachers (NCTAF, 2003). Thirty to 50 percent of the teaching population are presently baby boomers and will soon be retiring (Darling-Hammond, 2000, Strong, 2004). The combination of beginning teachers leaving the profession, the growing student population, and the great percentage of teachers retiring has resulted in a teacher shortage (Darling-Hammond, 2000, Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001; NCTAF, 2003; SBEC, 1998).

Considering the critical nature of teacher attrition, it is important to examine teacher turnover and attrition patterns to determine the nation's future need for teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). The most recent data from the NCES indicate that 550,000 full time public and private school teachers who taught during the 1999-2000 school year left teaching before the 2000-2001 school year (Teacher Follow Up Survey [TFS], 2000-2001, Figure 6). Approximately 280,000 teachers left the teaching profession while 270,000 teachers transferred to a different school (TFS, 2000-2001, Figure 6). Many of the teachers who decided to leave the teaching profession were among the most academically talented individuals, as measured by their college entrance

exams (Jerald & Boser, 2000; Schlechty & Vance, 1981). However, these teachers leave for varying reasons, which include taking other jobs, retiring, going back to school, or personal reasons. According to a NCES survey of 8,400 public and private school teachers, the main reasons for high teacher turnover and attrition rates were inadequate administrative support (38 percent) and workplace conditions (32 percent).

According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2002), salaries, working conditions, preparation, and mentoring support in the early years of teaching were the four major factors influencing teacher attrition. Although working conditions and salaries were both important reasons for leaving, their importance varied depending on the socioeconomic status of the school. Teachers who decided to leave low-income schools mentioned poor administrative supports where conditions were more challengeable, while teachers who decided to leave more prosperous schools (NCTAF, 2002) reported salaries more.

Urban schools struggle to recruit and retain teachers and have the highest teacher departure rate (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Foster, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; NCTAF, 2003; RNT, 2000). Urban schools' new hires were more likely to be beginning teachers or teachers with less than five years of experience (Henke et al., 2000; Justice, Greiner & Anderson, 2003; NCES, 1996; SBEC, 1998; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). This results in a high population of students who more than likely have a series of inexperienced beginning teachers throughout their educational career; thereby resulting in the students failing to achieve academically (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; SBEC, 1998).

Merrow (1999) advocates that an adequate number of teachers have graduated with education degrees to fill the available teaching positions. However, the challenge

has revolved around retaining beginning teachers so that they gain the necessary experience in order to become effective teachers. Recruiting New Teachers (2000) found that student achievement in urban schools was negatively affected by the loss of one third of the beginning teachers within the first three years of their career.

Several studies document the corresponding negative impact on student achievement in schools and districts with high levels of teacher turnover, teachers teaching out of their subject area and/or uncertified personnel (Berry, 2004; Lankford, et al., 2002; Plecki et al., 2005). The financial costs related to teacher attrition such as hiring costs, recruitment costs (Sargent, 2003), and training costs (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000), are estimated to be more than $2.6 billion annually (AEE, 2004).

Georgia's Concern

According to the *Status Report: The Georgia Educator Workforce 2006* of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, teacher attrition in Georgia decreased from 9.4 percent in 2000 to 8.7 percent in 2002 and has since increased and stayed at a range of between 9.1 to 9.2 percent since 2003. The long-term trend for Georgia suggests that there would be continued increases in the teacher attrition rate, which may reach 9.8 percent by 2012 (GPSC, 2006). The Georgia four year average rate of attrition from 2001 to 2005 supports the assertion that the first three years are critical for teachers to decide whether or not to continue in the teaching profession (GPSC, 2006). The data also indicate that the annual loss rate from the profession does not begin to decline until the 8th year of teaching. It is projected that Georgia will need an increase from 110,135 teachers to 132,059 teachers from 2006 to 2012 just to meet enrollment growth projections. This growth projection does not include teachers to replace those who leave

the profession, which at current rates of 9.1 percent attrition would exceed 67,000 teachers from 2007 to 2012 (GPSC, 2006).

In Georgia's quest to retain teachers, the 1995 Quality Basic Education Act focused on reducing the amount of dissatisfied teachers who leave Georgia's schools. In 1997, the state invested in induction through the Georgia Mentor Teacher Program. This program was not developed to serve all new teachers and the only funds that were allocated were for the mentor teachers. There was no supporting pool of funds for schools or districts to provide release and planning time between the mentors and new teachers. Implementation and quality of the program varied significantly from one school district to another. After the program's elimination in 2004, state investment in teacher induction fell to $0 (GPEE, 2006).

In 2006, Georgia's schools replaced almost 16,000 teachers. Several factors influenced these vacancies: the exodus of an aging workforce, class size reduction requirements with growing student enrollment, and teacher attrition. There are significant costs involved in replacing these teachers. It has been estimated that within five years 34 percent of Georgia's teachers will leave the classroom and the profession (GPSC, 2005). Conservative estimates quantify the annual costs of attrition in Georgia to be $81 million (AEE, 2005). With 33 percent of Georgia's teachers leaving after three years, Georgia loses new teachers at the critical point when the state begins to realize return on its investment (GPSC, 2006). Research indicates that the most pronounced effects of teacher experience on student achievement begin after three years in the classroom.

Beginning Teacher Attrition

Jerald and Boser (2000) reported the following findings in an Education Week's *Quality Counts* report: twenty-three percent of teachers leave the profession within their first three years of teaching. The brightest novice teachers, as measured by their college entrance exams, were the most likely to leave teaching (Jerald & Boser, 2000; Schlechty & Vance, 1981). Beginning teachers who did not participate in an induction program were twice as likely to leave teaching (Jerald & Boser, 2000).

Many beginning teachers cited their major reason for leaving the education profession was the lack of administrative support (Harris Interactive Inc., 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Quinn & Andrews, 2004; Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990). Administrative support can be viewed as the degree of assistance offered teachers by the school administration (Ingersoll, 2001). Other researchers such as Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990) explained needed administrative support as differing, depending on the status of the teacher. The experienced teachers often desired administrative support that enhanced their autonomy and professional development. On the other hand, beginning teachers normally desired administrative support that helped them manage the basic tasks of teaching such as classroom management, paperwork, and personal time management (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990).

The more recent *MetLife* S*urvey of the American Teacher 2006: Expectations and Experiences* revealed the following findings about beginning teachers who decided to leave the profession:

1. Beginning teachers were driven to leave the profession by unmet expectations, lack of preparation, and lack of support by colleagues and principal.

2. Beginning teachers felt shut out of decision-making at school, while having a say in school policies is a key determinant of teacher satisfaction.
3. Beginning teachers said they lacked the basic materials and equipment to get the job done.
4. Beginning teachers said they needed more training to prepare for their first year in the classroom.
5. Mentors helped keep teachers in the profession (Harris Interactive Inc., 2006).

Patterson (2005) compared the beginning teacher experience to being hazed. Patterson (2005) defined hazing as the instructional practices and policies that are in place, which ensures that beginning teachers experience poorer working conditions than the veteran teachers. According to Patterson (2005), examples of hazing in the high school setting may include beginning teachers being required to teach (a) the most challenging courses, (b) more than two course preparations, (c) in more than one classroom, (d) mainly entry level courses, (e) in a classroom located away from other members of the department and (f) new courses with little or no developed curriculum. Patterson (2005) also found that beginning teachers tended to be hired late, asked to sponsor time-consuming clubs, provided with an inadequate supply of books for students, held substandard credentials, and were evaluated at the end of the year. Patterson (2005) described this consistent marginalization and disenfranchisement of beginning teachers as being systematically hazed.

Challenges Facing Beginning Teachers

In 1963, Conant called attention to the needs of the beginning teacher in his publication “The Education of America’s Teachers”. In 1978, Garde studied the

beginning teacher experience and concluded that they were not as well prepared as they had thought and that they faced unanticipated gaps in their professional competencies. In 1983, the reported beginning teacher attrition rate was 50 percent within the first seven years of teaching (Schlechty & Vance, 1983). In 1984, Veenman described the transition from pre-service education to the harsh reality of everyday classroom life as “reality shock” (p. 144).

Traditionally, beginning teachers have been given the most challenging teaching assignments (Norton, 1999). These assignments may include teaching classes outside of their area of certification, job assignments at under funded schools, or assignments to classes with students who have been labeled as difficult to teach (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; NCTAF, 2003, Norton, 1999). These assignments tend to impair beginning teachers’ chances to be successful in the classroom (Norton, 1999). These early experiences of early frustration with teaching success act to discourage beginning teachers from continuing in the profession (Chapman, 1983). Chapman (1984) reported that the quality of the first year teaching experience is more important in retaining a beginning teacher than either the quality of the teacher preparation program or the beginning teacher’s academic performance.

Beginning teachers tend to experience problems learning the role and professional identity of a teacher (Brock & Grady, 1998); being acculturated into the school and the profession (Britzman, 1986) and developing as a professional (Bartell, 2005; Justice et al., 2003).

Professional Identity

Beginning teachers must learn the role and professional identity of a teacher. Yet they have several challenges to overcome while learning that role (Brock & Grady, 1998; Veenman, 1984). When new teachers are not successful in making this transition into the teacher role, they are destine to leave the profession. Beginning teacher literature has identified a number of challenges that new teachers face as they learn the role of teacher (Brock & Grady, 1998; Veenman, 1984). Many of the identified challenges confront several teachers in K-12 schools; however, the beginning teacher has not had the time and experience to develop a tool kit of strategies to deal with the challenges (Brock & Grady, 1998).

Veenman (1984) analyzed findings from 83 studies published in the literature. The findings reflect a compilation of data from studies conducted in several countries including the United States. This may be problematic in that other countries have different educational systems, as well as different teacher training and certification programs. Therefore, the beginning teacher's perceptions of their most important challenges may differ depending on the country in which the teacher may be employed. Nevertheless, Veenman's research has provided valuable information on global trends of the perceived problems of beginning teachers. Veenman (1984) found challenges (ranked in order of importance) to include: classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies, dealing with problems of individual students, heavy teaching load resulting in

insufficient preparation time, difficult relations with colleagues, lesson planning, and effective use of different teaching methods.

On the other hand, Brock and Grady's (1998) study consisted of 49 beginning teachers randomly selected from Nebraska's teaching population. Brock and Grady (1998) found challenges (ranked in order of importance) to include: classroom management and discipline issues, working with mainstreamed students, determining appropriate expectations for students, dealing with stress, handling angry parents, keeping up with paperwork, grading/evaluating student work, handling student conflicts, spacing lessons, varying teaching methods, dealing with students varying abilities and feeling inadequate as a teacher. Another important finding from the research was the beneficial nature of a comprehensive assistance program on teacher retention (Brock & Grady, 1998).

Enculturation into School and Profession

The transition from beginning teacher to veteran is not a simple transition from one role into another (Lortie, 1975). Instead, the transition can be characterized as a social process, which includes complex interactions between and among new and experienced teachers and their social circumstances (Lortie, 1975). Beginning teachers often had high expectations of collegiality and one of the main ways new teachers characterized their school was by whether the faculty was close and routinely worked together (Little, 1990).

Findings from the *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*: *Transitions and the Role of Supportive Relationships* (2005) indicated that if principals were interested in retaining qualified teachers, they should pay attention to the support systems that they

make available to beginning teachers. Beginning teachers' satisfaction with and the quality of their professional connections were related to whether they planned to remain in the profession. New teachers who reported that they were likely to leave teaching in the next five years were less satisfied with their relationships with other teachers, their principal, and with their students. They were also less likely to report that their principal created a supportive environment and were more likely to feel as if their job was not valued by their supervisor (Harris Interactive Inc., 2005).

Beginning teachers were often isolated from the experienced teachers working on the same campus (Britzman, 1986; Guyton & Hidalgo, 1995). Many beginning teachers felt that they should have previous knowledge in order to teach effectively and would therefore be unlikely to ask experienced teachers for assistance (Halford, 1999; Merseth, 1991). The experienced teachers' tendency to not interfere or offer assistance coupled with the beginning teachers' reluctance to ask for help result in a double barrier to beginning teachers receiving assistance (Huling-Austin, 1986). While facing these challenges, beginning teachers have been given the same responsibilities of more experienced teachers (Strong, 2005). Beginning teachers begin their career with two jobs: to teach and to learn to teach (Feiman-Nemser, 2001)

According to a report published by the Public Education Network (2003), new teachers stated the following as the most pressing workplace conditions: weak or ineffective leadership; not knowing what to expect; having to learn things the hard way; lack of basic resources and materials such as books, textbooks, and supplies, or not knowing what resources were available.

According to the *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*: *Transitions and the Role of Supportive Relationships* by Harris Interactive, Inc. (2005), beginnings mark important transitions for teachers. First-time teachers undergo a time of instability and stress as they progress from beginning teachers to experienced educators. New teachers who have supportive school relationships are more likely to have other positive school outcomes. For beginning teachers, fellow teachers and the principal can be sources of support when beginning their first teaching positions. According to results from the beginning teacher surveys, quality of support is an area that needed improvement. Fewer than six in ten beginning teachers strongly agreed that their school principal created an environment that helped them be an effective teacher. Two in ten beginning teachers reported not being assigned a more experienced teacher as a mentor when they began teaching (Harris Interactive Inc., 2005).

Schools, which house beginning teacher induction programs that successfully acculturate beginning teachers into the school's culture, see positive consequences for student achievement and attendance as well as staff morale (Fetler, 1997). Helping beginning teachers to become fully acculturated into the school is the most effective way to ensure a higher number of experienced teachers with higher student achievement rates and more collegial atmospheres (Hope, 1999).

Professional Development and Growth

Beginning teachers not only need emotional support but also need professional development that would enable them to enhance their existing skills and to mature as professionals (Clark, 2001). Cooper and Morey (1989) maintained that professional development should be structured as to provide purposeful assistance in instructional

performance for beginning teachers in order to facilitate their development as professional teachers (Clark, 2001).

Beginning teachers do not feel adequately prepared to meet the challenges they face when they first begin teaching in their own classroom (Berry, 2005; Public Education Network, 2003). According to the *MetLife Survey of the American Teache*r: *Transitions and the Role of Supportive Relationships* (2005) conducted by Harris Interactive, Inc., beginning teachers reported that they felt less prepared for managing a classroom, obtaining needed resources and working with students' parents. A NCES (1999) study, which surveyed 4,000 beginning teachers, found that 80 percent felt ill prepared to work with students from diverse cultures. Beginning teachers also struggled to determine appropriate methods for managing classrooms (Gold & Roth, 1993). While attempting to manage large classrooms, beginning teachers implemented strategies that were inappropriate and unsuccessful for the students that they taught (Justice et al., 2003; Stanulis et al., 2002).

When beginning teachers encountered insufficient facilities and resources, classroom organization became even more of a challenge (Veenman, 1984). Traditionally, when schools lack sufficient numbers of classrooms, beginning teachers have been relegated to travel from classroom to classroom while carrying their instructional materials (Bartell, 2005; Ingersoll, 1999; Veenman, 1984). As beginning teachers struggle with classroom management or classroom organization, they tend to implement inappropriate strategies especially when faced with a diverse population (Ganzer, 2000; Veenman, 1984). These strategies tend to be teacher survival strategies

rather than research based strategies, which deal with different learning styles (Bartell, 2005).

Benefits of Teacher Retention

Researchers (Johnson & Kardos, 2005; Neild, et al., 2003; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000; Weiss, 1999) have identified the importance of retaining teachers and have recommended the following reasons for its significance. Teacher attrition is costly to school districts. Stable staffs and school environments are important when inducing school reform efforts. Finally, student achievement is higher when more experienced teachers teach students.

Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson (2005) described the three types of costs associated with turnover of new teachers as instructional, organizational, and financial costs, all of which compound in conjunction with one another. Instructional costs were related to the general level of instruction that students experienced when other new teachers, who needed time to become proficient in their practice, replaced beginning teachers. Beginning teachers were not as efficient as teachers with more years of teaching experience, with brand new teachers being the least effective teachers (Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kein, 2005). Hedges, Laine and Greenwald (1994) in a meta-analysis of studies on factors that affect student outcomes, found a positive relationship between teacher experience and student academic outcomes. Teacher experience does affect student academic performance while the coming and going of new teachers disrupts the staff's progress toward creating shared purpose and practice, which results in a decrease of instructional continuity for students (Johnson & Kardos, 2005).

Johnson et al. (2005) refer to organizational costs as the potential loss of a consistent education program that includes staff unity. A stable staff is important for organizational performance (Berry, 2004). In order to ensure organizational effectiveness, commitment, continuity, and cohesion is required from the teaching staff (Ingersoll, 2003). Teacher turnover serves to disrupt school cohesion (Neild et al., 2003). Halford (1998) informed that school reform requires years of sustained collaborative staff effort and teacher turnover deters reform efforts. Several studies documented the corresponding negative impact on student achievement in schools and districts with high levels of teacher turnover, uncertified staff, and/or teachers teaching out of subject (Berry, 2004; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; Plecki et al., 2005). Experienced teachers can focus on student achievement and learning whereas the new teacher must focus on surviving the first year and learning the craft of teaching (Britton et al., 2000). Darling-Hammond (2003) supported the notion that beginning teacher productivity is not as high as that of more experienced teachers.

Financially, millions of dollars were lost when teachers decided to leave the teaching profession. In recruiting and interviewing teachers, human resource departments of school districts must spend time and money (AEE, 2004). By some estimates, American schools spend more than $2.6 billion annually replacing teachers who have dropped out of the teaching profession (AEE, 2004; Ingersoll, 2003). Ingersoll and Smith (2003), who have done extensive research on teacher retention, suggest that spending money to recruit new teachers to meet staffing shortages is a lot like putting water into a leaky bucket if these teachers leave in a few short years (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). The

drain of money spent on recruitment is a genuine concern for America's education community.

Ingersoll and Smith (2004) maintain that the high cost of teacher turnover is basis to implement induction programs, which serve to increase teacher retention. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) found that new teachers who participated in comprehensive induction programs with one-on-one mentoring had a higher likelihood to remain in teaching as compared to those new teachers who had not participated.

Induction Program Initiatives

Due to the recognition of the critical nature of providing purposeful and sustained professional support to teachers during the beginning years of their career, schools and districts are implementing induction programs as a way to maintain a strong, stable workforce and to improve student achievement (Berry, 2004; Johnson et al., 2005). Induction as a process to introduce beginning teachers into the school has been reported to exist as early as 1962 (Lawson, 1992). This process included an introductory meeting with the principals and other teachers to discuss the daily operations of the school along with materials and scheduling. This induction process also included an orientation to the building and information concerning policies and procedures (Lawson, 1992).

Induction programs can range from low-key, informal ones to formal, highly structured programs. In the informal program, the principal may give a beginning teacher a school orientation and ask a veteran teacher to provide assistance as the beginning teacher needs it (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). In the formal program, a mentor may be assigned for two years and the beginning teacher participates in jointly planned regular meetings, observations, formative evaluations and professional development (Stansbury

& Zimmerman, 2000; Wayne, Youngs & Fleischman, 2005). Recently, online beginning teacher support programs such as the Lighthouse Project have been developed (DeWert, Babinski & Jones, 2003). Britton et al. (2000) maintain that effective induction programs include an assigned mentor and work with beginning teachers for longer than their first year of teaching. Further, Britton et al. (2000) maintain that these programs should identify skills of professional practice and proactively engage teachers in activities that will help them to acquire these skills. After one year of attaining basic teaching skills and maintaining order in the classroom, it is in the second year that the beginning teacher may be better able to incorporate academic-specific assistance and to deepen instructive skills (Britton et al., 2000).

According to Wong (2003), induction is the process of preparing, supporting, and retaining new teachers and includes all of the things done to support these teachers. This support includes assimilation into the teaching culture, aiding in first day success and introducing them to district and school philosophies, responsibilities and missions. The most successful programs to keep good teachers have a well thought-out and continuous induction program of up to three years (Wong, 2003). Typically, induction programs are provided by districts and managed by administrators, human resource managers, and mentor teachers (Wong, 2003). Wong (2003) clarified that induction goes beyond mentoring to provide an extensive framework of support, professional development, and standards-based assessments and evaluations of beginning teachers and the program itself.

Stansbury and Zimmerman (2002) defined the induction period as a time when a beginning teacher endeavors for acceptance from supervisors, colleagues and students,

and attempts to attain a reasonable level of comfort and security while dealing with everyday problems and concerns. Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1993) maintain that a beginning teacher induction program should focus on retaining beginning teachers, improving teaching and learning for students and increasing professional effectiveness.

Gilbert (2005) reported survey and focus group data from 222 teachers who participated in induction programs in the state of Georgia. The five most valued strategies reported by the beginning teachers were:

1. Giving beginning teachers the opportunity to observe other teachers.
2. Assigning beginning teachers to smaller classes.
3. Assigning mentors to beginning teachers.
4. Providing beginning teachers with feedback based on classroom observations.

These results indicate that beginning teachers desire to work and collaborate with other teachers. The respondents also stressed the need for the assignment of mentors (Gilbert, 2005).

Research from the Alliance for Excellent Education (2004) revealed that about 50 percent of beginning teachers do not participate in induction programs beyond a one-time orientation and only one percent of the new teacher workforce participate in the comprehensive program recommended by researchers (Johnson et al, 2005). Many benefits of induction programs have been documented in the literature (Bartell, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Strong, 2004).

Benefits of Induction Programs

Providing high quality teacher induction programs to support beginning teachers as they grow and overcome classroom challenges has been more productive than hiring

new staff every year (Strong, 2004). Research has indicated that induction positively affects teacher retention and teacher quality (Bartell, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Fideler and Haselkorn (1999), in a teacher retention study, examined urban teacher induction programs across the United States. They found that 57 percent of the programs reported a 90 to 100 percent teacher retention rate; 12 percent reported an 80 to 89 percent retention rate; while five percent reported a 70 to 79 percent retention rate. Of the urban induction programs participating in the study, the median retention rate was 93 percent (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). The national average of attrition is reported to be 9.3 percent in the first year of teaching (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). Induction programs designed to meet beginning teachers' needs have been reported to increase retention rates from 50 to 85 percent (Lemke, 1995; Norton, 1999).

In *Tapping the Potential* (2004), a report commissioned by the Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE), it was revealed that teachers participating in a comprehensive model of induction developed teaching skills and capacities more rapidly; minimizing the time it takes new teachers to perform as efficiently as an experienced teacher (AEE, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2001). This report also asserted that comprehensive induction occurring during a beginning teacher's first two years was the single most effective strategy to curtail the teacher attrition rate (AEE, 2004).

There is data to confirm that schools, which provide high levels of support for beginning teachers, do retain more teachers (Bryk &, Schneider, 1999; Henke, et al., 2000; Moir, n.d.; Weiss & Weiss, 2002). The Santa Cruz New Teacher Project (SCNTP), which started in 1993, reported that 90 percent of participating teachers have remained in the profession (Moir, n.d.). There has been documentation of a 93 percent retention rate

in urban districts that provide comprehensive formal induction programs for beginning teachers (Weiss & Weiss, 1999).

Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that providing opportunities to collaborate within a teacher induction program reduce the risk of beginning teachers leaving the profession by 43 percent. When beginning teachers were provided an opportunity to participate in an external network, the chance of the beginning teachers leaving were reduced by 33 percent (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Fuller (2003) compared the retention rate of beginning teachers who were provided support in Texas public schools with the retention rate of beginning teachers who failed to receive support during their first year of teaching. After the first year, the retention rate of beginning teachers provided support was 89.2 percent, while the retention rate of beginning teachers without support provided was 80.3 percent. In the second year, the retention rate for teachers provided support was 84.4 percent, while the retention rate for teachers without support was only 75.4 percent (Fuller, 2003).

Collaboration between beginning teachers and experienced teachers provided in induction programs enhanced the learning of the beginning teacher (Foster, 2004) and empowered them to successfully teach students with diverse backgrounds (Guyton & Hidalgo, 1995). Through participation in induction programs, feelings of isolation and abandonment were alleviated (Cooper & Morey, 1989). Through the support of mentors, peers, and experienced teachers, beginning teachers can begin to construct instructional knowledge (DeWert et al., 2003).

According to Recruiting New Teachers (1999), 92 to 96 percent of beginning teachers who took part in a teacher induction program, which provides support during the

first year of teaching, demonstrated enhanced performance, improved knowledge of teaching and increased self confidence (RNT, 1999). With this sustained help, beginning teachers are able to concentrate on utilizing instructional techniques and less concentration is on classroom management issues (Foster, 2004; Stroot et al., 1999). Other studies document improved lesson planning, classroom management and better communication resulting in improved classroom interactions through the application of varied instructional strategies (Bartell, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Villar, 2004).

Although induction programs provide great benefits to the beginning teacher, only one percent of the new teacher workforce participates in the comprehensive program recommended by researchers (Johnson et al., 2005). Researchers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Gray & Gray, 1985; Camp & Heath-Camp, 1992; Moir & Gless, 2002; Ingersoll & Smith, 2000) have identified several key components characterizing effective induction programs.

Components of School Level Induction Program

Activities in induction programs range from a single orientation meeting at the beginning of the year to multiple activities designed to emotionally and professionally support beginning teachers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Villegas and Clewell (1998) found that induction programs that included professional development, collaboration, and social support components increased beginning teacher retention to up to 95 percent.

In a study done by Ingersoll and Smith (2004), of 3,235 beginning teachers, 80 percent were involved in teacher induction programs. Emotional support was provided in 81 percent of the programs. Opportunities to collaborate with other beginning teachers were provided in 68 percent. Professional development courses were included in 62

percent of the programs. Only 17 percent of the induction programs encouraged an external network of teachers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Many researchers report the essential components of effective induction programs. These components include purposefully selected mentors (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Gray & Gray, 1985; Camp & Heath-Camp, 1992; Moir & Gless, 2002), required training for the mentor (Gray & Gray, 1985), the provision of professional development (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Gray & Gray, 1985; Camp & Heath-Camp, 1992; Moir & Gless, 2002), the conducting of formative observations and assessments (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Gray & Gray, 1985), and opportunities for reflection on instructional strategies (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Camp & Heath-Camp, 1992).

Other key components of an effective teacher induction program identified in the literature include the recognition that induction is a multiyear, developmental process, not a short-term program (RNT, 2000). Other components include administrators understanding the needs of the beginning teachers, evaluations linked to state standards, and the provision of necessary technology to facilitate communication among beginning teachers, mentors and university faculty (RNT, 2000). The National Education Association (NEA, 1999) identified three stages to new teacher induction. Stage 1 should focus on practical skills and information such as how to order supplies, make copies, find resources, etc. In stage two, mentors and their mentees should concentrate more on teaching itself as well as classroom management skills. Stage 3 should shift towards a more complete understanding of instructional strategies as well as ongoing professional development (NEA, 1999).

According to Ingersoll and Smith (2004), individual components of teacher induction programs failed to significantly affect teacher turnover. However, when several components were implemented within a teacher induction program, the effect was significant. The more components that were combined in the program, the greater the result (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). These components included a combination of mentoring, professional development workshops, collaboration orientation seminars and emotional support (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Mentoring

A major emphasis in the vast majority of teacher induction programs centers on the assignment of a mentor to the beginning teacher (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2001), and if possible, a mentor who is in the same field (Gilbert, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Mentoring involves the professional guidance and emotional support that is given to a beginning teacher from a mentor. Multiple people such as a community of peers, an experienced teacher, or an administrator (Ayers & Griffin, 2005) can take on the role of mentoring.

According to the Alliance of Excellent Education's report, *Tapping the Potential*, high-quality mentoring is defined as "structured mentoring from a carefully selected teacher or teachers who work in the same field or subject as the new teacher, are trained to coach new teachers, and can help improve the quality of teachers' practice. Mentors guide and support the work of novice teachers by observing them in the classroom, offering them feedback, demonstrating effective teaching methods, assisting with lesson plans, and helping teachers analyze student work and achievement data to improve their instruction." (p. 2). Healy and Welchert (1990) defined mentoring as a reciprocal

relationship where a work environment between a mentor and a beginning teacher promotes the career development of both

Role

Odell (1990) defined a mentor in the academic setting as a friend, guide, counselor, but above all, a supportive teacher. There should be a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the mentor and the beginning teachers within the mentoring relationship. Clarification of these roles is beneficial for both parties during the mentoring process. Kay (1990) defined a mentor as a person who puts significant effort toward helping another person to become self-reliant. According to Stansbury and Zimmerman (2002), mentoring models can vary with some being more formalized mentoring programs and some less structured buddy systems.

Anderson and Shannon (1987) offer a comprehensive definition of mentoring and this definition is found in the Georgia's Teacher Support Specialist Handbook:

> Mentoring is defined as a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and protégé. p. 38

As school districts become more aware of the critical role that they play in preparing beginning teachers for their new role in the classroom and retaining these teachers for many years, more focus has been concentrated on the mentoring process.

Experienced colleagues influence the professional development of beginning teachers and are able to provide encouraging influences through formal mentoring (Sargent, 2003).

Johnston and Ryan (1980) state that mentors serve as instructional advisors by assisting new teachers in planning lessons, organizing for instruction, assessing student progress, motivating students, and locating and developing resources. In order to serve in these capacities, mentors need a broad conceptual understanding of the elements of good teaching (Johnston & Ryan, 1980). Stansbury and Zimmerman (2002) advocate that mentors are accessible listeners who will provide support, encouragement, and praise to their protégés.

Teacher induction programs must include structured mentor training (Thies-Sprinthall, 1986). Without adequate training in mentoring and coaching, mentors are unable to effectively assist beginning teachers (Single & Muller, 2001). Mentoring will not meet the goal of improved teacher quality and teacher retention without adequate planning and mentor training (Freedman, 1992). Trained mentors are better able to guide beginning teachers as they address the challenges in their classroom (DeWert et al., 2003). Mentors may provide many varied activities depending on the individualized needs of the beginning teacher (Ballantyne & Hansford, 1995).

Services Provided

Several mentoring techniques are proven effective when dealing with new teachers (Abell, et al., 1995; Huling-Austin, 1992; Schaffer, et al., 1992; RNT, 2000; Wildman et al., 1992).

1. Mentors encourage reflection in beginning teachers in order to lead them into meaningful deliberation of the many alternatives they might think about when reaching their own conclusions or solutions to problems, questions, and dilemmas.
2. Mentors direct and support beginning teachers when they help beginners to detect problem areas and to remind them of the school policies and procedures (Abell et al., 1995; Wildman et al., 1992).
3. Mentors give direct assistance to the beginning teacher to ensure success in their new profession (Odell & Ferraro, 1992, Wildman et al., 1992).
4. Mentors supply emotional support to beginning teachers about personal as well as professional matters (Abell et al., 1992).
5. Mentors address individualized needs based on race and gender that are inherent in any kind of teaching process (Graham, 1997).

Benefits of Mentoring

Research suggests that mentoring programs have the potential to improve the quality of teaching through improvement of beginning teachers instructional skills (NCES, 1999). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported in its 1999 *Teacher Quality* study, that seven in ten teachers who receive mentoring at least once a week believe that their teaching skills have significantly improved as a result. The literature highlights the importance of assigning the beginning teacher with a mentor who will provide professional and social assistance to the beginning teacher (AEE, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith; 2004; Gilbert, 2005).

Mentoring is positively associated with beginning teacher satisfaction and hence the ability to retain beginning teachers (Kardos, 2004). One of the five most valued strategies reported by beginning teachers involved in induction programs was the assignment of a mentor (Gilbert, 2005). In an analysis of the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey data, it was concluded that beginning teachers who were assigned mentors experienced decreased attrition (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

In a *New York Times* column "Dueling Goals for Education," Teachers College President Arthur Levine (1999) stated that mentoring programs can help in three ways to meet the challenge of recruiting and retaining quality teachers. Mentoring can be used as a recruitment tool; it can improve teacher retention rates; and it can help to improve the skills and knowledge of both new and veteran teachers. It has also been documented that mentoring programs benefit all participants: the mentor, the new teacher, and the school system (ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986). Mentors get the satisfaction of supporting a novice educator. School districts benefits are two fold, teacher attrition rate is lowered when school districts offer a systemic support for the new teacher, and the early detection of instructional problems is observed through the close observation and supervision of the beginning teacher. The beginning teacher benefits in three ways: fast assimilation into the school environment, establishment of professional competence and introduction to teaching as a lifelong career (ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986).

In Ganser's (1996) study of 24 teacher mentors, the participants identified 21 benefits that they observed of mentoring. The six most frequently reported benefits were:

1. Support and encouragement for the beginning teacher.
2. Improved teaching by the beginning teacher.

3. Help with discipline and classroom management for the beginning teacher.
4. Help in teaching skills for the beginning teacher.
5. Help in transition from college to work and to remain in the profession.
6. Help to avoid learning by trial and error by the beginning teacher (p. 37).

Ganser's research gave an interesting perspective in that it reported the opinions of the mentors instead of the beginning teachers. The findings could have been strengthened if the beginning teachers' perspectives had been studied as well.

Baker (2003) reported an additional benefit of mentoring as a provision of confidence building for the new teacher. Darling-Hammond (2001) maintained that beginning teachers who have access to expert mentoring are less likely to leave the teaching profession early in their profession. Although induction programs have the potential to support beginning teachers and improve retention rates, it can be ineffective if principals view the program as a substitute for their responsibility to support and provide guidance to beginning teachers (Bloom & Davis, 1998).

Principal's Influence on Beginning Teachers

An essential element of a quality comprehensive induction program is strong principal leadership (AEE, 2004). Principals can make or break a beginning teacher experience (Public Education Network, 2003). The principal's influence on beginning teachers is significant, if not profound (AEE, 2004; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Beginning teachers look to the principal for support and guidance on how to perform at school (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Richards, 2004). When this support and guidance are not received, beginning teachers encounter problems in teaching and tend to feel frustrated

and abandoned. It is at this time that they may decide to leave the school or the profession (Brock & Grady, 1997; Angelle, 2002; Colley, 2002).

Role

Wood (2005) conducted a study to explore the principals' roles in a large, urban, standards-based induction program. Results from this study revealed that principals have five leadership roles in induction: (a) a culture builder, (b) an instructional leader, (c) a coordinator/facilitator of mentors, (d) novice teacher recruiter and (e) a novice teacher advocate/retainer. A principal's capabilities to competently carry out these roles will potentially influence teacher retention.

Induction works best when it is systemically embedded in the culture of the school (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004) and the principals serve as builders of this school culture (Colley, 2002). As instructional leaders, principals give regular, systemic feedback to beginning teachers on instructional approaches, content knowledge, and classroom management strategies (Murphy & Louis, 1999). This information is vital for the beginning teacher to understand the principal's expectations (Brock & Grady, 1997). As coordinator/ facilitator of mentors, principals should initiate, facilitate, support, and assess the mentors' training and delivery services to their beginning teachers (Bartell, 2004; Stansbury, 2001). As beginning teacher recruiters, principals hold a pivotal role in influencing commitment to the administrator and retention in teaching (Wood, 2005). As beginning teacher advocate/retainer, the principal is one of the most important people in the lives of the teacher and is pertinent to the beginning teachers' perceptions of feeling supported (Brock & Grady, 1997; Richards, 2004).

A study done by Quinn and Andrews (2004) showed that there was a range in terms of teachers being satisfied or dissatisfied with the level of support of the principal. The first year teachers stated that there was a general lack of orientation to the school. This orientation should have included an introduction to the rest of the staff; information on policies and procedures at the school; information on how various processes worked such as administrative policies and procedures and where materials and resources were located (Quinn & Andrews, 2004).

Services Provided

There is a plethora of literature with prescriptive counsel for principals who are committed to the success and retention of beginning teachers (AEE, 2004; Britton et al., 2000). Much of the literature comes from information given by principals themselves (Colley, 2002; Mauer & Zimmerman, 2000; Sargent, 2003; Stuart, 2002). Based on the literature, there are many suggestions for principals to assist beginning teachers to ease into the first year of teaching.

Principals should treat the hiring process as the first step in the induction process (Johnson & Kardos, 2005) and to avoid hiring new teachers at the last minute or after the school year has already begun (Patterson, 2005). Beginning teachers need adequate time to plan and mentally prepare for their first teacher assignment.

Principals should provide orientations and school level induction for beginning teachers at the start of the school year and to take the lead in developing a formal program to show that new teacher support is a priority (DePaul, 2000). Prior to the first day of school, principals should give beginning teachers as much information as possible about their students (Brewster & Railsback, 2001).

Principals should insist on quality mentoring (Walker, 2003) and should create time for new teachers and mentors to meet in order to exchange ideas and problem solve (Chesley et al., 1997). The mentee should have time to observe the mentor or other experienced colleagues modeling professional teaching practices (Angelle, 2002; Britton et al., 2000; Chesley et al., 1997; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Gilbert, 2005; Johnson & Kardos, 2005). Principals should make sure that mentors are adequately trained and are well versed in the same content area and grade level as the beginning teacher (Wayne et al., 2005). Principals should encourage mentors to put more focus on improving the beginning teacher's instruction rather than only providing moral support (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004).

When making classroom assignments, principals should try not to assign beginning teachers the most challenging students or a combination/multi-grade classroom (DePaul, 2000; Halford, 1998; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). At the secondary level, principals can assign more than one class of the same course to the beginning teacher in order to reduce the number of preparations required (Britton et al., 2000; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Principals should assign classes to the new teachers that will be easier to manage, with fewer preparations and if possible to courses, with which they already have some familiarity (Huling-Austin, 1992; Walker, 2003).

Principals should integrate new teachers into school wide learning opportunities as well as encourage collaborative work in grade-level or departmental teams (Kardos, et al., 2001). Principals should develop a supportive environment and foster a culture of collaboration (Kardos et al., 2001; Patterson, 2005). Principals should integrate the beginning teacher into the larger school community and encourage professional

relationships (Bloom & Davis, 1998). The principal serving as the school leader plays a crucial role in creating, determining, and sharing school culture (Schein, 1985). Administrators should endeavor to build school cultures that facilitate and support all teachers to continue to learn and develop professionally during their careers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Principals, mentors, and colleagues should seek to furnish a learner-centered atmosphere in which induction into the profession is personalized to the beginning teacher's developmental needs (Bransford et al., 2000; Stuart, 2002).

Principals should work to limit additional duties (Britton et al., 2000; Davis & Bloom, 1998; Patterson, 2005) and discourage over enthusiastic beginning teachers from volunteering for too many additional duties during the first year (Stansbury, 2001). Beginning teachers already feel overwhelmed and do not need to be given additional extracurricular duties (Britton et al., 2000).

Principals need to be clear on expectations for the beginning teachers (Bloom & Davis, 1998; Patterson, 2005; Weiss, 1999) and let them know what kind of support is available and how they will be evaluated (Bloom & Davis, 1998). Principals need to let the beginning teachers know the expectations for instructional methods, student discipline, grading, and student achievement (Ganser, 2001).

In order to build trust and support, the principal can take the time to cultivate a relationship and show interest in the beginning teacher's professional growth and well-being (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Sargent, 2003). Principals should schedule time to meet with or drop in to see beginning teachers on a weekly basis to show your supportiveness (DePaul, 2000; Walker, 2003). Mentors can supply valuable support to beginning

teachers, but it is not a replacement for the teacher's need to interact with the principal (Chesley, Wood & Zepeda, 1997).

Principals can assist teachers in prioritizing their professional goals (Johnson & Kardos, 2002) and visibly engage in the professional development of personnel (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). Principals should let the beginning teachers know that they are invested in their success and will support them in areas of discipline and parental confrontations (DePaul, 2000). Encourage and give support in beginning teacher's participation in relevant professional development activities (Bloom & Davis, 1998).

Principals should promote learning during evaluation and use classroom observations, post-observation conferences and direct consultation to help beginning teachers to develop and apply instructional knowledge (Stein & D'Amico, 2002). These observations should be done with the purpose of improvement rather than evaluative (Angelle, 2002).

Principals should make materials for the classroom and the educational program readily available (Bloom & Davis, 1998; Patterson, 2005, Walker, 2003). Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990) found a link between principal buffering activities such as ensuring that teachers had required resources to teach and a beginning teacher's commitment to the profession.

Principals should provide beginning teachers with opportunities to discuss personal issues that effect job performance and morale (Hoerr, 2005). Principals should mentally prepare for and commit to the mentoring of beginning teachers (Monsour, 2000). When principals devote extra time and effort early, the beginning teacher can develop into a highly skilled educator, contributing to education into the long-term.

Benefits of Principal Support

Principals can make or break a new teacher experience (PEN, 2003). New teachers experience an easier transition into the school when principals who are effective and competent run it. In *The Voice of the New Teacher* report (2003), new teachers stated several attributes and behaviors of administrators that made a difference in their introduction to teaching. These attributes included being accessible, being instructional leaders, observing, and giving direct feedback and guidance, and being supportive of disciplinary decisions.

Induction Program Weaknesses

Most of the literature addresses the inappropriate application of state mandated programs to each school situation regardless of the differences that exist in the cultures of the schools and the individuality of each beginning teacher. Research documents that although induction programs are beneficial for beginning teachers, there are some problems with state-mandated programs (Abell, et al., 1995; Wildman, et al., 1992). Some of these problems may arise in states that require implementation of mandated programs.

The prevailing problem in state mandated programs is that a one-size fits all approach is taken when in fact each school has its own unique culture (Lawson, 1992). Since the research points out the individualized nature of teaching and teaching development, it would serve beginning teachers better if the existing induction programs were tailored to the their individual needs also with an understanding of the culture of the school (Weiner, 2000). Lawson (1992) lists several additional reasons that make the implementation of some induction programs difficult. The programs tend to fail to

accommodate the personal-developmental needs of teachers. Some induction programs try to do too much. Some induction programs can unintentionally foster competition between teachers. The programs are often designed in ways that neglect teachers' emotional needs (Lawson, 1992). Lawson suggests that induction programs be reconceived in order to meet the true needs of beginning teachers. He also states that most induction programs work on the assumption that they can anticipate the needs of beginning teachers, which is only possible up to a certain point. Abell, et al (1995) claim that the detailed guides and training for the mentor may not actually influence the beginning teacher as much as the relationship gained through the mentoring connection. Individual teachers and individual school climates may be more influential than state mandates when it comes to designing an induction program that will actually be beneficial to those working in that particular school.

There is also the problem of poorly matched mentors and mentees. Research has shown that if new teachers have no professional respect for their mentor, the relationship is perceived as less useful than if they had respect (Abell, et al., 1995). Hodkinson and Hodkinson (1999) found that induction has the possibility to lead to teacher burnout. The strength of the school culture and the new teacher's strong desire to become an expert as quickly as possible can result in activities, which extends beyond a teacher's normal role during school. In other words, the beginning teacher seeks to become an expert in one year and may be tempted to overachieve, which may result in teacher burnout.

Funding is another area that creates problems for induction programs. According to Recruiting New Teachers (2000), in 1996, state funding for induction programs ranged from $150,000 in Virginia to $80.2 million in California. This large disparity in funding

may result in major gaps in teacher quality from state to state. Some states require induction programs yet do not provide any funding to cover the expense (Sweeny & DeBolt, 2000).

Differences in Schools

The literature is sparse in addressing the differences in induction programs based on the school levels. However, there is literature, which explains conditions surrounding the higher rates of attrition in certain types of schools and situations. As these conditions are brought to the forefront, attention can be given to eradicating the problem.

In an Education Commission of the States (2005) review of the literature on teacher recruitment and retention, the question of schools differing in their success at recruiting and retaining teachers provided some conclusions. The research provided strong evidence that attrition is greater among secondary school teachers than among elementary school teachers. The literature was inconclusive on the differences in middle school attrition in comparison to high school or elementary school attrition. There was moderate evidence that teacher turnover is greater in schools with higher proportions of low-income, minority and academically low-performing students. The most surprising conclusion—in the current wave of creating smaller schools—was that turnover was greater in small schools than in larger schools (Allen, 2005).

The implication of this research literature is that there should be particular focus on stemming teacher attrition in secondary schools especially in math and science (Allen, 2005). This might be properly addressed through an induction program. The other implication is that importance should be placed on the teacher recruitment and retention

issues in schools with high percentages of low income and minority students (Allen, 2005).

Johnson et al., 2004 in a study designed to consider the effect of hiring practices, relationships with colleagues, and curriculum on new teachers' eventual retention in the education profession found that a support gap exists. This gap is evident when new teachers in low-income schools are less likely than new teachers in high-income schools to experience timely hiring, to benefit from mentoring and support and to have a curriculum that is complete and aligned with state standards (Johnson et al., 2004). This study implies that the mentoring and support component of induction would be beneficial to the new teachers in these low-income schools.

Neild, Useem, Travers, and Lesnick (2003) studied turnover patterns in Philadelphia public schools from 1999-2000 to 2002-2003 and found that the poorest of poor schools (i.e., schools with 90 percent poverty or more) had the most difficulty retaining teachers over the three-year period studied and the most difficulty filling vacancies that arose. Johnson and Birkeland's (2003) work shows, these schools do not have higher turnover because teachers prefer to teach wealthier students, but because these schools are often least equipped to support new teachers in their efforts to become effective.

Ingersoll (2002) reported that new secondary school teachers might find themselves assigned to teach in multiple classrooms or even multiple schools. As they move from room to room, typically wheeling carts loaded with materials, their teaching is made difficult by not having access to reference texts, supplies, records, and blackboards where they can post daily or long-term assignments. It is not unusual for a new teacher

simultaneously to experience the stress of teaching out of field, having a split assignment, and moving from classroom to classroom or school to school. The cumulative effect of such conditions often is stress and dissatisfaction (Ingersoll, 2002). This points to the needs of an induction program, which recognizes the needs of the beginning teacher and a principal who is supportive of the goals of induction.

Exemplary Induction Program Models

Many states have developed carefully designed teacher induction programs, which address the unique needs of the beginning teacher. These exemplary induction programs include the many induction components identified in the literature as beneficial to beginning teachers.

California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA)

California's Senate Bill (SB) 1422's intent was to help ease first- and second-year teachers' transition into the profession and to reduce teacher attrition. It was with this intent the California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA) was designed and developed. The incorporation of this program has drastically affected California's now higher-than-average teacher retention rates (Tushnet et al., 2002).

The BTSA program is a multifaceted program with a variety of components and stages of administration (Tushnet et al., 2002). In this program, the beginning teacher is assigned a mentor for two years. The mentor is expected to individualize support to meet the beginning teacher's unique needs and to make formative evaluations of the beginning teacher's teaching performance according to California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP). Mentors used a formative assessment tool that ensures that a series of events that encourages the beginning teacher to reflect on their practice takes place.

Evidence is gathered through observation, compilation of student work, and thoughtful dialogue between the beginning teacher and the mentor. Beginning teachers claim that they have benefited from the program and mentors report that the program has helped their own professional growth (Tushnet et al., 2002).

According to the California's Commission on Teacher Credentialing CCTC/BTSA Retention Surveys (2006) report, more than 92.2 percent of the 2005-06 participating teachers are teaching after two years and nearly 87 percent of the 2003-04 participating teachers are teaching in the fourth year. This exemplary induction program however is not without limitations and is constantly being assessed and modified to make necessary advancements.

Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training Program (BEST)

An exemplary support system for beginning teachers featured in a report given by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future is the Connecticut Beginning Educator Support and Training Program (BEST). BEST has district and school based mentor or support teams. State sponsored training for new teachers is available regionally and online. The induction program lasts for two years with a third year available if needed to meet portfolio assessment requirement. The mentors receive stipends, release time, professional development, and career growth, continuing education units for participation in BEST training and service as a mentor. Mentors are trained for up to 20 hours in teaching standards, coaching techniques and portfolio assessment. There is mandated release time for beginning teachers and mentors to observe each other's classrooms. There is a 30 hour minimum requirement of contact with mentor, support team, other teachers in the content area, principal and or district

facilitators. The new teacher workload is the same as a veteran's workload. There is an external network available. All public school teachers with initial educator certificate are eligible to receive BEST support. The state pays $760 per beginning teacher and the district pays $900 to $2,800 per beginning teacher per year. BEST reports an annual beginning teacher retention rate of 94.3 percent (NCTAF, 2005).

Lafourche Parish, Louisiana Framework for Inducing, Retaining, and Supporting Teachers (FIRST)

According to the Louisiana Department of Education (2001), the Lafourche Parish's Framework for Inducing, Retaining, and Supporting Teachers (FIRST) Program is an innovative program that provides three years of ongoing training and support for new teachers. The primary purpose of the program is to improve student achievement. To accomplish this, the FIRST program has the three main goals: reducing the intensity of the transition into teaching; improving teacher effectiveness; and increasing the retention rate of highly qualified teachers in the school district

All of the participants are paid a stipend for attendance. The first year starts with four highly structured days of training in areas such as classroom management, discipline, the first days of school, local policies/procedures, planning and effective teaching. The main focus however is classroom management. The fourth day brings an awards ceremony and a luncheon at which the new teachers meet their mentors, principals, school board members, and supervisory staff. To culminate the week, the beginning teachers visit actual demonstration classrooms and receive instruction from veteran teachers. All of these activities take place before school begins.

In April, additional one-day training is provided. Years Two and Three continue to provide structured training and support for the new teachers. Since the program's inception in 1996, the average attrition rate of new teachers has dropped from 51 percent to eleven percent (Louisiana Department of Education, 2001).

Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS)

An example of an exemplary support system for beginning teachers is The Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS). TxBESS was a three-year pilot project that was designed to address three major goals (1) increasing teacher retention; (2) assisting teaching that supports high-quality instruction, and (3) improving students' performance. TxBESS is a statewide comprehensive program of instructional support, mentoring and formative assessment to assist teachers during their first years of service in Texas public schools. Teacher mentors, along with other support-team members such as school and district administrators, education service center staff members, and faculty members from teacher preparation programs, offer guidance and assistance to beginning teachers during their first years on the job.

According to the Dana Center report, *Texas Beginning Educator Support System: Evaluation Report for Year Three*, 88 percent of the 2,059 beginning teacher participating in TxBESS during 2000-01, continued to teach in Texas the following year- this rate is higher than the statewide rate of 81 percent. In the third year of the program, 98 percent of the beginning cohort of teachers returned to teach in Texas.

TxBESS is associated with improved retention rates among beginning teachers **a**s well as stronger retention rates for high school teachers and minority teachers. Elementary, middle and high schools all had significantly higher retention of TxBESS

participants and TxBESS appeared to be especially helpful for under qualified teachers (Fuller, 2003). TxBESS mentor teachers report that serving as a mentor positively affects their professional growth. Participating principals report that TxBESS support results in improved classroom performance for beginning teachers (SBEC, 1998).

Summary

The review of literature for this study began with an introduction to the problem of teacher attrition. Attrition affects beginning teachers more than any other group of teachers, which may be due to the many challenges that they may face. They are expected to teach as they learn to teach.

Next, the benefits of teacher retention were discussed. The initiation of induction programs was discussed. Two major components of induction—principal support and mentoring were discussed. Lastly, an overview of four exemplary induction program models was explored with a discussion of the components included as well as a discussion of its affect on teacher retention.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Teachers are leaving the education profession at rates that make it difficult for schools to develop stable educational environments. This high attrition rate tends to occur with beginning teachers more so than veteran teachers. Teacher induction has been one of the responses to this dilemma. The present study intended to identify induction services available for beginning teachers and to assess how these services were beneficial for teachers during their induction years. Through a qualitative ethnographic approach, the researcher sought to understand the perceptions of beginning teachers, mentors, and principals regarding the benefits of induction services as they were provided to the beginning teacher during the induction process.

Through a qualitative research approach, the researcher examined the experiences of a small number of participants to elicit an information rich context. This chapter identified the research questions, the methodology used for the study, the research design, the population, the data sources, the data collection procedures, the data analysis methods, and trustworthiness including validity, reliability, generalizability and neutrality.

Research Questions

The following research questions served to guide this study:

1. How do beginning teachers describe their first year teaching experiences that make induction necessary?
2. What are the factors that support the induction process?

3. Which induction activities do beginning teachers, mentors and principals consider beneficial?
4. What are the types of induction services that are provided to beginning teachers in elementary, middle and high schools?
5. What induction services do beginning teachers, mentors and principals identify as missing but needed in the induction process?

Research Design

The researcher employed a qualitative research approach in order to discover the perspectives of the beginning teachers, the mentors and the principals involved in the teacher induction process. Strauss and Corbin (1990) stated:

> The nature of the research problem determines whether the research should be qualitative or quantitative. Some areas of study naturally lend themselves to research that attempts to uncover the nature of people's experiences. Qualitative research can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon… Qualitative methods can give the intricate details of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods. (p. 19)

Qualitative methods facilitated an understanding of how beginning teachers, mentors, and principals perceived their experiences and roles during the beginning teacher induction process (Creswell, 1994). This approach was appropriate to fully explain the experiences of the participants and allowed the researcher to gather the data necessary to answer the research questions. The qualitative approach served to provide a deeper understanding of the support activities that were most beneficial in beginning teacher induction. The researcher employed ethnographic research study methods

(Creswell, 2003) using thematic analysis to cluster and chunk data in general themes. Five purposefully selected elementary, middle and high school teams, each consisting of a beginning teacher, a mentor, and a principal served as the population for this study.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998) qualitative researchers “are interested in how different people make sense of their lives” (p. 7). Through the use of qualitative inquiry, the researcher sought to gain an understanding of how the beginning teachers, mentors, and principals viewed the induction process as it related to them. In describing qualitative research, Bogdan and Biklen (1998) distinguished the purposes of qualitative versus quantitative research when they wrote, “The open-ended nature of the approach allow the subjects to answer from their own frame of reference rather than from one structured by prearranged questions” (p. 3). Qualitative inquiry was appropriate for this study because it allowed the participants to discuss freely the benefits of the services that were provided. These responses were not stymied by the limitations of a quantitative survey where the questions are predetermined. This study called for a process in which the researcher and the participants worked together to build and understand the meanings of lived experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, Merriam, 2002).

According to Bogdan & Biklen (1998), although qualitative data is not statistical in nature, it is rigorous and based on data. For this study, the researcher used qualitative inquiry, which allowed the researcher to use the observation method of in-depth interviewing to construct descriptions of the school level induction team. Since the researcher sought to identify the services provided within the school level induction team consisting of the beginning teacher, mentor, and principal, the descriptive study design was chosen to examine each induction team.

For this study, the researcher examined each beginning teacher, mentor, and principal with the goal of describing the benefits of the services that were provided to beginning teachers. This researcher chose the qualitative research design because this study sought to describe, explore, and understand the induction services from the viewpoint of each participant. The qualitative method was used in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the induction process and the services that were involved with a specific group of people. Instead of studying large groups, qualitative researchers conduct a more in-depth study on a limited number of participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This type of investigative inquiry cannot be accomplished through quantitative research methodology.

Population

The population for this study consisted of first year teachers, their principals and mentors from one suburban school district located in the Middle Georgia area. There were five school sites. These five school sites consisted of two elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. This variety of schools gave a range of contexts and experiences, in that the schools varied by school size, socioeconomic status, and school level. The beginning teacher, mentor, and principal were chosen because these participants could give their own viewpoint and insight on the induction services that were provided and the roles that they played in the induction process. The members of the induction team were composed of the actual people who were involved in the induction process at the school level and could give insight to their actual lived experiences. Although the Personnel Director was involved in the induction process of

beginning teachers, the researcher sought to better understand the induction process and the services provided at the school level.

Participants

Qualitative samples tend to be purposive, rather than random (Kuzel, 1992) According to Patton (1990), purposeful sampling would allow the researcher to collect rich information that answers the questions central to the study. Since this study investigated the perceptions of beginning teachers, purposeful sampling was necessary to include first year teachers in one Middle Georgia public school district. Purposeful sampling occurs when individuals are selected who possess the characteristics or attributes of interest to the study (Berg, 2001). Merriam (2002) stated, “It is important to select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 12), and purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to determine the criteria essential in choosing what person to interview (Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 2002). Selection criteria for beginning teachers at school sites included (a) no previous teaching experience, (b) completion of initial two-day induction professional development training, (c) assignment of a mentor, and (d) school level. This sample was derived from the personnel director located in the school district after permission was obtained from the district Superintendent.

Once all first year teachers were identified, the researcher elicited volunteers to participate in the study as the district’s beginning teachers attended a mandatory beginning teacher induction meeting. After those beginning teachers who were willing to participate in the study were identified, the researcher randomly selected participants who would represent the elementary, middle and high school levels. The sample consisted of five certified beginning teachers, their mentors and principals from elementary, middle

and high schools. The sample consisted of two beginning teacher representatives from the elementary and middle school levels. There was one high school level beginning teacher representative. The total sample consisted of five certified beginning teachers, their mentors and principals from elementary, middle and high schools. The mentors and principals were identified based on the beginning teacher's school destination. This process was utilized to select five first year teachers, five mentors and five principals for the interview process.

Instrumentation

Interviews were the primary data of the study. The interviews provided description, detail, and context of the induction services provided during beginning teacher induction from the perspectives of the principals, mentors, and the beginning teachers. The common use of interviews in qualitative research allows the gathering of data on perceptions, feelings, and attitudes towards a topic (Glesne, 2006). Qualitative interviewing gives an open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life experiences of the interviewee (Charmaz, 2002).

Prior to the initial interviews, an inventory of questions, which served to elicit the interviewee's views was inspected and approved by a panel of experts in the area of beginning teacher induction. Feedback from the panel of experts was utilized in order to ensure the clarity and understanding of specific views the researcher was seeking to examine. An interview protocol served as a reference guide as the researcher questioned the participants. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews allowed flexibility whereas emerging ideas could be explored and could be immediately pursued during the interview process (Charmaz, 2002).

Data Collection

Permission to conduct research and to interview principals, mentors, and beginning teachers was obtained from the district superintendent. Permission from Georgia Southern University's Institutional Review Board to complete the study was obtained prior to beginning data collection. Interviews were held at the participants' school site at an agreed upon time. Participants were ensured of the confidentiality of their names and pseudonyms were developed. Each participant was required to sign an informed consent letter that explained the conditions of the voluntary participation, confidentiality, and contacts for questions about the research. The consent form also explained that the interview would be audiotaped, transcribed, and kept in the possession of the researcher in a secure location.

Interviews

Interviewing is a "complex act" (Glesne, 1999, p. 80). There is no common procedure for interview research (Kvale, 1996). Patton (2002) offers that the purpose of interviewing is "to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (p. 341). The researcher conducted one-on-one 60-90 minute beginning teacher interviews in a private setting at each school site at an agreed upon time. During the beginning teacher interviews, the researcher became acquainted with the participants, established rapport, explained the purpose of the study, and asked questions, which allowed the beginning teachers to reflect on the supports that were provided during their first year of teaching.

Open-ended questions were used to encourage the participants to discuss their experiences in terms of the strengths and weaknesses they perceived in the formal and informal induction programs at the school. The interview questions were planned to elicit

responses about how the participants viewed the usefulness of the activities provided in these programs and what they thought should be done in order for the program to achieve its full potential. The items on the semi-structured interview protocol for the beginning teacher sought to obtain information concerning the types of services that have been provided throughout the induction process. It also obtained information on activities that were considered valuable during the induction process. The beginning teachers were encouraged to elaborate on any additional comments about the induction services and the support provided by principals and mentors. Immediately following each interview, the researcher numbered and labeled the tapes for later comparison and transcription.

Principals and mentors at the five school sites were interviewed in one-on-one semi-structured 60-minute sessions. During the mentor and principal interviews, the researcher established rapport before asking questions related to the services that were provided to the first year teachers. The items on the semi-structured interview protocol for the mentors and principals obtained information regarding their perceptions of the induction program, their roles, and activities in it, and the perceived effects of the induction program on beginning teacher's practices. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis. Responses from these interviews provided data for analysis and interpretation, which led to a better understanding of the actual practices provided in beginning teacher induction.

Fieldnotes

The researcher also wrote fieldnotes throughout the interview sessions. These notes were an additional source of data for the researcher. The fieldnotes included verbal

descriptions of the setting, direct quotes, and the researcher's comments and interpretations.

Documents/Artifacts

Any other available documents or artifacts such as archival information gathered during beginning teacher orientation or formal policies on the induction process were analyzed as well. The data sources were compiled and analyzed using thematic analysis to recognize emerging themes and trends. The themes and findings, which emerged from the data, were compiled, summarized, and reported as a part of the data analysis.

Data Analysis

The goal of this research was to attain a deeper understanding of the beneficial induction activities that were provided to beginning teachers. The qualitative nature of this study utilizing ethnographic research methods required the researcher to identify themes that emerged from the data derived from the interviews. When all of the data was collected, the researcher employed thematic analysis to find common themes that provided answers to the research questions (Stake, 1995). According to Glesne, thematic analysis is "a process that involves coding and then segregating the data by codes into data clumps for further analysis and description" (p.147). This researcher sought to describe the induction services that were provided by using the themes emerging from the collected data

The researcher developed 'coding' categories as patterns emerged from the data. Creswell (1994) explained that qualitative data analysis requires that the researcher is comfortable with developing categories and making comparisons and contrasts. The analysis of the interviews, fieldnotes, and documents was ongoing, interactive, and

emergent through the research process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Through the discovery of these patterns, ideas, explanations, and understandings, the researcher summarized the data. A descriptive summary of the data was presented and interpretation was devised.

Triangulation

Triangulation during data analysis was accomplished through multiple analysts as the participants were reviewers of the data collected (Patton, 1990). This helped to guard against distortion of data. Participants who were interviewed reviewed each transcript of the taped interview and if misrepresentations were evident, they were given the chance to revise their comments.

Trustworthiness

According to Merriam (1998), trustworthiness is an essential element of conducting qualitative research. Glesne (1999) summarized the importance of trustworthiness in qualitative research when she stated, “The credibility of your findings and interpretations depends on your careful attention to establishing trustworthiness” (p. 151). Lincoln and Guba (1995) further states that trustworthiness consists of four components: validity, reliability, generalizability, and neutrality. In this study, the researcher addressed the trustworthiness issue by addressing each of the four components.

Validity

Validity refers to the correctness or credibility of the researcher’s findings. In reference to validity in qualitative research, Kvale (1999) wrote:

> Validation comes to depend on the quality of craftsmanship during investigation, continually checking, questioning, and theoretically interpreting the findings…Validation is here not some final verification or product control; verification is built into the research process with continual checks on the credibility , plausibility and trustworthiness of the findings. (pp. 241-242)

Since the researcher was more involved with the participants through the qualitative processes of interviewing or observing rather than the distant quantitative methods of surveying, internal validity was considered a strength inherent in qualitative research (Merriam, 2002).

There were a variety of means available for qualitative researchers to ensure validity while conducting research and analyzing data. Merriam (2002) described five basic strategies to ensure internal validity in the research process:

1. Triangulation—the process of multiple methods, investigators, and data source to validate data that the researcher collects.
2. Member checks—the process of asking participants to evaluate the researcher's interpretation of the data.
3. Peer review—the process of allowing colleagues familiar with or new to the research to read and comment on emerging findings.
4. Researcher self-reflection—the process of the researcher reflecting upon the research process to consider his or her biases and assumptions regarding the research.

5. Data collection submersion—the notion that the researcher should be engaged in the data collection process until the data become saturated; that is, the researcher begins to see and hear the same things again and again. (pp. 25-26).

This researcher used member checks as participants were allowed to review interpretations of the results to determine accuracy. The process of peer review was used when colleagues of the researcher reviewed the findings. Throughout the research process, the researcher reflected upon the subjectivity and biases that the researcher brought to the research process and the data analysis process. It was through these strategies, the researcher attempted to strengthen the validity of the study's findings.

Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research depends to a large degree on the credibility of the researcher to gather high quality data. According to Miles and Huberman (1999):

> In qualitative research, issues of instrument validity and reliability ride largely on the skills of the researcher. Essentially the *person*—more or less fallibly is—observing, interviewing, and recording, while modifying the observation, interviewing, and recording devices from one field trip to the next. Thus, you need to ask yourself and your colleagues, How valid and reliable is this person likely to be as an information-gathering instrument? (p. 38).

This researcher has developed necessary interviewing and data analysis skills through the qualitative research class completed in preparation for the dissertation study. Evidence of authentication can be found through a journal, which provided details regarding data collection, analysis, and decision-making (Merriam, 2002).

Generalizability

According to Yin (1989), generalizability in qualitative research is very difficult to achieve. The reason for this difficulty is that there are many subtle and unique differences operating in different natural settings, and that no two groups of people or settings are likely to be the same. Merriam (1998) pointed out that "applying generalizations is hardly useful" in qualitative research (p. 173). This researcher sought to learn the perspectives of the participants so that insight could be gained in the beneficial induction services that were provided. Generalizability may be limited to beginning teachers and induction services provided in this Middle Georgia suburban school district.

Neutrality

Neutrality refers to the degree to which the findings of a study represent the data reported by the participants and is not resultant from the bias or perspectives of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Glesne (1999) noted that researchers must continually ask themselves questions about their research and use techniques such as triangulation, peer reviews, and member checks to help reduce the presence of bias.

In order to increase neutrality, this researcher maintained a self-reflective journal, initiated member checks and peer reviews. This researcher completed a self-assessment in which prior experiences as a beginning educator and mentor were recorded. The purpose was to raise the researcher's awareness of subjectivities in order to protect the trustworthiness of the findings.

Summary

The researcher employed ethnographic research study methods in order to identify the perspectives of five school level induction team participants consisting of beginning teachers, their mentors, and their principals on the induction process. Qualitative methods were chosen to gain real-life perspectives of the participants and their experiences during the induction process. Research questions guided the study.

This study sought to examine the participants in their natural settings while focusing on their perspectives of the services provided during the induction process. A descriptive study approach was chosen for the purpose of compiling descriptions and explanations of the dynamics of the induction process at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

A purposeful sampling method was used to ensure that the beginning teachers had no previous teaching experience, had been assigned mentors, and had received the two-day professional development provided for all teachers new to the district. The participants' school sites provided variation in the school levels ranging from elementary to middle to high schools, varying socioeconomic statuses and varying school sizes.

Data for this study included interviews, fieldnotes, and document artifacts. One 60 to 90 minute semi-structured interview was conducted individually with each beginning teacher, mentor, and principal at the individual school sites. Transcripts of interviews were analyzed and coded to identify emerging themes.

Validity, reliability, and neutrality were addressed in this study. Validity was sought through constant readings of the data, and corroboration with the researcher's

major professor. Neutrality was addressed through acknowledgement of biases and self-assessment as well as member checks and peer reviews.

CHAPTER IV

REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

In collecting data for this qualitative study, the ultimate goal was to identify the induction services for beginning teachers and to assess how they are beneficial for teachers during their induction. The data focus on the characteristics of induction services that are available as described by beginning teachers, their mentors and principals as well as identification of those induction activities that are needed but are missing during induction. Specifically, this study sought to identify the induction services as a coordination of efforts between principals and mentors. By analyzing these services, implications were drawn as to how school districts, principals and mentors can best support new teachers to increase the likelihood that they will remain in the teaching profession and enjoy satisfying and successful careers.

Research Questions

The following research questions serve to guide this study:

1. How do beginning teachers describe their first year teaching experiences that make induction necessary?
2. What are the factors that support the induction process?
3. What induction activities do beginning teachers, mentors and principals consider beneficial?
4. What are the types of induction services that are provided to beginning teachers in elementary, middle and high schools?

5. What induction services do beginning teachers, mentors and principals identify as missing but needed in the induction process?

Participant Information

Data were collected by conducting one-on-one semi-structured interviews with 15 participants. Written and verbal permission from the Superintendent of the school district was obtained before interviewing began. The study involved 15 participants in which five were beginning teachers, five were mentors, and five were principals in a suburban school district located in the Middle Georgia area. The five beginning teachers were selected and asked to volunteer in this research study because they fit the following criteria: (a) no previous teaching experience, (b) completion of initial two-day induction professional development training, (c) assignment of mentor, and (d) school level. The five mentors and principals were identified based on the beginning teacher's school destination. Two beginning teachers along with their mentors and principals represented the elementary school level and two beginning teachers along with their mentors and principals represented the middle school level. There was one high school level beginning teacher representative along with his mentor and principal.

Without exception, all participants were helpful and courteous in working to set up face-to-face interviews. The interviews were conducted at the participants’ schools in their classrooms, offices, or conference rooms. These environments were chosen for convenience and comfort to the teachers and principals. Each interview lasted from 60 to 75 minutes and was tape-recorded. Each participant was cooperative and professional during the interview process. An emerging interview guide was used to maintain focus and allow additional questioning in order to answer the research questions. Before the

taped interviews began, the Informed Consent process was explained in detail and each participant was asked to sign a consent form to show that he or she was a voluntary participant (see Appendix A). When each interview was completed, either the researcher or an independent transcriptionist transcribed the tape of the interview verbatim. In keeping with the promise of confidentiality, participants were given pseudonyms that have no bearing on their given name or place of employment. The research questions guided a search for themes and emerging data that could give insight to the research topic.

This study was completed in a small suburban school district located in the Middle Georgia area. This district was comprised of ten schools with a student population of more than 5,000 and over 300 classroom teachers. The racial composition of the district is 72% Caucasian, 26% African American and 2% of Asian or Hispanic ethnicity.

This study was comprised of five beginning teachers, five mentors and five principals. The group of beginning teachers graduated from public colleges located in Georgia. Of the five beginning teachers, two were females and three were males. Of this group, teaching was a second career for one. The beginning teachers in the study ranged in age from 23 to 26. All of the beginning teachers in this study were Caucasian.

The five mentors' educational experience ranged from 11 to 33 years. All of the mentors were females who held the Georgia Teacher Support Specialist endorsement. Of the five mentors, three were Caucasian and two were African American.

The five principals' educational experience ranged from 15 to 35 years. One of the principals obtained the Georgia Teacher Support Specialist endorsement. One of the principals was female and four were males. Of the five principals, two were African

American and three were Caucasian. Table 1, using pseudonyms, is a graphic display of relevant participant demographics.

Table 1

Summary of Participants (pseudonyms)

Name	Gender	Status	Years	School Level	TSS
Louise Allgood	Female	New Teacher	0	Elementary	N/A
Brody Dancer	Male	New Teacher	0	High	N/A
Amy Hatter	Female	New Teacher	0	Elementary	N/A
Alms Misser	Male	New Teacher	0	Middle	N/A
John Mutter	Male	New Teacher	0	Middle	N/A
Lena Easy	Female	Mentor	33	Elementary	Yes
Goldie Haven	Female	Mentor	18	Elementary	Yes
Lucy Joy	Female	Mentor	19	High	Yes
Lottie Soother	Female	Mentor	11	Middle	Yes
Mary Toddler	Female	Mentor	11	Middle	Yes
Doris Booer	Female	Principal	29	Elementary	Yes
William Call	Male	Principal	19	Middle	No
Carl Givens	Male	Principal	24	High	No
Joseph Homer	Male	Principal	15	Elementary	No
Alvin Pull	Male	Principal	35	Middle	No

*TSS endorsed—Teacher Support Specialist—an endorsement that is given when the teacher is specifically trained to support other teachers.

The qualitative research data resulting from the interviews are presented to correspond with the research questions of the study. These are followed by a brief general discussion of the recurring themes or patterns, noteworthy responses and the insights as afforded through the interviewees' own words. The data are presented in the form of text selections corresponding to each research question and are further divided by the most prevalent topics and themes resulting from the data analysis. Several themes reflecting the induction services that were available to beginning teachers emerged during the data analysis process. These themes are summarized below and include a reference to the applicable research question.

Beginning Teachers' First Year Experiences

Research question 1 asks, How do beginning teachers describe their first year teaching experiences that make induction necessary? Responses to emerging interview questions revealed varying experiences from one beginning teacher to the next. The overall belief however was that their first year experiences were filled with challenges and new discoveries.

Each of the new teachers described their thoughts on the experience of being first year teachers. The literature suggests that new teachers have special challenges that are unique to first year teachers. The new teachers in this study stated that if it were not for the support that was provided to them, their first year would have been much more difficult. Amy, a young fourth grade new teacher, who worked at one of the older elementary schools sadly spoke of her first day experience when she initially saw her classroom. Even though teaching was a second career for Amy, she did not expect what she saw. She disappointedly recalled,

> I cried the first day because I didn't know what to do. I had a room with 15 wooden desks sitting in the middle of the room along with an old metal desk that I was supposed to sit in. And I was like, what am I supposed to do now? I just cried. Two of the other teachers were just so good. They helped me and gave me stuff from their rooms and showed me where to get the stuff to do the bulletin boards. My mentor came over with her husband. She ended up staying and helping me get my room set up.

Louis, a young, energetic first grade beginning teacher described her first few experiences differently from Amy. Although her room was better equipped since she was housed at a newer school, which had newer furnishings, she described her first year as full of stress. She felt that the help of the mentor made the transition easier. She explained,

> It was stressful…coming in, not knowing anyone. I was not from this county. I didn't know anybody and the way they do things in this school system. It was overwhelming. However, having someone there to help me through and showing the ropes, it was actually easy to get through. Having a mentor to sit and show you how to do it made it a lot easier than expected.

John, a young seventh grade beginning teacher who had completed his student internship at this middle school also had some interesting thoughts of his first year teaching experience. Although his first thoughts were ones of frustration, he has learned to adjust his day to day plans in order to meet the challenges that come his way. He also described the rewarding feeling he gets from helping his students to learn. He shared his frustration when he explained,

> The first thought is frustration. A lot of things happen that are out of my control. Yesterday, I was going to show a video and the sound didn't work so I had to go ahead and say alright I'm going to do tomorrow's lesson and then we'll alter…rotate them…so, definitely frustration. But it is also challenging. I love a challenge and that's definitely what middle school is all about…challenges. If I had to pick another term, it would be rewarding. Whenever you hear students say, "Oh, I understand." That really takes away all of the frustration and challenges. It makes you feel good.

Although Brody, had also completed his student internship at this large high school, he too had feelings of fear, lack of preparedness and anxiety. These varied feelings were eased when Brody realized that everyone was there to help him succeed. He related these feelings when he stated,

> Scared to death, scared to death, thinking I was prepared, not knowing if I was prepared, coming in and kind of wanting to ask questions, but not wanting to ask questions...scared to ask questions. Wondering what they are going to think about me…will they think this is a dumb question? I came in and my biggest fear of all was if I didn't know anything…who to ask and what kind of answers were they going to give me. Were they going to think that I was the dumbest person alive or not? After a while, you realize there are no dumb questions. And everyone is there to help and no one is sitting there on a pedestal looking down on you.

Alms, an young, athletically built seventh grade teacher described his thoughts of his first year experiences with varying emotions even to the point of questioning his career choice. However, he summed his experiences of varying emotions to be related to

a period of adjustment as he explained,

> A little bit of chaos, sometimes questioning, did I really make the right career choice? I feel comfortable. I feel nervous. I feel calm. I feel prepared. I feel lost. Some days you have all of them and some days you have one or the other. Some days it's as easy as it comes and other days it is just terrible and I guess it's a matter of getting adjusted.

The new teachers in this study described their first year experiences as a time filled with stress, frustration, anxiety, fear, chaos, nervousness and the feelings of being lost and overwhelmed. They acknowledged the professional and personal relationships that they were able to develop with their colleagues and administrators. These relationships gave them a sense of belonging and helped them to become acclimated into the schools and the teaching profession.

Induction Services Available

Research question 2 asks, What are the factors that support the induction process? The induction services ranged from emotional support to instructional support to professional support. When the beginning teachers spoke of the induction services provided to them, they initially spoke of the orientation provided at the county level before the beginning of preplanning.

Orientation

Orientations are used in induction programs to familiarize teachers with the county and school procedures and to introduce them to existing faculty and the culture of the county and the school. Beginning teachers received a two-day countywide orientation before the beginning of school. Three out of five beginning teachers referred to this

service as well as school orientation when referring to induction services. One of the new teachers did not refer to being oriented at the county or school level. John shared how he was impressed with the countywide orientation when he stated,

> New teacher orientation…we had that in July. I thought that was amazing how they actually put us on buses and took us around to the different neighborhoods to see the diversity of our students. Very sad but it is also opens your eyes to know what the students are going through…some of them.

Brody, the high school teacher also referred to the countywide orientation when the induction topic was introduced. He was especially impressed with the fashion show that showed proper school attire and the bus tour of the county. Brody appeared to have the most thorough school orientation that included a tour of the school, emergency procedures, socioeconomic profile, and the academic focus for the year. He described his orientation:

> They showed us the way they expected the schools to run, from dress code to school attire. They also showed us about teacher evaluations… One of the neat things was that they took us around the city in a bus and showed us not only the high economic places but also low socioeconomic places. At the school, they showed me my room…gave me my room keys. They told us about fire safety…what I can do in case of drills. They showed us statistics about the different socio and economic profiles here…about how we were struggling in Math and Science and how the Better Seeking Team was going to focus on areas that was going to help us get AYP for next year.

Alms also mentioned the countywide orientation and the school orientation.

However, he did not feel that he needed orientation since he had completed his student internship in this county. He vaguely remembered the jest of orientation as he reflected,

> We took a tour of the school. We had a short meeting with our team leaders. That was pretty much it for the school. I didn't need much of an induction because I had already been here for a year as a student teacher. For the county, we had new teacher orientation and we had presentations from the professional standards commission. We went through our paperwork. I don't remember that much because I had been here already and I didn't pay that much attention…I already had the information I needed.

Louise did not mention the countywide orientation yet she did mention the appreciation of being introduced to the faculty early on and not having to face her classroom without some support. She spoke of the whole faculty being there for her as she shared,

> She [mentor] came in and we met. I was introduced to the faculty. And then she and I went into my room and she showed me what would work best…what would probably not be suitable for this school. The most important thing that helped me was being introduced to the faculty. Therefore, people could kind of take me under their wings.

All of the participants were provided a formal induction program at the beginning of the school year. They had opportunities to meet with the Central Office staff where questions and answers could be addressed. Most of the principals also met with their new teachers to explain school procedures. A few new teachers mentioned handbooks, which they felt, were very helpful. Overall, the new teachers viewed their induction program as

beneficial.

Support

Early on, support of the new teachers emerged as a major theme in this study. Teachers stated that if it were not for the support that was provided to them, their first year would have been more difficult, less instructionally successful and definitely less satisfying.

As new teachers talked about support, it was apparent that support meant something different to each of them. The support of teachers came in various forms and from many different individuals based on what the new teachers needed at any given time. This support included helping with lesson plans; explaining a literary concept; telling how to reprimand students; teaching how to post grades online; and how to get along with other teachers.

Each teacher spoke of the support received from his or her mentors. By far, the mentor appeared to be the new teacher's primary support provider. All new teachers spoke of the support provided by others in the school such as the principal, the administrative team, the grade level teachers, and the entire staff. Sub categories of support were identified as the individuals or groups of individuals who the interviewees viewed as providing support.

Mentor

Overwhelmingly, the teachers in this study commented about the mentor's support of them in dealing with the many issues that may arise in the schools. From the introduction to the staff to support during parent conferences, each of the teachers was adamant about their mentors support. Each of the mentors was assigned to the new

teacher by the principal even though the team leader may be the one actually informing the new teacher of the assignment.

Louise was pleased that her mentor came to meet her before school actually started which decreased her stress to a great degree. She felt that the mentor/mentee packet, which guided the mentoring process, helped her to be prepared for future events. She explained,

> I didn't want anyone to come in and say, she doesn't know what she is doing, so I was stressed. But as far as relieving that stress, that is where the mentor comes in to play. That is when she was able to guide me and tell me things to do…what not to do…what works and what works better. She gave me a mentor/mentee packet. That packet helped me to know what to expect. I was not thrown out to the wolves. I was really taken care of.

John spoke of his initial contact with his mentor and the fact that the principal made it clear who his mentor would be. He stated that his mentor has always been willing to help. If there was a problem, the mentor would help him to find the solution. Although he had completed his student internship at this middle school, he was not aware that there was a mentor program there.

Amy was in constant contact with her mentor and relied on her in many ways. From parent conferences to actually teaching the class, her mentor has been a constant in her first year experience. Amy was pleased that the principal had taken such care in arranging a perfect mentor/mentee match. She emphatically stated,

> She [mentor] has been awesome. She sits on all of my parent teacher conferences with me…because that is really scary at first. She has helped a lot with the parent

> teacher avenue and with the control issue in my classroom. If I am having bad days or I am really struggling with this, she would give me some extra information or extra websites to look at. It just worked out that we are a perfect fit. The process would have been much harder. I think there would have been many more bad days if I hadn't had her.

Brody was assigned his mentor through his team leader during a high school team meeting before school actually started. Brody described his mentor as being awesome and that she has taught him how to do things without actually teaching him. Paperwork was a big issue in special education and she has been his leader and guider in this area. He also relied on her for answers to petty questions as well as giving advice about unfamiliar situations.

Alms took another view of his mentor. He was disappointed that he did not know who his mentor was early in the year. He stated, however, that his mentor has helped him a lot by stopping by and talking with him. He characterized their communication as, "informal but efficient…she lets me know the things I need to know."

Overall the beginning teachers felt that the mentors provided a large portion of their support and helped them to survive the challenges of their first year. Mentors being there to answer questions of the beginning teachers showed support that the new teachers needed and relied on in order to endure their first year of teaching.

Principal

Every new teacher mentioned that the principal offered assistance, either formally or informally. The new teachers did not speak as much about the principal's involvement in their day-to-day situations. In each instance, it appeared that although the new teachers

did not have as much contact with the principals, the support from the principal was obvious. Louise spoke of her principal as the perfect matchmaker when she assigned her the mentor. She spoke of her gratitude for being encouraged by the principal to attend professional development classes strictly designed for the new teachers. She mentioned that the administration in general supported her and she knew that if anything happened, they would take care of her.

John spoke of his comfort level talking to the principal. He felt as though the principal was the type of person who was open to your suggestions and you could always go by his office to have a talk and get his advice. He was also impressed with the principal seemingly not being intimidated by the teachers and his knack of telling things straightforward. However, one issue that John had with the principal was a time that he said he was coming to observe his class but he did not come. He felt confused when the principal did not show up and it surprised him because on other issues, he felt that the principal was reliable and trustworthy.

Brody generally spoke of his comfort level speaking with his principal about anything. He felt that the principal was friendly and held an open door policy that he admired. Alms also made very general comments about his support from the principal, he stated that he was checked on by his principal every once and a while. However, he would not hesitate to let the principal know if he needed anything.

Some new teachers feared that asking for help might give the appearance that as a teacher, they were was not effective or well trained. Amy initially characterized her principal as the “big bad boss.” She felt that he could be a little more personable with his authority. She stated that it has taken 18 to 20 weeks to feel comfortable going in his

office to talk about what was going on. She stated, “The first nine weeks…no way I would have done that unless I was bleeding.”

Other areas of support provided by principals shared by the new teachers interviewed included: acting as an encourager, creating a positive working environment, listening, giving new teachers a voice in decision making and encouraging close working relationships.

Administrative Team

The administrative team consisted of the guidance counselor, the instructional coaches, and the graduation coach along with the principal and assistant principal. Individual members of this team were credited with providing some of the support to the new teachers. In one case, the guidance counselor was credited with assembling the new teachers together to talk about their experiences with a few veteran teachers. This gathering helped the new teacher to get a different perspective on classroom management. He also explained how that support group had the potential to enable new and experienced teachers to share strategies and encourage one another if it had continued throughout the year.

Alms mentioned the instructional coach as the supporter who made sure that he received the materials that he needed to teach his classes as well as the person who deciphered the many expectations of central office and helped him to meet those expectations. He referred to her as the supporter with anything related to benchmarks or the standardized testing. In one case, the mentor also served as the instructional coach. This helped the new teacher tremendously in that if she had any problems, the instructional coach had the flexibility in her schedule to come and help.

Grade Level Team

Without exception, all of the new teachers mentioned the support that they have received from their grade level team members or their subject area team members. The new teachers shared their thoughts about their grade level team members using words such as friendships, relationships, and family. In one case, the new teacher stated that all the teachers on his hall checked on him now and then. He has developed relationships with all of them. Louise mentioned her grade level meetings as an opportunity to learn different techniques from eight different people. She felt that this has had an impact on her professional growth. She stated, “Having those different perspectives helps me to balance my approach.” Amy told how her lead teacher and the rest of her grade level team gave her an endless amount of support and information. She stated, “I feel blessed to have such a good fourth grade team.” John mentioned that although his mentor was assigned to him, several different team members have come to volunteer help. He stated, “It brings you up when you’ve had a tough day.”

Entire Staff

The participants all agreed that the entire staff was a strong source of support for them. In this supportive environment, the new teachers had knowledgeable people who were willing to help them with academic concerns as well as providing them with emotional support. One of the new teachers had developed relationships all over the school building and stated that there was not one specific person he relied on. “It just depends on the circumstance and on what is going on.” However, he viewed his team leader as the main support provider. He named the athletic coaches, the other seventh grade teachers on another team, the English/Language Arts teachers from the other

middle school in the county, and all of the veteran teachers. He also stated, “I feel equally comfortable asking anybody.” Louise stated that it makes you feel good when you can go to anybody on the staff. She stated, “It makes you feel at home.” The office staff was also mentioned as supporters of new teachers. John explained the support he has received at his school when he stated,

> It’s good to know that teachers will put you before they put themselves. Veteran teachers…they say I’ve been there before. I know how you feel. You just got to take it day by day. It’s good to know we have that support and encouragement here. That’s what really brought me to Cedar Creek [school]. I thought this was a good environment. Everybody works well together. They will just volunteer information. They want to support each other.

The data collected through interviews revealed that support of new teachers came from different individuals and groups and covered a myriad of needs. Teachers, who did not find the support they needed from assigned individuals, were resourceful in finding the support they needed through other individuals. Teachers reported a sense of family and found support from specific individuals as well as from the entire staff.

The sense of belonging that these new teachers experienced helped them to make the connections that were needed to feel a part of the school community. The new teachers reported a sense of the first year of teaching as being a success due to the support the mentors, principals, and the entire staff provided. The professional and personal connections helped these new teachers to be satisfied with school related relationships. All of the new teachers in this study plan to remain in education and referred to the various supports they received as well as the relationships that they have

made as reasons they have decided to remain.

Professional Growth and Training

Training is designed to assist the new teachers with classroom management strategies, student assessment, and curriculum mandates. According to the literature, many of the issues that frustrate beginning teachers are predictable. Some are relatively easy to address such as planning for the school's open house or parent conferences. Others are harder to address and may need more time and attention such as student discipline, student assessment, or teaching diverse learners. The issues new teachers spoke of most often in this study were classroom management, managing paperwork, designing performance-based classrooms, and motivating students to perform on the standardized assessments.

Although some of the new teachers received some formal training that was devoted solely to new teachers, others attended training that was designed for the whole faculty and staff which in essence was not induction related. Other new teachers have relied on informal training coming directly from the mentors or other support providers. Louise spoke of a "Work Development" class that her principal encouraged her to attend which was strictly for the new teachers at her school. She stated that the class has trained her on strategies such as "how to lesson plan, how to really bring in instruction…being able to make the children think out of the box. It was interesting because a lot of what I have learned, I would have never tried. I think that professionally that helps us grow and mature and get past that first year. We can't stop…we have to continue to go out there and learn and bring it in."

Amy spoke of some professional development that she attended for Science and

Technology Advancement. However, she had not been informed of any classes specifically for new teachers. She stated that if she felt weak in an area she could always pick up a class. She also mentioned the monthly reflections that she has with her mentor. If there were areas that she needed to focus on, her mentor would give her some suggestions or give her websites so she could research further in that area. Brody spoke of a *Yes, I Can* professional growth day that was designed for all of the high school teachers. He felt a little lost from the presentation but ultimately understood the message. This too was not actually a part of the induction process. The only other mentioned professional growth activities occurred through interactions with veteran teachers and reflections that occurred after collaboratively taught classes. Brody stated that his collaborative teacher has helped him to become more familiar with the curriculum through daily reflections and explanations of the curriculum.

John spoke of desperately needing some training on classroom management. However, he has only received some pointers from some veteran teachers. Alms had not attended any formal training sessions however, he spoke of the grade level meetings and the subject area meetings where ideas on teaching the lessons were discussed. He stated that he could acquire five to seven different ways on how to present a lesson. He would simply rearrange it so that it would flow better for his students.

Although each of the new teachers in this study appeared to be growing professionally, because of the differences in how the schools are structured, some were receiving more or less formal training than the others. According to the literature, most effective induction programs contain some element of professional training that addresses the unique new teachers' needs.

Assessment & Feedback

Assessment and feedback of new teacher's teaching performance can give new teacher's guidance on what to improve and how to transition to successful teachers. It can ultimately be reflected in increased student achievement. Although the amount of evaluations and the amount of feedback varied from new teacher to new teacher, they unanimously felt that receiving feedback could help them to improve their teaching practice.

Louise commented that she felt comfortable and not intimidated when she received her evaluation from the principal. She felt that she could be herself. Although Louise stated that her lead teacher has also observed her, she made no comments on the feedback that she was given. Amy spoke of the benefits she received from the feedback that she obtained from her official and unofficial observations. She stated that the principal and the assistant principal frequently visited her classroom. She received written feedback along with mini conferences to talk about her instructional performance during the visits.

Brody received two observations from the assistant principals and was pleased with the feedback he received. He stated that the positive feedback helped him to be more aware of what he was doing to engage students that he did not previously think of. He also spoke of the reflections that he has experienced everyday with one of his collaborative teachers. In his words, "Those reflections are awesome."

John could not get over the principal telling him that he was coming to observe and did not show up. He stated, "Because people depend on you, you have to be reliable in that sense." He was observed on the day of the interview therefore no form of feedback

had been given. John seemed disappointed that he has not received more frequent observations or walkthroughs. He felt that he would benefit tremendously from the feedback. He mentioned seeing other teachers getting ‘walkthroughs’ but none for him. He related that he wanted some feedback on his teaching especially when his students did not fare well on the benchmarks.

Alms on the other hand did not see the value of the observations and feedback that he received. Alms stated that one member of the administrative team observed him for one full lesson and the full administrative team observed him for a partial lesson. He stated that two other times the administrative team came for one-minute walkthroughs. He felt that the feedback was not very beneficial because it was only related to what was on the board or the wall, not the actual deliverance of instruction.

The assessments and feedback received by the new teachers in this study varied greatly. Some received frequent observations and feedback, while others received only one observation with limited feedback. However, the overall belief was that if the observations were done and feedback dealing with the deliverance of instruction was given, then it would benefit the new teachers in modifying their instruction.

Mentors’ Perspectives on Induction Services

Each mentor described the induction services that she provided to the first year teacher and it was evident that there were differences in the formality of the induction process from school to school. Two mentors spoke of a handbook and checklist that they used to govern their services for the mentee. Goldie, a veteran elementary teacher and instructional coach, spoke of monthly meetings in which topics of concern were discussed and techniques to address the concerns were implemented throughout the

month. Lena, who was a veteran of 30 plus years, spoke of a checklist that she used to guide the mentor and mentee in items that needed to be completed each month. However, this did not include formal monthly meetings.

Handbook

Each of the schools gave out handbooks that were designed for all of the faculty and staff. However, two schools provided handbooks that were designed specifically for the new teachers. In one case, this handbook included the topics for each month along with the checklist of items to discuss and reflect on each month. It is noteworthy to state that these handbooks were originated at the two elementary schools. No such formal handbooks specific to the new teachers were provided at the two middle schools or the high school. Although no handbook was provided at the high school, the mentor used a formalized checklist to ensure that she covered topics she thought were pertinent to the new teacher.

Observations

Each of the mentors was familiar with the observation process for new teachers however only one seemed to employ that technique with her new teacher. It was not apparent if the scheduling or the layout of the schooling had anything to do with the lack of observations done by the mentors. Each of the mentors were trained in the Teacher Support Specialist Classes and did recognize the value of clinical observations however the ones not providing that service did not feel that particular service was necessary for their assigned new teacher. Only Goldie, the fourth grade mentor habitually observed the new teacher in an effort to support and improve instructional strategies of the new teacher. She shared her perspective on the observations when she stated,

> We go and in and we are required to do at least two observations. We take that further with me being the coach. I go in at various times and I don't let them know...I just pop in... watching...I do a walk through just to check on them. When I do them I look for instruction…are they engaging the student? Are they meeting the needs of the students? What type of techniques are they using? Are they using any type of technology?

The mentors invariably provided formative observations and feedback to the new teachers. However, they all agreed that this service would serve to improve new teachers' instructional strategies.

Meetings

Frequent meetings were included in the support services for new teachers in order to ensure constant contact by the mentor. These meetings tended to be constant only for one mentor and mentee group. The mentors appeared to be the ones to decide whether this practice would be beneficial or not. Therefore, meetings were inconsistently initiated from school to school. The informal contact was the norm for the interaction between mentor and mentee at both of the middle schools and the high school. However, one elementary mentor/mentee team met at least once a month and used an agenda for the meetings. Goldie reflected on the monthly meetings that she and her new teacher have attended when she stated, "We have a monthly agenda, we have a notebook we keep with our mentee teachers, and monthly we have different topics." For each month, the mentor introduced a topic pertinent to new teachers' challenges. Goldie felt that these meetings helped the new teacher to address areas in which she was experiencing difficulty.

Reflections

Reflections occur when the new teacher meets with the mentor or support provider in order to reflect on the instructional strategies that were used during a classroom observation. This practice has been used to enhance professional development and planning. New teachers gain insight from the knowledge of their colleagues as their practice is confirmed and improved. Non-threatening, non-evaluative communication with more experienced educators serve to strengthen the new teachers confidence and acquirement of effective instructional skills. Through higher-level teacher effectiveness, instructional practice is thought to be improved.

These reflections occurred more frequently when it was encouraged by a support provider. Three of the new teachers spoke of reflections yet only one mentor provided for the reflections during the regularly scheduled meetings. One of the new teachers mentioned that those reflections occurred with his collaborative teacher immediately following classes. Another new teacher spoke of self-initiated reflections when his students did not fare well on the benchmarks. Goldie spoke of the reflections done during the monthly meetings with the mentee when she stated,

> They have a reflection and a set of questions they have to fill out, set and goal and answer what they have learned. I have noticed with my mentee that whatever she has placed on there that she would like to improve or that she had a problem with, maybe a month or two down the line, I noticed it has become a strength.

Goldie felt that these reflections helped the new teacher to identify what she needed to do to improve. Through these realizations, the new teacher improved her instructional practice.

Although the majority of the mentors in this study used their own judgment in deciding what activities to employ for the new teachers, they mentioned the provision of the following supports: orienting them to the building, assisting them, meeting their needs, designing their rooms and getting the rooms set up, explaining standardized testing procedures, providing feedback, demonstrating lessons, providing for new teachers to observe other teachers, reflecting on observations and lessons, helping with parental conferences, involving them in decision making, building leadership capacity, and encouraging professional development.

Principals' Perspectives of Induction Services

Each principal described the induction services that were provided by the school. These induction services tended to be generally the same from principal to principal. However in some instances, the support services were relegated to the mentor and the grade level team leaders. These principals believed that the new teacher understood that their direct support was there if it was ever needed. Each of the principals reported the following areas of support: orientation, assigning of mentors, meetings with mentees, observations and feedback, professional growth, providing resources and consideration of workloads and schedules.

Orientation

All of the principals attested to the orientation process in new teacher induction. They all performed that orientation as soon as the new teachers were officially released from the countywide orientation to their schools. Carl, the high school principal in his second year term, spoke of bringing his new teachers home as he explained,

We bring the new teachers home because this is really home for our teachers. We

> try to create that caring feeling so the first day we set apart at least a half a day just to spend with our new teachers. The biggest thing that I say to our new teachers…I thank them for letting me be a part of their life.

William, one of the middle school principals who was also in his second year of principalship, commented on the countywide orientation before delving into the school orientation in which he familiarized the new teachers with the school's standard operating procedures. He went into detail about the school's orientation as he explained,

> We sit down in the media center and we do some introductions of one another. We pick the major parts in the teacher's handbook… as far as the policies and procedures…such things as starting times, ending time, and daily procedures. We do a tour of the school. We walk around and sort of explain the procedures of how the students arrive in the morning and the procedures that they follow going to classes, going to lunch, connections and of course how we dismiss in the afternoon. Then we have a question and answer session…

Joe, one of the elementary school principals also had an involved orientation time with his new teachers, which also included his assistant principal and instructional coach. Student achievement and the school culture were viewed as essential items to discuss from the onset. With pride and enthusiasm, Joe described the school level induction when he stated,

> We have what we call orientation time. During that time, we give each individual a folder. The folder consists of some basic housekeeping things initially where you can find necessities on the campus. We share with them expectations in the school and certainly, student achievement is talked about. There are bullets that

describe the philosophy and the culture that is on this campus.

Alvin, the other middle school principal, who has been in the education profession for over 30 years, described the orientation process as a team effort coming from the mentor teacher, the principal, and the team leader. He felt that orienting new teachers was a team process, which started before preplanning as he informed,

> Our program is no less than to introduce them to the school and the community so that they will be comfortable and know their way around. It is important that they know the layout of the school, the personnel and who they need to talk to in event that they will need some help. We try to meet with them during the summer while they have some free time to wonder around the classroom and to get the feel of it before the teachers get back in and the students get there.

Doris, an elementary school principal, who referred to herself as being "ancient in this field" also spoke of the countywide induction process. Unlike the other principals, she described her initial induction as starting at the interview process when expectations were given to the new teachers. Her eyes lit up as she excitedly explained,

> We try to begin the induction process at the interview because we have really geared the interview process to weed out those that we don't think have the endurance that's mandated here. After a contract is given, I meet with them over the summer during the pre-teaching activities the county sets up. We sit down in small groups…very informal; we go through the handbook. I explain all my little quirks and idiosyncrasies…this will get you in trouble and this will get you a pat on the back kind of thing…so that is explained right up front.

Each of the principals spoke of their school level orientations with great pride. As

they described their schools, each made reference to their individual philosophies and their beliefs about their school's cultures.

Assignment of Mentors

The pairing of a new teacher with a veteran teacher is a major component of most induction programs. All of the principals in this study assigned mentors to the new teachers. Some of the principals made a point to do this during orientation. Yet others did not officially assign the mentors themselves...they gave this task to a team leader. In fact, one of the principals admitted that the task of orienting the new teacher to the school fell primarily on the grade level team leader. Another principal felt that some things were better received from the mentor versus the principal.

Carl stated that after the assignment of the mentor, he had certain expectations of the mentor. He spoke of the expectation that his mentors would provide a range of services for the new teacher as he explained,

> We use a checklist, which has a wide range of things that are better to come from your mentor than from the principal or assistant principal about what you need to do. Some of these things can be from record keeping, grades, attendance... We have a little question and answer session. We have them paired up and the experienced teachers or those teachers who have a working background of the high school will sit and answer questions in an open forum.

Alvin reflected on the importance of taking into consideration the personalities of both people when assigning mentors to new teachers. Alvin explained that these veteran teachers might discourage the new teachers and ultimately hinder a new teacher's growth He explained in detail his feelings in this area when he stated,

> It is also important in your induction program to take a lot of time and pair them up with a teacher that will help to be successful and to help them grow. My experience, I find, is that a lot of teachers coming out of college are exposed to a lot of new ideas and are innovative. If you get them with a seasoned or veteran teacher who is used to doing the same things over and over again, I really feel you have done the new teacher a disservice.

Doris spoke of the assignment of the mentor to the new teacher, which occurred during the orientation to the school. Although not all mentors were compensated for the time and effort they gave to new teachers, this principal provided something extra for them. She spoke of how she provided each teacher new to her school or to the county a mentor when she stated,

> Mentor teachers are assigned to our new teachers and to those people new coming into the county. The county pays and reimburses the teacher that is assigned to a new teacher. They don’t reimburse anyone that I assign to a veteran teacher. I give those supporting teachers a little perk. Everybody that is new to our county and our school is assigned a mentor person.

Joe did not speak of the compensation given to a mentor. Instead, he talked about how he matched mentors with new teachers taking into account the characteristics that a mentor must possess in order to be considered. He demonstrated meticulous care in choosing mentors in his school when he declared,

> Each new teacher is matched with a teacher in the building with a teacher that has three or more years of experience. And not only three or more years of experience but teachers we think the protégé can benefit from, not just putting him or her

> with a teacher, but someone the administration deems are really good teachers and effective teachers.

All of the principals used care and wisdom when relegating mentors to the new teachers. This care ensured that the new teachers would benefit not only from the mentors' experience but also their quality teaching.

Meetings

Each of the principals regarded meetings as an occurrence that should be initiated by the new teacher. Many times, the only meetings that were spoken of were the ones that were regarding observations or evaluations, which many times were initiated by the new teacher. The principals ultimately relied on the mentor to be the first line of contact for the new teachers. Periodically, Alvin would feel the need to meet with his new teachers. He shared his knack for arranging private meetings when he commented,

> Normally what I would do is ask them to see me every so often, and put a note in the box to stop by and see me. I don't tell them why I want to see them, but I just ask them how things are going, is there anything that I can do to help you? I like to get some one on one time behind closed doors. This gives them an opportunity to tell me if something is going wrong.

Doris felt that the contact with a colleague that you could trust and be comfortable with would be a better person to whom the new teacher could share concerns. She explained how she dealt with frequent meetings when she stated,

> My first touch is not with that individual it is with the mentor teacher. You try to go back to the mentor or the neighbor across the hall or another support person; it's who you see that person being responsible with and we have a conversation

about that and try to have them go have the talk and not me.

William stated that in his school he has created an atmosphere where the new teachers feel comfortable coming to him unannounced. He explained the close contact that he has with new teachers when he shared,

> They email me or come by and talk on a regular basis. I have close contact with a lot of them. The contact that I have had with them, they give me the perception through the number of times, or the frequent visits or the talks that they are comfortable.

Overall, the principals held an open door policy, which allowed the beginning teachers to meet with them when the beginning teachers felt it was necessary. It appeared that as a whole, the principals in this study left the option to meet or not to meet as a decision made by the beginning teacher.

Observations and Feedback

Observations and feedback give the new teachers valuable information regarding their instructional practices. Four out of five of the principals in this study stated that they observed the new teachers on a regular basis for the purpose of support. However, one principal felt that observations were mainly evaluative in nature. She spoke of her reliance on the lead teachers to observe and give supportive suggestions in order for the new teacher to grow when she stated,

> You know if an administrator walks into your classroom with a notepad in hand, you know that you are immediately going to feel like you are being assessed, not supported. It is baloney for someone at the central level to say I am offering them support. Baloney, it’s not, no matter what I see or what I say, I have made a

> mental note she is weak, and then I am wondering, do I keep her or do I need to replace? That is not supportive. The ultimate decision to keep that person lies with me and I don't want to be the person in the room watching them try to get their feet on the ground. When I walk in, I am making a mental note of whether I want to keep them or not. That's why I send my lead teacher in and not myself. Even when the lead teacher go in to that room and offers support, even the new teacher understands that they are being watched.

Alvin took a different approach to observing his teachers and providing feedback. He employed more of a trust factor and observed from a distance. He did not visit his new teachers' classroom often as he acknowledged,

> I am not just the type that likes to stand over people and watch them, I like to watch from a distance, I like to trust people and see them grow. As an administrator, I feel like sometimes when I go in to the classroom to evaluate a teacher I am kind of intruding in their territory. I don't want any one to feel like I don't trust them or I don't think they are doing their job.

Joe operated differently and wanted to see the evidence of new teachers actively improving instruction. He felt that the only way that he could do that was to frequently observe instruction and to provide feedback. His philosophy hinged on his presence in the classroom on a frequent basis. He explained his desire to know what was going on in all classrooms when he stated,

> I do quite a lot of informal observations and when I do them I immediately sit with the teacher and go over these informal observation and I share with them what I see is working and I share with them areas that I see need improvement. I

> may do 5-10 informal observations before I do one formal because my goal is to teach teachers to be good instructors…to be effective teachers.

As Carl commented on his use of classroom walkthroughs, he explained that these walkthroughs were performed by the principal, assistant principals, and lead teachers. He seemed relieved to have the help of his administrative team to aid in these observations as he explained,

> We go into their classroom with the classroom walkthroughs. There are two to three minute snapshots. What you do in turn is share those with the teacher. Then I would talk to the teacher afterwards and get their feedback on what they felt the initiative was in that classroom. What we found this will do is hopefully help us in molding our curriculum and putting the best fit for instruction with teachers and subject matter.

William spoke of the value of the walkthroughs with the verbal feedback that have been performed by the principal as well as the instructional coaches. William spoke confidently when he explained the usefulness of the walkthroughs:

> I think the peer observations and the walkthroughs with verbal feedback have been the most successful. The Math and Science coaches have taken a huge load off of the administration as far as being able to take that time…it's one of their job responsibilities and duties to really focus and get some feedback.

Overall, the principals felt that the observations with feedback were beneficial services provided to the new teachers even if mentors or other members of the administrative team provided them. However, these observations did not appear to be provided on a consistent basis throughout the county.

Professional Growth

Although each school had some plan for professional growth, it was obvious that a plan specifically for new teachers was not in place in most schools. In fact, only one of the schools studied had a plan designed just for new teachers. Some principals admitted this area needed improvement at the school level. Even though the county provided some staff development, the schools recognized that there should be some provision at the school level for additional classes that addressed new teachers' unique needs.

Joe reported, "I would like to speak to it here, that that is an area that I am working on and I say that because in order for us to get better; we must understand where we fall short." William has used peer observations and RESA workshops as a way to provide professional development. He also stated that professional development occurred weekly when all of the grade level or subject area teachers came together from both middle schools to plan and discuss the curriculum. Although a concrete plan for professional growth was not delineated, Alvin spoke of what he felt he could do to encourage professional growth for his new teachers. He stated that he encourages them to go back to school, participate in workshops and to apply for open jobs and positions. He emphasized that he sends a good mix of veterans and new teachers to workshops in order to help them grow professionally.

Carl explained the way he and the other administrators planned professional growth at the high school. Although no specific provisions for new teachers professional growth was delineated, Carl spoke of his general plan when he stated,

> Our county says we have to get 10 contact hours…PLUs. Well what we do is we build that into our planning period throughout the school year. The third and

> fourth Thursday of every month, we have during the teacher's planning period professional growth. So we take different needs…We poll them and survey them in preplanning…what are some areas of professional growth that you would like to see.

Each principal varied in their school's provision of professional growth for new teachers. Some provided specific new teacher professional development while others provided generalized professional development opportunities.

Providing Resources

Many times new teachers come in with limited supplies that veterans, on the other hand, have acquired over the years. They depend on the school to get what they need. When resources are limited, new teachers are typically the ones to suffer when classrooms are not adequately stocked with textbooks, desks, and basic supplies. Joe attempted to make sure that his new teachers have an adequate stock of supplies. This principal typically made sure that teachers had what they needed to adequately teach as he explained,

> My new teachers don't necessarily come in bare. We take a lot of concern we make sure that they have what they need. If the needs are relevant to the children, when it comes to material needs…you get it.

Carl explained that at the beginning of school, supplies are limited and new teachers may not have the necessary means to buy supplies so they are given staplers, hole punchers, markers and things such as that as a 'welcome to our school packet'. Alvin reiterated the fact that all staff members receive the resources that they need when he confirmed,

> Just because this is your first year on staff, does not mean that you won't get the same benefits as a teacher that has been here 15-20 years on staff. By them just coming out of college they do not have a surplus of supplies to use. So, what I try to do is to get a list of the things that they think they will need and that they may not be able to afford personally.

More often than not, the new teachers in this study received the supplies necessary to adequately teach their students. The principals felt that providing these resources was one of their administrative responsibilities to new teachers.

Consideration of Workload/Schedules

Two of the principals felt that adjusting the workload or the makeup of the classrooms would help the new teachers to get a better start in their new careers. They recognized that new teachers desperately needed to be able to succeed that first year in order to continue as teachers. The other principals thought that a reduction in the workload would be an unrealistic way to start a teaching career and that initiative would not be feasible given the current financial constraints. Joe discussed how he tended to workload issues with new teachers when he explained,

> One of the first things I did when I came on this campus is I recognized that the teachers who had been here the longest were getting the classes that were considered the better classes. One of the things I put into place was to make sure heterogeneous grouping takes place and we will make sure all teachers have all kinds of kids and not that the teachers that has been here 30 years does not have the best group. In fact, I looked at the new teacher and if I knew there were students who were problematic and I am not talking academically…even

> behavioral and even academically, I made sure the teachers who had the most experience was teaching that child. The children who I knew were doing very well we gave to the new teacher because we wanted the new teacher to succeed.

Doris managed to give her new teachers eased workloads based on how she assigned students to their classrooms. She demonstrated this preference when she reported,

> So my new teacher have the fluent, high fluent or the independent classes. Sometimes it is easier for a new teacher to enrich rather than remediate because they don't have as many rabbits in their hat to pull out when the kids just don't get it and you have to go over it again and again and again. So, more vets have the lower groups. More new teachers have the higher groups.

Other principals felt that new teachers needed to know what the job entailed from the onset and that it was not feasible to reduce a new teacher's workload. Carl replied, "The idea is good. The reality is that this isn't feasible here at this site at this time." William agreed that this practice was not feasible and was not in the best interest of the new teacher when he commented,

> The reduction of the workload is interesting. I don't know if that would be the best idea. You want the teacher to get a realistic look from the beginning of what is expected in the teaching profession. I wouldn't feel comfortable taking some duties off of a person and putting those duties on someone else and giving a false understanding or false perception of the way that it might be. I think it would be a very important part of the learning experience to learn how to balance work and doing the things that you have to do along with your regular teaching

responsibilities.

The principals in this study had the privilege of establishing induction services at the school level using their own discretion. This resulted in varying supports for new teachers from school to school. The overall perception was that the principals tended to rely heavily on other support providers in the school to handle the emotional and professional needs of the new teachers.

Beneficial Induction Activities

Research question 3 asks, Which induction activities do beginning teachers consider beneficial? These characterizations differed from beginning teacher to mentor to principal. Although the mentor felt that they knew what the beginning teacher needed, sometimes it did not match what the beginning teacher felt he or she needed.

Beginning Teachers' Perceptions

The most beneficial supports that were provided for the new teachers included the following: assigning a mentor keeping in mind the personalities of both people; giving a mentor/mentee handbook which delineates the activities for the year; positioning the mentor/mentee's classrooms very close to each other; assigning a second year teacher to also take care of the first year teacher; assigning other support providers along with the mentor; assistance with paperwork especially PEC paperwork; assistance with parent conferencing; assisting by informing about situations before they come up; establishing a relationship that is both personal and professional; maintaining an open door policy; being willing to help; being involved with what the mentee is doing on at least a weekly basis; providing frequent feedback from observations/evaluations; helping with using grading program; being consistent and not wavering; having discussions; listening when

there are problems; having someone who has been through what they are going through; and being accessible.

Alms identified discussions with a team of teachers along with their different ideas, as the activities that he thought were most beneficial when he stated,

> Just the discussions…being able to vent…being able to have somebody who understands. Having someone to commiserate with and having someone, who, when something good happens…I can share that with them and they can relate to that too. Someone who has been through what I have been through. I have seven different teachers who have taught these lesson plans before and I can get five to seven ways of how to teach these lesson plans.

Brody was reflective on the things that were beneficial to him and even thought of some of the supports that were provided to him that he felt he should have been exposed to at the college level. He referred to paperwork related concerns when he commented,

> Re-evals, IEP's, the paperwork…coming in as a PEC teacher. It's so much different in college. You don't ever see a re-eval in college. Other beneficial things are the answers to little questions…What I am supposed to do with parents? Help with how to handle certain situations when they come up or if they are able to see certain situations before they come up. From the principal… whenever I have a question, just being willing to give it to me. One of the others is also talking to me about non-school things…make a relationship outside of things.

John appeared to have some difficulty pinpointing specific activities that were the most beneficial for him. All the same, he did appreciate the mentor's availability and the principal's consistency. He spoke of these things when he commented,

> Just how she's always so willing to help. She sent me the email saying let me know if you want to get together to talk. When she saw me over here getting my room ready she came in and said any questions you have, let me help you. Helping me out with the grades and getting the grades in the computer. Consistency just being straightforward and not wavering this way and that way.

Louise had many activities that were beneficial to her during her transition into the teaching profession. She especially liked her mentor being located across the hall from her and the mentor/mentee package that kept her on track. She also benefited from a second year teacher looking out for her and making her transition easier. She happily reported these activities when she stated,

> Location…the mentor package was very beneficial and if you have a new teacher the year before and really makes sure that teacher takes the new teacher under their wing as well. There were things that my mentor couldn't handle with me that my mentor sister could. I think the mentor book giving guidance, because it was given to me…to start expecting what is going to happen and if you have any questions, we want you to know before it gets here. That helps, that way I wasn't surprised or caught off guard. I like the location; I would like to be beside my mentee, that way I would know if she needed me or anything, that I am right there.

Amy acknowledged that the feedback from observations and walkthroughs were the most beneficial activities that were provided to her. She reflected on her observations and feedback when she stated,

> I guess it would be feedback from our observations. He [principal] sat in on one of my parent teacher conferences and to me that has been the best. That's how I can improve...is the feedback from what I am doing. They do a write up, even if it is unofficial and we sit down and talk about it. That's been real beneficial to me.

The beginning teachers all felt that they benefited from the induction activities that were provided to them. However, the new teachers' perceptions showed quite some variation from the mentors' and principals' perceptions.

Mentors' Perceptions

The most beneficial activities that the mentors felt that they provided to the new teachers included the following: being open and honest; having an open door policy; having frequent meetings; understanding personalities and how to get along with other personnel; letting them know what's coming up; helping to follow school procedures; helping them to organize and better manage time; informing them of expectations; personal contact; and helping to complete paperwork.

Goldie summarized the most beneficial activities she provided were acting as a confidant and being there whenever she was needed. She reflected that her open door policy was beneficial when she stated,

> Being open and honest with them and having that open door policy. I don't care what it is if you need me, call me. We have walkie-talkies and my mentee, if she needs me…will call and say Goldie can you come to my room for a moment.

> That's really good. Being there for them and also having this monthly meeting with the agenda.

Mary, a veteran of her middle school spoke of helping the new teacher to negotiate the differing personalities of the faculty and to better manage his time as the activities that benefited him most. She showed how she helped him to understand the principal's actions when she stated,

> I helped him understand the personalities that are here. He [principal] never specifically points out anyone but he wants people to know when things aren't going right. That way if anybody else is doing it, he wants them to quit. So, he just makes a general statement so no one will do it. Not knowing how to take those things and having someone ease your mind that it wasn't about you. I think time management is the biggest growth he has gotten from us because we sit down and try to figure out how to do things that will speed up the process of getting things done and off your mind.

Lottie, a veteran seventh grade teacher, thought that just being there, letting the new teachers know what is expected and not giving prejudgments on how administration runs have been the most beneficial activities for her mentee. Lena attested to the thought that new teachers benefit greatly from the personal contact they receive from a veteran teacher who has been TSS trained. Lucy, also a veteran seventh grade teacher echoed the other mentors when describing the new teachers' benefit from just knowing that they can come to the mentor about anything.

Overall, the beneficial activities most spoken of by the mentors were having an open door policy and being readily accessible. They also felt that the ability to adjust

their mentoring to meet the needs of the beginning teacher was also beneficial.

Principals' Perceptions

The most beneficial activities that the principals felt that they provided to the new teachers included the following: providing peer observations implementing walkthroughs with verbal feedback, helping them to get the children to learn, making sure they have what they need, keeping an open line of communication, creating a family atmosphere, leading by example, assigning mentors, building barriers when so many initiatives are given, protecting the integrity of the classroom, providing coverage for observations, finding someone they can make personal contact with…one person they can trust, letting them know you believe in them, and encouraging them.

Alvin spoke of letting the new teachers know that you trust them and that you will give your support as the two most beneficial activities that he provided for the new teachers when he stated,

> I think the most valuable is to let teachers know you believe in them and to treat them as a professional and that is a pat on the back when they need it and give them whatever support they need when they need it but to also tell them when they are going in the wrong direction.

Joe felt that the most beneficial activities he could provide would always relate back to student achievement and an open line of communication, when he stated,

> I think the most valuable support that I provide is the academic part and helping them get the children to learn. The other thing that is offered is the line of communication. There is a tremendous amount of communication going on.

William felt that the new teachers received a tremendous benefit from the peer

observations and walkthroughs that they receive. He stated, “I think the peer observations and the walkthroughs with verbal feedback have been the most successful.” Carl, on the other hand, stated that, “creating a family atmosphere,” and “being the person who leads by example” are two of the most beneficial things he has provided for the new teachers. He spoke of building a barrier to protect his teachers along with protecting the integrity of the classroom when he stated,

> Our administrative team takes a good bit of all of these initiatives and we sort of build a barrier at times or wall. And we don’t let it get to the classroom teacher… They [initiatives] become moral busters…the teacher gets down…the teacher is already overwhelmed with additional paperwork. We don’t put a lid on our teachers. We try to protect the integrity of the classroom and of the students. To me that’s big…it’s just the climate of your school.

Overwhelmingly the principals felt that the new teachers benefited from the induction activities that the principals provided or that they arranged to be provided for the new teachers. The intentional creation of a family atmosphere by the principals was also considered beneficial by the principals.

Differing Services Based on School Levels

Research question 4 asks, What are the types of induction services that are provided to beginning teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools?

Overall, the different school level induction services included the same basic elements of mentoring and support systems. However, the frequency and intensity of supports varied due to the scheduling inherent in the schooling design.

Elementary Schools

The elementary schools' design is one that exists with teachers who teach all of the academic subject areas in self-contained settings. Two elementary schools were included in this study and differed in the size, number of students attending and socioeconomic status. Although the elementary schools only had a small amount of time during the day without students, the mentors found a way to provide supportive activities for the mentees.

In Elementary School 1, there were over 300 students and over 20 classroom teachers. This school has a grade span from 3rd grade to 5th grade. It is a Title 1 school, which brings with it some advantages in terms of the supports available such as an instructional coach. The teachers at this school were allowed a thirty-five minute planning time, which occurred as the students were attending exploratory classes such as Computer Lab or PE. This occurred three days of the week and was the time open to general planning or collaborative planning if the teacher participated in collaborative teaching. There was also a twenty-five minute morning and a one hour and fifteen minute afternoon grade level meetings and/or subject area meetings. The mentor and mentee were not given specific times to meet however, they were able to use the morning and afternoon meeting times for this purpose. In addition, given the flexibility of the mentor who also functioned as the instructional coach, Amy was provided supports that may not have been available to the new teacher at the other elementary school.

In Elementary School 2, there were over 800 students and close to 50 classroom teachers. This school has a grade span from Pre-Kindergarten to 5th grade. This school was not a Title 1 school and therefore did not have the benefit of an instructional coach.

However, Elementary School 2 had the benefit of having a one-hour planning period each day of the week while their students attend exploratory classes. This allowed grade level teachers to plan together daily. Inherent in this setting was the ability for the new teacher to benefit from support from her grade level teachers as well as her mentor. This gave Louise up to eight differing points of view as well as at least eight teachers to look after her. The mentor assigned to Louise also taught the same grade level and was located across the hall from her. Although this allowed them time to meet during their planning hour, Louise did not have the benefit of Lena frequently observing her during classroom instruction since they both had the same planning period.

Meetings

Meetings between the mentor and mentee were simple to arrange since the mentor tended to be assigned in the same grade level as the new teacher. That situation was shown to be true at one of the elementary schools as Louise stated,

> We have grade level meetings and that helps. Not only am I working with my mentor, but I am also working with my grade level. They can kind of show me… Lena can do something completely different from another teacher. I may like the way she is doing it better than my mentor and they are completely open to that.

However, at the other elementary school, the mentor also functioned in the role of an instructional coach. Therefore, she did not have a ‘set in stone’ schedule where she had to be with her own set of students the majority of the day. Consequently, she was able to meet with the new teacher whenever the new teacher was available such as during her planning period. In addition, it was during that planning time, Amy received her support from the other teachers on her grade level. Amy spoke of her delight to have such

a great team as she explained,

> Beverly Jude, she has been teaching forever. She is just another 4th grade teacher. She is really great, when I am having a bad day or have a lot of questions, I go to her and she has been an endless amount of support and information and helps me to find what books do I look in and what do I do this with? Our lead teacher is awesome, Vicki Howard. She is really great and any problems…I can go to her and talk to her. She does what ever she can to help. I feel blessed that we have such a good fourth grade team.

It was obvious from the comments made by the new teachers located at the elementary school level that there were tremendous benefits to having meetings with an entire grade level team. These regular meetings with the grade level team of up to eight members set the stage for relationships to be built and for the new teachers to feel connected to the school community.

Observations

The elementary school design made it difficult for mentors to observe the new teachers especially if the mentor was a classroom teacher as well. The assignment of the mentor would determine whether time throughout the day would be available to observe the new teacher. In Elementary School 1, the mentor held an administrative position so that flexibility in scheduling allowed for frequent observations. In Elementary School 2, the mentor was also a first grade teacher who shared the same planning period and lunch period. Although the mentor spoke of the availability of providing coverage through the use of paraprofessionals, this practice was not the norm. The new teacher in this study did not receive observations from her mentor. The mentor seemed to feel that this particular

new teacher did not need the observations because she was not struggling in any major areas.

Advantages

The advantages of the new teacher supports provided in Elementary School 1 were the frequency of observations with feedback and the additional support of an instructional coach. The other advantage was the formalization of the mentoring program. The mentor and mentee were required to meet at least once a month with an agenda to follow along with written reflections. A handbook was designed to maintain focus during the meetings and to ensure that specific topics were covered.

The advantages of the new teacher supports provided in Elementary School 2 were the common planning time and the location of the mentor directly across the hall from the new teacher. The common planning time, which occurred for one hour each day, allowed the new teacher to be supported by all of the grade level teachers. With the new teacher located across the hall from the mentor, there was instant access to answers for the many questions that may arise throughout the day.

Disadvantages

The disadvantages of providing new teacher support in the elementary school occurred due to the minimum amount of time the mentor has to meet with the new teacher during the school day. In order to sufficiently meet, the mentor/mentee pair would have to, at times, resort to an informal means of communication. Rushed talks before school, talking in the hallway or talking at lunch have been the avenues in which many issues were solved.

Middle Schools

The Middle School Concept

The Middle School Concept and design appeared to foster the ability to support new teachers. Both of the mentors assigned at the middle school level were in the same grade level as the new teacher. Inherent in this design was the ability for the new teachers to benefit from support from their team members, their grade level teachers as well as their mentors. The middle school design was one that enforced the team concept in which each grade level was divided into teams of three to four teachers. The teachers typically taught one or two subject areas. A team of students was assigned to these teachers and only takes classes from these teachers not including the exploratory classes such as PE, Art, Music, and Technology. Two middle schools were included in this study and differed in size, socioeconomic status, and number of students attending.

In Middle School 1, there were approximately 40 classroom teachers and over 500 students of which over 54% received free and reduced lunch. Being a Title 1 school brought some advantages in terms of the supports available such as several instructional coaches such as a Math coach, Science coach and a Graduation coach. The mentor at Middle School 1 taught a different subject area from the new teacher, was located across the hall, and was on the same team. The teachers at this school were allowed a one hour and thirty minute planning time, which occurred as the students were in exploratory classes. This time for planning occurred five days of the week and was open to general planning, subject area or grade level planning. The mentor and mentee were not given specific times to meet and were allowed to use these planning times for this purpose.

In Middle School 2, there were over 40 classroom teachers and over 700 students

of which 36% received free and reduced lunch. This school was not a Title 1 school and therefore did not have the benefit of as many Instructional Coaches as Middle School 1. However, it employed a half day Instructional Coach and a Graduation Coach. The mentor at Middle School 2 taught the same subject area as the new teacher and was located on the same hall yet on a different team. The Middle School 2 teachers were also allowed a one hour and thirty minute planning time, which occurred as the students were in exploratory classes. This time for planning occurred five days of the week and was open to general team planning in which either the four-team members would plan or the eight teachers from the seventh grade level would plan. The mentor and mentee were not given specific times to meet and were allowed to use these planning times for this purpose.

Meetings

Meetings between the mentor and mentee were easy to arrange since the mentor tended to be assigned in the same grade level as the new teacher. That situation was true at both of the middle schools. Although this time was inherently built into the daily routine, the mentor/mentee pair tended to not use this time to formally meet as a pair. At both middle schools, the communication between the mentor and the new teacher took on an informal nature as Alms explained,

> It always starts with…do you know this? If I say no, she tells me. Have you heard…do you know what to do… and if I say yes, I tell her and she says okay. It's very efficient. We have efficient communication. She lets me know the things I need to know. We have a very good relationship and a very friendly relationship. So I would say that it's informal.

John's communication with his mentor also took on an informal nature. He commented on the times that he was able to communicate with his mentor,

> The one-on-one might come from talking in the lunchroom while the kids are eating. And like talking in the morning…that adds up during the week. Talking in the afternoon after the kids have left…talking during planning. I would say one and a half to two hours per week. We just talk about stuff. It can be personal stuff or humorous stuff or what's going on…whatever is school related…definitely informal.

At the middle school level, the mentor solely determined the frequency of formal or informal meetings held between the mentor and mentee. Having this discretion caused the meetings to occur sporadically or on some occasions, not at all.

Observations

Although, the middle school arrangement allowed the mentor and the new teacher time to meet during their planning time, Alms did not have the benefit of Mary to frequently observe him during classroom instruction since they both had the same planning period. John felt that observations would have been a beneficial support activity for him. He stated, "That is something I will look into definitely…having a peer come and observe and see the things I need to improve on. Some things they think I'm doing good."

One of the middle school principals frequently mentioned peer observations as occurring often. However, this phenomenon appeared to not be happening with the new teachers in this study in either of the middle schools. William referred to the peer observations when he stated,

> We've done the peer observation. I have one that I have a particular concern about behavior. Very knowledgeable about the content…works with students well in the sense that you can tell that they want to work with students…they want to teach…they want to do what's right. But the classroom management areas are just not there. We do a lot of the peer observations here in school.

At the middle school level, the mentor solely determined the services provided during mentoring, which did not consistently include formative observations and regularly scheduled meetings. Again, the mentor's discretion determined whether this service was provided sporadically or at all.

Advantages

The Middle School design allowed for the following advantages in providing support activities for new teachers. The team concept which by design afforded four teachers to work together to serve the same set of students was inherent in the middle school concept. This team was allowed to plan together and to consistently devise initiatives, which would better serve the students. This provided tremendous support for the new teachers in that they had other teachers to supplement the support received from the mentor. This support came in the form of lesson planning, benchmark discussions, classroom management tips and emotional support.

Disadvantages

Few disadvantages were evident in the support afforded during the incorporation of the Middle School Concept. However, the opportunity for the mentors to observe the new teachers in order to offer constructive criticisms was not provided. In addition, the opportunity for the new teachers to observe veteran teachers was not provided as a

standard procedure in the induction process at the middle schools. It appeared that the observations were reserved for those teachers who were struggling in some way.

High Schools

In the High School, there were over 80 classroom teachers and over 1,500 students of which 31% received free and reduced lunch. This school was not a Title 1 school. In the High School, teachers were departmentalized and tended to be located on the hall with other teachers who teach the same content related subjects. For instance, the math teachers were all located on one hall and tended to have the same planning period and the same lunch period. It was during these times that the teachers were allowed to plan individually or collectively. Mentors at the high school may be matched with new teachers based on subject area, proximity or departmental similarities. The mentor and new teacher in this study were both special education teachers and were not housed in close proximity to each other. In fact, both of the teachers were collaborative teachers who moved from classroom to classroom to co-teach with regular education teachers. This served to be beneficial in that the new teacher identified the help with the special education paperwork as one of his greatest needs.

Assignments

In giving teaching assignments, the principal has the ability to make the load easier or considerably harder for a new teacher. The particular new teacher in this study was given a caseload that was more varied than the veteran teachers were; still he felt he was not given a caseload of the hardest cases. Actually, he enjoyed his caseload and appreciated the variety inherent in it, which was reflected when he stated,

I am a PEC teacher and I have three inclusion collaborative classes, two in Math,

> one in English. I also have two study skills classes. My two Math classes are concepts of problem solving and it is mostly where 9th grade repeaters and the lower spectrum of our school. I also do 9th grade English which is the 9th grade repeaters from last year. I have the whole entire spectrum. I have OHI [Other Health Impaired], MI [Mildly Intellectually Disabled], LD [Learning Disabled], and EBD [Emotional Behavioral Disordered]. I do actually teach with autism too. I probably have the biggest array of any of the teachers out here.

Although Brody had a wide array of students and taught most of the lower level students at the school, he felt that he was given a fair assignment and enjoyed the collaboration needed while working in an inclusion setting.

Observations

According to the mentor, there did not appear to be a need for observations by the high school mentor/mentee pair. The mentor mentioned that if there was a need for classes to be covered, the administration would be willing to provide coverage so that the mentor or the new teacher could observe or meet. Lucy spoke of this coverage when she maintained,

> Since we don’t see each other during planning time, I have had to miss class to go and be with him. That has never been a problem. They will allow me to get a sub or just make sure I go on a day that it will not be detrimental to my kids. Or if he needs to go observe, I am free to send him wherever I need to. And I get subs for him and that has never been a problem.

That coverage was not evident in the conversations held with the new teacher. According to the new teacher, neither the new teacher nor the mentor had observed each

other during instruction for the purpose of improving instructional practice of the new teacher. The new teacher readily acknowledged that the administrative team had observed him on more than one occasion. He explained, “Observations, not yet, observations, I have two assistant principal observations. But as far as mentor observations I have not had those yet.” It appeared that formative observations with feedback were also services which were provided based on the mentor’s discretion.

Advantages

The advantage of the high school in terms of supporting the new teachers was that once a new teacher was assigned to teach a particular subject, he or she was situated on a hall with teachers who taught a content related subject. This gave the teachers on this hall a commonality and a common language as it related to instruction.

The advantages of the mentor/mentee pair that was assigned at the high school were they were both special education teachers which helped the new teacher tremendously when the need to know how to complete paperwork was necessary. As Brody spoke of his appreciation of having a special educator as a mentor, he explained,

> One that sticks out is the re-eval. I didn’t know how to do a re-eval. I didn’t know what to do. She helped me get the paperwork. She showed me which forms went home to which people. But she allowed me to do it, she didn’t say “oh go give this to so and so or give this to so and so”. She said, “this is for your regular teachers, this is for your special ed teachers, this is for your parents”. She let me do the work, filling everything out, sending them and getting everything done.

It was obvious that the principal took care in assigning the new teacher a veteran teacher who could help him in an area that would probably cause him the most problems.

Manipulation of the mentor/mentee match was mentioned at the high school as a remedy to a poorly matched mentor/mentee pair.

Disadvantages

The disadvantages related to the new teacher services provided at the high school would be the possible detriment of being assigned to a mentor who was not knowledgeable about your subject area. For instance, although the new teacher in this study had to collaborate with several different teachers, it would not have benefited him to have those teachers as his mentors. Because he was a special education teacher, many times the paperwork was not the same as the regular education paperwork. It would be during those times, the new teacher would have had to solicit help from another special education teacher. Several barriers could prevent him from receiving that help if the mentor was not willing to meet him after school or before school and if the mentor was not housed in close proximity to him.

The services provided to the new teachers at all of the school levels tended to be the same as they related to the mentoring supports and the consideration in which the principal gave when assigning classes. The biggest difference noted in this study as it varied by school levels was the formality of the induction process and the documentation of the mentoring activities. The most formal programs were evident at the elementary schools. Both of the elementary schools had developed a handbook specifically designed to address the new teachers' concerns as well as a guide for the monthly meetings. The middle and high schools tended to gauge the program based on what the mentor felt the new teacher needed. This could pose some problems if the mentor was not in harmony with what the new teacher actually needed.

Induction Services Needed but not Provided

Research question 5 asks, What induction services do beginning teachers, mentors and principals identify as missing but needed in the induction process? Overall, the beginning teachers were satisfied with the supports that have been provided to them as first year teachers. However, they identified some situations in which they felt more services were needed than were provided. The mentors and principals as well identified some services that they felt should be in place that were not in place.

Beginning Teachers' Perceptions of Induction Services Needed

Although the beginning teachers unanimously felt that the services provided were greater than having no services at all, each of them was able to identify some supports that they wish had been provided. Some went even further to delineate the services that they would have provided for a beginning teacher had they been a mentor or a principal.

Assignment of Mentors

Each of the beginning teachers were assigned a mentor. Some of the assignments occurred at the beginning of the year and others occurred later in the year. The timing of the assignments seemed to be an issue that some of the beginning teachers felt could have been improved. One teacher felt that the assignment of additional staff members has helped her to navigate her way. One beginning teacher went further to say that the location of the mentor should also be a priority when assigning mentors to new teachers.

John, Louise, Brody and Amy were assigned a mentor immediately before or during preplanning. Louise seemed to feel that the assigning of a mentor was helpful yet she also needed the assignment of what she terms, "a mentee sister". She stated that having a second year teacher who went through the same experience the year before

helped her to cope with many challenges. She reminisced on her “mentee sister” as she stated,

> They call her my mentee sister and I like that because it kind of makes us like a little family because my mentor was her mentor last year. The things that maybe my mentor doesn’t remember stressed her out, she [mentee sister] remembers that and she comes to me and say this will stress you out, but let me tell you how to handle it. And she says I was just like you last year and having that helps me feel good.

At first thought, Alms was disappointed at being assigned a mentor so late in the school year. He stated, “I think it should have been a part of my orientation when I came to the school before orientation for the county. If it had been then, it would have been perfect because that would have set it up from the beginning of the year.” However, he went on to say,

> I am a proactive person, if I don’t know something, I am the type of person that will go and find out. If I have a question about something and it relates to me performing my job correctly, I will find out before I do anything. If it wasn’t handed to me without asking, I went and found out the answer. So I didn’t know I needed a mentor. I have had so much help and support from everyone on the hall.

The location of the mentor in relation to the mentee also was important to the first year teacher. Louise and John were located across the hall from their mentors. They both felt that this was advantageous to their ability to receive advice any time through out the day. Louise and her mentor developed a code to let the mentor know when the situation was urgent and the mentee needed help immediately. Louise commented,

> My mentor told me that if I had a huge issue…she actually gave me a Kleenex box… If I can't get over there quick enough, slide that Kleenex box across the hall…I know you need me. That's extremely helpful being right beside your mentor… I can just scoot over to her and that helps tremendously. Location is the number one key…being right next to each other.

It is understandable that at times it would not be feasible to place mentors and mentees in close proximity to each other. However, this arrangement proved to be a beneficial service provided for some of the new teachers.

Observations

According to Georgia's requirements, the beginning teachers must receive at least three formal evaluations from an administrator. Information from these observations/evaluations determines whether the teachers will be offered a contract for the following year. These new teachers appeared to be somewhat fearful of this experience as Louise explained what she would provide for a new teacher as a principal. She replied, "I would make sure she felt very comfortable and not be intimidating. I think that is one thing that makes someone hide their true teaching ability is when they feel you go in and you are stern." Louise went on to talk about observations she wished she had been able to experience:

> My mentor has never come in and watched me and I have never gone in and watched her. I think that would be wonderful. I think that would show you…especially just morning routine would be huge. It would be nice to see what they are doing in the morning time and how she does this to make it a little bit easier. I think that if I did have the opportunity to go, it would be a wonderful

help to a new teacher but it is not provided.

John looked at the situation differently. Rather than fearing the observation process, he desperately wanted to be observed and given feedback. He reflected these thoughts as he explained,

> I really would feel comfortable having an observation because I want to know…I want to have feedback on how well I'm doing so far this year. I definitely need more work in classroom management. So having another teacher in there to see what I'm facing especially in that last period class. That would give me some insight on how to handle that situation. So, that would definitely be beneficial and hopefully that will happen in the future. You don't want to keep doing the same mistakes over and over again. You want to get those nipped in the bud so you can improve on those.

Brody had not received any mentor observations however; he had received several from his administrators. He felt that the feedback was adequate but was not what has enhanced his professional growth. His professional growth has been enhanced through the reflections that he has shared with his collaborative teachers.

Professional Development and Training

The new teachers overwhelmingly felt that they were thoroughly prepared through their college education program to deal with content related issues. However, they did not feel that they were prepared in all areas especially classroom management. John stated, "I feel like I could have had a little more guidance on…like other teachers perceptions of classroom management before I started that first day. Being the very first time I had a first day of school, I could have felt better approaching that day."

When Alms spoke of professional development, he felt that the majority of his professional learning had come from his "constant contact with other teachers…getting ideas especially since they had taught with the lesson plans before." He also spoke of the learning he has gotten from having to teach collaboratively with a special education teacher. He stated, "She gives me suggestions how I can better instruct them and something that I can do to help them even if it is something as simple as writing in different colors. She has been a great resource to me because I don't feel instructing kids with learning disabilities is necessarily a strong suit of mine."

As Amy reflected on the guidance that she wish she had received, she spoke of behavior management. She felt that she was not as prepared to handle behavioral issues. She made the following comments regarding her preparedness:

> I wish I had been a little more prepared as far as behavior in the classroom. I had no clue what was expected of me and what the school policies were when school started. I think that as a teacher you should be aware of what is expected of you and what you are supposed to do if you have a behavior issue. You don't want to make the wrong decision for yourself, for your principal or anybody. That's the main thing that I wish I had gotten more of. I would have been a little bit more informed and a little bit more prepared.

In this study, professional development and training was provided at each school level in some form. However, the new teachers unanimously felt that they were missing some important skills when dealing with classroom management and behavioral issues that could have been addressed with more professional development.

Mentors' Perceptions of Induction Services Needed

The mentors felt that they had a good gauge on what their individual beginning teachers needed and attempted to provide that for the new teacher. However, each mentor felt that improvements could be made to the present induction program.

Teacher Preparation

Three out of five of the mentors felt that the colleges were failing to prepare the new teachers to meet the challenges that will inevitably be present that first year of teaching. Lena felt that the colleges should be addressing better ways to prepare the beginning teachers. She felt that one of the new teachers' experiences should be coming to the school during pre and post planning to see how things are set up and end of the year procedures. Lottie too felt that the new teachers needed some exposure to the school's actual activities before joining the teaching force. Goldie also felt that the new teachers did not have a true picture of what it was like to be a teacher until they actually started the job.

Assignment of Mentors

The timing of the assignment of the mentors was a concern with the mentors. The majority of them felt that the new teachers would have benefited more from the assignment had it happened in the summer before school started. Mary spoke of her late assignment as she reported,

> Aligning the mentor/mentee before school starts. That's a big one. I think that hurts you when you come in late in the ballgame, they may have already learned a lot and you don't know what they have learned or haven't learned. What they need or don't need. What they understand or don't understand. If you had them

> right at the beginning, you would know what they were having difficulty with and it would be easier, for both people.

Lottie also thought that the assigning of the mentor should have been done earlier and if there was an opportunity, the new teacher should observe a day at the school before coming as a new teacher. She felt that the new teachers should be allowed to spend a day prior to the beginning of the school year to observe the school's culture and get acquainted with their future mentor.

Lucy also thought that the assigning of the mentor should be done earlier because when preplanning starts, she is inundated with her own list of things to do. She spoke of her multiple tasks when she stated,

> So I would like to meet with them before the school year starts just to get them ready for the school year. And then again of course during preplanning to cover all the housekeeping type things. Not waiting because when I hit the door during preplanning I have my own stuff to do. And then he has his stuff to do but then he still has the issue of "Oh, I still don't have my room set up. I don't have my board, I don't have anything." So it would be nice to be able to meet with them before they are actually required to come in so I can help him with some of those things.

Overall, the mentors felt that the timing of their assignment was later than what would have been most useful to the new teachers. The mentors agreed that the assignment should be made before actual preplanning since they also have tasks to complete in a timely manner.

Meetings

Goldie felt that the group meetings component of the induction program could be improved. She stated that although she met with the individual mentee every month, there needed to be some consistency in meeting with the new teachers as a group. She reflected, “If I thought there was anything else that we needed to add to our calendar it would be a designated monthly or bi-monthly meeting for those teachers on a regular basis.”

Mary felt that there should be some accountability in terms of meetings with logs being completed and inspected by the principal every nine-week period. This would be done to ensure that the meetings were being held on a frequent basis. As Mary spoke of some of the expectations she would have in the induction program, she spoke of giving new teachers as much as they needed in order to help them feel supported.

Observations

Mary felt that observations should be started within the first couple of months along with meetings to follow-up on the observations. She stated that the number of observations that were expected should be documented in a written policy so that every mentor would be on the same page. However, she felt that the mentor should have the flexibility to provide what the new teacher needed. She spoke of this flexibility when she stated,

> I would want that person [mentor] to give the other person what they needed. If they were needy, I would want them to understand that and if they were independent, I would want them to understand that. There are a certain amount of things that should be uniform and a certain amount that should not.

In this study, the observations were completed at the discretion of the individual mentors. Some of the mentors felt that this should be a requirement that should be documented to ensure that it actually occurs.

Formal Policy

Many of the mentors stated that having a formal policy might alleviate some of the variation in the provisions given to the new teachers. It was recognized that new teachers might be at different levels and need different things, however some uniformity might help the program to be more consistently implemented. Lottie commented, "Maybe it should be uniform, but new teachers are different. So maybe my teacher doesn't need a lot of attention, but someone else's might." Lottie also felt that new teachers should receive a letter from the individual school welcoming them along with a checklist, which tells the things that they should be getting together as a new teacher.

Lucy also felt that there should be a formal policy to address induction. Lucy spoke of the need to have uniform procedures when she made the following statements,

> I can't say that what I am doing is the best way. I do it the best way I know. That's all I can do. If we had some sort of manual that was just specific to the high school…you know something current…we would have to update that every year…you know we change policies…we change procedures. So it would have to be a collaboration between teachers and administrators.

Although the mentors felt that they should be able to provide induction services in a flexible manner, they agreed that a formal policy would help them to be of more assistance to the new teacher. They felt that documentation would improve the current mentor/mentee program at the school level.

Principals' Perceptions of Induction Services Needed

All of the principals admitted that there was room for improvement in the school level induction program. Most of the principals felt that a formal policy would lessen some of the inconsistency in what is provided at the individual schools.

Formal Policy

Among the principals, there was some concern over the variability of the induction process from school to school. Some felt that a more formal policy might ensure a more fluent process at each school location. In addition, the recognition of some of the processes that are needed might cause more attention to the induction of new teachers. Joe spoke of a systemic plan when he stated,

> I would make sure all the principals are on the same page and we have a systemic plan in place as it relates to the new teachers. I would make sure there was clear and strategic planning for this. At present, I don't have an evaluation process, and we are working on that. I think that component is not there where you can actually get evaluated. Because we have a packet together, we have given a lot of thought to it…the evaluation piece is not where I want it.

William stated that the central office has been the primary provider of monthly meetings for the new teachers. However, no direction on how the individual schools should be supporting the new teachers has been determined. He further commented,

> As far as giving us direction on strategies or techniques or procedures or ways that we should approach it, I can say that we haven't gotten together and discussed that. With that being said, it may be a good idea if the county adopts a common plan/guidelines for us to follow when doing that.

Carl felt that there was always room for improvement and that the missing component at his school was the documentation. He felt that there was a weakness in the documentation related to the mentor and the mentee interaction. Although he felt that was a missing piece, he was cautious about adding extra work on the mentor.

Professional Development

Alvin spoke of the new teachers coming in without the knowledge to handle certain types of students. He proposed that there should be a plan in place that accounts for time to help them to acquire this knowledge. He spoke of a plan to address professional development when he stated,

> They should have a certain number of days off, to do paperwork or plan or go to workshops or areas that they are weak in, give them some help as soon as you possibly can. Instead of expecting them after school when they are tired and broken down, you want them to stay from 4-9 o'clock and they don't want to do that. Give them that time during the day, reduce their class size, and give them half a day off during the week to help them learn what they need to learn about the school or students they are working with.

Joe agreed that professional development for new teachers was an area that needed more attention in his school. He reflected on how he was considering this area when he commented,

> My assistant principal and I have sat down and we have put in place a plan to work more consistently with our new teachers as it relates to sending them to workshops and training. I think that's a situation across the board in the system where we need to work more with our new teachers. The way things have

> happened in the past, a person is sent to staff development, for say discipline, because there is a discipline problem in the classroom. But, we need to plan ahead of time for all teachers to have staff development regardless of whether we think they are going to be a good disciplinarian or whatever the case may be. So, I say that's an area we all need to work on and we are offering staff development.

Professional development appeared to be an area that each principal felt could be improved in the induction process. Many principals had already identified this as an area of need and were in the planning stages of addressing implementation of professional development that would be geared towards the new teachers' needs and challenges.

Observations

Release time in order for new teachers to observe veteran teachers' classrooms has been suggested by researchers. Alvin stated that he felt release time for observations should be a part of the norm for new teachers not just for those who are struggling. He suggested a plan to address this issue when he commented,

> I think we need to provide them more release time from the classroom to observe other teachers and also to get used to the paperwork and to meet with other staff members about how to relate to some of the students in the school. A lot of times, we want to meet after school when the kids have gone home. But if they could meet when the kids are with other teachers and the other teachers are handling those situations.

Doris felt that the observations including the walkthroughs with feedback were not effective if she was the one to complete them especially if they were designed to be a tool for improvement. She stated that when she entered the room, in the back of her mind

there would always be an evaluative nature to her observation. “I will have made a mental note she is weak and I am wondering do I keep her or do I need to replace?” She spoke of her discomfort in this situation when she stated,

> When you are weak or new at a skill and you have someone who is talented sitting there with you, regardless of what they say you still feel the pressure. They still know those write ups are coming to me and it’s still a form of evaluation regardless of what anyone says. I still don’t think that even in the attempt or in the fantasy, that some people I work with sees it as a good thing, I see it as one more evil thing we put in place pushing people out the door because we have placed too much pressure on them. We need a safety net, we need somebody that is not going to write anything down, somebody that they can have a conversation with, somebody that they know is not going to come back on them at any point in time, and I feel that is what we are lacking. I think we are lacking in appropriate personnel.

Overall, the principals felt that the present induction processes at the school levels were beneficial. However, there were components that they identified as missing. The principals identified staff development related to new teacher needs and release time for observing colleagues as components that should be included in a formal policy to help better induct new teachers at the school level.

Summary

Within the data analysis of the taped interviews, several themes emerged as the new teachers, mentors, and principals shared their perceptions regarding the induction services provided for beginning teachers. These themes reflected the belief that although

induction services were beneficial to the beginning teachers' transition into the teaching profession, there were elements that are missing but needed.

The broad themes which emerged from the beginning teachers interviews included the challenges and successes of the first year teaching experience, the support systems provided for new teachers, the provision of professional growth opportunities and the quality of observations and feedback. The majority of the support provided to the new teachers was from the mentors.

The themes, which emerged from the mentors' data as it related to induction services, included the provision of handbooks, observations, meetings, and reflections. The majority of the mentors did not have a formal guide to direct their provisions of support. However, they strove to provide those supports they thought that the individual new teachers needed.

The themes, which emerged from the principals' data as it related to induction services, included orientation, assignment of mentors, meetings, observations with feedback, provision of professional growth opportunities, providing teaching resources and consideration of new teacher workloads and schedules. Although each principal provided varying levels of support to the new teachers, they all spoke of the importance of supporting new teachers.

The differing services based on the school levels were also explored along with the identification of advantages and disadvantages at each level. The elementary schools tended to have established the most formal approach to providing services for the new teachers. Lastly, the identification of services needed but not provided was discussed with emphasis on the need to develop a formal policy that would include all school levels and

would delineate proper support procedures.

Description was used to present themes that were generated from the perceptions of the fifteen participants whenever possible. Chapter V provides information from the data analysis chapter that was used to develop findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research and practice.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The teaching profession has a historically high rate of attrition occurring especially in those teachers in the first five years of their career. This high attrition is costly to the school systems and deprives the neediest students of the quality education that experience brings. New teacher induction programs have been initiated as a promising strategy posed to assist new teachers in transitioning smoothly into their new careers and to decrease this high attrition rate.

Induction programs can range from low-key, informal ones to formal well thought-out programs that are responsive to the distinctive needs of beginning teachers. Research has indicated that induction positively affects teacher retention and teacher quality (Bartell, 2005, Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Induction programs designed to meet beginning teachers' needs have been reported to increase retention rates from 50 percent to 85 percent (Lemke, 1995, Norton, 1999). Although induction programs provide great benefits to the beginning teacher, only one percent of the new teacher workforce participates in the comprehensive program recommended by researchers (Johnson et al., 2005). Action must be taken to ensure that all new teachers are adequately supported through the use of comprehensive teacher induction programs.

Although research literature implies a strong need for support by beginning teachers, limited studies address the responses from teachers concerning activities in their induction process. This study was intended to increase the research base on the types of induction services that beginning teachers consider important and the services that they

currently receive. The purpose of this study was to identify induction services that were available for beginning teachers and to assess how these services were beneficial for teachers during their induction. Specifically, this study sought to identify the induction services as a coordination of efforts between principals and mentors.

The following research questions served to guide this study:

1. How do beginning teachers describe their first year teaching experiences that make induction necessary?
2. What are the factors that support the induction process?
3. What induction activities do beginning teachers, mentors, and principals consider beneficial?
4. What are the types of induction services that are provided to beginning teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools?
5. What induction services do beginning teachers, mentors, and principals identify as missing but needed in the induction process?

Individual interviews were conducted with five beginning teachers, five mentors and five principals at schools located in a small suburban school district in the Middle Georgia area. These interviews were completed using an open-ended technique with a set of interview guide questions to focus the inquiry. This qualitative study used ethnographic study methods and utilized thematic analysis in order to cluster and chunk data in general themes. This study allowed for the emergence of details and description that would be lacking through the use of a quantitative study.

The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher or an individual transcriptionist. The transcriptions were analyzed using thematic analysis. Through the

analysis of the interviews, the researcher uncovered a wide range of perceptions held by the participants concerning the induction process at the school level. Based on the data collected and the analysis that followed, the following major findings were obtained.

Summary of Research Findings

A summary of the research findings as they related to each research questions is presented as follows:

Research Question 1: How do beginning teachers describe their first year teaching experiences that make induction necessary?

The new teachers in this study identified their first year experiences as a time filled with stress, frustration, anxiety, fear, chaos, nervousness and the feelings of being lost and overwhelmed. Some of the new teachers even questioned whether they had made the correct career choice. They believed that if it were not for the support that was provided to them, their first year would have been much more difficult and the high level of support seemed to be enculturated into the schools. The new teachers in this study identified the professional and personal relationships that they have developed with their colleagues and administrators. It was these relationships that gave them a sense of belonging and helped them to be acclimated into the schools and into the teaching profession.

Research Question 2: What are the factors that support the induction process?

Each participant attested to the provision of a mentor who was assigned by the principal along with the services he or she provided. The practice of mentors observing and being observed by the mentees consistently occurred at only one elementary school. Professional development was addressed at the elementary schools with classes

especially designed to address new teacher challenges; at the middle schools through grade level and team curriculum planning sessions; and at the high school with book studies and general professional development available to the entire faculty. Formative observations and assessments without the evaluative component were more readily performed with the purpose of improving practice at the elementary school level. Although opportunities for reflection on instructional strategies occurred frequently at one elementary school, this did not appear to be a consistent part of the induction process in this county. Overwhelmingly, the beginning teachers attributed much of their first year success to the support received from a multitude of support providers and they all intend to remain in the teaching profession.

Research Question 3: Which induction activities do beginning teachers, mentors and principals consider beneficial?

The beneficial activities as reported by the beginning teachers included the assignment of mentors along with the multilayered support provided at the school. The other beneficial activities included assistance with paperwork, parent conferencing, operating the grading program, providing general information and solving general problems. Although observations with feedback were not consistently provided in this study, all of the beginning teachers felt that this would be a beneficial activity.

Without exception, each mentor in this study reported the benefit of having the flexibility to analyze the new teachers' needs and adjusting the mentoring to meet those needs. In addition, all of the mentors in this study received special training to support new teachers through the Georgia Teacher Support Specialist Program.

The principals reported that the beginning teachers benefited most from open and

honest communication, encouragement, peer observations with feedback and creating a family atmosphere. The principals also spoke of the intentional creation of a family atmosphere, which would provide high levels of professional and emotional support.

Research Question 4: What are the types of induction services that are provided to beginning teachers in elementary, middle and high schools?

There was a definite difference in the frequency and intensity of induction services by school levels with the elementary school providing the most consistent services along with the highest level of services. The formalization of the elementary schools' induction and mentoring program tended to facilitate meetings and observations since these services were actual requirements of the program. At the middle school and high school levels, the mentor solely determined the services provided during mentoring, which did not consistently include formative observations and regularly scheduled meetings.

Research Question 5: What induction services do beginning teachers, mentors and principals identify as missing but needed in the induction process?

All of the participants shared their comments on what was missing in the new teacher induction process. It was evident in this study that the mentors were the major support providers and were assigned during preplanning days, which were hectic for both the new teachers and the mentors. Sometimes these assignments were made even later in the school year. All of the new teachers felt that they would have benefited from an earlier assignment. Although the mentees felt that observations and feedback would have been beneficial, this was not a consistent practice throughout the county. The new teachers, mentors and the principals felt that the college education classes did not prepare

new teachers to deal with classroom management, special needs students and behavior issues. The mentors agreed that the colleges should give the pre-service teachers a more realistic view of the demands of teaching.

The mentors and principals agreed that a formal policy would better guide the induction process and would ensure continuity of provisions to the new teachers. The principals identified professional development specific to the new teachers' challenges as a need at each school level. The principals also reported the need for non-evaluative observations and feedback, which they could provide along with other personnel such as lead teachers, instructional coaches and mentors.

Discussion of Research Findings

Despite the differences in age, gender, colleges and school settings of the participants, the findings of this study were similar and resembled much of the information cited in the literature review. Regardless of the school level, the new teachers responded to interview questions in a similar manner. The findings are discussed as a series of responses to the research questions.

Research Question 1: How do beginning teachers describe their first year experiences that make induction necessary?

The responses to research question 1 were congruent with the literature as the beginning teachers described their experiences as a first year teacher. Brock and Grady (1998) found that beginning teachers must learn the role and professional identity of a teacher and experience challenges that they must overcome while learning that role. The new teachers in this study identified their first year experiences as a time filled with stress, frustration, anxiety, fear, chaos, nervousness, and the feeling of being lost and

overwhelmed. The challenges identified by the new teachers in this study were congruent with the challenges identified by Veenman (1984) and later by Brock and Grady (1998) and included classroom management and discipline issues, working with mainstreamed students, handling disputes with parents, insufficient teaching materials, dealing with stress, and feeling inadequate as teachers. Some of the new teachers even questioned whether they had made the correct career choice. The new teachers in this study believed that if it were not for the support that was provided to them, their first year would have been much more difficult.

New teachers discussed how a high level of support seemed to be enculturated into the schools and eased their transition into the profession. Lortie (1975) characterized the beginning teachers' transition into teacher as a social process, which includes complex interactions between and among new and experienced teachers and their social circumstances. In this study, it was evident that the high level of support that was enculturated in the schools contributed to the beginning teachers' sense of belonging and their decision to remain in the profession. All of the new teachers made reference to the connectedness that they felt with other members of the school's faculty and staff. Each new teacher spoke of a family atmosphere and a feeling of being at home.

Research Question 2: What are the factors that support the induction process?

The responses to research question 2 were congruent with the literature and all aspects of induction were addressed even though there was some variation from school to school and from participant to participant. Researchers (Camp and Heath-Camp, 1992; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2000; Moir & Gless, 2002) identified the essential components of effective induction to include purposefully selected mentors, the

provision of professional development, the conducting of formative observations and assessments, and opportunities for reflection on instructional strategies.

Each beginning teacher in this study attested to the provision of a mentor who appeared to be a ‘perfect match’ for him or her. A major emphasis in the vast majority of teacher induction programs centers on the assignment of a mentor to the beginning teacher (AEE, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2001) and if possible one who is in the same field (Gilbert, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). The mentors seemed comfortable in their mentoring role and felt that their role varied depending on what the beginning teacher needed at that particular moment. These varying roles were supported by the literature when Odell (1990) defined a mentor in the academic setting as a friend, guide, counselor, but above all, a supportive teacher. Trained mentors are better able to guide beginning teachers as they address the challenges in their classrooms (DeWert et al., 2003). In this study, four of the principals spoke of the care that they used when assigning mentors to the beginning teachers and made sure that the mentors held the Teacher Support Specialist endorsement. Angelle (2002) commented that the mentee should have time to observe in the mentor or other experienced colleagues modeling professional teaching practices. In this study however only one school consistently provided this service for the beginning teacher. The mentors in the four other schools tended to decide if this service was necessary or not.

In this study, professional development and training took on different appearances in the different schools. Although each of the new teachers in this study appeared to be growing professionally, some received more or less formal training depending on the individual school. Bloom & Davis (1998) advised that principals should encourage and

give support in beginning teacher's participation in relevant professional development activities. The two elementary schools provided professional development in the form of classes designed especially for new teachers. Kardos et al. (2001) stated that principals should integrate new teachers into school wide learning opportunities as well as encourage collaborative work in grade-level or departmental teams. The middle schools provided professional development during the grade level and team curriculum planning sessions. Johnson & Kardos (2002) recommended that principals visibly engage in the professional development of personnel. The high school addressed professional development through book studies and general professional development provided to all of the faculty and staff.

Stein and D'Amico (2002) stated that principals should promote learning during evaluation and use classroom observations, post conferences and direct consultation to help beginning teachers to apply instructional knowledge. Angelle (2002) went on to say that these observations should be done with the purpose of improvement rather than evaluative. In this study, the formative observations and assessments were more readily addressed at the elementary school level in that frequent observations with feedback were provided without the evaluative component. The beginning teachers at this level were given many opportunities to practice their skill before being evaluated on that skill. Observations and assessments at the secondary levels appeared to be more evaluative in nature when they occurred. Although consistent feedback was not provided, each of the new teachers felt that receiving feedback could help them improve his or her teaching practice.

The literature suggested that one of the mentoring techniques proven effective

with new teachers was encouraging reflection in order to lead them into meaningful deliberation to consider alternatives and to reach their own solutions to problems, questions or dilemmas (Camp & Heath-Camp; 1992; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Recruiting New Teachers, 2000). The opportunities for reflection on instructional strategies were reported to occur daily by one of the beginning teachers who performed this service with his collaborative teacher. This service was provided to only one of the elementary schools' new teachers as part of the monthly meetings. This service did not appear to be a consistent part of the induction process in this county.

Ayers and Griffin (2005) stated that mentoring involves the professional guidance and emotional support that is given to a beginning teacher from a mentor or from multiple people such as a community of peers, an experienced teacher or an administrator. This claim was supported by this study in that the beginning teachers clearly attributed much of their first year success to the support they received from their mentors, principals, administrative teams, grade level teachers, and the entire staff. The support provided to the new teachers came in forms of helping with lesson plans, answering questions, guidance with discipline issues, posting grades online, helping with academic concerns, listening, providing emotional support, sharing in decision making, creating a positive working environment and encouraging close working relationships. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) in a nationwide survey analysis concluded that beginning teachers who were assigned mentors experienced decreased attrition. All of the new teachers in this study plan to remain in education and referred to the various supports they received as one of the reasons they have decided to remain.

Research Question 3 was, Which induction activities do beginning teachers,

mentors and principals consider beneficial?

The responses to the research question 3 were congruent with the literature and the beginning teachers in this study by far felt that the assignment of the mentors and the multilayered support provided at the school were the most beneficial actions that were provided. Gilbert (2005) cited one of the five most valued strategies reported by beginning teachers involved in induction programs was the assignment of a mentor. The other beneficial supports identified by the new teachers included assistance with paperwork, parent conferencing, operating the grading program, providing general information and solving general problems. Odell and Ferraro (1992) cited the need to give direct assistance to the beginning teacher to ensure success in their new profession. Without exception, this assistance was provided to each of the beginning teachers in this study.

According to Murphy and Louis (1999) principals, as instructional leaders give regular, systemic feedback to beginning teachers on instructional approaches, content knowledge, and classroom management strategies. The observations with feedback were not induction activities that were consistent from school to school, yet each of the beginning teachers mentioned that this would be a beneficial activity.

All of the mentors in this study mentioned the benefit of analyzing the individual needs a new teacher may have and then adjusting the mentoring to give that mentee what he or she needed. Ballantyne and Hansford (1995) addressed this issue when stating that mentors may provide many varied activities depending on the individualized needs of the beginning teacher. Single and Muller (2001) contended that without adequate training in mentoring and coaching, mentors were unable to effectively assist beginning teachers. It

is noteworthy to mention that all of the mentors in this study were trained as mentors though the Georgia Teacher Support Specialist Program.

The principals felt that the beginning teachers benefited most from open and honest communication, encouragement, peer observations with feedback and creating a family atmosphere. Ganser (2001) reported that principals should let the beginning teachers know the expectations for instructional methods, student discipline, grading, and student achievement. The participants in this study seemed to feel that they obtained this information as the year progressed. It appeared that the expectations were learned by trial and error rather than through a clear understanding of expectations. Hoerr (2005) contended that principals should provide beginning teachers with opportunities to discuss personal issues that effect job performance and moral. This was a provision that was implied in most of the schools in that the principals spoke of the intentional creation of a culture that created a family atmosphere where there was concern regarding all aspects of each other's lives.

Principals should let the beginning teachers know that they are invested in their success and will support them in areas of discipline and parental confrontations (DePaul, 2000). Without exception, all of the beginning teachers in this study felt confident that the principals would support them in areas of crisis.

Research Question 4: What are the types of induction services that are provided to beginning teachers in elementary, middle and high schools?

The literature was sparse on the differences of induction services that are provided at the different school levels. However, the literature did address some conclusions related to retention of teachers. The literature reveals higher attrition rates at secondary

schools and in schools with higher proportions of low-income, minority and academically low performing students (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). There were neither low performing schools nor minority schools in this study therefore this set of literature was not pertinent. This study then purports to fill a gap in the research regarding the differences in the supports at the different school levels.

The information related to research question 4 illustrated a definite difference in the frequency and intensity of services by school levels. The elementary schools met with the least amount of readily available time during the school day for meetings, observations and planning. When a grade level teacher was assigned as the mentor, there was a facilitation of meeting times in that they would have common planning time even though this did not occur daily. Yet that same assignment would present a barrier to observing each other's classroom instruction. The advantage to this situation was that the beginning teacher had the benefit of being supported by a whole grade level along with the mentor. The formalization of the mentoring program at the elementary schools also tended to facilitate the actual meetings and observations in that these were requirements of the program. The use of a mentoring handbook ensured that typical new teachers' concerns would be addressed during the monthly meetings.

The middle school design met with the most conducive setting that would ensure a tremendous amount of support for all teachers especially the beginning teachers. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that providing opportunities to collaborate within an induction program reduced the risk of beginning teachers leaving the profession by 43 percent. In line with the Middle School Concept, there was ample time for team planning, grade level planning and mentor/mentee meetings. Middle school teachers had the benefit of

one hour and thirty minutes of daily planning time along with regularly planned extended planning time, which lasted up to two hours. This setting not only had the potential to facilitate the mentor/mentee relationship, it also facilitated the building of relationships with the entire grade level teachers at both the school and county levels.

Bloom and Davis (1998) stated that principals should integrate the beginning teacher into the larger school community and encourage professional relationships. This task was less difficult when given the middle school setting. The literature proposed that the mentee should have time to observe the mentor or other experienced colleagues modeling professional teaching practices (Gilbert, 2005). This proposal posed a problem in this setting unless the beginning teacher sought to observe teachers on another grade level or unless provisions were made for substitutes to cover classes. The middle schools' new teachers in this study were not involved in observing other teachers. In addition, the opportunity for the mentors to observe the new teachers in order to offer constructive criticisms was not provided. At this school level, the mentor solely determined the services provided during mentoring.

In a review of the literature, the Education Commission of the States (2005) found strong evidence that attrition is greater in secondary schools especially in the areas of Math and Science. In this study, the high school setting was the setting that exhibited the most drawbacks to an adequate provision of support. Since the teachers were departmentalized and were located on the same hall, if the beginning teacher was not in the same department as the mentor, proximity became a barrier to support. Time also became a barrier in the high school setting in that the planning period of the mentor may or may not coincide with the mentee's planning period. In this instance, meetings must

occur before or after school or in rushed conversations in the hallways. In this study, the mentor at the high school solely determined the provision of induction activities. Allen (2005) reported that particular focus should be on stemming secondary school's teacher attrition, which could be addressed with intensive teacher induction. This intensive new teacher induction was not evident at the high school in this study.

Research Question 5: What induction services do beginning teachers, mentors and principals identify as missing but needed in the induction process?

The responses to research question 5 varied from beginning teacher to mentor to principal. However, the most prevalent answer was a formal policy, which would delineate what should be provided in an induction program. These responses were congruent with the induction services identified in the literature.

Although the literature supports the position that beginning teachers look to the principal for support and guidance on how to perform at school (Richards, 2004), it was evident in this study that the major support providers were the mentors. These mentors usually communicated the school's expectations as well as day-to-day assistance. In this study, the timing of the assignment of mentors varied and the beginning teachers as well as the mentors spoke of the benefits of earlier assignments.

In an Alliance for Excellent Education (2004) report, one of the functions of the mentor was to observe new teachers in the classroom, offering them feedback and demonstrating effective teaching methods. The findings in this study indicate that this was not a consistent practice throughout the county. In fact, the mentees felt that observations and feedback from the mentors would be beneficial and hoped that it would happen in the future.

Although the new teachers in this study felt they were thoroughly prepared through their college education program to deal with content related issues, they did not feel prepared to deal with classroom management, dealing with special needs students and behavior issues. This perception corresponded with the results from the *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher 2006: Expectations and Experiences* which revealed that one of the reasons beginning teachers stated they decided to leave the teaching profession was because they needed more training to prepare from their first year in the classroom. In addition, in a 1978 beginning teacher study, Garde concluded that beginning teachers were not as well prepared as they had thought and faced unanticipated gaps in their professional competencies. Three out of five mentors agreed that the colleges were failing to prepare the new teachers to meet their first year challenges.

The mentors in this study overwhelmingly felt that a formal policy was necessary to alleviate some of the variation in the provisions given to new teachers. This formal policy should address documentation of observations and meetings and would provide uniform procedures to ensure continuity of provisions to the new teachers. California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA) is an example of a multifaceted program with a variety of components, which includes a formal policy. The initiation of this program drastically affected California's higher-than-average teacher retention rates (Tushnet et al., 2002). Although this formal policy was seen as necessary, the mentors felt that there should be some flexibility allowed so that the individual needs of the mentee would be taken into consideration. Ballantyne and Hansford (1995) agreed that mentors might provide many varied activities depending on the individualized needs of the beginning teacher. The principals in this study agreed with the mentors that a

formal, uniform policy would ensure a more fluent process at each school location. They also felt that documentation related to the mentoring aspect should be included in that policy.

Researchers contend that principals, mentors and colleagues should seek to furnish a learner-centered atmosphere in which induction into the profession is personalized to the beginning teacher's developmental needs (Bransford et al., 2000; Stuart, 2002). The principals in this study indicated the need to provide professional development relative to the needs of the beginning teacher at the school level.

The concept of providing time for formative observations with feedback and observations of mentors or other veteran colleagues is greatly supported by many new teacher induction researchers (Angelle, 2002; Britton et al., 2000; Chesley et al., 1997; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Gilbert, 2005; Johnson & Kardos, 2005). The principals in this study felt that time for observations and feedback should be a norm for all induction programs. The element of non-evaluative feedback was an issue that one principal felt could be addressed through the use of other personnel completing the observations and providing the feedback.

Conclusions

Many schools are seeking ways to better support their new teachers in making the transition to teacher. Based on the responses to the four research questions in this study, certain conclusions were drawn:

Conclusion 1: *Although first year teachers' experiences may be challenging the high levels of support enculturated in the schools helped the experiences to be rewarding and eased the transition into the profession.*

First year teachers' experiences were met with mixed sentiments ranging from extremely challenging to extremely rewarding. New teachers struggled with identifying where they belong and how they would be perceived. However, they tended to overcome these challenges when administrators and other teachers including their mentors adequately supported them. A sense of belonging and developing collegial relationships also helped the new teachers to be acclimated into the culture of the school as well as the teaching profession.

Conclusion 2: *Formal induction policies would provide consistency in the induction services provided to new teachers.*

Induction services available to beginning teacher were wide-ranged and greatly varied depending on the mentors' perception of the beginning teachers needs or the requirements outlined in school policy. Collectively, the induction services available to new teachers included orientation, assignment of mentors, provision of professional development, observations and assessments, and opportunities for reflection on instructional strategies. These induction services were inconsistently provided from school to school and would be better regulated if policies were in place.

Conclusion 3: *Consistent provision of induction activities from principals and mentors with recognition of what beginning teachers identified as beneficial would serve to aid the transition process.*

School administrators should take a serious look at what items were reported by the beginning teachers as what was needed and what would be beneficial if added. The mentor must be knowledgeable of the needs of beginning teachers and be able to meet those needs as the new teacher progresses through the school year

Conclusion 4: *Regardless of the various school level barriers to providing quality induction practices, Elementary, Middle and High Schools' administrators should find ways to institute consistent induction practices.*

At the middle and high schools, it was obvious that the sole determination of induction supports were based on the opinions and perceptions of the mentors. These perceptions may not always be in harmony with the new teachers' actual needs. Consistent provision of induction activities including time for these activities would ensure all new teachers adequate support regardless of their school levels. The possibility of stemming middle and high school teacher attrition reside with the provision of intensive new teacher induction.

Conclusion 5: *Although a formal policy is necessary, there is also the need for principals to assume active roles in the induction process rather than regulating this task to other staff members namely the mentor*.

Principals and mentors should coordinate their efforts to actively induct new teachers into the profession by providing frequent meetings, instructional monitoring and feedback regarding professional practice. Principals and mentors should insist on a formal teacher induction policy that would ensure continuity and would facilitate documentation of the actual provision of supports. Depending merely on the mentors' discretion of what induction supports to provide is not consistent with best practices.

Implications

These findings should assist Georgia educators as they plan for induction programs to assist new teachers. The findings of this study will be shared with the Superintendent, Staff Development Coordinator and Principals for use in ensuring

continuous induction program improvement within the school district. Results from this study can also provide valuable information to school leaders, school districts and policy makers at the local level as decisions are made regarding the implementation of policies and administrative actions intended to increase teacher retention.

Other audiences for this study include colleges of education. Although this study did not seek to investigate the teacher education programs' role in induction, professors of education can use this data in curriculum planning in order to identify the discrepancy in what pre-service teachers are currently being taught and what new teachers, mentors and principals identify as necessary components of training programs. In addition, educational leadership professors can utilize this research to assist aspiring school administrators in identifying the components of effective induction programs and in recognizing their significant role as administrators in facilitating the support new teachers need.

Recommendations for Further Research and Practice

Results of this study substantiate general themes in the literature regarding effective comprehensive new teacher induction programs and give rise to the same implications prevalent in the literature. The study provided insights into the lived experiences of beginning teachers, mentors and principals regarding their roles and participation in new teacher induction in a small suburban school district in the Middle Georgia area. The data presented in this study indicated that there are some inconsistencies in the level of support received by the new teachers in this school district. The results could be utilized as a basis for additional investigation into the wide variations in the supports provided at the different school levels. This study can be

strengthened with some additional research. The following are recommendations for further research.

1. Studies to identify best practices from formalized induction programs would give insight on how formally constructed induction programs are structured and operated.
2. Quantitative studies to determine the effect of the number of induction activities provided on rates of attrition at the differing school levels.
3. Studies, which compare induction supports provided at low academically performing schools with induction supports provided at high academically performing schools.
4. Studies should be conducted which include qualitative and quantitative components which address induction activities that were provided however were not mentioned by the participants.

Simultaneous with research, administrators should institute practices, where practical, that predominate the literature and that were reinforced in this study as being effective and beneficial in the induction process. It is specifically recommended that:

1. Formal processes/procedures be developed to ensure continuity, consistency and quality through appropriate administration including such practices as:
    a. The principal should reflect leadership that facilitates the induction process with increased communication with the new teacher.
    b. There should be ongoing professional development training for the mentees and mentors.

c. There should be a provision of formative observations and assessments with feedback by assigned personnel to support the new teacher and to encourage professional growth.

d. There should be a provision of opportunities for mentee's reflection on instructional strategies.

e. There should be routine assessments of the induction process with resulting planning of program improvement strategies.

2. There should be time specifically allocated for mentor/mentee collaboration and communication.

3. There should be a proactive approach to supporting new teacher utilizing the knowledge of typical new teacher challenges.

4. There should be mandatory Teacher Support Specialist training for administrators and personnel assigned to inducting the new teacher.

5. There should be a formal plan tailored to the needs of the individual beginning teacher—Individual Induction Plan.

It is further recommended that school districts devise a way to financially support as well as mandate the support of beginning teachers. As was stated in the introduction of this research study, school districts, the state of Georgia as well as the nation lose significant amounts of money when beginning teachers leave the teaching profession. The recommendations set forth in this study can be instituted if there is a coordination of efforts between the building administrators and the mentors. Individual principals can have a significant impact on the quality of the induction program in their schools by implementing a leadership model, which facilitates a culture of support for the faculty.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPROVAL FROM THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Georgia Southern University
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-681-5465
Fax: 912-681-0719 Ovrsight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu

Veazey Hall 2021
P.O. Box 8005
Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Mable Webb Anderson
946 Summit Avenue
Macon, GA 31211

CC: Abebaychu Tekleselassie, Ph.D.
P.O. Box 8131

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

Date: December 20, 2007

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

After a review of your proposed research project numbered:"H08113" , and titled **"Beneficial Induction Activities for Georgia Teachers"**, it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,

N. Scott Pierce
Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER FROM SUPERINTENDENT

Mable Webb Anderson
946 Summit Avenue
Macon, GA 31211

December 9, 2007

Jim LeBrun, Superintendent of Schools

Jones County Schools
125 Stewart Avenue
Gray, GA 31032

Dear Mr. Jim LeBrun:

I am a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. One of the degree requirements is the completion of a research study. Hence, I am asking your permission to conduct this study in the Jones County School District.

The research study is entitled *Beneficial Induction Activities for Georgia Teachers*. The purpose of my study is to identify the induction activities that are beneficial to beginning teachers. After the expenses incurred in attracting and hiring new teachers, retaining those same teachers is of considerable interest and importance to school administrators. Determining what it is that makes a difference in the first year of teaching and in particular those induction activities that are the most beneficial to beginning teachers will provide necessary information on an increasingly important topic.

I am requesting to interview five beginning teachers, their mentors, and their principals. I would like to select a representative group from each school level—two elementary schools, two middle schools and the high school. There will be no involvement of students. The name of the respondents will not appear on any of the results and all of the individual responses will be kept confidential. Only group findings will be reported.

Thank you for your considering my request to conduct the study in your school district. I believe the results of the study will be beneficial to your district as well as to others in the state. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or for further clarification. I can be reached by email mwlha25@aol.com, phone 478-361-4252, or mail 946 Summit Avenue, Macon, GA 31211.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mable Anderson

Mable Webb Anderson
Georgia Southern University, Doctoral Candidate

Approved

Jones County Schools

JIM L. LeBRUN, SUPERINTENDENT
P.O. BOX 519
GRAY, GEORGIA 31032

James T. Stone, Chairman
Mark W. Andrews
Willie L. Fluellen
Larry J. Haskins
Deloras T. Moon

December 10, 2007

Mable Webb Anderson:

Please consider this letter as official approval of your request to conduct your dissertation research in the Jones County School System. I am very interested in your topic. If either I or my Director of Personnel may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate in asking. I wish you the very best as you undertake this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Jim L. LeBrun, Superintendent
Jones County Schools

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT

LETTER

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Mable Anderson

TITLE OF PROJECT: *Beneficial Induction Activities for Georgia Teachers*

Informed Consent Letter

The purpose of this letter of informed consent is to explain a research project in which I am requesting your participation. My name is Mable Anderson and I am a doctoral candidate at Georgia Southern University completing the dissertation requirements for my Ed D in Educational Leadership. This research project will be conducted under the direction of Dr. Abebayehu Tekleselassie, Faculty Advisor, Georgia Southern University. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer. By no means is there any pressure for you to participate in this research.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this research is to identify induction activities available for beginning teachers and to assess how these activities are beneficial for teachers during their induction. The study will investigate the induction activities provided to beginning teachers at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Five schools will be involved and 15 interviews will be conducted.

PROCEDURES:

Participation in this research will include completion of a 60-minute interview. The procedures for this study include interviews and collection of documents pertaining to school level induction. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with beginning teachers, their mentors, and their principals within your school district. Your interview will last approximately 60 minutes and will take place at the school site. Interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed at a later point in time. Only the researcher will have access to the data and a pseudonym will be used to provide confidentiality.

RISKS:

The inherent nature of the interview process may cause some stress or discomfort. I understand that I may experience some discomfort during this process as I share personal feelings and experiences about the induction process.

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

BENEFITS:

The benefits of this study include improved understanding of the school level induction activities that are valuable to beginning teachers. This research will lead to further discussion among school level personnel about current practices and methods to improve school level induction. At the end of this research project, you may contact the researcher for a summary of the research results.

DURATION/TIME:

The individual, semi-structured interviews conducted in this research study will last approximately 60 minutes each. As emerging views may become apparent during the interview process, the researcher may extend the interview to a total of no more than 90 minutes.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

Your identity as a participant in this study will be held confidential. Pseudonyms will be used to replace your name, the name of your school, and the name of your school district in any reports of the information collected through interviews and documents.

Audio tapes of interviews will be made. The audio tapes will remain in the principal investigator's possession except when being transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. At all other times the audiotapes will be stored in the investigator's home in a locked file cabinet. It is recognized that you have the right to withdraw your permission to allow use of all or part of the transcript of the interview in which you take part. A copy of the transcript will be forwarded to you to allow you to check for accuracy. You will be invited to confirm, clarify, or reject any parts of your transcribed statements. After you have approved the transcripts, the audio tapes will be erased and then deposited into the principal investigator's trash receptacle.

RIGHT TO ASK QUESTIONS:

As a study participant, you have the right to ask questions and have them answered to your satisfaction. If you have any questions about this study, please contact the researcher named above or the researcher's faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the informed consent letter. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs by email at {HYPERLINK "mailto:oversight@georgiasouthern.edu"} or call (912) 681-0843.

COMPENSATION:

No monetary compensation is connected to participation in this study.

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:

Your participation is strictly voluntarily and you are free to refuse participation or to discontinue participation at any time. You are free not to answer any questions during interviews at any time you choose.

PENALTY:

There is no penalty for deciding not to participate in the study and you may decide at any time that you do not want to participate further and may withdraw without penalty.

SUBJECT'S PERMISSION:

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I verify that I am 18 years of age or older. I have had all of my questions answered and hereby give my voluntary consent for participation in this project as indicated by my signature below.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

TITLE OF PROJECT: *Beneficial Induction Activities for Georgia Teachers*

Principal Investigator: Mable Webb Anderson,
946 Summit Avenue,
Macon, GA 31211
(478) 746-9782
{ HYPERLINK "mailto:mwlha25@aol.com" }

Faculty Advisor: Abebayehu Tekleselassie, Ph.D.
Georgia Southern University
P.O. Box 8131
Statesboro, Georgia, 30460-8131
(912) 681-5250
{ HYPERLINK "mailto:atekleselassie@georgiasouthern.edu" }

_____ _____
Participant Signature Date

I, the undersigned verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

_____ _____
Investigator Signature Date

APPENDIX D

MENTEE EMERGING INTERVIEW GUIDE

Mentee
Emerging Interview Questions:

I appreciate you giving of your time to answer some questions related to your experiences with the induction process here at your school. Let me assure you that any information that you provide will be confidential. Your responses will be presented as a part of my research only in summarized form.

1. As you reflect on your experiences as a first year teacher, what are the first thoughts that come to your mind?
2. Tell me about the experiences that you were provided to help you grow as a first year teacher at the school level.
3. What kind of guidance did you have to help with problems that first year teachers encounter?
4. Tell me about the people who provided guidance to you. Volunteer? Assigned?
5. If you had been the mentor/principal, what would you have done for your mentee?
6. What were the most satisfying/beneficial experiences that mentoring/principal support provided?
7. What were the least satisfying/beneficial experiences that mentoring/principal support provided?
8. Overall how would you characterize the mentoring experiences/principal support that you had?
9. Evaluate your transition into the teaching profession.
10. Looking back, was there any guidance that you wish you had gotten but did not?

APPENDIX E

MENTOR/PRINCIPAL EMERGING INTERVIEW GUIDE

Mentor/Principal
Emerging Interview Questions:

I appreciate you giving of your time to answer some questions related to your experiences with the induction process here at your school. Let me assure you that any information that you provide will be confidential. Your responses will be presented as a part of my research only in summarized form.

1. Describe the induction program at your school?
2. Describe your role as a mentor/principal to the first year teacher.
3. What types of supports did you provide as the mentor/principal to the first year teacher?
4. What supports did you feel were the most valuable for the first year teacher?
5. What effects do you feel the supports had on the first year teacher's transitioning into the teaching profession and on the teacher growth and development as a teacher?
6. How did the beginning teacher respond to you as a mentor/principal?
7. Were there any components missing that you think should have been in place?