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The experiences of alternately certified teachers with teacher mentoring, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement

Charyl L. Pace
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Walden University
2010

Abstract

The Experiences of Alternately Certified Teachers With Teacher Mentoring, Teacher
Effectiveness, and Student Achievement

by

Charyl L. Pace

M.S., Central Connecticut State University, 1988

B.S., Central Connecticut State University, 1985

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

The Teacher as Leader

Walden University

October 2010

Abstract

Alternately certified teachers (ACTs) are teachers who receive teacher training in an accelerated program provided by alternate certification programs (ACPs). Induction/mentoring programs are provided to ACTs as a source of additional training. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine ACTs' perceptions of their effectiveness as teachers in relation to their students' achievement and the support provided to them as new teachers by their induction/mentoring training. The research question explored if there was a relationship between the amount of support provided to the ACTs from their induction/mentoring programs and the ACTs' perception of their effectiveness in relation to student achievement. The primary data sources consisted of journal data and semistructured interviews from 2 ACTs. Open, axial, and selective coding strategies were used as one component of the data analysis. Conventional content analysis was used to explore the perceptions of the 2 ACTs interviewed. Analysis revealed that ability to manage a classroom and the support provided by induction/mentoring programs may influence the ACTs' perceptions of effectiveness in terms of student achievement. Results also suggested that ACTs' induction/mentoring programs did not successfully facilitate a transition into the teaching profession. The results from this study can be used by mentoring/induction program directors, and school administrators to inform policy and curricular modifications to induction/mentoring programs that would optimize ACTs' perceptions of their effectiveness as teachers and student achievement. The use of these data may contribute to social change by providing the ACT with an improved support system during the ACTs' first year in the classroom.

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Dedication

I want to thank my family for the sacrifices they have made to help me through this experience. Your faith in me kept the roller-coaster ride manageable when it was difficult. Mom, thank you for cheering on the sidelines, and dad for expecting me to be a doctor rather than a nurse. Stan, you have been by my side through this whole experience, thank you for the encouraging words when I needed them the most and most of all for believing I could accomplish anything. To my daughter and grandchildren, thank you for understanding when I had to do my homework and could not spend time with you. And a special thanks to my colleagues who always provided words of encouragement.

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Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction to the Study	1
Introduction.....	1
Problem Statement	3
Nature of the Study	5
Purpose of the Study	8
Conceptual Framework.....	10
Definition of Terms.....	14
Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope.....	15
Assumptions.....	15
Limitations of the Study.....	16
Scope.....	17
Significance of the Study	18
Summary	20
Organization of the Study	20
Section 2: Literature Review	22
Introduction.....	22
Induction and Mentoring.....	23
Introduction.....	23
Alternately Certified Teachers and Induction.....	25

Induction Programs	27
Other Support Systems	29
Administrator’s Role in the Induction Process	30
Mentoring for Alternately Certified Teachers	32
Mentor Training and Benefits	33
Successful Induction Programs	35
Recommendations	35
Summary	36
Teacher Effectiveness	38
Alternate Certification and Teacher Effectiveness	38
Definitions of Teacher Effectiveness	38
ACTs’ Effectiveness	41
Principals’ Perceptions of the Effectiveness of ACTs	43
Summary	44
Student Achievement	45
Teacher Preparation and Student Achievement	45
Professional Development and Student Achievement	47
Teacher Effectiveness and Student Achievement	47
Other Factors Influencing Student Achievement	48
Student Achievement in High-Poverty Schools	49
Student Achievement and Society	50

Summary	50
Research Methodologies Found in the Literature	51
Introduction.....	51
Case Studies	52
Other Studies.....	53
Summary	56
Section 3: Research Methods.....	59
Introduction.....	59
Research Design and Approach	60
Research Questions	62
Context of the Study	63
Measures for Ethical Protection of Participants.....	63
Role of the Researcher	65
Participant Selection Criteria	67
Data Collection Procedures.....	68
Data Analysis	70
Validity/Trustworthiness.....	73
Reliability.....	73
Validity/Trustworthiness.....	74
Section 4: Results.....	76
Introduction.....	76

Participant Selection Process	77
Community Partner	77
Participant Selection	77
Data Acquisition	78
Journal Data	78
Interview Data.....	79
Systems To Track Data.....	80
Findings.....	82
Introduction.....	82
Journal Data	83
Interview Data.....	84
Research Questions.....	84
Dana’s Journal Data Analysis for Subquestion 1	85
Introduction.....	85
Induction/Mentoring	85
Opportunities to Seek Advice	87
Effective Teaching	88
Student Engagement	91
Dana’s Interview Data Analysis for Subquestion 1	92
Induction Program	92
Mentoring.....	95

Other Support Systems	96
Effective Teaching	99
Induction/Mentoring Affect on Teacher Effectiveness.....	100
Summary	101
Dana’s Journal Data Analysis for Subquestion 2	102
Introduction.....	102
Difficulties with Student Achievement.....	102
Student Success.....	104
Mixed Results	105
Dana’s Interview Data Analysis for Subquestion 2	106
Student Achievement Definition.....	106
Success Stories.....	106
Induction/Mentoring and Student Achievement.....	107
Summary	108
Tom’s Journal Data Analysis for Subquestion 1	108
Introduction.....	108
Induction/Mentoring	109
Tom’s Attitude	111
New Strategies Produce Results	113
Difficult Students	115
Bad News	116

Disappointment.....	118
Summary.....	120
Tom’s Interview Data Analysis for Subquestion 1.....	121
Overwhelmed and in Culture Shock.....	121
Classroom Dynamics.....	122
Induction/Mentoring.....	123
School Environment.....	125
Administrative Support.....	126
Classroom Management.....	130
Tom’s Definition of Teacher Effectiveness.....	132
Teacher Effectiveness.....	134
Failure Is Not An Option.....	137
Summary.....	139
Tom’s Journal Data Analysis for Subquestion 2.....	140
Introduction.....	140
Tom’s Interpretation of Student Achievement.....	140
Differentiation.....	141
Challenges.....	142
Support From Other Teachers.....	143
Student Achievement.....	143
Summary.....	146

Tom’s Interview Data Analysis for Subquestion 2.....	147
Tom’s Definition of Student Achievement.....	147
Induction/Mentoring.....	150
Classroom Management and Student Achievement.....	152
Perceptions of Student Achievement.....	153
Summary.....	154
Discrepant Cases.....	156
Patterns, Relationships, and Themes.....	158
Support Systems.....	159
Teacher Effectiveness.....	160
Student Achievement.....	161
Procedures for Quality Assurance.....	162
Reliability/Trustworthiness.....	162
Peer Review.....	162
Member Checking.....	163
Triangulation.....	163
Summary.....	163
Section 5: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations.....	166
Introduction.....	166
Summary of Purpose.....	166
Summary of Research Problems.....	167

Summary of Findings.....	169
Interpretation of Findings	169
Significance of Subquestion 1	170
Significance of Subquestion 2	171
Literature to Support Findings	172
Conclusions.....	174
Implications for Social Change.....	175
Recommendations for Action	177
Recommendations for Further Study	178
Researcher’s Experience in the Research Process	179
Researcher Bias.....	179
Effects of the Research on the Participants.....	180
Researcher’s Thoughts Regarding the Study	181
Conclusion	182
References.....	184
Appendix A: Interview Guide.....	200
Appendix B: Invitation to Participate in Study.....	203
Appendix C: Consent Form	205
Appendix D: Secondary Interview Questions.....	209
Appendix E: Participant 1—Sample Journal Entry	212
Appendix F: Participant 2—Sample Journal Entry	214

Appendix G: Participant 1—Interview Transcript.....	217
Appendix H: Participant 2—Interview Transcript.....	256
Curriculum Vitae	298

Section 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The teacher shortages in the 1980s presented a need to develop alternate teacher certification program across the United States to fill teacher vacancies. Alternate certification programs (ACPs) provide an abbreviated teacher training experience, sometimes as little as 2 weeks, compared with that of the traditionally trained teacher (TTT), who generally receives 4 to 5 years of training prior to entering the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2005c; Feistritzer, 2005; Harvey, 2005; Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Torres, 2006). This shortened training experience has caused concern about the quality of the alternately certified teacher (ACT) compared with that of the TTT. A literature search shows mixed and contradictory results from studies related to the issues of teacher quality, student achievement, and alternate forms of teacher training (Burkett, 2006; Ding & Sherman 2006; Harvey, 2005; Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Milanowski, 2004; Rockoff, 2004). South Carolina mandated an ACP known as the *Program of Alternate Certification for Educators (PACE)* and trained its first group of ACTs in 2003 (South Carolina Department of Education, n.d.), but no research has been conducted on the quality of support that PACE ACTs received from mentoring and/or induction training and the teachers' perceptions of their own classroom effectiveness and student achievement.

Since the program's inception in 2003, South Carolina's PACE (South Carolina Department of Education, n.d.) has trained approximately 400 new teachers each year.

PACE provides career changers the opportunity to enter the teaching profession while receiving training from the program. Many PACE teachers obtain teaching positions in schools that are difficult to staff; such schools are found in both urban and rural areas. Quality support systems such as induction programs or mentoring can provide improved levels of teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Maciejewski, 2007). These additional support systems may be advantageous for PACE teachers who otherwise lack the student teaching component found in other teacher training programs.

The issue of teacher quality and student achievement from the perspective of the ACT is compounded by the level and quality of new teacher support provided through mentoring and/or induction programs during those teachers' critical first year in the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2005b, 2005c). New teacher support systems such as induction training and mentoring vary from school to school, district to district, and state to state, if they exist at all. Although South Carolina is one of the states in which induction training is mandated (Wong, 2001), the literature revealed no studies documenting whether or how this training affected PACE teachers' effectiveness and student achievement.

Some researchers (Anfara & Schmid, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Rustique-Forrester, 2005; Salinas, Kritsonis, & Herrington, 2006; Torff & Sessions, 2006) use the terms *teacher quality* and *teacher effectiveness* interchangeably in the literature. Murnane and Steele (2007) defined effective teachers "as those who are skilled at raising the achievement levels of their students" (p. 17).

Researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2005c; Mahatha, 2005) contend underprepared teachers can hinder student learning, making the need for quality teacher training and professional development more important than ever.

Problem Statement

The literature (Cherubini, 2007; Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Maciejewski, 2007; Wong, Britton, & Ganser, 2005) indicated support systems such as induction training and mentoring may influence teacher effectiveness and student achievement. According to Maciejewski (2007), additional support structures or systems such as induction training and mentoring programs are desperately needed for new teachers. Maciejewski found funding for new teacher induction programs were available in less than half of the United States, and those that had funding lacked the appropriate elements that are necessary to ensure a quality induction experience.

The nationwide problem involving recruitment and retention of quality teachers has increased since teacher shortages began in the mid-1980s. ACPs such as PACE have helped fill teacher vacancies by providing an abbreviated training program to the many college graduates and career changers who desire to teach. Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, and Heilig (2005) suggested ACT training is perceived to be inferior to that of TTTs in terms of teacher effectiveness and student achievement, especially in hard-to-staff settings, at least in the geographic area targeted by their study—Houston, Texas. In 2008, the state of South Carolina hired more than 400 ACTs to fill positions in hard-to-staff schools (M. F. Harvey, personal communication, November 17, 2008), but no

investigations have been conducted to determine whether teachers believed the additional support provided by their district's induction and/or mentoring program had any impact on their perceived effectiveness or student achievement.

Contributing to the perception of the disparity in training and its potential connection with underachieving students are the more than 600 ACPs nationwide, the quality of which varies (Darling-Hammond, 2005b; Feistritzer, 2005; Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007). As Murnane and Steele (2007) noted it was difficult to generalize about ACP's effectiveness because of the lack of uniformity between the groups. The variances in the ACPs included the selection process for prospective ACTs, the programs' management, and how the prospective ACTs received the curriculum and training. The lack of standardization of ACPs nationwide threatens the quality of training an ACT receives (Harvey, 2005). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) mandates a highly qualified teacher in each classroom. The absence or presence of a highly qualified teacher in the classroom has an influence on student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005), underscoring the importance of providing thorough and consistent training to teachers.

Quality mentoring and induction programs are particularly valuable to ACTs to help counterbalance the abbreviated nature of their teacher-training period. Still, many factors other than training contribute to the challenge of ensuring the presence of quality teachers in the classroom. Some of these factors include teacher recruitment and retention (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005); teacher work

conditions (Center for Teaching Quality, 2006; Cleveland, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2004); teacher support from administration and peers, student behavior, and new teacher self-efficacy beliefs (Anthony & Kritsonis, 2007; Malow-Iroff, O'Connor, & Bisland, 2004).

Literature on new teacher support systems (induction and mentoring), teacher effectiveness, and student achievement is readily available but limited research is available on the interrelationship of these topics from the perspective of ACTs. The relationship between support systems provided to ACTs and the impact these programs have on ACTs' perceived effectiveness in relation to student achievement needs exploration. To date, no studies have examined whether first-year PACE teachers' experiences in the classroom were optimally supported by the mentoring and/or induction training they received from the program, and the teachers' perceived effectiveness in terms of student achievement. This case study will tell the stories of two PACE ACTs who received support from mentoring and/or induction. The stories will focus on the teachers' perceived effectiveness in the classroom in terms of student achievement. Section 2 explores the literature regarding alternate certification, teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and additional support structures including induction and mentoring and the relationship between them.

Nature of the Study

Merriam (2002) suggested the nature of qualitative research requires the researcher to explore the meanings participants place on their interpretation of their

experiences. These meanings evolve over time, depending on how the experiences change. Qualitative researchers, who take an interpretive approach, as used for this case study, desire to bring the participants' perspective into the study in order to understand the participants' experience. According to Bassey (2007), Creswell (2003), and Merriam (2002), a case study may have boundaries; time and unit are the boundaries in this case.

The bounded unit in this case study was a group of two PACE ACTs and the experiences they documented during their first year in the classroom. An examination of two PACE ACTs' perceptions regarding the quality of support they received from a mentoring and/or induction program and their teaching experiences in the classroom explored the impact the support system(s) had on teacher quality and student achievement in the teachers' classrooms. Another boundary in this study is time because it examined two PACE ACTs' experiences and perceptions documented by the teachers during the 9-month academic calendar representing their first year in the classroom.

Merriam (2002) stated purposeful selection of the case is dependent on what the researcher wants to learn, resulting in an extension of the existing knowledge or improving practice. Bassey (2007) suggested a case study should portray a convincing story that relates to current research literature. Narrative case studies "tell the story." I used a case study design to conduct my investigation because I wanted to understand whether the additional support (induction and/or mentoring) provided by the ACT's district has an impact on the ACTs' perceptions of their effectiveness in the classroom in terms of student achievement. I told the in-depth story of two ACTs' experiences as they

navigated their first year of teaching in the classroom. Creswell (2007) suggested only one or two individuals should be studied in narrative case study research unless a collective story from a larger group was intended.

Creswell (2007) suggested multiple sources of data are possible in case studies. This case study used two sources for data collection: participants' weekly journals and semi-structured interviews. The participants' journals provided substantial information for this study. The journal format included one single-spaced typed page per week and the study incorporated the journal information from a 9-month academic year. The archived journals chronicled the participants' experiences over their first year in the classroom. In addition to reviewing the teachers' journals, I conducted individual semi-structured interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' classroom experiences in regards to teacher effectiveness and student achievement and the role that induction and/or mentoring played in those experiences. The teachers were in the midst of their second year in the classroom when the interviews took place and provided some added perspective on their first-year's experiences and perceptions relative to the support they received.

The data was analyzed using conventional content analysis, as described by Trochim and Donnelly (2008). In this type of analysis, the researcher approached the data without any preconceptions and allowed the data to unfold or tell the story. During the analysis phase, the data was coded using the open-coding method described in Trochim and Donnelly; as part of this process, sections of text were placed into categories. As

suggested by Creswell (2007), the data analysis consisted of searching for themes and cross-case themes. Contextual analysis from both sets of data followed, and relational analysis explored the relationships between the data sets. Section 3 includes an expanded explanation of the research method.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine first-year PACE ACTs' perceptions of their effectiveness as teachers in relation to the achievement of students in their classrooms and the support provided to them as new teachers by their district's mentoring and/or induction training. The case study focused on the examination of two PACE teachers' electronic journals of their experiences in the classroom and determined if there is a relationship with the quality of support received from mentoring and/or induction training in terms of teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

The PACE program assigned Cohort 6 the task of writing weekly electronic journals for a period of approximately 20 weeks. The PACE program assigned the following topics to be included in each weekly journal entry: planning, pacing, lesson plan implementation, classroom management, discussion of relevant issues related to experiences as a first-year teacher, and a case study following the progress of one student. All of the journal topics relate to one of the following topics: overall teacher duties, student achievement, and teacher effectiveness. As indicated in the entries, teacher duties related to planning, pacing of lessons, lesson plan implementation, and classroom management. The journal entries addressed student achievement with the case study

following the progress of one student. All of the topics addressed teacher effectiveness in the journals. This study explored the journal data to look for relationships in the teachers' experiences as noted in each topic area while focusing on teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

The other data source in this study included multiple semi-structured interviews to clarify the themes that emerged from the journal data. The interviews allowed the teachers to reflect on their experiences during their first year in the classroom and provide their perceptions of their induction/mentoring experience in relation to their effectiveness and the student achievement as noted in their journal entries. The combination of both data sources in this study offered insight on whether ACTs perceive the additional support received from mentoring and induction programs are relative to their teacher effectiveness and student achievement in their classrooms.

NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) requires a highly qualified teacher in each classroom. Strong (2005) explained the revised regulations of NCLB to mean ACTs are considered highly qualified if they receive additional support and rigorous instruction and if they complete their requirements for certification within 3 years. Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) stated, teacher quality relates to student achievement when teachers receive the status of highly qualified in Houston, Texas.

In 2008, more than 400 PACE ACTs were hired to fill hard-to-staff schools (M. F. Harvey, personal communication, November 17, 2008). Despite schools' demonstrated willingness to turn to PACE as a source of teachers, no studies have been conducted

regarding the level of mentoring/induction support PACE ACTs received during their first year in the classroom and their perceived effectiveness and student achievement. Each PACE teacher's mentoring/induction experience is unique but it would be impractical to attempt to investigate the first-year teaching experience of every new PACE teacher. In an attempt to fulfill the intent of NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), an understanding of PACE teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness as teachers in relation to student achievement and the support received from mentoring and/or induction training could allow policy makers to optimize their mentoring and/or induction training. A case study of two teachers' experiences is a practical first step and, according to Creswell (2007), only one or two individuals are necessary for a narrative case study. The review of personal journals conducted as part of this case study yielded rich data on two ACTs' experiences in their first year in the classroom. One-on-one interviews conducted with the two teachers clarified the themes of support these teachers received from mentoring and/or induction training in terms of the teachers' perceptions of effectiveness and student achievement.

Conceptual Framework

Prior to NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), teacher vacancies in rural and urban schools were often filled with under-qualified or uncertified personnel (Darling-Hammond, 2005c). As a means of improving the nation's teacher workforce and thereby the education provided to every child, NCLB focused on ensuring every classroom was staffed by a highly qualified teacher. Accountability systems such as

NCLB require schools to focus on teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The need to quantify teacher effectiveness has stimulated considerable debate in the educational arena about “how to identify highly effective teachers” (Murnane & Steele, 2007, p. 23).

Researchers have taken a closer look at teacher quality and training and its relationship to student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Ding & Sherman, 2006; Jacob & Lefgren, 2004). Blanton, Sindelar, and Correa (2006) suggested NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) changed the way educational leaders look at quality teaching, placing more emphasis on content mastery and verbal ability and less emphasis on pedagogy, which has resulted in a change in how teachers are trained and opened the doors to alternate forms of training. The additional support systems provided to ACTs need to be investigated because the perception of ACTs’ quality or effectiveness is linked to teacher training and student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

ACPs were introduced in the 1980s to address teacher shortages nationwide (Feistritzer, 2005). As of 2005, more than 100 types of alternate teacher training were available in the United States (Feistritzer, 2005). Because no standard exists, the quality and the length of the training experience vary for these ACPs. Some training experiences for ACTs may be as little as 2 weeks, compared with those of TTTs, who generally receive 4 to 5 years of training prior to entering the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2005c; Feistritzer, 2005; Harvey, 2005; Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Torres, 2006). The shortened training experience associated with ACPs has caused concern about the quality

of the ACT compared with that of the TTT. Researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2005c; Mahatha, 2005) contend underprepared teachers can hinder student learning, making the need for quality teacher training and professional development more important than ever. Studies by various researchers (Bowen, 2004; Burkett, 2006; Ding & Sherman, 2006; Harvey, 2005; Milanowski, 2004; Rockoff, 2004; Suell & Piotrowski, 2006) involving the topics of teacher quality and teacher training have produced contradictory results. Some studies indicate no difference in teacher quality between ACTs and TTTs (Cochran-Smith, 2006; Murnane & Steele, 2007), while others cite significant differences (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

Mentoring and induction programs help new teachers transition into the profession and lower the attrition rate of new teachers (Martin, 2008; Strong, 2005; VanderPyl, 2007). Wong et al. (2005) suggested mentoring and induction programs vary in quality and duration throughout the United States. According to Wong et al., the additional support provided to new teachers most commonly appears in the form of a mentorship program that relies on the two participants (mentor and mentee) to seek out each other. Many mentoring situations are primarily nothing more than a “safety net for the new teachers” (Wong et al., 2005, p. 384). Researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2005c; Mahatha, 2005) agree teacher training has an impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Mentoring and induction are forms of professional development and teacher training.

Researchers (Anfara & Schmid, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Rustique-Forrester, 2005; Salinas et al., 2006; Torff & Sessions, 2006) use the terms *teacher quality* and *teacher effectiveness* interchangeably in the literature. Brophy (1986) was one of the first researchers to identify the types of teacher behavior that effect student achievement. Ding and Sherman (2006) discussed the difference between teacher effects and teacher effectiveness when studying student achievement, ultimately indicating that teacher effects included salary, training, gender, and experience, among other factors. They noted the possibility of confusion between teacher effects and teacher effectiveness. Ding and Sherman also noted that school, students, and family play a role in influencing student achievement. Ding and Sherman indicated that teacher effectiveness is related to student characteristics, but emphasized that one must consider the students' own role in learning before determining teacher effects and teacher effectiveness. They suggested effective teachers are aware of their students' learning needs and address those needs with each student.

Several researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2005b; Davis, 2006; Haskins, & Loeb, 2007) agree that teacher quality is the most important factor influencing student achievement. Other researchers (Stronge & Hindman, 2006) suggested some researchers assess teacher effectiveness in terms of student academic achievement over time. According to research, student achievement and teacher quality are related; therefore, teacher preparation programs that focus on content knowledge, pedagogy, and practice produce quality teachers (Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2003). Rockoff (2004) stated students'

test scores have been used as a data source to determine teacher effectiveness. Ding and Sherman (2006) stated policy makers directly relate student test scores with teacher effectiveness.

This case study parallels the studies of prior research (Cherubini, 2007; Ding & Sherman, 2006; Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Rockoff, 2004; Strong, 2005; Stronge & Hindman, 2006; VanderPyl, 2007) in that it seeks to understand the experiences of ACTs in relation to their induction and/or mentoring support, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement. To date, no studies have examined the relationship between first-year PACE teachers' experiences in the classroom, their perceived effectiveness in relation to student achievement, and the degree of support received from mentoring and/or induction training.

Definition of Terms

Alternative certification programs (ACPs): Programs that offer participants “who possess an undergraduate degree in a field other than education to participate in shortened training and/or on-the-job learning experiences that lead to full certification” (Mahatha, 2005, p. 1).

Alternately certified teachers (ACTs): Teachers who have completed or are in the process of completing an alternate teacher certification program.

Program of Alternate Certification for Educators (PACE): An alternate teacher certification program offered by the South Carolina State Department of Education (n.d.).

Induction: A term that refers to programs designed to extend the basic teacher preparation training. These programs may have a variety of different purposes and include many different elements such as “workshops, collaborations, support systems, orientation seminars, and especially mentoring” (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004, p. 683).

Mentoring: A process of “personal guidance provided, usually by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers” (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004, p. 683).

Teacher effectiveness: According to Polk (2006), characteristics of effective teachers include “good prior academic performance, communication skills, creativity, professionalism, pedagogical knowledge, thorough and appropriate student evaluation and assessment, self-development or lifelong learning, personality, talent or content area knowledge, and ability to model concepts in their content area” (p. 23).

Student achievement: For the purpose of this study, the term is defined as being dependent on the teacher’s ability to teach a diverse set of learners, requiring teachers to be diagnosticians that understand the learning process and develop a large set of teaching methods to meet their students’ needs (Darling-Hammond, 2005b).

Traditionally trained teachers (TTTs): Teachers who have received certification by completing a traditional teacher-training program through a college or university.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope

Assumptions

The researcher made several assumptions in this study. It was assumed that the teachers who participated in the study accurately recorded their experiences in their

electronic journals. The interview information is assumed to be an accurate account of the teachers' perceptions. Both of the teachers randomly selected to participate in the case study were members of Cohort 6. Because Cohort 6 consisted of two sessions located in five regions statewide and the curriculum remained the same throughout the state, the researcher assumed both of the PACE teachers received the same quality of teacher training prior to entering the classroom. I assumed that the teachers' experiences and perceptions of their mentoring and/or induction programs were different, as well as how those support systems related to their teacher effectiveness and student achievement, in part because of the teachers' placement in different schools and districts throughout the state.

Limitations of the Study

This study used ACTs trained in South Carolina's PACE. The results of this study may not be generalizable to other ACTs and their mentoring and/or induction programs because of the geographic boundaries established for this study. Induction and/or mentoring programs vary in quality and duration (Maciejewski, 2007) as do alternate teacher certification programs (Harvey, 2005). Although replication of the electronic weekly journals can produce reliability, the possibility exists that the interviews may not give a clear and accurate representation of the teachers' experiences and perceptions; the researcher's presence may have biased the participant's responses. To overcome the possibility of biasing the participant's responses, I provided the interview questions to

each participant prior to their interviews so that each participant had adequate time to process the questions and prepare his or her responses.

Researcher bias may be a limitation in this study because the researcher is an instructor in the PACE program. The researcher minimized bias by compiling the data from an academic yearlong journal assignment to self-describe the participants' first-year experiences in the classroom. In an effort to reduce researcher bias, the individual interviews were conducted secondary to the review of journal entries and were based on prepared questions that were peer-reviewed and provided to the teachers in advance of the interview. The study participants reviewed the researcher's findings and indicated the findings were accurate with the exception of one omission. The second participant indicated I did not include his advanced degree in the introduction to the findings. I reviewed the journal data and the interview transcripts again and could not find the information regarding his advanced degree. I corrected the omission for the participant because he reported it to me during the member checking process.

Scope

As suggested in Creswell (2007), narrative case studies should include only one or two individuals unless the intention was to produce a collective story from a larger group. The scope of the proposed study included two ACTs' experiences during their first year in the classroom, as documented through weekly electronic journals filed as part of a program assignment from fall 2008 through spring 2009. These journals are archived and in the possession of the South Carolina PACE. In addition to the data retrieved from the

archived electronic journals, participants were individually interviewed to examine the relationship between the participants' mentoring/induction experiences and the perceived impact of these experiences on teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

According to Creswell (2007), case studies should focus on one to three participants. Creswell also indicated that case studies should clearly identify themes related in the case to understand the research problem. The themes in this case study focused on the perceptions and experiences of two PACE ACTs during their first year in the classroom in relation to their induction/mentoring programs, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement. As noted in Creswell, the study provided a chronological account of the related themes that develop during the teachers' first year in the classroom. The participants selected for this study were volunteers from PACE Cohort 6. Of the 431 PACE teachers in this cohort, 14 teachers responded to the email to volunteer for the study.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the body of knowledge needed to address the problem of providing quality teachers for every child and quality induction and/or mentoring programs to every new teacher by studying the experiences of two first-year ACTs and their perceptions of effectiveness and student achievement. The results of this study provides insights that may inform policy makers, state departments of education, legislators, and school districts of the implications for positive social change by providing

the story of two ACTs' perceptions of the role induction/mentoring played in their experiences with teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

This study is significant because limited research has been conducted relating ACT training and support to teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Harvey (2005) concluded the results of the research conducted comparing ACT's and TTT's effectiveness was contradictory and inconclusive. Perhaps more important to policy makers in South Carolina, no research has been reported that relates the perceptions of PACE-trained teachers' effectiveness and student achievement to the quality of those teachers' induction and/or mentoring program. Another area in which the study may be significant is the possibility of its results indicating the need for curricular modifications to the induction and/or mentoring programs offered to ACTs to increase teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

The primary focus of this case study was to examine two PACE teachers' perceptions of their experiences in the classroom and determine if there is a relationship with the quality of support received from mentoring and/or induction training in terms of teacher effectiveness and student achievement. This study contributes to positive social change in that its findings inform policy makers of alternately certified first-year teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness and student achievement based on the additional support received from PACE's mentoring and/or induction programs.

Summary

This case study tells the story of two PACE ACTs based on the chronicles of their weekly journals, prepared as part of an assignment during their first year in the classroom and subsequently archived. The interviews conducted during the teachers' second year in the classroom clarified the themes extracted from the archived weekly journals. The study focused on the support the two teachers received from their mentors and/or induction programs during their first year in the classroom and how that support affects the teachers' perception of their own effectiveness and student achievement. The interrelationship of the following themes was addressed from the perspective of two alternately certified PACE teachers: additional support mechanisms (mentoring and/or induction) provided for the PACE teachers, PACE teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness, and their perceived impact on student achievement.

Organization of the Study

Section 2 offers a review of the literature regarding the relationships between alternate certification, teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and mentoring and induction programs. The next section discusses the reasons for ACPs as well as the needs of ACTs. Section 2 explores the themes of teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and mentoring and induction programs separately and in relation to each other through various research studies. Section 3 describes the methodology used in the study, including its possible limitations. Section 4 presents the findings and results of the study.

Section 5 offers a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

Section 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review explores the role additional support mechanisms (induction training and mentoring) have on ACTs' effectiveness and student achievement.

Discussions include the following topics found in the literature: (a) mentoring and induction as support systems for ACTs; (b) how alternate teacher certification and induction programs evolved; and (c) how the ACTs' support mechanisms (induction and/or mentoring), teacher effectiveness, and student achievement are related. An examination of teacher effectiveness and its relationship to student achievement include the factors that influence both teacher effectiveness and student achievement. A discussion of the following topics includes; the interrelationship between ACT training, teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and the support systems provided to new teachers.

This section includes subsections addressing ACT support systems (induction and/or mentoring), teacher effectiveness, and student achievement. The introduction provides an overview of the chapter's contents and the section summary provides an explanation of how the subtopics are related. In the early stages of the literature review phase of the study, the researcher explored the general topic of ACTs' perceptions of their training. As the research progressed, it became apparent there was a need to continue further literature review in the subtopic areas of teacher quality or teacher effectiveness, mentoring and induction, and student achievement. The literature review

included peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, personal conversations, books, abstracts, and reports and papers from annual meetings.

Induction and Mentoring

Introduction

Induction programs date back to the 1980s, spurred by the onset of teacher shortages (Glassford & Salinitri, 2007; Marable & Raimondi, 2007). Thirty states have mandated induction programs and the remaining states implemented some form of induction (Marable & Raimondi, 2007). Generally, induction involves the first 3 years of teaching. Mentoring is the most common element of induction programs and is only one of the many components of induction (Arnold-Rogers, Arnett, & Harris, 2008). School districts on limited budgets may resort to mentoring as their only means of induction.

One benefit from quality induction programs is increased teacher retention (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004). Induction and mentoring have been widely cited in the literature (Arnold-Rogers et al., 2008; Cherubini, 2007; Davis & Metzger, 2006; Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Fry, 2007; Leimann, Murdock, & Waller, 2008; Maciejewski, 2007; Marable & Raimondi, 2007; Owen & Solomon, 2006; Strong, 2005; Wilson, 2009) as a means to reduce teacher attrition and promote teacher retention. Almost 50% of new teachers in the United States leave the profession in the first 5 years of entering the classroom (Anthony & Kritsonis, 2007; Steadman & Simmons, 2007). In New York, statistics indicate an average of 15% of ACTs leave in their first year and, by their third year, approximately 40% leave (Steadman & Simmons, 2007).

Darling-Hammond and Berry (2006) described the situation in a rural North Carolina school district, noting its “teacher turnover rate has reached up to 20 percent annually; some schools have lost as many as 70 percent of their teachers within a year” (p. 18). The constant turnover of staff creates a revolving door on the teaching profession. This revolving door of resources has its most significant impact on poor urban and rural districts, where the teacher shortage is worst, and the use of ACTs is greatest. The need for quality induction programs is paramount to help remedy the teacher attrition problem.

Hiring underprepared teachers violates a component of NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), which requires a highly qualified teacher in every classroom (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). The component of the law requiring teachers to meet the status of “highly qualified” compounds the teacher shortage problem. Prior to NCLB, many states issued emergency certificates to prospective teachers before they were adequately prepared and districts hired nonqualified individuals to fill their teacher vacancies. A primary objective of ACPs is to fill, with highly qualified teachers and not just warm bodies, the gap caused by teacher shortages. Although approximately 35,000 new teachers enter the teaching profession each year through an ACP, the teacher shortage remains the most severe in rural and urban areas, and in the content areas of math, science, and special education. Where the shortage is the most critical—in urban areas—87% of alternatively certified minority teachers accept positions to fill these gaps (Torres, 2006).

Well-designed induction programs provide the support new teachers need to attend to the task of teaching and learning. The quality of the program is most important to the teachers' career longevity. Fry (2007) stated just having an induction program does not guarantee lower attrition rates and increase teacher satisfaction. Induction programs provide the necessary support to address classroom management issues (Fry, 2007), reduce the feeling of isolation (Owen & Solomon, 2006), provide opportunities for collaboration (Leimann et al., 2008; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), improve practice in a non-evaluative format (Leimann et al., 2008), and ease the transition from teacher training to practice (Fry, 2006).

Alternately Certified Teachers and Induction

ACPs developed in the mid-1980s were a solution to the teacher shortages caused by increasing numbers of teachers retiring or leaving the work force, lower enrollment of prospective teacher candidates in university programs, an increase in student enrollment in public schools, and most recently a federal mandate to lower class size. Boyd, Goldhaber, Lankford, and Wycoff (2007) stated half of the ACPs currently training teachers started their programs during the past 15 years and more than one third of the existing programs were created after the year 2000. ACPs provide an abbreviated training experience for potential teachers so that those teachers can enter classrooms as quickly as possible.

Many factors may place ACTs at risk of leaving the profession. The shortened training experience combined with difficult teaching assignments and perceived lack of

support may make ACTs more likely to leave the profession. Berry (2001) cited classroom discipline problems and insufficient training to handle student discipline issues as reasons teachers gave when they left the New York City Teaching Fellows ACP. Literature (Arnold-Rogers et al., 2008; Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Fry, 2006, 2007; Owen & Solomon, 2006) has suggested that the feeling of isolation is a contributing factor to new teacher attrition. Isolation causes new teacher frustration and the teacher's reluctance to ask for help diminishes the teacher's self-efficacy, resulting in the teacher leaving the school or the profession. New teachers are more vulnerable to feelings of isolation and stress if a quality induction program is not in place to help them transition into teaching.

ACTs need additional support from administrators. Cleveland (2003) followed the electronic discourse of a cohort of teachers in the North Carolina's ACP, *NC Teach*. The focus of Cleveland's discourse was one teacher's frustration with his work environment and his lack of support from his administrator. As I read the postings on the discussion board, I could sense the teacher's anguish over the intolerable conditions and the difficulty he felt in deciding his fate was apparent in the tone of his writing. He was hanging on by a thread. His cohort was supportive and tried to encourage him to transfer to another school rather than leave the profession entirely. The administrator placed a letter in the teacher's personnel file when the teacher asked for help. He lacked the administrative support he needed to do his job effectively. He became demoralized and finally resigned. Districts can address many problems without major expense to make the

working conditions tolerable and increase teacher retention. Cleveland recommended hiring a full-time coordinator and mentor for each site that has an ACT.

Other studies have focused on the reasons why new teachers leave the profession. Malow-Iroff et al. (2004) indicated the teachers trained by New York City Teaching Fellows, an ACP, stated they left the teaching profession because of the lack of support from administrators and coworkers. Worthy's (2005) study echoed the lack of administrative support provided to new teachers. Davis and Metzger (2006) stated that new teachers need emotional support in addition to the basic information about school culture and curriculum. Conclusions reached by these studies increase awareness about the additional support needed by ACTs.

Induction Programs

Induction programs that follow best practice include training in the following areas: classroom management, parent communication, school and district policies and procedures, special education, differentiated instruction, and assessment (Flynn & Nolan, 2008). According to Maciejewski (2007), the key components for an effective induction program include extensive mentor training and support, formative assessment to monitor new teacher growth, observation of veteran teachers, teacher networking, and professional development that transforms theory into practice. Flynn and Nolan (2008) suggested mentors should be certified in the same area as the mentee, be easily accessible, have common planning periods, and have schedules that promote the observation of each other's classes. New teacher needs assessment data can provide

important information useful for developing an individualized induction/mentoring plan (Leimann et al., 2008). Haskins and Loeb (2007) suggested professional development, including mentoring, is important for new teachers to become acclimated with the business of effective teaching and learning.

Quality induction programs have many components in addition to mentoring. A study by Davis and Metzger (2006) described a model induction program that follows best practice standards by providing “monthly seminars, departmental mentoring, observations of veterans, coordinators’ observations, social events, and the new teacher retreat” (p. 5). Freiberg (2002) suggested schools assist new teachers with the following to promote success: (a) provide help at the beginning of the school year, with follow-up sessions to monitor progress; (b) provide summer training sessions on teaching and learning; (c) co-develop methods courses with traditional and alternate teacher preparation programs; (d) establish an online lesson plan library developed by veteran teachers; and (e) provide a help line for new teachers. Induction program components should be versatile and meet the needs of new teachers.

Both veteran teachers and new teachers benefit from induction and professional development programs. Darling-Hammond (2005b) described professional development schools created to resemble the teaching hospitals in medicine. These schools provide professional development for veteran teachers and offer them the opportunity to conduct action research as well as provide training for new teachers. Davis and Metzger (2006) posited quality induction programs choose leaders from within the school, provide

overnight retreats, and are useful for any teacher new to the school. Induction and professional development schools provide continued support as new teachers make the transition into the profession.

Some induction programs include a collegial coaching component. Dantonio (2001) stated that new teachers who lack experience have not developed the ability to predict potential instructional outcomes or potential student behaviors. New teachers discover their strengths and weaknesses through coaching sessions and begin to develop their teaching talents. It is critical the coach identifies, explores, and reinforces teacher strengths or they will disappear. Novice teachers benefit from the coach's observations and data collection, while they are free to focus on the task of teaching. Teachers must see the collaborative process as a means to enrich their teaching and improve student achievement. Coaches need to encourage the maintenance of effective instructional practice and diminish ineffective strategies. Dantonio emphasized quality instruction increases when teachers focus on the relationship between teaching and learning. This aspect of support is particularly important for PACE ACTs because their training lacks the student teaching experience.

Other Support Systems

Development of alternate options to the typical mentor/mentee relationship have overcome obstacles such as distance, location, and lack of workers. When provisions for adequate mentoring are not met on-site, communication using e-mail supports reflection and builds one-on-one relationships. This form of off-site mentoring which uses e-mail as

a primary communication tool is referred to as e-mentoring in the literature. Anthony and Kritsonis (2007) mentioned e-mentoring as a way to provide the support new teachers need and as a way to contribute to “novice teacher’s self-efficacy” (p. 7). Fry (2006) suggested additional support using technology help teachers in rural districts. Discussion boards and compressed video are popular formats readily available to support new teachers. Mentoring circles are an alternative to the dyadic model of matching a mentor with a mentee. Mentoring circles have one mentor/facilitator who works with a group or mentees. The advantages offered by these alternative methods are as follows: sharing different perspectives between group members, mentees gain confidence, there are reduced feelings of isolation, and mentees have more networking capability and an increased sense of support (Darwin & Palmer, 2009). Creative alternatives can provide the support a new teacher needs as the teacher navigates the induction period.

Administrator’s Role in the Induction Process

Teachers often cite lack of support as a reason for their having left the profession. The administrator’s role is important in the early stages of a teacher’s career. Administrators with low teacher turnover encourage the use of effective teaching strategies and provide additional support for their teachers. Watkins (2005) noted that without a supportive work environment for new teachers, attrition rates might negatively affect student achievement. Administrators should provide a work environment that allows teacher-led decision making to set high standards for student achievement.

Administrators must value collaboration as a part of professional development in order to improve student achievement and teacher retention.

Dantonio (2001) suggested administrators must be creative in order to give teachers access to time for collaboration. Dantonio recommended administrators cover classes for teachers, hire substitutes, or request parental assistance as options for affording teachers the time they need to collaborate. An additional recommendation by this researcher is that administrators can also show support for new teachers by providing them with mentors and/or coaches who have the same planning period and teach the same content. New teachers need administrative and collegial support as they become more experienced and develop a strong self-efficacy.

Principals are sometimes hesitant to hire ACTs because of the additional work and support required to assist these teachers with the daily chores of teaching (Nagy & Wang 2006). Hord (2004) suggested support from administrators can be provided in many forms, including conditions, shared leadership, and shared values and vision. Administrators can show their support by allowing teachers who need to plan together the time to do so and position their classrooms near each other for easy access. Administrators can also show support by sharing their leadership roles and allowing committees to determine how professional development funds are spent, allowing teachers to write grants, and developing materials together. Administrators and teacher leaders who share the same vision recognize the potential for increased teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Support from administration is critical in retaining teachers, especially new and inexperienced teachers. Strong leadership can alleviate high turnover rates. The ACT in Cleveland's (2003) study needed the support of his administrators; the administrator crushed rather than nurtured the teacher's self-efficacy. It is imperative that ACTs receive quality professional development that meets their needs and their students' needs.

Mentoring for Alternately Certified Teachers

Many ACTs find themselves in a sink-or-swim situation. Steadman and Simmons (2007) stated that even though ACTs have not had student teaching experience, their colleagues view them as teachers who are capable to start teaching. Teachers who have not had the student teaching experience have reported feelings of being isolated, overwhelmed, and unprepared to deal with the variety of student behaviors and academic needs presented in the classroom. Although ACTs bring a wealth of experience and practical knowledge to teaching, they lack the experience of dealing with the nuances of classroom management, lesson planning, understanding assessment, and dealing with diversity and learning styles. ACTs perceive their colleagues and administration are viewing them as incompetent when they do ask for help.

Freiberg (2002) suggested one of the benefits of mentors helping new teachers with instructional planning is mentors can demonstrate for new teachers how to see the bigger picture and work backward from the end of the unit. Organizing, instructing, and assessing are essential teacher skills that may help a new teacher develop into a master teacher in a shorter period. Training in these essential skills may help new teachers feel

successful and ensure their decision to remain in the classroom. Hoff (2004) suggested providing mentoring programs for new teachers in urban schools to give them the skills they need and ultimately encourage their willingness to continue to teach in the urban setting.

Steadman and Simmons (2007) shed light on another problem that results from the need to provide mentors to ACTs: the extra burden placed on the experienced teacher. As the teacher shortage becomes more imposing, the burden becomes greater for the experienced teachers, administrators, and other personnel to do their own jobs and assist new teachers who are expected to be ready to teach but lack preparation due to gaps in their training. Steadman and Simmons wondered whether continuing to place these demands on the mentor teacher increases their dissatisfaction with their career and drives them away from the profession.

Mentor Training and Benefits

Quality induction programs need quality mentors. Maciejewski (2007) emphasized the importance of mentor training in quality induction programs. Mentors need training in how to explain the elements of effective teaching. Peer mentors should receive training in the most effective strategies to help adult learners. This training would include adult learning theory and effective communication skills that stress improvement rather than evaluation (Leimann et al., 2008). Flynn and Nolan (2008) stated mentors need training in cognitive coaching and adult learning theory. Trubowitz (2004) explained that if mentoring programs are to be truly effective as a means to develop

effective teachers, they must provide the training and support to the veteran teachers selected to be mentors.

Mentor training is essential to provide quality assistance to new teachers. The Santa Cruz New Teacher project (Moir, 2003) provides specialized training to mentors prior to the beginning of the school year in the following areas: the role of the mentor, effective mentor relationships with mentees, identifying new teacher needs, effective communication, and formative assessment. Mentors receive additional training on coaching and observation skills. The mentors attend ongoing weekly meetings with other mentors in the project to develop their mentoring skills. During the first year of mentor training, the mentors may receive training on standards, lesson planning, analyzing student work, differentiating instruction, collecting and analyzing data to drive instruction, and special needs students including English language learners and literacy instruction. The second year in the project exposes mentors to different topics to add to the mentor's knowledge base (Moir, 2003).

As in any good relationship, there are reciprocal benefits for mentors and mentees. Mentors gain a sense of renewal and worth as they help a new teacher transition into the profession. Moir (2003) stated that mentors feel rejuvenated as they pass on their knowledge to the less experienced teacher. The process of mentoring removes the feelings of isolation and encourages collaboration. Done well, mentoring helps increase achievement levels for both the mentors and mentees' students.

Successful Induction Programs

Quality induction programs have common components. Flynn and Nolan (2008) studied a successful induction program that focuses on helping new teachers by avoiding the practice of giving them the most difficult classes and types of students, less classroom preparations, and released them from non-instructional duties during the first semester. In California, mentor-based programs are a requirement for full certification (Moir, 2003). Mentoring programs that require reflection help teachers assess their strengths and weaknesses and make adjustments accordingly. Moir (2003) suggested mentors and mentees who develop a portfolio find that it is beneficial as both a process and a product. Teacher growth is the intended outcome of reflection journals. In turn, teacher growth translates to teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Recommendations

Moir (2003) suggested that successful induction programs require substantial dedication to the goal of successfully transitioning new teachers into the profession and recommended mentors should work in a new teacher's classroom at least 2 hours per week to provide demonstration lessons, observe the new teacher, and assist with curriculum planning and development. The time needed to provide this support structure is essential for the new teacher to hone his or her craft. Such collaboration benefits the development of both the mentor and mentee.

Moir (2003) provided a checklist of the core elements found in quality induction programs:

- full-time administrators to monitor the program,
- quality mentoring during the school day,
- a mentor selection process and the subsequent training,
- formative assessment for new teachers to appraise their needs,
- administrator training to ensure the availability of support the new teachers need,
- standards,
- high expectations,
- networking opportunities, and
- training in data collection.

Summary

Schools with high teacher turnover receive the most benefit from quality induction programs. Quality induction programs save money on teacher recruitment by decreasing attrition through improved teacher morale and effectiveness (Moir, 2003). When the issue of teacher turnover is resolved, quality induction programs shift the focus to student achievement. This approach reinforces the supposition that teacher quality, student achievement, and quality induction programs are interrelated and are important when focusing on the additional support ACTs need.

When schools and districts correct the issues related to teacher retention, the need for ACPs would diminish because the teacher shortage will no longer be an issue. Disjointed and unconnected ACPs nationwide are little more than a bandage on a

seriously wounded education system. Quality ACPs provide teachers for the classroom but the problem remains one of retaining teachers in the first 5 years. Research indicates a shortage of classroom teachers now and a shortage that will worsen by the year 2010, when more than one-half of the teachers will be new to the teaching profession. ACPs would not be required if schools and districts would make the changes necessary to retain teachers. This testimony mirrors Loeb et al. (2005), which indicated making changes in policy and practice could alter the levels of teacher turnover. The inference is simple: the smaller the teacher turnover, the less need for ACPs.

The literature suggests that there is a more global problem regarding the teacher shortage. Recruiting, training, and retaining teachers are the larger issue. Although ACPs recruit and train new teachers, it is the schools and districts' collective responsibility to retain teachers. The literature suggests reasons for teacher resignations excluding retirement are low pay, lack of support from colleagues and administrators, and student discipline issues. Administrators must be cognizant of the conditions in their schools and nurture new teachers. The use of mentors, a good support system, scholarships for continued education, a strong induction model, a safe workplace, support with discipline issues, and an administration that listens to teacher input are some of the teachers' requests. Additional support systems (induction/mentoring) provide ACTs the resources needed to improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Teacher Effectiveness

Alternate Certification and Teacher Effectiveness

ACPs provide a shortened teacher training experience, sometimes as few as 2 weeks, as compared to that of TTTs, who generally receive 4 to 5 years of training prior to entering the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2005c; Feistritzer, 2005; Harvey, 2005; Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Torres, 2006). This abbreviated training experience raises concern about the ACT's effectiveness in the classroom in relation to student achievement. Research shows that alternative route programs do not provide adequate training for the ACT, resulting in lower teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Allen, 2003). The literature (Burkett, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Ding & Sherman, 2006; Harvey, 2005; Milanowski, 2004; Rockoff, 2004) offered mixed conclusions on the topics of teacher quality as it relates to alternate forms of teacher training. Understanding the support systems provided to ACTs during their first year of teaching is critical because of their abbreviated training, which may not include a student teaching component. Support systems such as teacher induction training provided to first-year teachers and the support provided by a mentor are essential to helping the ACT transition into the profession.

Definitions of Teacher Effectiveness

Some researchers (Anfara & Schmid, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Rustique-Forrester, 2005; Salinas et al., 2006; Torff & Sessions, 2006) used the terms teacher quality and teacher effectiveness interchangeably in the

literature. Experts have not been able to develop an absolute definition of teacher quality because the concept involves subjective value judgments and consensus is difficult to reach. Goos (2006) suggested that it is difficult to determine how teaching affects student achievement because of the complex variables involved. According to Fenstermacher & Richardson (2005), quality teaching is teaching that results in learning. They suggested that delivering a lesson was not as important as the method used to teach the lesson. Johnson-Leslie (2007) commented that effective teaching practice were found in constructivist type classrooms, and emphasized pre-service teachers need training in effective teaching strategies.

Other researchers indicate effective teachers must be able to do more than deliver content. Berry (2001) stated teachers should be able to make connections with students. Sindelar, Daunic, and Rennells (2004) indicated that teaching is more than being an expert in content but requires the ability to represent lessons in a meaningful way to the student. Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) stated, “perhaps we cannot define quality teaching, but we know it when we see it” (p. 186). Visible characteristics of effective teachers include “good prior academic performance, communication skills, creativity, professionalism, pedagogical knowledge, thorough and appropriate student evaluation and assessment, self-development or lifelong learning, personality, talent or content area knowledge, and the ability to model concepts in their content area” (Polk, 2006, p. 23). Although a definition of effective teaching may be difficult to reach, visible teacher characteristics are generally used when assessing teacher effectiveness.

Darling-Hammond (2005b) recommended what teachers need to know and be able to do prior to entering the classroom. The list of these skills and competencies includes the following: (a) interpret the way students view the curriculum and adjust the lesson to accommodate the student, (b) listen to students, (c) motivate students, (d) structure lessons and tasks and provide feedback to encourage effort, (e) obtain resources and be familiar with integrating technology into the curriculum, and (f) analyze and reflect on their teaching to improve their instruction. New teacher training programs recognize that teacher reflection is an important component to improve teaching and learning.

Blanton et al. (2006) suggested elementary and special education teachers learn pedagogy rather than content mastery of the basic skills they teach. The need for identifying a creditable and versatile measure of teacher quality is necessary. Berry (2001) indicated research has not linked content knowledge to effective teaching, although there is an exception for mathematics and science. Berry stated many career changers lacked the knowledge and skills that would result in effective teaching. Wise and Leibbrand (2000) stated the public believes teachers should have a command of the content they teach and be able to have a positive impact on student achievement. Definitions of quality teaching include terms related to teacher actions, knowledge, and creativity (Blanton et al., 2006).

ACTs' Effectiveness

Research indicates teacher training and support are directly related to teacher effectiveness and student achievement. In some studies, ACTs did not perform well and the data showed they were ineffective. Berry (2001) indicated ACTs were not prepared to develop lessons that delivered the subject matter in a way that enhanced student understanding, assessed prior knowledge, motivated students to learn, and allowed for cultural differences. Freiberg (2002) suggested, new teachers have difficulty assessing their students' learning and their own professional learning. Torff & Session (2006) stated principals in their study cited the following reasons for teacher ineffectiveness: classroom management, lesson planning and implementation, and student rapport. Principals cited deficiencies in content knowledge as a minimal concern when they evaluated teacher effectiveness. In Johnson-Leslie's (2007) study, more than 50% of the pre-service teachers identified junior high school teachers as being ineffective. The lack of quality teacher preparation and support reduces the ACT's ability to teach effectively and have a positive impact on student achievement. Researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2001, 2005c; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2003; Mahatha, 2005) have contended that underprepared teachers can hinder student learning, making the need for quality teacher training and professional development more important than ever.

Many ACPs do not include a student teaching component in their curriculum, thus robbing the new teacher of the opportunity to practice these teaching strategies prior to becoming certified. Johnson-Leslie (2007) suggested a minimum of 3 years of classroom

experience is necessary to become an effective teacher. Three years is indicative of the metamorphosis of becoming an effective teacher through the lens of the constructivist theory in that teachers will reflect and grow in their knowledge of what it means to be effective. The length of time it takes to become an effective teacher raises many questions. How can educational leaders improve teacher preparation to shorten the time it takes to become an effective teacher? Are administrators and new teachers aware of the minimum period? How does this period affect a new teachers' students' achievement? Can quality teacher support systems (induction/mentoring) develop effective teachers in a shorter period?

There are many variables involved in studying ACT training and support, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement. Slavin (2003) stated genuine reform in instruction requires a focus on many variables at the same time. Slavin recounted the story of a foolish scientist who only studied the variables of plant growth in isolation and determined that none of the variables (water, light, or fertilizer) worked. Slavin added researchers often engage in a similar process, isolating only one variable when what they are studying is too complex and requires consideration of the totality of all the variables working together. Ding and Sherman (2006) noted the role that the school, students, and family play on student achievement. They emphasized studying factors in isolation is not recommended. Learning is an interactive activity between teacher and student. Ding and Sherman stated educators must recognize that the student plays an important role in his own learning. The students' role is an important factor when addressing the issues related

to teacher effectiveness. They suggested effective teachers are aware of each of their student's learning needs and address those needs with each student.

Teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and professional development provided through mentoring and/or induction programs for ACTs are too complex to study in isolation. The misconception that the knowledge of subject matter automatically means that you can teach, and teaching and learning happens by trial and error, is detrimental to the concept of effective teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2005b). Darling-Hammond's research cited studies related to ACT's effectiveness that revealed ACTs had difficulty with classroom management, planning lessons, and understanding students' academic needs. Linda Darling-Hammond has been a vocal opponent to ACPs because of the inadequate training provided to prospective teachers in programs she has researched. She has claimed TTTs have a stronger pedagogical base and are more effective with students. The ACPs' shortened training experience and possible lack of student teaching experience has caused concern about the teaching quality of the ACT. Providing additional support systems such as induction training and mentoring for the ACT to develop into an effective teacher are necessary to overcome the deficiencies in training.

Principals' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of ACTs

Results from studies on teacher effectiveness have been contradictory. Mahatha's (2005) study indicated principals perceived TTTs as more effective than ACTs in content knowledge and classroom management. Findings from Torres's (2006) study conducted in Florida indicated that ACPs performed their job as well or better than the traditionally

trained teacher did. An evaluation of the Dallas Independent School District's ACTs effectiveness found that ACTs earned higher scores by their principals than did TTTs (Mahatha, 2005). In some studies, ACTs had difficulty with instructional planning and had less professionalism.

Classroom management and pedagogy are essential components of the teacher's everyday classroom experience. Classroom management is often a determining factor in evaluations of teacher effectiveness. Freiberg (2002) suggested poor classroom management may lead to increased student discipline issues, as well as decreased teacher effectiveness and student achievement. In a survey of PACE ACTs, Burkett (2006) identified the need for more classroom management lessons in the training program. Some studies indicated ACTs might have excellent content knowledge but lack the ability to teach the material. The inability to explain concepts to students resulted in a lower rating of teacher effectiveness. The ACT might have a negative impact on the students' education because the ACT's pedagogical knowledge base is weak (Mahatha, 2005). A quality induction/mentoring experience could help the ACT to overcome classroom management and pedagogy issues.

Summary

The usages of the terms of teacher quality and teacher effectiveness are interchangeable in the literature. Although, there have been many attempts to provide a definition for teacher quality or teacher effectiveness, only characteristics of effective teachers have been generated. The literature related to teacher effectiveness includes a

discussion of the relationship of ACTs' training and effectiveness, as well as principals' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. Mixed and contradictory results are present in the literature concerning teacher training and teacher effectiveness as it relates to student achievement. The topics of teacher support systems, including mentoring and induction training, teacher retention, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement are interrelated and should not be isolated when studying the training and support needed for an ACT to be considered an effective teacher.

Student Achievement

Teacher Preparation and Student Achievement

NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) prompted researchers to take a closer look at teacher quality and its relationship to student achievement. Researchers agree teacher quality is the most important factor influencing student achievement. Davis (2006) added that a report from the Center for American Progress could not identify one specific factor that predicts teacher success. Ding and Sherman (2006) stated there are a variety of factors that lead to student achievement. Darling-Hammond (2005b) suggested the teacher's professional development has an impact on student learning and recommended regular self-evaluation and reflection of the teacher's practice to improve student achievement. The literature indicated that teacher quality is linked to teacher training, therefore, an investigation of the type of training a teacher receives prior to teacher certification, the support systems put in place once a teacher enters the classroom, and the impact of the teacher's training and support on student achievement is warranted.

Horgen (2004) suggested teacher preparation programs have a far greater influence on student achievement than any other factor, including class size, budget, and teacher salaries. Boyd et al. (2007) found ACPs that have strict candidate selection criteria produce ACTs that perform as well as their TTT counterparts after only 2 years in the classroom. McFadden and Sheerer (2005) indicated that teacher preparation programs need to prepare teachers to focus on strategies that will improve student achievement in various school settings. Darling-Hammond (2005b) posited teacher qualifications are the most important factor when considering variances in student achievement. Salinas et al. (2006) stated, “given that urban and rural areas are turning more frequently to alternative certified teachers in high need areas, it is critical to determine whether the teacher certification route impacts student achievement” (p. 6). Teacher quality is dependent on teacher training and support. ACTs’ shortened training experience may be a factor in their perception of their own effectiveness and student achievement.

It is our responsibility as leaders to give teachers the best preparation and support possible to realize the maximum possible effect on student achievement. Better teacher training and support will result in higher student achievement. Standards raise the bar for student achievement (Lambert et al., 2002), so higher standards and standardization of ACPs, induction programs, and mentoring programs may help raise the bar for both prospective teachers and their students.

Professional Development and Student Achievement

Research showed professional development has a direct impact on student achievement. Glassford and Salinitri (2007) posited induction should not stop after the first 3 years but continue as a career-long series of professional development. Fletcher & Barrett (2004) stated new teacher expectations in terms of student achievement are the same or higher than their experienced colleagues. Leimann et al. (2008) explored a mentoring program created by a team of teachers in Maryland that originally started out to improve teacher retention in order to “maintain and increase student achievement” (p. 28). Maciejewski (2007) explained how a school district in Palo Alto, California, collaborated with the University of California to create a new teacher and new principal induction program. After 3 years, the school district made significant improvement with teacher retention and student achievement. According to Maciejewski, the algebra students in this district made significant gains on their state achievement tests. Maciejewski even stated the results from the district indicated some new teachers made better gains in student achievement than did their veteran colleagues. Murray, Ma, and Mazur (2009) suggested professional development could have an impact on student achievement in mathematics. All of these studies found that professional development had a profound impact on student achievement.

Teacher Effectiveness and Student Achievement

Hester (2006) defined effective teachers as “those that lead students to achieve normal academic gain over a three-year period” (p. 7). Haskins and Loeb (2007)

suggested students taught by teachers considered to be the most effective (in the top 20% on an effectiveness scale) for a period of “three years scored about 50 percentile points better than students who had teachers in the lowest fifth” (p. 2) reinforces the idea that gains in student achievement are the result of consecutive years of good teaching. Hester suggested the damage done to student achievement by ineffective teachers is apparent years later, even if effective teachers teach the student later. Glassford and Salinitri (2007) suggested better teaching has a positive impact on student achievement. The consensus is that ACTs need the support from induction/mentoring programs to increase student achievement.

Other Factors Influencing Student Achievement

The literature on student achievement and teacher effectiveness revealed mixed and conflicting results. One of the best predictors of student achievement is the number of teachers that are certified and have an academic major in the field (Investment in Teacher Quality Pays Off, 2001). Haskins and Loeb (2007) stated family background had a greater effect on student achievement than did any other school-related factor. Heck (2007) suggested teacher quality reduces the gaps in student learning that are associated with socioeconomic standing and race or ethnicity. This finding implies teacher quality is a factor in explaining differences in student achievement. Hester (2006) stated teacher subject matter knowledge influences student achievement.

Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2006) suggested experience and state-licensure test scores are the only teacher qualifications that predict increased student achievement.

Brewer (2006) stated teachers who acquire a master's degree in an academic discipline rather than in education have shown increased teacher effectiveness in regards to student achievement. Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) stated the teacher is only one of four factors that facilitate quality teaching and student learning. The students' willingness and effort, the nature of the social setting, and the opportunity account for the other factors. These studies showed that many variables are present when evaluating teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and teacher support systems provided to ACTs.

Student Achievement in High-Poverty Schools

Hoff (2004) reported state leaders are aware that they must recruit the best teachers to the schools with the lowest test scores to improve student achievement. Hester (2006) indicated high poverty schools are filling teacher vacancies with un-credentialed teachers and teachers who have graduated from noncompetitive universities. Schools that experience high rates of teacher turnover also experience low student achievement, possibly because of poor quality instruction. Liu and Meyer (2005) concluded the revolving door effect created by constant teacher turnover is detrimental to student learning. Hard-to-staff schools must turn to ACTs to fill vacancies. Junor and Thomas (2004) considered ACTs' abilities to have an impact on student achievement as an indicator of teacher quality. Junor and Thomas suggested, "there is a need to understand how these teachers' experiences in the alternative teacher preparation program prepare them for urban classrooms and to understand the impact of these teachers on student achievement" (p. 1).

Student Achievement and Society

Students' academic achievement becomes the foundation for students to be productive in society. Education is the vehicle that provides students with the tools necessary for entry into an increasingly complex society. Student achievement is dependent on the teacher's ability to teach a diverse set of learners, which requires teachers to be diagnosticians that understand the learning process and are capable of developing a large set of teaching methods to meet their students' needs (Darling-Hammond, 2005a). Teachers must have a deeper understanding of the content and a solid foundation in pedagogy to maximize student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2005b). Teacher training and support is the key to teacher quality and student achievement. ACTs require the additional support mechanism to realize a favorable impact on student achievement.

Summary

Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) cautioned educators, policy makers, and parents that teaching and learning are components of a reciprocal relationship that requires action from the learner. Good teaching is only one fourth of the total student-learning picture. The student's willingness and effort, the nature of the social setting, and opportunity make up the remaining three fourths of the picture. Society cannot place the total "burden for student learning upon the shoulders of the teachers" (Fenstermacher & Richardson, p. 197). It is easy to place the blame on teachers for low student achievement because it is easy to make provisions to provide more training and professional

development at a lower cost, when the focus should also include the other three factors of student learning.

Berry (2001) suggested there is not enough research that provides conclusive evidence to support what Berry called a myth that “alternative licensure produces more effective teachers who, in turn, produce higher student achievement” (p. 34). In a perfect world, the vision expressed by the National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future (1996) that every child would be taught by a caring, competent, and qualified teacher, and every teacher would receive quality teacher training and professional development would be realized. Polk (2006) advised teachers should be proactive in their own professional growth. Quality professional development is necessary for successful teaching. Research indicates teacher quality does have an impact on student achievement. PACE ACTs may need additional support systems to realize a positive impact on student achievement because they lack the student teaching component found in TTT programs.

Research Methodologies Found in the Literature

Introduction

Blanton et al. (2006) categorized teacher education research into one of five areas: identifying factors for student achievement, comparative studies of teachers and certification, follow-up surveys, experiments, and longitudinal case studies. In the review of the literature on alternate certification, teacher quality, and student achievement, some researchers (Burkett, 2006; Mahatha, 2005; Powell, 2004; Torres, 2006) used surveys to assess teachers’ and principals’ perceptions, while other researchers (Cleveland, 2003;

Fry, 2007; Worthy, 2005) used case studies to explore issues related to first-year teachers. The themes presented in this subsection included; ACTs' induction/mentoring, teacher effectiveness, student achievement and the methodologies used in each study.

Case Studies

New teachers are excellent candidates for case studies because of the unique experiences they encounter. Fry's (2007) case study used monthly interviews to investigate how induction supported four beginning teachers' journeys through their first year of teaching. The induction support categories are: (a) basic induction, which included mentoring and administrative support in the form of supportive communication; (b) Level II, which included grade-level or content area planning or seminars; and (c) Level III, which included assistance from an aide or a reduced amount of preparations, and support from other networks. The study revealed that all four teachers received inadequate induction support. Fry recommended a differentiated approach to induction training to meet the needs of all first-year teachers.

Worthy (2005) studied one teacher over a 5-year period in a case study that examined a first-year teacher's "longitudinal perspectives of teaching, teacher preparation, and support" (p. 380). The case study described the teacher's perseverance despite the difficult working conditions and limited support the teacher received during the beginning years of teaching. Six observations conducted over a 3-month period, field notes, and interviews were the primary data sources in this study. Fry used informal meetings with the first-year teacher to discuss the issues and topics found in the data.

Worthy concluded teacher attrition rates rise, and student achievement suffers when beginning teachers do not receive support.

Cleveland (2003) studied a group of ACTs in the North Carolina Teachers of Excellence for All Children program over the period of one semester. The study focused on whether an ACP would address the teacher shortage in North Carolina. The dialogue between participants on an electronic mailing list produced data, which generated six themes. The themes included; organization/disorganization, support/lack of support, coursework, mentoring, time, and frustrations. The dialogue presented in the case study illuminated the difficult journey ACTs make as they transition into the profession.

Cleveland made a recommendation to provide mentoring and additional support to ACTs as a means to retain teachers.

Other Studies

Many researchers used survey instruments in their studies. Burkett (2006) used the summative evaluation method to study and evaluate PACE. PACE participants and principals of PACE teachers either agreed or strongly agreed the PACE participants received effective training from PACE. The survey indicated there should be more training in the areas of long-range planning, classroom management, and the development of assessments. Torres (2006) used a 20-question survey and Dillman's tailored design method to determine Florida principals' perceptions of ACTs' effectiveness. The data in Torres' study indicated ACTs in Florida received favorable performance ratings that were equal to or higher than those received by TTTs.

Powell (2004) used a survey instrument and the chi-square analysis method to determine teachers' and principals' perceptions of the principals' support provided to beginning teachers. Powell disaggregated and compared the data in his study by several subgroups, including ACTs and TTTs, gender, grade level, and minority status. The data showed differences in principals and teachers' perceptions of support provided to first-year teachers.

Mahatha (2005) used a survey instrument to determine principals' perceptions of ACTs' effectiveness in New Orleans public schools. The survey yielded data that compared ACTs to TTTs in the following areas: content knowledge, classroom management, instructional planning, human relation skills, and professionalism. The data was analyzed using *t* tests. Mahatha's results indicated principals' perceptions of TTTs surpassed those of ACTs in all areas except human relations skills. ACTs received high scores in professionalism, which Mahatha attributed to the teachers' experiences in previous careers. Principals indicated ACPs produce teachers that perform as well as TTTs.

Bowen (2004) surveyed principals' perceptions of ACTs and TTTs. Multiple regression analysis, analysis of variance, content analysis, and a series of *t* tests were used. Principals' perceptions of TTTs were dependent on student demographics. The results indicated that principals believed ACPs brought diversity into the teacher workforce and helped alleviate the teacher shortage. The study also showed principals' preference to hire TTTs over ACTs.

Harvey (2005) used a comparative analysis to study the performance of TTTs and PACE ACTs on the Principles of Learning and Teaching exam, concluding TTTs performed better than ACTs on the exam. Harvey studied a second question concerning differences in district-level evaluators' perceptions of the TTTs and ACTs' performance. The data indicated there was no significant difference in evaluators' perceptions. The data analyzed the demographic variables of the two groups. The PACE program attracts a more diverse population than represented by TTTs, based on gender, age, and ethnicity, and the ACTs in PACE perform at the same level as their TTT peers in these same groups. Harvey's conclusions included a recommendation that "additional research needs to be conducted to determine the link between the teacher and student achievement" (p. 108).

Hester (2006) used an ex post facto design to study the relationships among teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and years of experience. Hester matched teacher records in a value-added database, which contained students' standardized test scores, and their respective teachers in grades 3-12. The study was similar to the Tennessee value-added study. Hester studied the residual teacher effect of fifth- and sixth-grade teachers on the eighth-grade Algebra I end-of-course test. The data indicated the least experienced teachers were less effective than teachers with more experience. Hester concluded teachers were an influential factor in a student's achievement, particularly in math. Teacher quality influenced student achievement for up to 3 years after the teacher taught the student.

Vinger (2004) used a causal-comparative research design in her study with an ex post facto research design because the cause and effect had already occurred. A telephone survey produced data used to determine the factors that contributed to the teachers' retention or attrition. The data collected over a 5-year period assessed the attrition rates of both TTTs and ACTs. The study found there was no significant difference in attrition rates for either group of teachers until the last year of the study when there was a significantly higher rate of attrition for ACTs.

Chapman (2005) used a "retrospective (secondary analysis), a quasi-experimental design with two nonequivalent groups" (p. 37) consisting of TTTs and ACTs. The archival survey data in Pearson's study used the chi-square test because the variables of ethnicity and certification were dichotomous at the nominal level. Chapman indicated that researchers have attempted to compare traditional and alternative certification in terms of student achievement and have produced unstable results.

Summary

Teacher training, teacher effectiveness, teacher support systems (induction training and mentoring), and student achievement are interrelated; they are dependent on each other. It is imperative that a teacher receives the support needed to stay in the profession, become an effective teacher, and be able to provide a positive impact on student achievement. Research indicated student achievement can be affected by many factors, including home and/or school environment (Haskins & Loeb, 2007), teacher and/or student self-efficacy (Yeo, Ang, Chong, Huan, & Quek, 2008), teacher quality and

effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2005b), teacher training and support, and student ability. Quality induction and/or mentoring programs can facilitate the transition for teachers into the profession.

The literature showed that teacher training and support has an influence on teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Horgen (2004) suggested teacher preparation programs have a far greater influence on student achievement than any other factor including class size, budget, and teacher salaries. McFadden and Sheerer (2005) indicated teacher preparation programs need to prepare teachers to focus on strategies that will improve student achievement in various school settings. The literature clearly showed that teacher training and the subsequent support systems put in place once a teacher is in the classroom have a direct impact on teacher retention, attrition, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement. Individual teacher needs assessments provide valuable data for professional development. As noted in Owen and Solomon (2006), principals who match experienced teachers with novice teachers based on the results of a teaching styles inventory realize the importance of providing the specific support each individual new teacher needs by making their own customized professional support systems.

The quality of the teacher-training program directly relates to teacher effectiveness. Researchers agreed teacher quality is the most important factor influencing student achievement. Some researchers (Burkett, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Ding & Sherman, 2006; Harvey, 2005; Milanowski, 2004; Rockoff, 2004) reported conflicting

and inconclusive results on the topics of teacher quality as it relates to alternate forms of teacher training. In order to put to rest the inconclusive and conflicting results, more studies are needed to investigate the relationship between ACTs' support systems and ACTs' perceptions of their effectiveness and student achievement.

Teacher training and support helps determine teacher effectiveness in that it provides the teacher with the necessary tools to be successful in the work of teaching and learning. Teachers who have excelled in their teacher-training program are more likely to be successful and perceived as more effective. The days of the sink-or-swim or trial-by-fire mentality that contributed to early teacher retention problems gave rise to induction and mentoring programs (Davis & Metzger, 2006; Fry, 2007; Glassford & Salinitri, 2007; Maciejewski, 2007; Marable & Raimondi, 2007; Moir, 2003; VanderPyl, 2007; Wilson, 2009). The need for teacher support systems was so apparent that a variety of induction and mentoring programs were developed. The cost of such programs varied, depending on their quality and duration. Districts cannot afford to continue to spend money on teacher recruitment when it would be more cost effective to provide professional development for the teachers that are already in the classroom. Research showed that teacher attrition has a negative impact on student achievement and that student achievement and teacher quality are related. When studying ACT training in terms of teacher effectiveness and its relationship to student achievement, teacher support systems (induction, mentoring, and any other form of professional development) need consideration.

Section 3: Research Methods

Introduction

A case study design was chosen to explore two PACE ACTs' experiences and perceptions of their own effectiveness and student achievement during their first year in the classroom and whether the additional support systems (induction/mentoring) provided by the ACTs' districts had an impact on those experiences and perceptions. Case studies use in-depth exploration to uncover rich information from various data sources over time (Creswell, 2003). Bassey (2007) suggested researchers should use case studies when they seek to provide understandings and explanations from data that surveys cannot capture. This type of study is effective because it allows collection of rich data chronicling the teachers' first year in the classroom and provides the results in a narrative format. The data collected from the journals provided a lens into the perceptions and experiences of two ACTs and the data from the semi-structured interviews provided clarification of themes that present themselves in the journals. This case study will add to the present body of knowledge found in the literature.

Case studies investigate a phenomenon within a set of boundaries, usually space and time (Bassey, 2007; Hatch, 2002). The contemporary phenomenon in this case study is two PACE ACTs' perceptions of their experiences of receiving additional support and the boundary in this case is the first year in the classroom. This case study told the stories of two PACE ACTs who have experienced varying degrees of support in the form of mentoring/induction, and their perceptions of their teacher effectiveness and student

achievement. In this case, the sample size is not detrimental to the results of the study, in contrast the depth and richness of description is more important than the sample size.

Research Design and Approach

Creswell (2007) suggests that researchers identify the central purpose of their study to determine which research approach should be selected. The central purpose of my study is to understand the relationship of ACTs' classroom experiences and the support received from induction and/or mentoring programs to identify whether those themes relate to the teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness and student achievement in their respective classrooms. The focus of case studies is to develop an "in-depth description and analysis of a case" which was the primary reason for this study (Creswell, 2007, p. 78). This case study focused on the experiences and perceptions of two ACTs. Case studies tell the story. I intended to tell the in-depth story of two ACTs' experiences as they navigated their first year of teaching.

The other research approaches were not selected for the following reasons (a) an ethnographic study would not be appropriate because this study does not represent an intact cultural group; the participants are a part of a larger group of teachers, (b) a grounded theory approach would not be appropriate because I am not attempting to derive a theory grounded by participants' viewpoints, (c) a phenomenological approach would not be appropriate because all of the participants in this study may not share the same amount of mentoring/induction support or the same perceptions of teacher effectiveness and student achievement and ultimately may not have shared the same

phenomenon, (d) a narrative approach would not be appropriate because narrative studies retell the stories of individuals which is not the sole intent of this study.

Data for this case study came from two sources: electronic journals and one-on-one interviews. The primary data source was the participants' archived weekly electronic journal entries of their first year in the classroom. These journals were maintained by the ACTs as part of a PACE assignment. The archived journals used as a data source in this study are unobtrusive data because the researcher did not request them; they were part of a PACE assignment. The journal entries provided a lens into the ACTs' experiences to explore a deeper understanding of their perceptions (Fitzgerald, 2007). Each weekly journal submission contains one typed page of single-spaced content. The journal data included approximately 20 to 30 weekly journal submissions from each teacher. This amount is based on the amount of journals completed and submitted to the PACE program during the ACTs' first year in the classroom. The archived weekly electronic journals represent the perceptions and experiences of PACE teachers during their first year in the classroom. The journal entries provided data for analysis and theme identification. Participants were asked to verify the accuracy of the themes generated from their journal entries as part of the semi-structured interviews.

The secondary data source was individual semi-structured interviews. These interviews followed the journal analysis to supplement and clarify the themes that emerged from the journal data. The individual semi-structured interviews took place during the teachers' second year of teaching. The teachers had access to the interview

questions prior to the interviews. The interviews provided an opportunity to explore, verify, and clarify themes identified in the data collected from the journals.

Extensive interviews provided the data for themes to be explored, verified, and clarified. Interviews are the best choice when the intention is to explore the teachers' perceptions of their experiences. Interviews help uncover the participants' meanings or perceptions that are not evident through observation (Hatch, 2002). The use of interviews and unobtrusive data—the journal entries in this case—allow the researcher to uncover the meanings found in the data (Hatch, 2002). The researcher asked the participants to verify the themes generated by the researcher. Observations would not be an appropriate data source because this study focused on the written journal reflections of two first-year teachers' experiences. Observations are not appropriate when exploring perceptions and experiences because the researcher must ask the participants about those perceptions through interviews.

Research Questions

The overarching research question in this study is as follows: Is there a relationship between the amount of additional support (induction and/or mentoring) received by ACTs and the teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in relation to student achievement?

The following sub questions were addressed:

1. How have your induction/mentoring experiences affected your ability to become an effective teacher?

2. How have your induction/mentoring experiences affected student achievement in your classroom?

The semi-structured interview questions are located in Appendix A and F.

Context of the Study

This case study reported on two PACE ACTs' experiences during their first year in the classroom. It highlighted the teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness and student achievement during their first year in the classroom, as well as the teachers' perceptions about the quality of additional support provided by induction/mentoring programs. Analysis of the archived electronic journals of the teachers' first year in the classroom produced categories and themes. The semi-structured interviews clarified the categories and themes presented in the archived electronic journals. The researcher conducted the interviews in settings that were convenient to the participants. The participants granted permission to audio-record the interviews.

Measures for Ethical Protection of Participants

The protection of participants' rights was carefully adhered to using the following the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (2009). To ensure this protection remained in place before, during, and after the study, the following steps were taken:

1. The researcher requested and obtained permission from the ACP prior to gaining access to the archived electronic journals. The researcher requested permission to conduct this case study with two of the PACE program's

participants. The researcher waited for approval from the PACE program and the Walden University Institutional Review Board before the researcher contacted PACE teachers to participate in this study.

2. A request to conduct the study was granted by the Walden University Institutional Review Board prior to the data collection phase.
3. A cover letter (see Appendix B) explaining the nature and purpose of the study was sent via e-mail and posted on Blackboard, a communication system used by PACE, to invite ACTs from a particular PACE cohort to participate in the case study.
4. Two ACTs were randomly selected from those ACTs who volunteered in Step 3 and provided with additional information on the nature of the study, the right of nonparticipation, the right to contact the researcher, and the procedures to ensure participant confidentiality (see Appendix C).

The researcher protected the participants' confidentiality by disguising certain aspects of the material gathered. The researcher used the pseudonyms "Dana" and "Tom" to protect the identities of the participants. When the data included the names of schools, districts, or programs, the researcher removed and replaced the names with XXX to protect the entities. The only descriptors used were rural, suburban, or urban. No information was disclosed that would identify the participants, or the schools or district in which they work.

The researcher was the only person who accessed and analyzed the data from

the journals for this study. The researcher was also the only person who conducted the semi-structured interviews using an interview guide, transcribed the audio-recorded interviews, and analyzed the data from the interviews.

5. The researcher placed the data, files, and documents associated with this study in a locked file cabinet and on a password-protected computer. The researcher has sole access to these items and the file cabinet. The researcher will maintain the data gathered as part of the study in these secure settings throughout the study and for a period of 5 years following completion of the study.

Role of the Researcher

I have worked as a part-time instructor for PACE intermittently between the years 2005 and 2009. The ACTs who participated in this study were in PACE's Cohort 6. PACE divides the state of South Carolina into five regions. Each region has a team of five or six instructors who deliver instruction, facilitate learning, and implement the PACE curriculum. My relationship as instructor in the program had no impact on the first phase of the data collection process because the weekly electronic journal entries were submitted to the PACE program before my research proposal was submitted to the Walden University institutional review board. My role as an instructor in the program did not have an impact on the second phase of the data collection because Cohort 6 completed their formal PACE training by the time the second phase of my data collection

commenced. From the participants' perspective, I was no longer perceived as an instructor but as a researcher.

I developed a researcher–participant working relationship using a process suggested by Creswell (2007):

1. I posted a request on the PACE discussion board for volunteers from Cohort 6.
2. I randomly selected volunteers, shared the purpose of the study and the procedures for data collection, and provided copies of the interview questions and consent form.
3. I informed the participants that they had the right to withdraw from the study if they desired to.
4. I assured participants I would keep their identity confidential for their protection. I informed them that pseudonyms would be used to identify them and general terms such as rural, urban, and suburban would be use to describe their schools and districts.
5. I notified the participants of any potential risks or benefits associated with the study.

I am a teacher with 17 years experience and understand I may have possible biases because I am researching first-year ACTs. I may also have possible biases because I am a part-time instructor with PACE. The researcher minimized bias by compiling the data from an academic yearlong journal assignment to self-describe the participants' first-

year experiences in the classroom. Individual interviews were conducted secondary to the review of journal entries and were based on prepared questions that were peer-reviewed and provided to the teachers in advance of the interview in an effort to reduce researcher bias. The researcher encouraged the study participants to review the data gathered from their journals and the transcriptions of audio-recorded interviews to ensure the accuracy of information presented in the findings. As noted in the American Psychological Association's (2009) manual, the participants in the case study read the researcher's analysis of the case and verified the accuracy of my findings as a means to minimize researcher bias.

Participant Selection Criteria

Creswell (2007) suggested that in case study research, the researcher studies only one or two individuals unless the intention was to capture a collective story from a larger group. Creswell also stated the identification of themes in the case and the use of cross-case theme analysis is more manageable with less participants. According to Creswell, purposeful sampling implies the researcher chooses participants for a study because they have information and understanding related to the research study. The two participants in this case study were PACE ACTs who have completed their first year in the classroom. They were selected because the study focuses on the relationship between ACTs' perceptions of their effectiveness, student achievement and the role mentoring/induction had on their experiences during their first year in the classroom.

The data collected from the two participants provided the opportunity for deep inquiry of the teachers' experiences as they relate to their perceptions of effectiveness and student achievement based on the additional support they were provided. The data was comprised of 20-30 single-spaced, one-page typewritten weekly journal entries and a 60 – 80 minute interview with each participant. The interview process clarified and identified themes found in the journal entries. The data provided the information to tell the story of the participants' journey through their first year in the classroom.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher contacted the South Carolina PACE and requested permission to use the weekly electronic journal entries submitted as a Cohort 6 assignment and to interview two PACE ACTs. Once the permission was granted from PACE and the Walden University institutional review board, a request for volunteers was posted on the PACE discussion board. The researcher sent the invitation letter (Appendix B) to participate in the study to the PACE program by e-mail. The PACE program uploaded the letter on the communication system (Blackboard) used by the PACE participants and sent a second invitation by email to the potential participants (members of PACE Cohort 6). The invitation letter asked potential participants to accept or decline the offer to participate in this case study by e-mail. The researcher randomly selected two participants from the pool of volunteers. The participants selected agreed to participate in the case study, and the data collection phases commenced.

The researcher collected the data in two phases. First, the researcher collected data from archived electronic journals submitted by PACE ACTs from Cohort 6. According to Hatch (2002), this type of data is unobtrusive because the participants generated the data as an assignment for the PACE program prior to the commencement of this study and was not a result of researcher requests. The researcher deliberately selected this unobtrusive data to determine if patterns were apparent among PACE ACTs' experiences over the course of one school year without interrupting the dynamics of the classroom interactions.

The second phase of the data collection involved conducting semi-structured interviews with the two volunteers from PACE Cohort 6. These interviews included questions relating to the ACTs' experiences in the classroom and with the induction/mentoring programs in terms of the ACTs' perceptions of their effectiveness and student achievement. The interview questions were developed following Hatch's (2002) guidelines: they are open-ended, use language familiar to the participants, are both clearly stated and neutral in nature, and generate answers that are related to the research being conducted in this case study. An interview guide is located in Appendix A and a secondary set of interview questions is located in Appendix D.

The researcher conducted the interviews at times and locations that were convenient to the participants. As explained in the interview guide (see Appendix A), I requested permission from each participant, prior to asking any questions, to make an audio recording of the interviews in addition to taking notes during the interviews. The

participants granted permission to be interviewed and audio-recorded by the researcher using a digital recording device. The researcher asked follow-up probing questions, as needed, to clarify or extend the participants' responses. Once the researcher was satisfied that sufficient information was gathered from the interview, the researcher asked the participant if he or she would like to add any final comments.

The researcher made a back-up copy of the audio recording after I transcribed the interviews. I backed-up the data from the electronic journals and the digital voice recordings on a password-protected computer. The computer, hard copies of the transcribed interviews, and the researcher's handwritten notes from the interviews were stored in a locked file cabinet when not in use. The locked file cabinet will be accessible only to the researcher. I erased the digital voice recordings from the audio recorder after I created the back-up copies of the recordings on the computer and verified they were accessible.

Data Analysis

Hatch (2002) stated, "Data analysis is a systematic search for meaning" (p. 148). Searching for patterns, themes, and relationships will be critical to the task of interpreting the perceptions of ACTs. Hatch recommended data analysis should start immediately after data collection. The researcher analyzed each set of data (interviews and journals) separately following the data analysis procedures, as noted in Creswell (2007).

Creswell's (2007) and Hatch's (2002) data analysis procedures were adapted as follows:

1. I created electronic and paper files to organize each participant's set of data. The digital audio recordings of the interviews were backed-up and stored in data files on a password-protected computer. The researcher transcribed the interviews from the back-up copies of the audio-recorded interviews and erased the original recordings. The researcher printed out the transcriptions and shared them with the study's participants. The researcher asked the participants to review and edit the transcribed interviews to ensure the transcriptions accurately reflected the participants' experiences in their classrooms and induction/mentoring programs in terms of teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The researcher incorporated any changes or additions the participants made into the electronic copies of the transcribed interviews.
2. The researcher printed copies and read the electronic journals and the validated interviews. The researcher made notes in the margins and formed initial codes. The researcher reread the journals and interviews to seek emerging categories and themes.
3. The researcher made a list of the participants' statements that supported the categories and themes presented in the data.
4. The researcher used direct interpretation and developed naturalistic generalizations.
5. The researcher described the case and its context using a narrative format.

6. The researcher reviewed the interpretations with the participants.
7. The researcher made the necessary corrections to include the omission in the data that the second participant identified.

Creswell (2007) suggested analysis begins with a description of the case and the setting. If chronological events occur within the case, then the multiple sources of data should provide an avenue for analysis of each event. The journal reflections in this case study are already in chronological order and may need more clarification; the semi-structured interviews present an opportunity to elicit clarification of the events. This study uses conventional content analysis, as described in Trochim and Donnelly (2008).

Conventional content analysis allows the researcher to let the data tell the story. In this type of analysis, the researcher does not have a preconceived theory or predetermined codes. The first step in content analysis allows the researcher to read the data thoroughly prior to placing chunks of data into categories. The coding process begins after categories are established.

Meyers and Sylvester (2006) suggested there are three levels of coding in qualitative research. The first level, open coding uses the participants' own words as the data is broken down into smaller parts. In the second level, axial coding, the researcher places the text into categories, and creates and reviews the codes by comparing the categories. The researcher repeats the second level until satisfied that the text has been adequately coded and categorized to identify core categories. The third level, selective

coding, searches for relationships between the core categories. As suggested by Creswell (2007), the data analysis included searching for themes and cross-case themes.

Validity/Trustworthiness

Reliability

The term *reliability* assumes that the same results occur after repeated attempts, typically made in quantitative studies. Trochim and Donnelly (2008) suggested using the term *dependability* in qualitative studies, which connotes the thorough description of changes in the case setting and how those changes may affect the researcher's conclusions. According to Bush (2007), reliability in document analysis is dependent on content analysis. In this study, the participants' electronic journals serve as a permanent record of the events that took place in the ACTs' classroom over the course of their first year of teaching. This permanent record allows other researchers to reanalyze and replicate the data in subsequent studies.

This study used semi-structured interviews to allow the ACTs to provide and elaborate on their own unique perceptions of their experiences noted in their journal entries. According to Bush (2007), case studies using semi-structured interviews may have more difficulty with ensuring reliability because of the nature of the participants' unique interview responses. The uniqueness of the ACTs' responses is essential in understanding this case. Bassey (2007) explained that obtaining reliability in a case study is not practical because case studies are studies of events or people and because these events or people have unique qualities, the replication of this study may be difficult. As

suggested by Trochim and Donnelly (2008), the use of the term dependability should replace the term reliability in studies such as this one. I will ensure dependability by providing a thorough descriptive account of the ACTs' experiences and their effect on the conclusions reached.

Validity/Trustworthiness

Bush's (2007) definition of validity suggested the research analysis should accurately represent the case. In qualitative studies, the term *validity* can replace the term *trustworthiness*. Bush indicated researchers using semi-structured interviews as a data source in case studies should ensure validity by reducing bias issues. Researcher bias is reduced when they provide the interview transcripts and notes to the interviewees so the interviewees may verify the accuracy of the material. Bush suggested researchers should carefully construct and check interview questions for bias. I asked Dr. Harvey, a more experienced researcher to check my interview questions for bias to improve the validity of this case study. Bassey (2007) suggested the use of "how?" and "why?" questions to help direct the interview in a way that provides rich analytical data to illuminate the case.

Merriam (2002) described member checking as a procedure to ensure validity in qualitative studies. In member checking, the researcher asks the participants to validate the researcher's interpretations of the data. I implemented this procedure to reduce bias and to improve validity. The participants of the study received electronic copies of the transcripts to check for transcript validity. I provided the participants electronic copies of my notes and analysis and asked them to confirm these items for accuracy. Throughout

the interview process, I asked the participants for clarification of my interpretation of their interview responses.

Trochim and Donnelly (2008) suggested the term *credibility* as an alternative to the word validity. They stated the term credibility suggests the qualitative research results must describe the phenomenon in the case from the participants' perspective. They also suggested only the participants in the study could determine the credibility of the results. I asked the ACTs in this case study to comment on the accuracy and credibility of the findings from their point of view. Both participants verified the accuracy of the findings. I corrected the one omission that participant two found.

An audit trail and evidence of triangulation improve validity/trustworthiness in studies. Bassey (2007) suggested providing an audit trail as another form of ensuring trustworthiness. I provided the interview transcripts in the final report to assist in the audit process. Bush (2007) described the triangulation method as the comparison of several data sources for information accuracy. I attempted to increase the validity/trustworthiness of the case study by using triangulation to compare the data from the journals and interviews for accuracy of information and interpretation.

Section 4: Results

Introduction

This qualitative case study examined two PACE ACTs' perceptions of their teacher effectiveness in relation to the student achievement in their classrooms and the support provided to them as new teachers by their district's mentoring and/or induction training. I used two sources of data: weekly electronic journals submitted to the PACE program during the teachers' first year in the classroom and data from semi-structured interviews conducted the following year. Both participants answered the same interview questions. The questions were open-ended and allowed the participants to provide their own unique answers. I designed the interview questions (Appendices A and D) for multiple interviews. These two data sources were analyzed to determine if there was a relationship with the quality of support received from mentoring and/or induction training in terms of the PACE teachers' perceived teacher effectiveness and student achievement. This section describes the participant selection process used in this study. I provide a description of the events that led to the generation of the data, and how they were gathered and recorded. An explanation for the systems for keeping track of the data and the emerging understandings derived from the data is given. Findings from the data are noted. Possible discrepant cases or non-confirming data are included. I described the patterns, relationships, and themes presented in the data. Finally, a discussion of the measures taken to assure quality and accuracy of the data collection and analysis are included.

Participant Selection Process

Community Partner

I received Walden's IRB approval to conduct the study on March 17, 2010 (approval # 03-17-10-0361849). I e-mailed the PACE program coordinator immediately to inform her that I was ready to invite PACE Cohort 6 teachers to participate in the study. I sent the PACE program coordinator a copy of the invitation letter (Appendix B) in an email attachment. She uploaded the letter onto the communication system (Blackboard) used in the PACE program and sent the invitation letter by email to over 400 Cohort 6 PACE teachers on March 19, 2010. The invitation letter asked PACE Cohort 6 teachers to accept or decline the offer to volunteer for this case study. The invitation letter indicated the deadline to volunteer for the study was March 31, 2010.

Participant Selection

I received 14 e-mail responses, 11 PACE teachers volunteered and three PACE teachers formally declined the offer to participate in the study. Of the 11 teachers, seven were female and four were male. An e-mail was sent to the 11 volunteers to verify their participation in the PACE Cohort 6 training. Eight teachers verified they were members of PACE Cohort 6. Three of the volunteers did not affirm their membership in PACE Cohort 6, thus I eliminated them from the participant pool. I placed a number from one to eight on each volunteer's e-mail. I used a random number generator on a calculator to select the two participants for this study. The two participants randomly selected using the number generator included one male and one female. I contacted the two participants

by telephone and notified them of their selection to participate in this study. I briefly described the study and answered any questions they had. The participants were sent two copies of the consent form (Appendix C), one to sign and return to me, and one to keep in file. I received one additional email on April 27, 2010, from a volunteer to participate in the study. I eliminated this volunteer for this study because the researcher chose the participants earlier in the month and the data was collected at the time the email was received.

Data Acquisition

Journal Data

The following is a description of the events that led to the generation of the data, and how they were gathered and recorded. I used two data sources in this study—weekly journals and semistructured interviews. The first set of data were generated from the participants' electronic weekly journals assigned by PACE during the teachers' first year in the classroom. The electronic journals were stored in the PACE program archives. I contacted the PACE program coordinator's office to make an appointment to collect my participants' electronic journal data for the first phase of this study. I provided the PACE program's office staff with the participants' copy of their email response indicating they had volunteered to participate in the study. One of the PACE staff copied the electronic journal data onto a compact disc (CD) while I waited in the office. I transported the journal data to my office and I transferred the data on the CD to a password-protected computer and a portable USB flash drive. The CD and USB flash drive were stored in a

locked file cabinet when not in use. The second set of data included data from the semi-structured interviews with the two participants selected for this study.

Interview Data

I collected the interview data after I coded and analyzed the journal data. I decided to wait to collect the interview data to ensure that the interviews would explore, verify, and clarify the themes generated in the journal data. Both participants received the interview questions prior to the interviews. I contacted the first participant by telephone to arrange a date and location for the interview. We met at a library in her hometown on April 8, 2010. The librarian gave us access to a study room to conduct the interview. The room gave us the privacy needed to conduct the interview without interruption. I used a digital voice recorder to record the interview. The participant indicated she was willing to answer the second set of interview questions (Appendix D) immediately following the initial interview (Appendix A) because of other commitments in the future. The combined interviews lasted 60 minutes. I transported the digital recording to my office where I downloaded and saved the recording to my password-protected computer and a portable USB flash drive. I verified the transfer of the data to the password-protected computer, and flash drive and erased the recording from the digital voice recorder.

I contacted the second participant by email to arrange a time and place to conduct his interview. We both agreed to a telephone conference. I conducted the telephone interview in my office on April 14, 2010, using a speakerphone and a digital voice recorder to collect the interview data. This participant preferred to complete both sets of

interview questions (Appendices A and D) during this telephone conference. This interview lasted 80 minutes. I downloaded the digital voice recording of the interview to a password-protected computer and a portable USB flash drive. I verified the second participant's digital voice data transfer to the password-protected computer and USB flash drive and erased his recording from the digital recorder.

Systems To Track Data

Each participant's weekly electronic journal data was stored on the password-protected computer and USB flash drive. I printed copies of each participant's journals and filed them in a notebook. The notebook contained dividers labeled for each participant's journal data, interview transcripts, and consent forms. I used additional colored paper dividers to separate the uncoded data from the coded data in each section. I placed the page number and the participant's name on each page of the paper copy of both participants' journals.

I read the first participant's 28 weekly journal entries prior to beginning the coding process. This step allowed me to develop an understanding of the participant's experience as an ACT. I began the coding process by reading each weekly entry a second time. During the second reading, I underlined key phrases and sentences and made notations in the margins of the paper copies. Next, I transferred the coded information from the paper copies to computer files on the password-protected computer and USB flash drive. I highlighted chunks of data and inserted comments on the electronic journal computer files as a back up to the paper copies. I assigned categories and themes to the

chunks of data. Finally, I developed a table to organize the data into the categories and themes from the initial data coding phases. The table included four columns labeled: week, date, categories and themes, and supporting text. I copied and pasted the supporting text into the table from the journal entries located in the computer files. I also included the code indicating the week number for the journal entry, the actual date noted on the participant's journal entry, and the title of the category or theme assigned to the text. The table was saved as a data file on the password protected computer, on the USB flash drive, and as a paper copy stored in the notebook. I repeated this process for the second participant. The second participant wrote 24 weekly journal entries. I coded and transferred the journal entries into a separate table. I saved each participant's journal files in separate computer files.

For the second data source, I transcribed each participant's digital voice recordings of the semi-structured interviews. The transcription process took 13 hours for the first participant's interview and 14 hours for the second participant's interview. The transcripts were saved on the password-protected computer and the USB flash drive. I filed paper copies of the transcripts in my researcher's notebook. I implemented the same data coding process for the interview transcripts as the journal data. The papers copies of the transcripts were read to develop an understanding of the participant's responses. I read the transcripts a second time and began the coding process. Sections of text were underlined on the paper copies and made notes in the margins to indicate possible themes and categories from the text. I transferred the coded information from the paper copies to

the interview transcripts stored on the computer files. Each coded interview transcript was saved as a separate file for each participant on the password protected computer and USB flash drive. The paper copy of the coded transcripts were filed in my research notebook under each participant's divider. Next, I made a three-column table for the transcript data on the computer. The columns were labeled participant one, participant two, and categories and themes. I placed the chunks of interview data from the coded interview transcripts into this table under the appropriate participant's column. As the data was placed in the table, I noted the category or theme identified in the margins of the paper copy onto the table. The table was saved on the password-protected computer and the USB flash drive. A printed copy of the table was filed in my notebook. Finally, I read the table containing the interview data, made notes in the margins regarding the similarities and differences of the two participants' experiences, and placed this in the notebook.

Findings

Introduction

I assigned the pseudonyms *Dana* and *Tom* to protect the identities of the participants in this study. Participant 1, Dana, is a female with more than 20 years experience in either engineering or finance and accounting. She has a bachelor's degree in computer science and a master's degree in industrial engineering. She taught eighth grade mathematics in a middle school in the suburbs. Participant 2, Tom, is a male with over 30 years work experience in various fields. He started his career as a geologist,

switched careers to work as a manager for a medical company, and then started some businesses including mortgage and computer consulting prior to entering the PACE program. Tom has a bachelor's degree in geology and a master's degree in business. He is currently working on his 18 hours graduate level economics courses so he may teach college level economics. Tom taught eighth grade science in a middle school in the suburbs also, in a different part of the state. Both participants are approximately the same age and have a wealth of practical knowledge to bring to the profession.

An explanation of the data sources and the themes and categories gleaned from these sources are presented. I explored the data and presented the findings that supported the research question and sub-questions. The findings were organized by sub-question, by participant, and by data source. For example, sub-question one's findings are reported separately by each participant's journal data and interview data.

Journal Data

The journals were written as a weekly reflection assignment for the PACE program. This journal data is unobtrusive because the researcher did not request the PACE teachers to write the journals. The journals were completed during the teachers' first year in the classroom and subsequently archived at the PACE program offices prior to the approval of this study. Themes and categories extracted from the two participants' journals in this study are as follows: classroom management, content planning, differentiation, emotions, induction training/mentoring, mentor assistance opportunities,

student achievement, teacher effectiveness, self-reflection, miscellaneous distractions, real life connections, and non-instructional duties.

Interview Data

I conducted the semi-structured interviews after the journal data were collected and analyzed. I used two sets of questions (Appendices A and D) during the interviews. The interview questions were open-ended in nature to allow the participants to answer the questions in their own unique way. I developed the questions to ascertain the teachers' experiences with the support they received from mentoring/induction and how that support affected their perceptions of their effectiveness in terms of student achievement. I developed two key questions for the interviews in this study: first, "How do you describe an effective teacher?" and, second, "How would you define student achievement?" These two questions gave me a baseline to determine the teachers' perceptions of teacher effectiveness and student achievement. I also asked the teachers to describe their induction/mentoring experience.

I conducted the interviews during the teachers' second year in the classroom. I asked the participants to focus on their experiences during their first year in the classroom when responding to the interview questions. The themes and categories generated from the interview data are as follows: experiences related to induction/mentoring, support structures in place, teacher effectiveness, student achievement, classroom management, the role of administration, and suggestions to improve induction/mentoring experience.

Research Questions

The overarching research question in this study is as follows: Is there a relationship between the amount of additional support (induction and/or mentoring) received by ACTs and the teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in relation to student achievement?

The following subquestions were considered when analyzing the journal and interview data:

1. How have your induction/mentoring experiences affected your ability to become an effective teacher?
2. How have your induction/mentoring experiences affected student achievement in your classroom?

Dana's Journal Data Analysis for Subquestion 1

Introduction

This section will describe Dana's experiences with her induction/mentoring program and other sources of support as noted in her journal entries and interviews. This section also presents her definition of an effective teacher and her account of when she believed she was effective in her classroom. Dana's story provides a discussion of how her induction/mentoring experiences affected her ability to become an effective teacher.

Induction/Mentoring

Data from Dana's journal entries indicate her dissatisfaction with her mentoring experience and as a result, she sought help from other sources. The following references her reflection of a meeting with her mentor and district coordinator:

There were some specific issues and students they brought up, but quite frankly when I asked for *how to* I really didn't get any. That has been an issue for me with my mentor and the district coordinator. I have gotten very little feedback from them on ways to improve. They tend to point out an area of concern, but not give much practical advice on how to improve. I will continue to read and seek the advice from other more experienced teachers for help and ideas on specific issues. Several teachers on my team have been great resources for different issues already.

Dana referenced working with the teachers in her school throughout her journals. On March 26, 2009, she wrote, "I asked several veteran teachers and put together what I feel will be a good unit on various elementary measurement and geometry concepts."

Conflicts

Dana wrote about some of her induction/mentoring training and district initiated professional development that conflicted with her district or school's policy. Dana wrote in her journal on November 17, 2008, about what she learned in her induction class conflicted with her school's policies and procedures, she stated, "So I'm getting mixed messages." In February, she wrote about a district professional development day with the same concern.

We had a professional development day and that was very good. I really liked what our guest speaker had to say about stepping up the rigor in our classes, but a few of her ideas are against district policy and I know they won't fly at my

school. Using an iPod or Cell phone during school hours is strictly prohibited—although a nice way to engage students at truly their level—it won't work for now.

Opportunities to Seek Advice

Dana's journal reflections indicated her desire to learn more about the business of teaching and learning. Her journal entries showed many opportunities for her to seek advice from a mentor but she made no mention of doing so. For example, on October 13, 2008, she wrote, "I'm still struggling with how much material is enough material and how to keep students on task" and on October 27, 2008, she wrote, "I'm not exactly clear what I should do next." In January she wrote, "I need to find more differentiated instruction ideas and how to implement them in my review sessions" and "That's another area I need to work on professionally. How do I let go and let them just show me what they REALLY know?" In her May 4, 2009, journal entry, Dana wrote:

Review days, even if we play review games, seem to be behavior management nightmares. There is always a select group of students who enjoy the games and truly participate in the review. Then there are the kids who totally shut down and try to disrupt everyone and everything else. I gave out my share of recess detentions this week. I really need to find a way to make reviews more engaging – or something.

Dana noted her concern about her effectiveness and her search for answers in her May 18, 2009 journal entry. She wrote:

I'm still searching and working on different techniques to get these young minds to truly understand linear equations. I've done a lot of real world connections, but it still is like leading them down the path to get them to derive the equations to solve. I know this takes a lot of practice and skill is acquired over time, but I struggle with how to make more light bulbs go on!

At the midpoint of the school year, Dana indicated her concern about a conference with her mentor, administrator, and district math coordinator. She noted on December 8, 2008

With the 2008 observations over, only the Summative Conference remained and that was scheduled for Thursday. I was a bit nervous, but realized, whatever was said in the conference was intended to make me the best teacher I could be.

Each of these entries highlighted Dana's desire to obtain help in her critical first year in the classroom. These entries suggested there is a need to provide quality mentoring to this concerned first year teacher.

Effective Teaching

Dana's journal entries discuss her ability to be an effective teacher but do not relate her effectiveness to her mentoring/induction experience. Throughout the journal entries, she indicated times when she was effective and when she was less effective than she had desired. She stated in her March 26, 2009 journal entry "classroom management is a struggle for me at times. I tend to bend until I break and then I'm very upset with them and me." Dana intuitively knew that classroom management is an essential component in providing the right atmosphere for effective teaching. In the April 20, 2009

journal she stated, “I am starting a new classroom management plan next week. It may seem awfully late in the year, but I know I cannot function with these disruptions for another 30 days.” In Dana’s May 11, 2009 journal entry, she indicated her desire to improve her classroom management. She wrote, “Maybe I just need to limit the group work, or assign better groups, not sure why it didn’t work last week, but I need to continue to grow with group activities.”

Dana indicated her knowledge of effective teaching practices in her January 26, 2009 journal entry. She stated, “I know if they can do this they are climbing up the taxonomy ladder.” In Dana’s November 10, 2008, she indicated that the new instructional strategy that she implemented was effective in improving student engagement. She stated:

I could not have asked for a more engaged student body. They were nothing short of mesmerized by the children’s book, and asked very good questions as I continued through the story. The students were eager to see if Pythagoras solved the problems presented in the story. The students were very interested in the *crazy* facts I dug up on the different mathematicians.

In many of Dana’s other journal entries she indicated the use of effective teaching strategies increased student engagement in her classroom. Excerpts from her journals included: “My reluctant learners were really pumped up about the Algebra Four,” “The students liked the game, but the fierce competitiveness was more than I had anticipated”, “The kids seem to enjoy the ‘competition’ of who could get it solved first and if the final

answers would agree,” and “The students were very engaged, and enjoyed the interactive parts of the power point.”

Dana enjoyed the feeling of being an effective teacher. She stated in her October 20, 2008 journal entry, “The week of Oct 20, 2008 had some real highlights for my teaching career. Day 2 was the best day ever. It was fantastic! Integration was such a success.” Dana also noted the connections between student engagement and teacher effectiveness. In December, she wrote about a successful experience with student engagement and teacher effectiveness. She wrote:

One success was the calculator graphing activities that I did with my Algebra 1 Part 1 students. These activities were hands on, and successfully kept them engaged and working. They are new to these calculators and it takes a good deal of effort for them to program them. It’s also a great skill to develop for future math classes. So, what seemed fun to them, actually was working on the standards and preparing them for more advanced math. You have to love it when something works out like that.

Dana understood the connections between teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

In her May 4, 2009 journal entry she wrote:

I really want the kids to understand, not just know, what linear equations mean. It is one thing to be able to calculate the slope with a calculator and it’s a totally different thing to understand that slope is rate of change and a relationship between two variables. I’m going to work hard on this deeper understanding for

the remainder of the year and my final will cover on these sections. I know that next year, I'll approach linear equations and graphing in a totally different way – I want them to understand this concept and be able to apply it, not just memorize the different equations of lines and plug numbers into it. A lot of work needs to be done here.

She also noted in another journal entry in May that effective teachers help students understand concepts in order to improve student achievement. She stated:

Since I have started reading the book *Understanding by Design*, I realize now that my students “knew” the material in January but never really “understood” it. I’ve tried several different approaches during my review, but I’m not sure I’ve seen evidence of understanding yet. I have clearly missed the mark of driving home that graphing and linear equations are all about relationships.

Student Engagement

Dana indicated how the use of her effective teaching strategies provided opportunities for increased student engagement and student achievement in her classroom. Excerpts from her journals included “they actually got much faster at solving the equations than I had even anticipated. The competition was a big hit with this group.” and “I really was impressed with how easily the kids picked up the concepts and how fun we made it. Finally I could prove to them that math can be fun!” In her February 9, 2009 journal entry, she stated:

Several of them really have found a part of math they like and can see themselves using. We played probability games on the internet and did several dice and card games in class. It was a fun week for them.

Dana increased student engagement by introducing interesting interactive activities into her lessons. The increase in student engagement improved her teacher effectiveness, which ultimately improved her students' achievement as indicated in the journal entries.

Dana's Interview Data Analysis for Subquestion 1

Induction Program

Dana's experiences with her induction program were less than satisfactory.

Dana's induction program had approximately 200 new teachers with only one instructor.

Her comments about the effectiveness of the induction program included:

The group was large too, it was huge and I think added some um you couldn't get as much done. It wasn't very effective. There were so many people everybody couldn't even get a word in. There were several times I sat in a group and never said anything, gained stuff from it but actually couldn't get around to all 25 of us in a group in the limited time to move around. So some of that was a problem.

She noted there were problems with the formation of the groups in her induction classes.

Dana said, "sometimes the cohesiveness of the group, we didn't have any of the same goals or the same approaches to things so the grouping was bit of a problem." Dana also spoke about the difficulty hearing the instructor in the various cafeterias and libraries.

She stated “and in cafeterias you know the echoing was hard to hear at times. It was crazy.”

Dana mentioned the induction program curriculum bounced around and seemed almost disjointed. She stated:

It did, it did bounce around. Um the one thing that I kept hoping and I know from talking with other members of my induction class. It seemed like it was very theoretical at first. And this was the ideal way to do it, and this is the ideal way to do when really being this is the first year teacher the August, September, October, November stuff would have been nice to have been very practical because you're just thrown into the classroom. I really want some practical, how do you do this stuff right now. And she got to that but it was later in the year. And at that time I was going why didn't you tell me that in August? Because it was helpful information it wasn't in the right time. It was already past that issue. Well I was like I can use that next year but not now. So I think they hit the right things. I don't think the order was right... Practical stuff needs to go first for sure. How do you really maneuver these different meanings and what's important, who do you talk to and who do you not talk to necessarily would have been helpful.

She continued to say, “she jumped around [*sic*] the instructor from month to month. We could never really tell what we were going to talk about. She was not a very good classroom manager.” Dana described having to make careful choices about where to sit because it was difficult to focus in the induction classes. There were many groups of

teachers engaging in personal conversations loud enough to be a distraction to the surrounding teachers. She repeated, “The class was huge though as I have said before the groups I think it was too overwhelming.” She also stated the instructor was a teacher in the district. Dana remarked that the instructor took too long to give feedback on the assignments. She said, “You do something and turn it in and it would take forever to get it graded. But I can imagine with her own grading and then the 200. I finally didn’t even worry about it.”

Dana had positive comments about the speakers who presented in her induction program.

The guest speakers were neat. We had a guest speaker from special ed. I learned everything I know about how the special ed department works from that guest speaker. Um, she was with our district so that was really nice to see how things worked there. Um, some of the other guest speakers we had a librarian that came for a while. Although I don’t use the library as much in my discipline she was still helpful in what they could provide support for different things in the classroom.

Dana commented a second time in the interview about the special education guest speaker. Dana indicated the guest speaker’s presentation was relevant for her because she was dealing with some issues with some special education students in her classroom at that time. She stated “and that person just made all of that into a 20 minute speech. She told me what I could do and I could ask her questions on the floor. You know it was wonderful.”

Dana also spoke about other guest speakers who presented information about classroom management in her induction class. She stated that she received some good ideas regarding classroom management but felt the presentation related more to elementary school. She did comment that the strategies that she learned worked for the students that wanted to change their behavior.

Mentoring

Dana's mentoring experience had a rough start. Her word choice in the interview shows her dissatisfaction with the situation. She stated:

I had an unusual experience where I was tossed around to; I had four mentors before I actually showed up for the first day of work. The lady who was supposed to be my mentor actually ended up being my teammate, um and she was working on her masters and had to go defend her theses and couldn't attend the induction stuff therefore they disqualified her from being my mentor. The next one ended up in the hospital. And a third one something else happened and her and she didn't even end up teaching at my school. And the fourth one finally I think just got me out of desperation and they picked a teacher.

Dana remarked that her mentor did not teach the same grade level or course level as she did and was not familiar with Dana's eighth grade standards. Dana did not receive the help she needed to understand the eighth grade standards from her mentor. She commented:

She wasn't a lot of help there. I ended up getting what I would call most of my mentoring information from the original lady who was my teammate. She provided me probably most of the assistance and obviously she didn't get paid for it though.

She indicated there was not much collaboration between herself and her mentor and felt that the barrier preventing the collaboration was both teachers taught different grade levels. Dana said her mentor was not involved in helping her with curriculum planning. She said, "I did that on my own and with other teachers in my grade level. She didn't, she did not help with that." She stated, "the only time I ever saw her was when deadlines were showing up and she had to come by and check boxes." On a positive note, Dana did add that her mentor was math certified, an excellent teacher, very knowledgeable and had been teacher of the year in that school several times. She commented, "Just not the best of mentors—didn't have a lot to share there."

Other Support Systems

Dana indicated that she had access to an instructional coach at her school during her first year in the classroom. Dana made the following comments regarding her experiences with the coach:

Um my first year the instructional coach um I found useless. And that's the best word I can come up with. Couple of several different times she would come in, ask me stuff, and plop something down on my desk and said I'll get back with

you. I never once heard back from her on anything that she said she would get back with me on ever. Until the point I stopped asking her anything.

Dana stated her instructional coach did not help her assess her strengths and weaknesses during her first year in the classroom.

Dana described the support she received from her co-workers as wonderful. She indicated that she worked in a team environment where four teachers teach the same group of students. She remarked about her surprise that the teachers in the other disciplines could just listen to her concerns and provide her with the assistance she needed. She stated:

Um as far as I can tell even the ones in the different you know totally different disciplines that you wouldn't think how in the world how would they help me. They come up with some good ideas and some support for different students sometimes you can talk about different students and what are you doing. And someone would say I'm not having a bit of a problems with this student so what are you doing? And that actually has helped a couple of times. You find little things to key in on what they like to do. Or who to keep them away from sometimes. I think the support there has been wonderful.

Dana indicated that her team of teachers enjoyed lunch together, celebrated birthdays and stated "I mean it was very nice and we belonged together kinda thing and I enjoyed that."

Dana also had positive comments about the support she received from the assistant principal for instruction (API) and the principal. She stated both administrators

were very helpful and had an open door policy. She stated the API provided her assistance with analyzing instructional issues and offered ideas to help her students. She commented that the principal “was um, Johnny on the spot and picked up the phone and solved whatever I needed solved.”

Dana pursued additional support from alternate sources. Dana mentioned that she used blogs and other on-line resources. She indicated that she did not make many posts but learned from other teachers’ experiences on the posts. She stated, “I did learn some really neat stuff.” She added, “I learned a lot of stuff that I have used both years and have passed on to other teachers that they have used. So some of that was super valuable.”

Dana also received additional support through her district’s mandated professional development. The district required all teachers to work in cohorts once a month as a form of professional development. Dana worked in a heterogeneously grouped cohort that focused on technology use in her school. Dana remarked about how much she learned from the different teachers in her cohort.

Dana spoke about how she had to be proactive with her mentoring experience. She said in the beginning of the year she hesitated to ask for help because she did not want to appear that she didn’t know what to do. She stated:

I actually, after a little while figured out I’m going to have to seek out some people. And you could find them if you start seeking. There are plenty that want to be helpful. They just don’t want to step on anybody else’s toes.

Dana described the help she received from one veteran English teacher. She said “One of the people who helped me the most my first year um especially when I was at my wits end. I think she got appointed by my team to come talk to me. But she was invaluable.”

Dana indicated that although the veteran teacher did not teach math she gave Dana personal advice on how she would handle different situations in her classroom. Dana said, “She had some neat what I call survival techniques that really were nice.” Dana also said the veteran teacher would check in on her the following day after providing assistance.

Effective Teaching

I asked Dana to describe an effective teacher to ascertain her meaning of effectiveness. Her response was:

Effective with an “e” meaning results is kinda how I look at that. So how does a teacher get results? To me that would have to be somebody who could engage the students at their level, could you know come up with a relationship with the students that would make it with what you are teaching relevant to them so that they would buy in to learning the new topic. And then of course you’re hoping and with the effective stuff and if you can do all of that it shows up either in your own test scores or some kind of standardized benchmark testing.

It appears that she interprets the components of effective teaching as engaging students, building relationships with students, and showing students the lessons’ relevance. She indicates that those components should produce results, meaning student achievement in

the form of test scores. Dana described when she felt as if she was effective in her classroom. She indicated, “The kids really were engaged and were asking lots of probing questions, questions I actually hadn’t even thought of when I prepared the lesson. It almost took me by surprise, took me by surprise in a good way.” She interpreted the probing questions to mean that the students were listening, thinking, and trying to make connections with their prior knowledge. She stated that she made a point of showing the students which professions use the different types of math she was teaching. She indicated the students wanted to know the relevance of the mathematics they were learning and its usage in everyday life. She said, “They would really expand on it and I thought that was effective they could really see how that could apply outside of the classroom. I like that.”

Induction/Mentoring Affect on Teacher Effectiveness

Dana indicated the guest speakers who spoke at the induction classes about classroom management provided tips about setting up the classroom and addressing discipline issues were helpful. Dana intuitively knew that classroom management is one of many components necessary to become an effective teacher. Dana stated that she observed her mentor and other teachers to see how they managed their classrooms. She observed the room layout as well as the dynamics of the classroom. She stated:

I think I gained a lot by watching them. I don’t know if they necessarily told me to watch them or I was told to watch them. I learned a lot from those mentor teachers so I think whoever picks those mentor teachers is picking the right type

of teachers. Um they necessarily have the right skills, I just don't know if they have that skill to transfer it to you orally. I didn't personally get that. But what watching the teacher I personally gained a lot from seeing what they did.

It appears that Dana appreciated having the opportunity to learn by watching other teachers working with their students. She implied the teachers she observed were good role models for a new teacher but expressed her concern that those same teachers could not transfer their knowledge to another teacher orally. Dana indicated that she and her observer were required to complete a checklist that included observations. Dana completed four observations during her first year.

Summary

Dana's experiences with her induction/mentoring program did not meet her expectations. Dana had to overcome many obstacles during her induction/mentoring experience. Obstacles included the induction class size was too large, poor meeting facilities, feed back from assignments was slow, her mentor was not accessible and could not verbalize solutions to Dana's questions, and the induction curriculum seemed disjointed. Dana resorted to finding help from alternate sources including: teachers on her team, cohort members, administrators, and on-line resources. Dana indicated a desire to learn more about the business of teaching and learning throughout her journal entries. Her desire to learn more about teaching shows her desire to become an effective teacher. Her negative experiences with induction and mentoring forced her to look elsewhere for assistance. Dana's induction/mentoring experiences did not provide the support Dana

needed to become an effective teacher. Dana commented that the whole experience of finding a mentor for her was very upsetting. She said, "I think that started an avalanche for me. Of her not being able to do then it got shifted around of who will do it. Cause the other people hadn't jumped up wanting to do it." Dana's effectiveness is a result of her own resolve, the assistance provided by her co-workers, and the support she received from her administrators. Dana commented about her mentoring experience "I definitely think it could have been better. There are a lot of little holes in my education of being a teacher too that I'm still filling in."

Dana's Journal Data Analysis for Subquestion 2

Introduction

This section will describe Dana's experiences with her students' achievement as noted in her journal entries and interview transcripts. It will highlight her successes, her difficulties, and the mixed results she encountered in her first year with student achievement. Also in this section, Dana's definition of student achievement and a discussion of how her induction/mentoring experiences affected her student achievement are included.

Difficulties with Student Achievement

In Dana's journal entries, there are many references to student achievement, but she did not mention how the induction/mentoring experiences affected student achievement. She identified her struggle with student achievement and indicated her desire to obtain help. On October 13, 2008, she stated:

I've tried all sorts of different approaches. We've gone over lots of word problems, built charts of words that directly translate to algebraic equations, provided example after example and still they struggle. I need to research and find other methods.

In the same October journal entry, she wrote "My Algebra 1 Part 1 students are really having a hard time grasping "number" word problems." In Dana's January 12, 2009 journal entry, she indicated her surprise and irritation at some of the students' comments about not knowing there was an exam that day. She wrote, "That night I reviewed what they were doing so far and I was appalled. I felt like a failure. How could they know so little?" In her January 26, 2009 journal entry, she indicated, "It surprised me how much difficulty, even my good students, had with this method." In February Dana stated, "This topic is familiar to them, and although we're going a bit deeper into the subject, they still seem to feel more confident with it." Dana's April 27, 2009 journal entry indicated the students were having difficulty with a concept. She wrote:

The exponents unit was a tough concept for my algebra 1 part 1 kids. At times they seemed to really understand, and then they couldn't solve the homework problems. Friday was quiz time and out of 28 questions, the average student got 20 correct.

These journal excerpts indicated how Dana struggled with student achievement. If Dana had a quality mentoring experience, she might not have struggled with student achievement.

Student Success

Dana's journals also included success stories in relation to student achievement. In October she mentioned, "I was very pleased with the projects. All but four students turned it in on time." Also in October she wrote, "They seem to really grasp just how big their accomplishments were. I felt that for the first time, my students were really using higher order thinking about mathematics." In her January 5, 2009 entry she stated, "I really enjoy watching the student's faces when they finally get their graph to look correct" and "This was a tough topic for my students to grasp. I took two days, and used the Smart board, some word problems I found in another book and I felt like the students really understood the process." Dana attributed some success to students doing their homework. In February Dana stated, "This topic is familiar to them, and although we're going a bit deeper into the subject, they still seem to feel more confident with it." She wrote in her February 16, 2009 journal "So many of the students didn't do well on the first systems of linear equations test, but really improved. They are for the most part doing their homework and grades are improving." By March, Dana was experiencing more success with student achievement. Her March 2, 2009 journal entry noted, "The grades on the homework and class activities have been very good." In the last weeks of school she noted, "There has been the occasional grumble about homework "this late in the year," but the homework I've graded has been quality work." In her final journal entry dated June 1, 2009, she wrote about the students' exam grades. She commented,

“The exam grades were respectable. I had several very high As and then mostly Bs and Cs.”

Mixed Results

Dana also encountered mixed results with student achievement. Dana referred to her experience with conferencing with her students prior to taking a computerized district assessment in October. She stated:

It was refreshing to see the students who really wanted to improve and liked the individual attention, even if it was just for a few minutes. It was also discouraging to see some of my quite capable students not seem to care at all about their scores.

Overall, I was pleasantly surprised at the how much useful information I gained.

The next two journal entries provide examples of Dana’s mixed results with student achievement:

January 12, 2009:

The exam grades ranged from a low of 43 to a several 100’s and a bunch of A’s and B’s. Some one had listened and had learned and I felt vindicated. Of course there were my few that made a D or F and truly I know they didn’t study at all.

February 23, 2009:

I finished up my Probability and Statistics unit and I felt like the kids really knew what they were doing. The grades were a bit lower than I had hoped, but they were solid B’s and C’s and only really one person really bombed it.

Dana's Interview Data Analysis for Subquestion 2

Student Achievement Definition

Dana defined student achievement as “achievement is for me to see them grow to me to know for sure that from August to June they have definitely gained something somewhere, hopefully a lot.” Dana described a district-mandated test that students take in the fall and spring each year that shows student growth in her subject. She indicated the tests showed her student scores improved from the fall to the spring. She said:

I really have a lot of success last year and this year with the MAPS scores going up tremendously. So I don't know if that was my prompting them to do better or them recalling some things or hopefully them learning a few new things to but they definitely were very excited.

Success Stories

She gave examples of success stories on the district-mandated test. The students should increase their score from the fall to the spring. Most students increase their score by only four or five points. Any student increasing their score more than five points has made significant achievement in the course that year. Dana shared her results:

I had one kid go up 22 points and I had one kid in that class go up 10 points which barely got him up to a 4th or 5th grade level but at least he is not on the 2nd or 3rd grade level anymore.

Dana taught students that performed at grade level or below. She stated that student achievement is no easy task with her students because “so many of them are over aged

and they just haven't seen any success in math whatsoever and therefore they've withdrawn. And have no intentions of learning anything this year." Dana shared some wisdom about student achievement, "in teaching them success is letting them enjoy some success I've decided." She also said:

What I've learned of the difficulty of teaching them is these kids haven't experienced success and they really have lots of holes in their basic math skills. So introducing the algebra concepts to them is very foreign to them. And I spend a lot of time spiraling around and around and around the same topic the whole year through. So teaching them is more difficult than I would have thought for that level of math.

Dana received her state standardized test scores from last year. She was disappointed that only 51 met the state standards and 49 did not meet the standard. She said, "I really thought a lot of those kids knew more than I thought they did."

Induction/Mentoring and Student Achievement

Dana discussed how the induction/mentoring experiences affected the students' achievement in her classroom. She told me about the guest speakers who talked about teaching the students how to take a standardized test. She learned some tips about taking a multiple-choice test to share with her students. She noted, "I hadn't really thought about that. It was just one of those things I thought you knew. But until you're taught you don't know." Dana stated that her mentor gave a multiple-choice test once a quarter so the students would have adequate practice with taking multiple-choice tests. Dana said that

she did not give multiple-choice tests in her first year but has started giving them in her second year. The topic of multiple choice tests introduced in Dana's induction class did not have an effect on her students' achievement because she did not implement this knowledge during her first year in the classroom. She stated she started using multiple-choice tests during her second year.

Summary

Dana's perception of her students' achievement was positive. Her definition of student achievement was to have her students grow mathematically. She noted that her MAP test results were good and cited many student gains from the fall to the spring. Dana did not limit her definition of student achievement to test scores. She described her policy about making the students analyze their errors on tests, which required the students to describe what type of mistake they made, careless, or did not understand the concept. She noted the students were making progress and made less careless mistakes. She said, "That's helping them. I'm seeing them grow too. And I always tell them their mathematical mind is growing." A relationship between the support received from induction/mentoring and student achievement is not noticeable because a guest speaker only addressed the topic of student achievement once in the induction class.

Tom's Journal Data Analysis for Subquestion 1

Introduction

This section will describe Tom's experiences with his induction/mentoring program and other sources of support as noted in his journal entries and interviews. This

section also presents his definition of an effective teacher and his account of when he believed he was effective in his classroom. Tom's story provides a discussion of how his induction/mentoring experiences affected his ability to become an effective teacher.

Induction/Mentoring

Tom's journal data indicated his mentoring experiences revolved around classroom management issues. Tom had particular difficulty with his fourth class, which he called his Core 4 class. The number of low level and behavioral problem students in this class was a recipe for disaster. You can get an image of the types of behavioral problems he was dealing with in his February 9, 2009 journal entry:

Four of my worst students were in OSS for fighting. Tuesday, three boys jumped another boy right outside of my classroom just before class. It was premeditated and two were charged with assault. One was the student that tried to poison a teacher two years ago and another was expelled last year for slashing a teacher's tires. It is still amazing to me that some of these kids are allowed back in a regular classroom after these behavior patterns.

Tom noted the district classroom management coach observed Tom's Core 4 class and "She admitted that I have some real challenges with some troubled kids but there were also several things that I was doing wrong." Tom's journal entries did not mention his experiences with his induction classes.

Tom received some support from his mentor and administrator in the beginning of the school year. The first time Tom wrote about his mentor in his journal was on

November 3, 2008. He noted his mentor observed him and “gave me some much appreciated feedback.” The following week his journal entry indicated he tried some new techniques that both his mentor and assistant principal suggested. Tom noted that he sought advice from his assistant principal throughout his journal entries. In his November 10, 2008 journal entry, he mentioned that his assistant principal told him that he was not writing enough referrals. Over time, his journal entries show that the support from his mentor and administrator diminished.

Support From Other Sources

Tom’s journal entries indicated that he also sought help from other sources than his induction/mentoring program. These sources included his team of eighth grade science teachers, a district classroom-management coach, and a private teacher coach that he hired near the end of the year. He stated in his December 15, 2008 journal entry that he resorted to these resources because his “mentor admitted that the principal feels like I’m behind the curve as far as class management is concerned and that I need to make a lot of improvements.” He noted he had difficulty with keeping his Core 4 class working from bell to bell. He added, “However, I’m not really having a lot of trouble with the other classes.” In the December 15, 2008 journal, Tom stated his administrator also enrolled him in a classroom management class and an instructional strategy class, both conducted by his district.

Suggestions for Improvement

Tom's December journal entries highlighted the suggestions his mentor and administrator gave Tom to improve his instructional strategies and classroom management issues. He wrote, "Some suggestions were that I get a wireless mouse so I can walk around the room while lecturing and showing slides, use more positive feedback than negative, work on my differentiation and instructional strategies." Tom also visited a classroom in another school in the district "to observe some best practices for presenting content and managing a class."

Tom's Attitude

Tom kept a positive attitude throughout his experience and showed a willingness to make improvements. He stated, "I will spend a fair amount of time during winter break making a plan that addresses all of these suggestions" and "I'm very excited about going back in January to start fresh and develop good teaching habits and skills." He wrote about his visit with the district classroom-management coach. He said, "She gave me some tips that I can't wait to try." In his January 5, 2009 journal, he appeared to have a renewed sense of optimism. He wrote:

I know this will be a lot more work for me but it'll be worth it if I can keep them focused most of the time and reduce my stress level. I'm scheduled to attend three days of training in January on class management and instructional strategies. I'm looking forward to these classes for new ideas. I'm also very happy with the support I'm getting from the administration concerning training and discipline.

In Tom's February 2, 2009 journal entry his sense of optimism suddenly changed. He wrote:

I was feeling pretty good about the progress when suddenly I get a visit from all four administrators in a span of about an hour and a half. I went to my mentor to discuss this and she agreed with me that they are discussing me. I can only assume that they are trying to decide whether or not I can control all of my classes.

Tom's positive or negative feelings about being effective revolved around his ability to manage his classroom. He noted in the February 2, 2009 journal entry "Core 3 and 4 have been behaving much better in the last few weeks since I've made the changes in the classroom." Tom noted he was not at ease in his February 2, 2009 journal entry. His principal came into the classroom and "read them the riot act" because the students came into the classroom in a disorderly fashion. The principal did not give Tom a chance to settle the students down. Tom wrote:

He came back into the room about ten minutes later and took some notes while I was lecturing. The class was doing pretty good at that time. Then, during Core 4, all three of the assistant principals visited my class for a short while. At the end of class, Mr. xx (researcher omitted name to protect the participant) made a comment about two kids that were talking in the back and then left. It was very weird and made me feel very uncomfortable.

Tom had attended the district training the administration recommended the week before he learned he would not receive a contract. Tom may have felt he needed more time to implement the strategies he had learned the week before.

New Strategies Produce Results

Tom implemented the classroom strategies he learned in the district training classes. Tom's change in his classroom management strategies appeared to be producing results. In his January 26, 2009 journal entry, he mentioned that the class seemed more orderly and focused. He wrote that his mentor observed his class briefly that same week and said "at least they came in more calmly and they all got their notebooks out for the warm-up." The following week he wrote that Core 4 was "more focused and on-task this week than I have seen them all year." In Tom's February 9, 2009 journal he wrote, "Even though I think my classroom management skills are improving, I can't take all of the credit this week. Four of my worst students were in out of school suspension (OSS) for fighting." The following week Tom wrote that his Core 4 class "behaved much better this week for the most part." Tom saw improvement with the students' behavior in his Core 4 class since he implemented the new classroom management strategies he learned at the district training.

When the students returned from OSS the following week they started to test Tom to see if he would follow through on the rules and consequences he set for his classroom. They began disrupting the classroom. Tom took charge and let the students know he would not tolerate any misbehavior and indicated he would write an administrative

referral. The administrative referral is a violation of the terms of the students' probation. Tom said, "They were much better the rest of the week. Supposedly, one more violation and at least two of them are out for good, but I've learned that it doesn't necessarily happen that way." Tom stated that his administrator was observing his class the same week the students returned from OSS. He wrote:

The principal has been walking through quite a bit and I even received a positive note on one of his sit-ins. He said that I was making improvements and I should keep working hard. Not a resounding endorsement but I'll take what I can get at this point.

In Tom's March 2, 2009 journal, he referred to a change in behaviors with some of his better-behaved students. He said I had "what I call a clown vacuum." A couple of the other normally well behaved kids tried to step up and take charge but I successfully squelched every attempt, at least for now anyway." Tom was beginning to feel effective with the changes he made to his classroom management. He experienced success when he took charge of the classroom and let the students know his expectations. He perceived he was becoming more effective as a teacher.

Tom also attributed his recent success with classroom management to the administration finally addressing the discipline issues. Tom noted a discussion he had with a parent in his March 2, 2009 journal entry. The parent had visited Tom's classroom everyday for months and was familiar with the classroom dynamics. She sat in Tom's class to monitor her own son's progress because of his behavior. The parent called a

meeting with the assistant principal and Tom. The other teachers on the team joined the meeting. In the meeting, the parent had recounted Tom's struggle with classroom management in the past. Tom wrote, "She did admit, however, that the last few weeks have been better and I attributed that to the fact that the administration had finally come down hard on the worst offenders."

Difficult Students

The week of March 16, 2009 did not prove to be a productive week. Tom stated that the weather had recently become warm and the students were testing all of the teachers on his team. He wrote:

This week, I felt like I was a prison guard. They didn't get much instruction and mostly I just had to keep them busy so they're wouldn't be a riot. I truly feel that this week with Core 4 was almost a total waste of time.

Part of Tom's classroom management problems stems from some hard-core discipline students. Tom described two of his students and their recent escapades:

One of my worst kids finally crossed the line and was in OSS all week. He actually got a hold of the principal's password and altered a bunch of records (including mine) while he was in the A+ lab. He probably would have never been caught had he not been bragging about it to others. He has been put up for expulsion so I'm anxious to see how this turns out. This kid is very troubled and he should have been removed from the class months ago, in my opinion. Also, another student, who is on strict probation, is starting to act up again. This is a

repeat(er) that was expelled last year for slashing a teacher's tires. I 'm making sure that my discipline on this child is by the numbers because one more referral for him and supposedly he's out too.

Students with such difficult behavior issues can make any teacher feel ineffective. Tom's journal captures his feeling of being ineffective when he stated he felt like a prison guard. Tom could not teach because the students took control. Unfortunately, it took such extreme student behaviors for the administration to intervene. The lessons that Tom learned from his classroom management classes and from the coach may have been more effective with less difficult students.

Bad News

There was a four-week gap in Tom's journal entries. One week is missing because of spring break. As you read his April 13, 2009 journal, you can just imagine why he did not write journals the other two weeks. Tom wrote:

I was informed a couple of weeks ago that I was not getting a contract for next year. I thought I was making enough progress according to my evaluations from the principal but I was wrong. I was kind of in shock when the principal called me in and told me that I had made progress with my classroom management but it wasn't enough to satisfy him.

Tom did not let this setback destroy him. He became proactive and hired a private independent teacher coach (TC). He said:

She is in the process of helping me document this entire experience and help me take control of my classes. I need to do this as soon as possible for my sanity and a chance at a decent referral from my assistant principal.

Tom asked his principal if he could invite his private TC to observe his classroom and the principal said “no.” Tom met with his TC over the weekend and they formulated an action plan. He noted in the journal that he started the new plan immediately and kept in touch with the TC daily. The TC advised him the students’ behaviors would take at least two to three weeks to change. Tom started to see progress the first week he implemented the new plan. He said, “Right now, I’m encouraged by the progress and confident that if I follow the TC’s advice I can actually get through this year.”

Tom reported that his new classroom management implementation plan was showing some promise. The students tried testing him but he followed through with the consequences he had set. Tom’s effectiveness improved in his lessons and his classroom management. He wrote in his April 20, 2009 journal entry:

The labs we did this week went surprisingly well. I’m not sure I would have even let them do it before I started this new program with the teacher coach. At one point, the principal did a walk through and saw them doing the lab and I think he was a little pleased. He said that he wanted the kids to be up and actively involved more in this class and this is exactly what he saw.

Tom reported the following week that the students did well until he started to review for a test. His TC diagnosed his problem was in his transitions. Tom and the TC agreed to

work on transitions next. The assistance Tom received from his private TC helped Tom regain his sense of feeling effective in his classroom.

Disappointment

Tom expressed disappointment with the administrators. They had stopped coming to observe his classes once they told him he would not receive a contract. Tom started to wonder if they did not want to see him become an effective teacher. He suggested there might have been other reasons why they did not renew his contract. He wrote:

I've been trying to keep them updated and have repeatedly invited them to witness my improvement but so far no takers. The fact they were in my classroom every other day when I was struggling and now they're scarce when I'm doing better is troubling to me. Are they afraid that I will improve so much that their decision looks premature? Did I even have a chance in the first place? There is a strong rumor that the 7th Grade class is smaller and so the 8th Grade can do without a block next year. To support this rumor, we have already lost a social studies teacher due to personal reasons, an ELA teacher just mysteriously quit, my contract was not renewed and a math teacher is talking with the principal about moving to the 7th Grade. That is the elimination of an entire block without RIFing anyone. That looks like good personnel management from a distant [sic]. How convenient.

Tom asked the district teacher coach to observe his Core 4 class. He stated that, when the district teacher coach observed his class, five or six of the difficult students

were not on their best behavior as the class played Jeopardy to review for a test. The district teacher coach did tell Tom that she saw some improvement from her previous visit. Tom stated he wanted her to observe one of his other classes. He wrote, “I really want her to see that I’m not totally incompetent.”

Tom shed some light on some of the discipline issues in his Core 4 class. He stated some of the students have given up because their grades were so low and they have become more difficult to handle. He said the school had a program called content recovery where a student can receive a passing grade for the course by putting in some time in the “A+” lab. This is a computer lab that has different computer programs to remediate the student who is failing. Tom wrote about his disappointment with this program because the students who disrupted his class all year and failed his course now got a chance to pass the course. This policy seemed to undermine all that Tom had done and tried to do.

Tom ended his journal entries stating that he had tried to get his assistant principal to write a referral for him. The assistant principal never wrote a reference for Tom. Tom suspected that the assistant principal knew that the principal did not write a positive reference for Tom and thought the assistant principal did not want to contradict his boss. Tom noted he did get positive references from his team members and his mentor. Tom had trouble because he had very difficult students in one class, students that have committed some very disturbing acts against teachers.

Summary

New teachers need support to feel effective. The purpose of induction/mentoring programs is to support new teachers. Additional support from other sources can supplement the induction/mentoring experience to help the new teacher transition into the teaching profession. Tom's journals indicated he did not receive consistent help from the administration or his mentor. Tom's journal entries have no information about his induction classes. Tom needed administrative support to help him with the most difficult students in his last class. Tom thought he was receiving support from the administration because they sent him to district training for classroom management and instructional strategies. When Tom attended those classes, he realized his administrators did not support him at all, because the following week he was informed he would not receive a contract the next year. Tom expressed his confusion over why the administrators would send him to classes and not give him time to implement what he learned and show his improvement. He stated he invited the administrators after he attended the district training to observe his progress but they would not come.

Tom knew early in the year that his Core 4 class was going to be a challenge. He wrote in his first journal entry:

This class is more challenging than the others because it is my largest class (27 students), it begins one hour after lunch and includes 80% of my "higher needs" students. By "higher needs" I mean either they are ADHD (some are on medication and some are not), have a poor or apathetic attitude about my class,

they have higher than normal discipline issues or a combination of all or some of the above. I feel like if I can learn to manage this class successfully then I'm well on my way to becoming an effective teacher.

It is interesting that Tom intuitively connected classroom management with becoming an effective teacher. It is unfortunate Tom's difficulty with his last class overshadowed his feelings of being effective in his other three classes. He felt effective for 75% of the day. His last class consumed all of his energy and eventually was the reason he did not receive a contract for the following year. Tom's induction/mentoring experiences did not provide him the tools he needed to become an effective teacher. Any success Tom had with classroom management was a result of the support he received from other sources including the district classroom-management coach and the private TC he hired.

Tom's Interview Data Analysis for Subquestion 1

Overwhelmed and in Culture Shock

Tom repeatedly mentioned the words "overwhelmed" and "in culture shock" throughout the interview. He was shocked at how the school handled discipline, how students behaved, how little authority the teachers had with student behavior issues, and just how much work is involved with the teaching profession. He commented about how different the school environment is today as compared to when he was in school in the 70s. He said:

I don't know how old you are but in the 70s they had a blackboard, a textbook, and a desk. You know and that's what teachers taught with. That sort of how naïve I was about going in. Well at least when I went to school whether they like it or they were half asleep or whatever at least they sat there and listened quietly. And they were at least they didn't cause trouble.

Tom made additional references to the 70s when I asked him to clarify if the teachers were doing any diversified instructional strategies; he said, "Well they weren't doing it. They were doing it some. But it was much it was pretty traditional. Stuff that I was used to back in the 70s."

He described trying to implement new instructional strategies he learned in PACE that were not familiar to the other science teachers on his team. He stated "So for me to step out of the box and implement this stuff. I had to kind of do my own my own thing and I was so overwhelmed." He repeated, "Just so overwhelmed." Later in the interview he repeated "but so I was in culture shock about the whole time" when he was describing the policy regarding student failures.

Classroom Dynamics

Tom described his students as "a pretty good group of kids." He mentioned that he taught approximately 99 students and all but "10 or 15 of them were kind of a problem." He told me in his morning classes he had 12 students in his first class, and 13 in the other class. The morning classes were comprised of honors students because their math classes grouped them by ability level. The afternoon classes were large and had the

students with the discipline issues in them. He stated his afternoon class sizes had 32 and 33 students in each class. He said:

Yeah it just blew me away. And nobody could give, really me an answer but basically what was happening is the kids that were advanced, they got priorities. They got to be in a small group. And those classes were a dream. I mean it was a dream. I couldn't believe they were paying me to go in there. And these kids, there's [sic] 12 kids in a class and they're engaged and they're smart. And it was just wonderful. And then after lunch it was a totally different story. So it was harder reaching the kids. Thirty-three kids and you've got four or five of them always acting up. It just didn't make much sense to me.

The class size and ability grouping of students would eventually determine Tom's perception of his effectiveness. As he stated, the smaller classes were a dream and in later journal entries, he noted his perception of his effectiveness was positive with the morning classes because he had no trouble managing those classes. In contrast, Tom's comment "So it was harder reaching the kids" indicates his perception of being ineffective in the afternoon classes because he stated, "you've got four or five of them always acting up." Tom related his teacher effectiveness to classroom management.

Induction/Mentoring

Tom described his induction program as a seminar once a month where he was required to do reports. He could not remember what the subject matter was for the reports. Tom asked his induction instructors "What the heck do I do I am having so much

trouble with this class management?” The instructors’ responses were “you just got to figure it out for yourself because every class, every person is different.” Tom was searching for strategies, suggestions, anything that would help him and his instructors did not provide the support he was requesting.

I asked Tom to tell me about his induction program, if it met his needs, and if he learned any strategies. He commented the strategies introduced in the induction program were the same as what he had learned in PACE. He said “PACE just seems like PACE is ahead of the just so far ahead of the, is so far ahead of the strategies than the main stream education.” He indicated that his eighth grade science team did not use the strategies that he learned, but he did remark that when he observed his mentor, the seventh grade science team was implementing them.

He mentioned that he was required to work with his administrator and his mentor as part of the induction experience. When I asked him to describe his mentoring experience he said “Oh lord have you read the journals yet?” He stated he did not get much help from the administration and his mentor was in another grade level and he did not have much contact with her. He stated the help he received from the administrator in the beginning of the year was so vague that he had to do the best he could.

Tom stated he had observed his mentor’s classroom a couple of times and she gave him suggestions after she observed his classes. Tom was very complimentary as he described his mentor.

My real mentor was a nice lady and she was a great teacher. She was teacher of the year that year. And she tried her best but she was teacher of the year, she was doing her own class, uh she was mentoring two other people, and didn't just get much time with her.

It is evident that Tom liked his mentor but he made excuses for her inability to assist him when he stated "Yeah the national board. She had just gotten that. She was burnt out and I kind of felt sorry for her because she had a lot on her plate." He stated his mentor did not assist him with curriculum planning because she taught seventh grade. Tom stated the amount of collaboration with his mentor was minimal.

School Environment

Tom inferred the school environment was not optimal for retaining teachers. Tom stated the principal was in his second year at the school and had lost 30 – 40% of the teachers last year. He also stated the year he taught at that school "there was a lot of unhappiness, a lot of teachers that were still there were looking to go somewhere." I asked him to tell me why the teachers were unhappy. He stated the principal was "he was very condescending, wasn't very helpful, and didn't support the teachers. The parents were always right." He recounted a conversation he had with one of the guidance counselors that indicated that the principal played favorites and that there were some harassment suits filed against him. He stated, "Just knowing that going in. And I'm like holy cow what have I gotten myself into?" He stated "And um so it was just a mess and I'm like well now I know how I got the job there because everybody else was leaving."

Teachers need a nurturing environment to grow professionally. The administrators in the school can either promote the right environment or risk losing teachers. PACE teachers, need additional assistance because they have not had student teaching experience. The administrator in Tom's school did not provide the supportive environment for Tom to become an effective teacher.

Administrative Support

I asked Tom to describe the support from his administrators. He indicated it was "pretty good til about February and then the whole thing kind of changed and fell apart." He stated there were rumors that the eighth grade would need less teachers the following year because the seventh grade class was smaller. He also mentioned the pending budget cuts may have been a reason for his not receiving a contract for the following year. Tom indicated his administrator reduced the amount of support when he told Tom he would not return the following year. He said the principal told him "Just put your thumb on them. You know if you're having trouble with them put your thumb on them."

Tom mentioned his administrator reduced the amount of support around February. He stated the administrator came into his classroom and told the students that Tom would send any students that caused a disruption to his office. Tom stated:

And he kind of scared them for like a week. Then when I started doing it. They'd just come back and laugh. And nothing happened to them. So they got the (inaudible) quick that there's no consequences. And they weren't scared of him.

So it was kind of a nightmare but after that after I was told I wasn't going to be asked back.

Tom hired a private teacher coach when he learned he was not returning. He asked his principal if the coach could observe his class so she could make recommendations for improvement. His principal said "No." A few weeks later Tom asked his principal to observe him to see the improvements he was making. He said "And then after I got my own teacher coach I could not I begged him to come in to see me after I started improving. And I couldn't get him to come in there at all." He continued:

And my teacher coach she just she couldn't believe it. Uh and I couldn't get him in so a lot of that I don't know if a lot of that is they weren't they didn't want to be proven wrong or they just didn't care because they knew I was going away anyway. I don't know.

Tom will never know why the principal chose not to observe him when he was making improvements despite the circumstances.

Tom also indicated the principal would not support the teachers if they gave any student a grade less than a 60. He stated he got into trouble for giving grades below a 60 because the administration did not tell him about the policy. He stated the reason for such a policy was a grade less than a 60 made the student give up. He said:

If we um if we give he said if we gave any of the kids below a 60 on a grade whether they turned in something or not, then he would not support us because what we've done is made them give up. And I didn't find that out til later. Um

when I'd already done that. Cause if a kid came in and he didn't turn in an assignment I gave him a zero. Well I got in trouble for that.

Tom's word choice was interesting when he spoke about the principal's policy. He indicated the principal was placing the blame on the teachers when he said, "what we've done is made them give up". Statements like these show the lack of support for teachers.

Other Sources of Assistance

Tom indicated the other three eighth grade science teachers planned the curriculum with Tom. He stated:

Um the preparation in my class, I was lucky because we did a team preparation.

So I didn't actually have to do lesson plans everyday by myself. And I just had to learn the lesson plans and then teach um. So I didn't have to you know reinvent the wheel which was a life saver.

I asked Tom to describe the support he received from his co-workers. He responded:

Uh they helped me a lot. My co-workers and the other three teachers in my block were awesome. There was actually one that was a PACE teacher. And uh the other two the English teacher was PACE. And that was her third year. She was just finishing up. She had the same problems that I had her first year in PACE. And she barely made it and she cried at night and almost went home and almost quit. But she ended up sticking it out. It wasn't there, oh yeah it was there. It was with another principal. And uh so they were very supportive. They helped me any way they could because they knew what I was going through.

It is interesting that Tom discussed the other PACE teacher's experience during her first year, crying every night and almost quitting. It was as if the teachers knew that Tom needed their help so he could persevere through his first year in the classroom.

Tom said he did not have the opportunity to observe other teachers because he used his planning periods to get ready. He stated, "I just didn't seem to find the time for anybody else." Science teachers need time to gather the materials for labs and demonstrations during their planning period.

Tom received help once from the district classroom-management coach. He said she was "awesome." He stated the coach was supposed to return and help Tom but she had a death in her family and took a leave of absence. Tom recounted the experience:

So I was like okay. And then I would go to the principal and he didn't have time for me. The whole attitude changed by then. And uh it was and of course my mentor was so busy. So the only recourse I have to get a referral is to improve. So I had to go out and hire my own teacher coach. Out of my own pocket cause I wanted to learn this. And I wanted to get better. And I really wasn't getting much support there.

Tom's dedication to improve and learn how to become an effective teacher was apparent when he resorted to hiring his own private teacher coach. He stated he worked four to six weeks with her and he made improvements under her guidance. Tom's principal did not allow his private teacher coach in the school and consequently she had to rely on Tom's recollection of the events that happened each day. If the private coach had the

opportunity to observe Tom, she may have been able to make different recommendations based on those observations. Another pair of eyes may have been able to see something Tom may have missed.

Classroom Management

Tom mentioned in the interview the principal tried to convince his mentor who taught seventh grade to take the eighth grade position that he held. He stated:

Yes and the principal tried to get, tried to get her uh, to teach eighth grade science before he hired me and she said she couldn't do it because they were kids just too out of control. She had a hard time handling the eighth graders but the seventh grades she did great with them.

Tom gave some reasons why he had so much trouble with classroom management in his Core 4 class. He stated:

Part of it was because I did not know how to handle them. Part of it was because I was new. Part of it was because some of them had come over from failing schools and were problems and they didn't know what to do with them. And there was [sic] probably about 10 kids that I had a reoccurring problem with the entire time.

Later in the interview, he gave additional reasons why he had so much trouble with the Core 4 class. He spoke about the student who tried to poison a teacher, another who slashed a teacher's tires, and another student who was turning seventeen that was "so bad that his mother came in every, you saw that, every week." Each of those students was in his Core 4 class. Tom stated "and uh the

other teachers had experienced that too. That was a, that was the hard the hard part cause you couldn't do anything with them." Later in the interview, he was describing some of the students who gave him the most trouble in his Core 4 class. He couldn't believe that the student who used the principal's code to change student grades in the A+ lab only received three days detention and that the other students who committed criminal acts against the teachers were in his class. He stated:

And I'm like how does this kid stay in school? And what about the other kids? I mean, well he's got every right to be here and it's no child left behind. And I'm like what about the other kids? Why do we slow the bus down so much that you don't leave anybody behind but the other kids aren't going anywhere. You know what I am talking about.

Tom made a very good point. What is happening to the other students in his classroom while these students are disrupting the instructional process?

Tom discussed that his classroom management issues were inhibiting his use of the effective instructional strategies he learned in PACE. He stated "It was just it was just easier just to go along with it and not I was just having so much trouble with the class management mostly one block. That I was just happy to get home by six o'clock."

I asked Tom "How have your experiences with the induction/mentoring program affected your effectiveness in the classroom in terms of content standards implementation

and classroom management?” He replied the eighth grade teachers had helped him with the standards and continued:

Tom: With the classroom management, there was my mentor at the school. Uh she was helping me with that and the science teachers they had no idea uh how to help me.

Researcher: Okay

Tom: They didn't have the problem and it was because they knew what they were doing. I was fresh meat. You know was I felt like I just kind of fell to the dogs.

Researcher: Oh, so your induction program really didn't help you with the classroom management become with your [*sic*]?

Tom: No it did it did help me but it wasn't enough. I didn't get anybody come into my class and show me how to do something. Uh I mean it was lacking but it. Everybody was doing the best they could I guess. Uh I mean my mentor was doing the best she could. The science teachers were doing the best they could to get their stuff done. Um

Tom's statement "I was fresh meat. You know was I felt like I just kind of fell to the dogs" shows how vulnerable Tom felt. He appears to excuse the circumstances because everyone was doing the best they could.

Tom's Definition of Teacher Effectiveness

I asked Tom to describe an effective teacher. He describes the qualities of effective people, projects those qualities to his classroom, reflects about his own effectiveness, and gives reasons why he may have had those experiences.

Tom: An effective teacher is no different I don't think than an effective manager or effective worker. They're prepared, they know what they're doing, they're organized and they know their customer they know their clientele. Uh and uh they developed their own technique along with some that they've learned. But they know how to handle different situations. And when the kids see that, they see you're prepared, you know your stuff, you were organized, and you kept them moving and engaged. Uh then the rest of it just flows. And I don't pretend to even, even uh I was so far away from that you know I wasn't even in the ballpark you know. But I wasn't I did that I was I didn't think that I was so below average as a first year teacher. Especially from the PACE people I talked to they were having the same problems I was having. And it seemed like the difference was the administration. Now the time is bad too. You got all these you got all these budget cuts and everything. Everybody is stressed out.

Researcher: Right

Tom: Everybody's doing more with less. And uh so that was part of it too I think. But I saw some really good teachers. My mentor she was a good teacher and that one lady I saw at that other school. Uh there's an art to it. And I would be selling the profession short if I said I could learn it in a year or two or five years. I mean

uh it's a lot harder than I ever thought it would be. But I also saw how rewarding it was when you got it right.

Tom's statement "I also saw how rewarding it was when you got it right" shows he did feel effective even if it was for a brief moment.

Teacher Effectiveness

Tom stated he had learned effective teaching strategies in the PACE program. He stated, "PACE gave a lot of ideas and they gave me a lot of things to do... the hard part was I didn't have anybody kind of show me how to do it." Tom stated the other science teachers were not familiar with the new strategies Tom learned in PACE and taught the way Tom was taught in the 70s. He said:

I had to kind of do my own my own thing and I was so overwhelmed. I didn't and I tried a few times and it failed miserably and it just and it just so I just went with the flow because that's what the other teachers were doing.

Tom talked about the frustration he had regarding implementing the strategies he learned in PACE. His frustration intensified because he could not get the support he needed.

And we I knew kind of what to do but I didn't know how to implement those things. And I didn't have anybody to show me. I couldn't get my teacher coach in there to show me first hand. And my first teacher coach from the county I only saw her once. And my mentor was so busy she had hardly any time to come in there. When she did she didn't stay long. It was like I see what PACE is talking about. I see where they want me to go. And how they want me to engage the kids.

But it was just tough because my other three science teachers were not doing that at all. They weren't doing much of that at all.

Tom indicated his internal struggle with trying to become an effective teacher in the following statement:

I didn't and I tried a few times and it failed miserably and it just and it just so I just went with the flow because that's what the other teachers were doing. And the administration was fine with that. And for me to step out of the box and do these strategies. I mean I did some but doing it on my own and kind of break out of that was near impossible.

Tom equated his perception of his effectiveness to his statement "it failed miserably". I later asked Tom to describe his perceptions of his teacher effectiveness. He responded:

Oh I would say and I keep in the morning I think I was pretty effective, in the afternoon I was not so effective. Just because I didn't know how to handle these kids. I mean I wasn't taught how to do and I really wasn't shown. They said basically just figure it out. Here's [sic] some pointers. You've got to figure it out. And I just didn't, I tried to figure out how to get support. You know I spent, I bet you I spent most of my time after class calling parents. And I did that a lot. And I've got the logs to prove it. You know its like but that was effective but was I an effective teacher? Did they learn anything? That fourth block, I don't know if they learned anything in that fourth block because they had six or eight kids that were just hard to handle and the other kids just kind of lost and uh. I was frustrated. I

don't know but the first the first two blocks of classes were wonderful. And the kids really really responded. I really connected with them because they were trying.

Later in the interview, I asked Tom to describe when he felt he was effective. Tom's response indicates conditions must be favorable for someone to feel as if they were effective.

Researcher: I agree with you. Can you tell me a time when you felt you were effective in your first year?

Tom: Um Well it depends on the class. I thought I was very effective in the first two classes. With the small class, with the bright kids, I should say motivated kids. And the fourth block after lunch and the third block after lunch uh the kids were great. There was just so many of them. And I was effective more, I was effective but less effective I think. But that fourth block I had all the troubled kids. I had all the troubled kids in the fourth block. The other teachers seemed to have them spread around. And, I had them all in the same block. And, they just fed off each other. Yeah I had lynching, I had fights in my rooms, uh and a lot of that was I mean the principal said it was you because you were taking your eye off the ball. And you weren't and that's true I am sure in a lot of cases but, but uh. Uh I was effective I think I was very effective for those first two classes because uh I had the environment. I had the easy environment. But I but I was, they were so engaged that it was just fun. You know that hour and a half went so fast. So I

think I was effective for the first you know the first half of the day. And that got less and less effective because it was more challenging.

Tom's response also shows how the principal placed blame on Tom when he stated, "the principal said it was you because you were taking your eye off the ball." Tom's statement that followed indicated that Tom was beginning to believe what his principal said was true.

Failure Is Not An Option

In the interview Tom told me about the administration's policy regarding student failures. The following dialogue should illuminate why students were apathetic, would not engage in the lessons, and would cause classroom disruptions.

Tom: And the other thing, did you read, did I put in there about the A+?

Researcher: Yeah and I didn't know what that was.

Tom: Well that was another shock. They could go in. This was countywide. Well they were implementing it. They said it worked it worked in a couple of high schools and they were implementing it in some of the other schools. But okay for instance I had this one kid who came in. He did absolutely nothing. Nothing. I couldn't you know I talked to everybody well there's nothing you can do about it. He's a big guy. You can't he [sic] kinda sits there and interrupts other people because he doesn't do anything. Well he had, he had a 34 average the first semester, the first nine weeks. And I was being generous. Well all he had to do was go to the lab for a couple of hours and take this program that had the material.

And at the end he's out of there and that 34 gets turned to a 70. And once the kids figured out they could do that a lot of them said, "What's the point?" (Inaudible) 70 and even if they failed they would go to the A+ lab come out and they would have a 70 and they would pass. And my administrator, principal, he met with us toward the end of the year. Well I guess it was spring maybe actually spring break. And he said he said with my block in the eighth grade well it was the whole eighth grade teachers. In the eighth grade there is 25 kids uh that are going to fail. That are on track to fail. And he said that's not going to happen in my school. You will not fail them. You will find a way to pass them. And I was just like, my mouth dropped you know. And I was talking to the teachers and they looked at me and they said do whatever it takes. Don't fail them. And that's how they keep passing them on. Guess how many kids failed in the eighth grade?

Researcher: Probably zero.

Tom: Yeah a big goose egg.

Researcher: Oh goodness.

Tom: Can you imagine we had we had uh 400 I think 350 or 400 eighth graders and not one of them failed? Not one of them was retained.

Researcher: That was many of them deserved to be.

Tom: Oh yeah, and that was the whole point. That was the message the kids were getting. That, What's the point?

Researcher: Right

Tom: This is just you know this is uh an exercise. You know we're just to going to go through this and show up.

Researcher: And will pass anyways.

Tom: I had kids good kids that were more in danger of failing because, because they didn't show up. They were out too many days. Uh than the ones who didn't do anything. Never turned in their paper. Never did anything. Never did any homework. Some of them wouldn't even take a test. Some of them would hand me the you know the test back with their name on it. And I'd go to the counselor and say what do we do? Well he's you know he's this, he's that, he's that. They get a chance to do it over again at their leisure. But so I was in culture shock about the whole time.

Tom felt helpless and ineffective with classroom management because the policy allowed the students to do as they pleased and they would not fail. The policy was flawed because students who refused to do anything in class would cause classroom disruptions because they were bored and did not have to be held accountable for their grades.

Summary

Tom's experiences with his induction/mentoring program did not appear to meet his needs. Tom indicated his induction classes met once a month and required reports. He mentioned when he asked his two instructors for some advice pertaining to classroom management they did not give him strategies to follow or resources to investigate.

Tom's mentoring experiences were less than adequate to meet his needs. His mentor taught a different grade level. According to Tom, it was not her fault that she was not able to assist him. Tom relied on the help he could get from his team of eighth grade science teachers for lesson planning. Tom was proactive in his quest to become an effective teacher. He asked the district's classroom management coach for help and when she was no longer available to Tom, he hired his own private teacher coach. When Tom had to hire his own private teacher coach implies the induction/mentoring experience did not meet his needs.

Tom's Journal Data Analysis for Subquestion 2

Introduction

This section will describe Tom's experiences with his students' achievement as noted in his journal entries and interview transcripts. It will highlight his successes, his difficulties, and the mixed results he encountered in his first year with student achievement. Also included in this section are Tom's definition of student achievement and a discussion of how his induction/mentoring experiences affected his student achievement.

Tom's Interpretation of Student Achievement

In Tom's journal entries, he related student achievement to student performance on quizzes and tests and the level of student engagement in his lessons. He wrote in his October 20, 2009 journal about the concern he had with all of his students' achievement.

I'm usually presently surprised how lively the discussions are. I am, however, shocked at how little some of the students know about science but at least they feel free to take part in the discussions. This class has a much lower knowledge base level so keeping them from falling too far behind is a real concern. The other concern is that I'm not sure how I'm going to keep the interested students engaged without losing all of the unmotivated ones.

Tom noted in his October 27, 2009 journal "The lesson plan seemed to flow well as I didn't hear a lot of complaints of how boring class is." Tom inferred that student achievement relates to teacher effectiveness. In his mind, teacher effectiveness was the ability to "Wow" the students. He referred to whether the students enjoyed a lesson or if they were bored. He wrote, "It was very interesting to see which classes were wowed and which ones were so not impressed. I swear I don't what it takes to get through to some of these hard cases." Tom learned early that he must use differentiation to reach all students at their own level in order to increase student achievement. He wrote, "My goal is to be able to differentiate instruction within the same class to different students based on their individual needs, but I'm not quite there yet."

Differentiation

Tom's descriptions of his lessons showed that he was differentiating the delivery of his lessons to maximize student achievement. The lessons provided opportunities for students to be engaged in hands-on learning. Tom related his effectiveness with student

achievement to whether the students were actively participating and wanted to learn more. In his November 3, 2008 journal entry he wrote:

We also had two pretty decent labs that let them use some good maps of the ocean seafloors and a large plate tectonic puzzle that took a lot of thought for each group to complete. Of course, this was a hit with the class and they practically begged for a lab every day.

In Tom's February 15, 2009 journal entry he reiterated how he believed that differentiation lead to student engagement, which ultimately leads to student achievement. He wrote:

This was a fun week because the kids seem to really be interested in this topic. I think we had the most fascinating discussions of the year. It's very rewarding to finally wow these kids for a change. I tried to use as much variety as I could to keep their attention, like Gizmos, posters, NASA's web site, etc.

Tom also differentiated his assessments to provide more opportunities for student achievement. In October he wrote "For the two lower end classes, I counted the diagram as extra credit which made a significant difference in their grades."

Challenges

Tom indicated in his October 27, 2009 journal entry that he had some challenges with planning his lessons for maximum student achievement. His concerns were with the pacing of the lessons and with teaching big concepts when the standards provided narrow objectives. He indicated some of his science standards are so narrow that it is difficult to

help students see how they fit into the big picture. He wrote in his November 3, 2008 journal “The hard part, to me, was giving students the big picture without going too deep and losing them in the details.” Tom’s conception of pacing a lesson and differentiating a lesson are related. He wrote, “This was a good week for pacing since we had a good video, two good labs and a couple of lectures with help from a power point slide show provided by my team leader.”

Support From Other Teachers

Tom’s journals indicated he planned with the eighth grade science teachers often. The science teachers shared resources and materials with Tom to help him maximize his students’ achievement. In October, he noted that he received a power point slide show from his team leader. In his November journal entries he wrote, “my team put a lot of thought into conducting an easy transition from layers of the earth to plate tectonics” and his “planning team had a lot of discussion concerning the order of presentation.” In January, Tom wrote, “my team will meet next week to decide what if any content we’ll re-teach.” The support he received from the teachers with lesson planning helped him feel effective with his classroom instruction and gave him more time to focus on the other issues he was dealing with in the classroom.

Student Achievement

Throughout Tom’s journals, there are references of varying degrees of results with his students’ achievement. Many of his journal entries noted whether the students did well on their assessments or were actively engaged in the lesson. Tom expressed

concern about his students' achievement in his November 10, 2008 journal entry. He remarked about the other science teachers having the same difficulties as he did. He wrote:

Last week's unit test grades were pretty low. The other science teachers had the same problem so it wasn't just me. There is a lot of frustration on our science team because many of the students are only doing a bare minimum of work and we have to stay after them to turn in almost every assignment. The apathy at this age still surprises me. In fact, one of the veteran teachers on my team emailed the principal asking for any advice that would help motivate the students. We are still waiting on a response.

Tom noted in his November 17, 2008 journal "Most of the students seemed to really like this exercise and understand the concepts" and "we had a quiz on Thursday but I haven't graded them yet. Based on comments from several students, I'm very optimistic about the grades as a whole." Tom's comment in this journal entry shows that he believes student engagement and student achievement are related. Tom noted again in December and January how he was pleasantly surprised the students were so interested in the topics he was teaching. Tom continued to write in his journal about the success he was having with student engagement. He wrote in his February 23, 2009 journal "This was another fun week because the students are so interested in this subject. The questions they ask are so much more "high-end" when we talk about space and the stars." Tom continued to search for ways to engage his students. In his March journal entries, he described how he

introduced more technology into his lessons. He wrote “This week I tried to inject as much technology as I could to wow the kids... Friday’s Sun video was spectacular and yet some struggled to stay awake. Go figure.”

In December, Tom noted that the whole science team decided to repeat the instruction on a set of standards because all of the grades on the quiz were “dismal.” Tom reported in his journals, his grades were similar to the other teacher in eighth grade. He wrote:

Progress reports went out this week and I have 15 of 28 students with a grade of D or F (mostly F’s). It seems that I’m not the only one with a high failure rate. Many of the other teachers are complaining about the same thing. Most of the teachers I’ve talked to that have been at this school for more than a couple of years agree that this is an exceptionally tough year for discipline and academic achievement.

In February, Tom noted that the majority of his students and the other teachers’ students did poorly on the quiz. The team decided to review the material prior to giving another assessment. He wrote, “It’s very frustrating for all of us to see these kinds of results after we slowed down and put forth so much effort.” The journal entries imply the teachers are working hard and not getting the results they expected. One of Tom’s February journal entries stated that the other teachers’ students did not perform as well as his students on a test. Tom wrote, “My grades, however, were not as low so I decided to break ranks and do something a little different.”

Tom was so concerned about his students that he began tutoring students after school twice a week. He wrote, “My biggest concern is for the kids that want to learn are getting short-changed.” His tutoring program had only one rule: The program was only open to students that exhibited proper behavior in his class. Tom noted in later journal entries that his tutoring sessions were making a positive impact on student achievement.

Summary

Tom did not discuss his induction/mentoring experiences in relation to student achievement in his journals. However, Tom wrote about the support he received from the other eighth grade science teachers with planning lessons that provided differentiation and student engagement. He was also vocal about the message that schools are sending students about student achievement. He wrote:

We are more concerned about them being passed through than holding them accountable for their actions and efforts. These kids know that teachers are under a lot of pressure to pass them. This message is loud and clear when we are encouraged not to give them zeros, even if they don't turn the assignment in, but to give them a 60 so they don't feel like they're getting too far behind and give up. My principal actually said in a meeting that if we give any student below a 60 then he will not support us when that child misbehaves. I almost fell out of my seat because I couldn't believe what I just heard. Is it any wonder why we have such a low graduation rate in this state?

Tom made a good point regarding holding students accountable. Students will meet the expectation level set by the teacher or the school. If the administration's expectation is no student will receive less than a 60, then students can literally do no work and still receive a grade of 60. In Tom's school, failing students went to the A+ lab, and finished some computer-generated lessons, and still passed at the end of the year. The administration's policy was actually hindering Tom's and other teachers' ability to maximize student achievement because the students knew with little or no work completed all year they could still pass by completing lessons in the lab.

Tom's Interview Data Analysis for Subquestion 2

Tom's Definition of Student Achievement

In the interview, I asked Tom to define student achievement. He indicated by his response that his students were performing as well or better than the other teachers' students were. He said:

Uh, I was very proud of my student achievement because on average, believe me I let my administrator know this later on, uh that uh that we all took the same tests. I did the lesson plans that they had already and they made copies and gave them the same tests. And my grades were my kid's grades were, uh, half the time about half the time they were better and the other half they were right there and the same. Because we'd compare and I know I know several times where my grades were better than their's. So I kept I kept an unofficial tally of that and I let my administrator know and my assistant principal. Now my assistant principal was,

was he was he was first year in middle school. And he was about as lost as I was. He was nice, he was trying to help but he was so overwhelmed. And I let them know that look you know whatever I'm doing and whatever you think I'm doing wrong or right the kids are actually testing just as well or better than these seasoned teachers. Which I was very proud of. But it didn't seem to matter much. Tom implied that his students' achievement was as good or better than the other teachers despite the difficulty he had with classroom management. His last statement "But it didn't seem to matter much" shows how his spirit was broken. Tom continued to describe his encounter with the principal regarding his students' achievement.

Oh I know when the principal asked me to come in and he told me they weren't going to ask me back. This was uh March uh March, no yeah early February whatever it was. Anyway I said wait a minute I said have you looked at my grades because I know you can pull them all up? Have you looked at my grades? My kid's grades, they are testing just as well or better than the others. And he said, didn't look at those that doesn't matter.

He was defeated. The administrators were not using his students' achievement data to make their decision about Tom's fate.

I asked Tom "So can you tell me how you define student achievement though, you told me you were proud of your student achievement, but how do you define student achievement?" The conversation continued:

Tom: Well the management of them taking a test and scoring just as well or better than.

Researcher: Is your definition?

Tom: Well that's not my definition but that's one way because that's why we test them to see how much they know. How much they retained. But uh no I think I think we should be teaching the kids how to learn. Not just take back what they just you know what they can read or do on a test. How to explore especially in science how to explore and how to do projects and how to formulate you know ideas and equations and those things. And I really hammered the uh the uh scientific method for everything we did cause I wanted them to go to high school being able to think. Uh I probably wasn't very effective in doing that, but that's what I want, that's what I want to do. I want a high school teacher to come back to me and say, "Your kids really think. They kind of look at the whole thing and they try to figure something out rather than just reading something and regurgitating it back on a test."

Researcher: Okay

Tom: So to me if they can think and think a problem through then I figure I figure I've done my job pretty much.

Tom considered student achievement as more than getting good test results but helping students to think, explore, and wonder. He stated it was important for them to learn how

to learn and formulate ideas. Tom's vision was to see his students become life-long learners.

Induction/Mentoring

I asked Tom to tell me how his induction/mentoring experience affected his students' achievement. His response was:

Um not much I mean not like I said my mentor helped me. Uh but it was minimal. It wasn't her fault. She was just so busy. Um she would write little notes on what to do. And then we had some formal things we had to turn in but I do them but I didn't really have enough no somebody showing me how to do it. Uh I mean I got things like keep them moving, don't let them sit too long, get them all involved. Then when I asked it was how do I do that? Like my principal would say you got to find a way. You got to find a way to reach that kid. You know and I am like how do I do that? You know I didn't get a lot of real help from that.

Tom was not satisfied with the general suggestions like "don't let them sit too long" or vague responses "you got to find a way to reach that kid." Tom needed specific strategies and suggestions. He would have benefited from a student teaching or a co-teaching experience to help him transition into teaching. Tom made excuses again about his mentor suggesting it was not her fault that Tom did not receive adequate mentoring. I asked Tom to give me suggestions on how the induction/mentoring experience might be improved. The dialogue follows:

Researcher: Okay what are your thoughts on how the induction/mentoring experience might be improved?

Tom: Um I think just a little more hands on. Now this might be another whole different story had I had access to that teacher coach. And she had time to help me develop. Uh

Researcher: And you mean the teacher coach from the district?

Tom: Yeah

Researcher: Or the one you hired?

Tom: Yeah from the district.

Researcher: Okay

Tom: If I would have had access to her sooner. And if she could have followed through and been with me I think it would be a different story. Because she was sharp, she knew her stuff, and I just saw her once and it was frustrating. Um and uh but I don't think the system, I don't know. Maybe the system failed but uh, uh. The way they did I don't really have anything to compare it with. I don't know how it could have been done differently. I mean they had their seminars. They had they were there when we needed help. But they said they were but I didn't use them that much. But then I asked for the teacher coach and that finally came you know.

Researcher: How were you made aware about the teacher coach? Was that something that someone tipped you off to?

Tom: Um I think, no I think we were at one of the classes and somebody mentioned it and I asked someone about it. That I could really use one. And then they contacted my principal I think. And he said yeah. And I mean you're welcome to come in. And they were kind of working together.

Tom wondered about how things might have been different if he had access to the district's teacher coach sooner and for a prolonged period. Unfortunately, she only observed him once. He had many positive comments to say about the district's teacher coach and he was eager to work with her for as long as he needed to resolve his classroom issues.

Classroom Management and Student Achievement

I asked Tom to relate his experiences with classroom management and student achievement. The conversation follows:

Researcher: Okay, now how would you describe your experiences with your classroom management and the use of content standards in the classroom in terms of student achievement? You talked about how you had difficulty with the afternoon classes as far as classroom management and not so much in the morning but as far as student achievement goes did you see or did they correlate together or how did your experiences work with that?

Tom: You mean as far as the morning and the afternoon?

Researcher: Well if classroom management was a problem did it relate in it's student achievement?

Tom: Oh yeah, oh yeah that fourth block was rough. I had half the kids in that fourth block should not have passed. Uh but I was under pressure to pass them. Uh, uh that fourth block was just a nightmare. And I don't know if they learned anything. I feel sorry for the kids that had to endure that. That were really trying. Because I got no support for the ones that were acting up. Um now the other three classes uh yeah I think they did I think their achievement was pretty good. I mean I'd say that third block probably only a couple of those kids maybe three or four out of 30, 33, 32 whatever it was, uh should have should have probably not gone on. But the rest of them should of and of course the first two blocks were, yeah they were, they were great.

In Tom's first three classes, his students' achievement was satisfactory. Tom's word choices tell the story about his Core 4 class. "It was a nightmare" and "I feel sorry for the kids that had to endure that". The administration expected students to pass regardless of their actual classroom performance. Tom's statement "Because I got no support for the ones that were acting up" shows the administration did not provide Tom with the support he needed to provide the environment that is conducive to student learning. Disruptive students hinder the learning process.

Perceptions of Student Achievement

Tom indicated that his morning classes achieved and probably were going to achieve whether he taught them or not. He stated that although the class covered the required material, he felt he did not have the experience or the structure to go further.

Researcher: Okay, how would you describe your perceptions of your students' achievement?

Tom: Um well like I said the same thing. The first two blocks they achieved. And they were probably going to achieve without me. But we did get far we did get it was kind of hard because we could have gone so far ahead of the other two classes but I didn't have the experience or I didn't have the structure to go farther with them. I was just trying to figure out how to implement that for the day. The lesson plan for the day. And I know an experienced teacher would have would have had them doing different projects and going the extra mile. I just didn't know how to do it. I was just so worn out from the last two blocks, the fourth block. I was just trying to keep them all kind of you know not one class from going so far ahead of the other. That I didn't, I was over my head.

Tom believed his first two classes achieved because they exhibited the behaviors to learn, they did not disrupt the lessons. He commented that he was exhausted from the last two blocks, the classes where he had the most problems. He indicated the last two classes consumed all of his energy. He implied he did not have the energy or the knowledge to provide more projects "and going the extra mile" for his morning classes. His frustration is apparent in his last sentence "That I didn't, I was over my head."

Summary

I asked Tom to describe his feelings about his first year in the classroom. He said, "It was the best of times it was the worst of times." He explained:

So but you know that's it I mean I mean like I said those classes before lunch were a dream. And I'm like I can't believe they are paying me for this. Um but after that it kind of just went south. Uh slowly but my feelings were I really was surprised. I really would like to keep teaching and I am going to. But uh I am really surprised that uh there was less discipline and less support from the administrator for a new teacher. It really was surprising.

Tom indicated this whole story might be different if the economy was better, there were no budget cuts, they needed teachers, and not everyone was under so much pressure. He described the pressure his mentor was experiencing:

Uh my mentor her husband had just lost his job. And she was mentoring me and two other people and she was teacher of the year. She had all that stuff. You know it was like it was too much for her. And she had just come off of being board certified and she was burnt out. And I kind of felt bad when I was asking her a lot of you know a lot of help.

He indicated the induction/mentoring "structure was fine it just wasn't executed very well." Tom spoke about his training experience in general that he thought there were many teachers in ACPs that had the content knowledge and personality to become an effective teacher but lacked pedagogical knowledge. He said "they're not really they don't really see what they're supposed to be doing. And they don't really have for whatever reason might not have the training or the exposure." He stated, "I remember asking early on I said my biggest fear and it seemed like everybody's biggest fear was

classroom management.” Tom felt the PACE program presented the lessons on classroom management covered in the PACE program too late. He said he needed the lessons prior to entering the classroom. He indicated he was not alone when dealing with classroom management issues. He said, “Now I heard some awful horror stories. People had it a lot worse than me.”

Tom suggested that new teachers should have the opportunity to shadow another teacher, or work, as a teacher’s assistant to observe how effective teachers perform their duties prior to entering a teaching position. Tom expressed his desire to see what works for different teachers. He wanted to fill his teacher toolbox with the tools necessary to become an effective teacher. Tom stated:

And I really think you really lost a lot, PACE has lost a lot of teachers, I think from not letting them actually, um because we are just throwing them in there without any kind of training or without being able to observe for x amount of time.

Tom referenced the profession was losing teachers because they are placed into a “sink or swim” situation. He suggested providing prospective teachers some type of field experience prior to becoming a teacher.

Discrepant Cases

Dana and Tom experienced many similar situations during their first year in the classroom. The differences in their stories are as follows. Dana received administrative support throughout her first year teaching. She stated her administrators had an open door

policy and one administrator was particularly helpful with finding solutions to Dana's questions regarding her students. Dana received a contract for the following year. Tom on the other hand believed he had administrative support until February when he learned he would not receive a contract. Tom's administrators were not as helpful when they made themselves available to help. Their answers were too vague for Tom's needs. The administrators ignored Tom's requests to observe him once he starting showing signs of improvement after he hired a private teacher coach.

Dana's induction classes and district professional development seminars suggestions conflicted with her district's policies leaving Dana puzzled. Dana's school provided professional develop during the staff meetings. Tom did not remember the topics involved in his induction classes. Tom did not discuss any professional development beyond the district teacher coach he requested. Tom hired a private teacher coach to improve his practice. Dana did not hire any coaches. Tom had one mentor assigned to him. Dana had four different mentors assigned to her prior to her first day in school. The first three mentors could not meet the conditions necessary to serve as mentor. Dana felt the fourth mentor agreed because the school was desperate.

Dana taught eighth grade pre-algebra and Algebra I part I, to students that were below grade level or at grade level. Tom taught eighth grade earth science to all student levels including honors.

Dana learned in the spring that she would not receive a contract due to budget cuts. She received a contract once a position was available. Tom learned in the spring that

he would not receive a contract, because of his lack of classroom management skills.

Tom suspected budget cuts and next year's class was smaller were the true reason he was not offered a contract.

Tom had access to additional training and a teacher coach. Tom attended additional district seminars on classroom management and instructional strategies. Tom thought highly of the teacher coach and her recommendations but was disappointed because he only saw her once. Dana did not receive additional training. An instructional coach was available to her, but she considered her useless.

Both teachers dealt with discipline issues, but Tom had to deal with some hard-core discipline problems including students who had committed serious crimes against teachers. Tom's students had committed assault, poisoned a teacher, slashed another teacher's tires, and stole administrators' passwords and altered school records. Dana's discipline issues were not nearly as severe.

Patterns, Relationships, and Themes

The patterns and themes found in the data revolved around the following topics: support systems, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement. The patterns and themes emerging from support systems included (a) support systems are necessary for the successful transition into teaching, (b) correct implementation of induction/mentoring programs are necessary to meet the needs of the new teacher, (c) implementation of other support systems can assist new teachers, and (d) administrative support is essential. The themes emerging from teacher effectiveness and student achievement included: A

teacher's ability to increase student achievement may influence the teacher's perception of the teacher's effectiveness, and the teachers' ability to manage a classroom effectively influenced the teacher's perceptions of the teacher's effectiveness and student achievement.

Support Systems

Both teachers taught eighth grade in suburban schools with similar demographics. Each teacher attended induction classes and worked with a mentor. Dana and Tom considered their induction classes to be useful but not well implemented. Dana's induction class had approximately 200 teachers in it with only one teacher. Dana's induction class was not effective because it was too large, was difficult to hear because of the size of the rooms they met in, and instructor feedback was not timely. Tom did not give the details of his induction class. He did say the "structure was fine it just wasn't executed very well." Tom and Dana's mentors were both seventh grade teachers who were not familiar with Dana or Tom's standards. The mentors did not have a common planning time with their mentees and provided minimal support. Dana spoke about her mentor, "just not the best of mentors- didn't have a lot to share there."

The implementation of the induction/mentoring programs did not meet the teachers' needs, subsequently both teachers searched for support from other sources. Dana received her support from her team and Tom received his support from the science department, a district classroom-management coach, and a private teacher coach. The lack of consistent support for both teachers made it difficult to transition into teaching.

Both teachers wanted someone to give them specific advice about the business of teaching and learning. Both teachers taught difficult to manage students and would have benefited from a support structure that met their needs. Tom sought additional assistance from his district and finally from a private teacher coach. The lack of support he received from his mentor may have been a contributing factor to his not receiving a contract for the following year. Induction/mentoring programs' purpose is to help teachers transition into the teaching profession. These programs should provide strategies to promote effective teaching and student achievement. Dana and Tom's perceptions of their induction/mentoring programs indicate they did not receive enough support to feel effective in terms of student achievement.

Teacher Effectiveness

Both teachers brought real-world experiences to the classrooms from their former careers. These experiences immersed relevance into the lessons. Dana and Tom desired to become effective teachers. They searched for strategies to improve student engagement, classroom management, and student achievement. Both teachers intuitively knew that classroom management was essential to becoming an effective teacher. Dana and Tom struggled with classroom management and regrouped in the spring to start over with their rules and consequences because of their quest to become effective. Both teachers started to see improvements in the students' behaviors after beginning their new classroom management strategies. Dana and Tom indicated their classes were so much easier to manage when the discipline problem students were in OSS. They expressed they felt they

were effective when the students were actively engaged and they had minimal classroom disruptions.

Student Achievement

Both teachers considered test scores to be a means to measure student achievement. Dana and Tom wanted their students to reach higher levels of understanding. Dana mentioned using the book *Understanding by Design* by Wiggins and McTighe (2005) as a resource to become more effective with student achievement and used probing questions to increase higher order thinking skills. Tom stated he defined student achievement as his students being able to think, formulate, and explore. Dana's and Tom's students' test scores were as good or better than the other teachers' students' scores as reported in their journals and interviews. Dana's students made significant gains on their MAP tests. Tom tried to show his principal that his student's scores were as good as the other teachers in his team. The ability to produce positive test results influenced Dana and Tom's perceptions of their effectiveness.

Dana and Tom indicated they did not feel their students made positive gains in student achievement when the teachers were having difficulty with classroom management. The teacher's ability to manage his or her class influenced the students' achievement in each teacher's classroom. Dana and Tom's induction/mentoring experiences did not provide the resources or strategies to assist them with improving student achievement. Dana and Tom expressed they did not feel their

induction/mentoring experiences provided the support they needed to feel effective with student achievement.

Procedures for Quality Assurance

Reliability/Trustworthiness

Bassey (2007) suggested providing an audit trail as a form of ensuring trustworthiness. In this study, the participants' electronic journals serve as a permanent record of the events that took place in the ACTs' classroom over the course of their first year of teaching. I provided a sample of the weekly journal entry from each participant and the interview transcripts from both teachers to assist in the audit process. Appendices G and H are samples of journal entries for each participant. The digital voice recordings of the interviews and the interview transcripts also serve as a permanent record in this study. Appendix G and H include the interview transcripts for each participant. These permanent records will allow other researchers to reanalyze and replicate the data in subsequent studies.

Peer Review

I asked the coordinator of the SC PACE to review my interview guide (appendix A) for clarity, bias, and any other suggestions she may have prior to the actual interviews as a form of peer review. She indicated the wording in question eight may not be familiar or clear to the PACE teachers and may need to be reworded. She suggested the phrase *electronic journal* in question eight may cause some confusion for the PACE teacher because the teachers were required to complete a journal for PACE and possibly one for

their induction class. I indicated that I would change the phrase for more clarity and stated the reason I used the phrase electronic journal was the journal data was stored electronically at the PACE office.

Member Checking

I asked the participants clarifying questions during the interview process. The participants had the opportunity to verify my analysis of their journals and semi-structured interviews. I sent each participant the interview transcripts and my data analysis by email. The participants confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts and the credibility of my findings from their point of view. The participants provided clarification or modifications as needed. They returned their suggestions by email within one week. Dana verified the accuracy of my data analysis on April 29, 2010. Tom verified the accuracy of my data analysis on May 9, 2010.

Triangulation

Bush (2007) described the triangulation method as the comparison of several data sources for information accuracy. I attempted to increase the validity/trustworthiness of this case study by using triangulation to compare the data from the journals and interviews for accuracy of information and interpretation. I triangulated the data compiled from the journals and interviews with the scholarly review.

Summary

Section 4 provided an analysis of the data from two sources in this qualitative case study. An analysis of the two PACE ACT's electronic journal entries compiled

during their first year in the classroom and the transcripts from semi-structured interviews conducted the following year is located in this section. Also in this section, an exploration of the research questions is included with the presentation of the findings.

Hatch (2002) indicated when researchers use interviews with unobtrusive data – the journal entries in this case – this allows the researcher to uncover the meanings found in the data. This case study revealed the meanings found in the ACT's journals.

Creswell's (2007) and Hatch's (2002) data analysis procedures were used to analyze the findings in the journal entries and the interview transcripts. Trochim and Donnelly's (2008) study described conventional content analysis, the implementation of which is in this study. The researcher used the three levels of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding as suggested by Meyers & Sylvester (2006) in the data analysis phase.

The patterns and themes found in the data revolved around the following topics: support systems, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement. The patterns and themes emerging from support systems included (a) support systems are necessary for the successful transition into teaching, (b) correct implementation of induction/mentoring programs to meet the needs of the new teacher, (c) implementation of other support systems can assist new teachers, and (d) administrative support is essential. The themes emerging from teacher effectiveness and student achievement included: the quality of support provided by induction/mentoring programs may influence a teacher's perception of their effectiveness, the ability to increase student achievement may influence a teacher's perception of their effectiveness, and the teachers' ability to manage their

classrooms effectively influenced their perceptions of their effectiveness and student achievement. Section 5 contains the discussion, conclusion, recommendations for future studies, and implications for social change.

Section 5: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

This section reiterates the study's purpose and research questions. The role of the researcher and a discussion of how the researcher minimized bias are included. A summary of the research findings are included in addition to a discussion of how the findings relate to the literature. This section includes; recommendations for further study, implications for social change, and recommendations for induction/mentoring programs.

Summary of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine first-year PACE ACTs' perceptions of their effectiveness as teachers in relation to their students' achievement and the support provided to them as new teachers by their district's mentoring and/or induction training. Every year since the program's inception, approximately 400 new teachers are trained through the South Carolina's PACE (South Carolina Department of Education, n.d.). PACE provides career changers the opportunity to enter the teaching profession while receiving training from the program. Many PACE teachers obtain teaching positions in schools that are difficult to staff; such schools are found in both urban and rural areas. Improved levels of teacher effectiveness and student achievement can be provided through additional quality support systems such as induction programs or mentoring (Maciejewski, 2007). These additional support systems may be advantageous for PACE teachers who otherwise lack the student teaching component and extended formal training that TTTs receive.

The issue of teacher quality and student achievement from the perspective of the ACT is compounded by the level and quality of new teacher support provided through mentoring and/or induction programs during those teachers' critical first year in the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2005b, 2005c). New teacher support systems such as induction training and mentoring vary from school to school, district to district, and state to state, if they exist at all.

Summary of Research Problems

This case study focused on the examination of two PACE teachers' electronic journals of their experiences in the classroom and determined if there is a relationship with the quality of support received from mentoring and/or induction training in terms of teacher effectiveness and student achievement. A second data source, collected during the teachers' second year in the classroom, included semi-structured interviews to clarify the themes that emerged from the journal data. The interviews allowed the teachers to reflect on their experiences during their first year in the classroom and provided their perceptions of their induction/mentoring experience in relation to their effectiveness and the student achievement as noted in their journal entries. The combination of both data sources in this study offered insight on whether alternately certified teachers perceived the additional support received from mentoring and induction programs are relative to their teacher effectiveness and student achievement in their classrooms.

Research for this study was conducted during the spring of 2010. The researcher contacted the South Carolina PACE program to upload her invitation letter to volunteer

for this study on the PACE communication system (Blackboard). This letter was sent to approximately 400 PACE Cohort 6 teachers. Two participants were randomly selected from the pool of volunteers and the data analysis process using the volunteers' archived electronic journal data immediately followed. The two volunteers wrote their journal entries throughout the 2008-2009 school year during their first year in the classroom as an assignment for the PACE program and were subsequently archived in the PACE program office until the researcher requested them for this study in 2010. Analysis of the journal data preceded the semistructured interviews with the teachers. Each semistructured interview lasted 60 to 80 minutes. The teachers' experiences were documented in the recorded and transcribed interviews.

The overarching research question in this study was: Is there a relationship between the amount of additional support (induction and/or mentoring) received by ACTs and the teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in relation to student achievement?

The following subquestions were addressed:

1. How have your induction/mentoring experiences affected your ability to become an effective teacher?
2. How have your induction/mentoring experiences affected student achievement in your classroom?

Summary of Findings

The findings indicate a relationship exists between the amount of additional support (induction/mentoring) received by the ACTs and the teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in relation to student achievement. In this case study, the data showed PACE teachers received minimal support from their induction/mentoring programs. The minimal support received from the induction/mentoring programs permeated the PACE teachers perceptions of their effectiveness in terms of student achievement. The lack of quality induction and mentoring support fueled the teachers' negative perceptions of their own effectiveness with student achievement. The data indicates the PACE teachers relied on other sources of support because the induction/mentoring program did not meet their needs in terms of teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Interpretation of Findings

The patterns and themes found in the data revolved around the following topics: support systems, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement. The patterns and themes emerging from support systems included (a) support systems are necessary for the successful transition into teaching, (b) correct implementation of induction/mentoring programs are necessary to meet the needs of the new teacher, (c) implementation of other support systems can assist new teachers, and (d) administrative support is essential. The themes emerging from teacher effectiveness and student achievement included: the quality of support provided by induction/mentoring programs may influence a teacher's perception of their effectiveness, the ability to increase student achievement may

influence a teacher's perception of their effectiveness, and the teachers' ability to manage their classrooms influenced the teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness and student achievement.

The overarching research question in this study was: Is there a relationship between the amount of additional support (induction and/or mentoring) received by ACTs and the teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in relation to student achievement?

Significance of Subquestion 1

Question 1 asked, "How have your induction/mentoring experiences affected your ability to become an effective teacher?"

Dana and Tom's induction/mentoring experiences did not provide the support they needed to become an effective teacher. Both teachers resorted to looking for help from other resources. Dana had to overcome many obstacles during her induction/mentoring experience. Her negative experiences with induction and mentoring forced her to look elsewhere for assistance. Dana's effectiveness is a result of her own resolve, the assistance provided by her colleagues, and the support she received from her administrators. Dana commented about her mentoring experience "I definitely think it could have been better. There are a lot of little holes in my education of being a teacher too that I'm still filling in."

Tom needed to see what effective teaching looks like. Tom suggested that new teachers should have the opportunity to shadow another teacher, or become a teacher's

assistant to observe how effective teachers perform their duties prior to entering a teaching position. Tom expressed his desire to see what works for different teachers. He wanted to fill his teacher toolbox with the tools necessary to become an effective teacher. He also stated the induction/mentoring program “structure was fine it just wasn’t executed very well.” The support the teachers received from outside sources contributed more to the teachers’ perceptions of effectiveness than the experiences with the induction/mentoring program.

Significance of Subquestion 2

Question 2 asked, “How have your induction/mentoring experiences affected student achievement in your classroom?”

In Dana’s case, she mentioned the only time student achievement was introduced in her induction/mentoring experience was when she listened to a guest speaker in her induction class discuss how to teach students to take a multiple-choice test. The topic of multiple choice tests introduced in Dana’s induction class did not have an effect on her students’ achievement because she did not implement this knowledge during her first year in the classroom. She said she started using multiple-choice tests during her second year. A relationship between the support received from induction/mentoring and student achievement is not noticeable for Dana because a guest speaker only addressed the topic of student achievement once in the induction class.

Dana and Tom’s induction/mentoring experiences did not provide the resources or strategies to assist them with improving student achievement. Dana and Tom expressed

they did not feel their induction/mentoring experiences provided the support they needed to feel effective with student achievement. They relied on the other sources to obtain assistance with student achievement. Both teachers indicated their ability to manage their classroom had influenced their students' achievement. They both indicated they received minimal assistance from their induction/mentoring programs in relation to classroom management.

Literature to Support Findings

Prior to NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), teacher vacancies in rural and urban schools were often filled with under-qualified or uncertified personnel (Darling-Hammond, 2005c). As a means of improving the nation's teacher workforce and thereby the education provided to every child, NCLB focused on ensuring every classroom was staffed by a highly qualified teacher. Accountability systems such as NCLB require schools to focus on teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

The shortened training experience associated with ACPs has caused concern about the quality of the ACT as compared to that of the TTT. Researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2005c; Mahatha, 2005) contend underprepared teachers can hinder student learning, making the need for quality teacher training and professional development more important than ever. PACE teachers received two weeks training the summer prior to entering the classroom, an additional two weeks the following summer, and six seminars during their first two years in the classroom. The PACE teachers who missed the first summer training attended a winter training session during their winter vacation and

throughout weekends in January and February. PACE teachers who attend the winter training sessions, enter the classroom without any formal training making the need to have a quality induction/mentoring program imperative.

The purpose of mentoring and induction programs is to fill the gaps in the ACP's training. The additional support systems provided to ACTs need to be investigated because the perception of ACTs' quality or effectiveness is linked to teacher training and student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Mentoring and induction programs help new teachers transition into the profession and lower the attrition rate of new teachers (Martin, 2008; Strong, 2005; VanderPyl, 2007). Wong et al. (2005) suggested mentoring and induction programs might vary in quality and duration throughout the United States. According to Wong et al., the additional support provided to new teachers most commonly appears in the form of a mentorship program that relies on the two participants (mentor and mentee) to seek out each other. Many mentoring situations are primarily nothing more than a *safety net for the new teachers* (Wong et al., p. 384). PACE teachers are expected to attend induction/mentoring programs to help them transition into the profession.

Studies by several researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2005b; Davis, 2006; Haskins, & Loeb, 2007) agree teacher quality is the most important factor influencing student achievement. Research indicated student achievement is related to teacher quality; therefore, teacher preparation programs that focus on content knowledge, pedagogy, and practice produce quality teachers (Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2003). Rockoff (2004) stated

students' test scores have been used as a data source to determine teacher effectiveness. The PACE teachers in this study indicated their belief that their effectiveness related to student achievement. They indicated their test scores were a measure of their effectiveness. Both teachers suggested they needed assistance with pedagogy and that the induction/mentoring programs did not provide the assistance they needed to feel effective because of their lack of pedagogical knowledge.

Conclusions

After careful review of the data in this case study, this researcher determined the PACE ACT's induction/mentoring experiences provided by the ACT's districts did not meet the teachers' needs. The teachers' perceived they were ineffective with classroom management, which negatively affected student achievement. Because the teachers' induction /mentoring experiences did not meet the teachers' needs, the teachers searched for other sources of assistance to improve their effectiveness with classroom management and student achievement. This researcher concluded that there is a relationship between the quality and amount of additional support received by ACTs and the teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in relation to student achievement. In this case, the teachers' perceptions of their support were negative leading to their feelings of ineffectiveness until they received support from other sources. However, the researcher determined once the teachers found other support structures that their perception of their effectiveness improved in terms of student achievement. The researcher also determined the teachers perceived support systems are necessary for the successful transition into

teaching, induction/mentoring programs should meet the needs of the new teacher, and administrative support is essential.

As cited in section 2, researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2005c; Mahatha, 2005) agree teacher training is related to teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Mentoring and induction are considered as extended forms of professional development and teacher training. Quality professional development is necessary for successful teaching. Glassford and Salinitri (2007) suggested better teaching has a positive impact on student achievement. The results from this study indicate PACE ACTs may need additional support systems to realize a positive impact on student achievement because they lack the student teaching component found in TTT programs.

Implications for Social Change

The study is significant because limited research has been conducted relating ACT training and support to teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Perhaps more important to policy makers in South Carolina, no research has been reported that relates the perceptions of PACE-trained teachers' effectiveness and student achievement to the quality of those teachers' induction and/or mentoring program. This study contributes to the body of knowledge needed to address the problem of providing quality teachers for every child and quality induction and/or mentoring programs to every new teacher by studying the experiences of two first-year ACTs and their perceptions of effectiveness and student achievement. The results of this study provide insights that may inform policy makers, state departments of education, legislators, and school districts of

the implications for positive social change by providing the story of two ACTs' perceptions of the role induction/mentoring played in their experiences with teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

The primary focus of this case study was to examine two PACE teachers' perceptions of their experiences in the classroom and determine if there is a relationship with the quality of support received from mentoring and/or induction training in terms of teacher effectiveness and student achievement. In this case, the teachers' perceptions of their support were negative leading to their feelings of ineffectiveness until they received support from other sources. However, the researcher determined once the teachers in this study found other support structures, their perception of their effectiveness improved in terms of student achievement. The researcher also determined the teachers perceived support systems are necessary for the successful transition into teaching, induction/mentoring programs should meet the needs of the new teacher, and administrative support is essential. This study contributes to positive social change in that its findings inform policy makers of alternately certified first-year teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness and student achievement based on the additional support received from their district's mentoring and/or induction programs. This information may suggest the need for program modifications.

Another area in which the study may be significant is the possibility of its results indicating the need for curricular modifications to the induction and/or mentoring programs offered to ACTs to increase teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Curricular modifications may need to include a variety of components that meet individual teachers' needs.

Recommendations for Action

This researcher will offer the following recommendations to the PACE program to disseminate as they wish to school districts, other South Carolina State Department of Education departments, legislators, and any other agencies that may find the study beneficial. As indicated in the findings, (a) support systems are necessary for the successful transition into teaching, (b) correct implementation of induction/mentoring programs are necessary to meet the needs of the new teacher, (c) implementation of other support systems can assist new teachers, and (d) administrative support is essential.

Therefore, the researcher recommends:

1. Change the induction/mentoring training period from one year to two years to allow adequate time to transition into the profession. Add a third year if needed.
2. Administer teacher surveys to assess PACE teachers' induction/mentoring needs periodically during their first three years in the classroom.
3. Implement administrator surveys or reports to assess PACE teachers' induction/mentoring progress and needs.
4. Design individual PACE teachers' progress reports to indicate individual teachers' strengths and areas requiring professional development.

5. Develop and offer course modules to meet the PACE teachers' needs indicated in the surveys and the progress reports.
6. Monitor implementation of induction/mentoring programs to assess possible program changes.

Recommendations for Further Study

The recommendations for further study include an examination of PACE teachers' needs to improve their own perception of teacher effectiveness in terms of student achievement. The data from this study indicated that the participants' induction/mentoring programs did not meet their needs because of poor implementation. Another possibility for future studies might include which curricular and program changes need improvement to provide a more satisfactory induction/mentoring experience for PACE teachers. Additional studies may consider surveying larger sample sizes to ascertain areas of concern. The possibility exists that some concerns may be regional rather than statewide.

Finally, a study of the administrative support provided PACE teachers might be beneficial. The participants in this study noted their mentors did not have the same planning period as they did and were overwhelmed with the other duties they had to attend to beyond being a mentor. Administrative support structures could allow teams of teachers to become mentors for new PACE teachers. In this study, the PACE teachers relied on their co-workers more than they did their assigned mentor for support.

Researcher's Experience in the Research Process

The researcher examined two PACE teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness with student achievement in terms of the quality and amount of induction/mentoring support provided them by their school districts. This research used unobtrusive journal data produced during the teachers' first year in the classroom and collected the following year for this study. Semi-structured interviews conducted as a second data source clarified the themes generated in the journal data. Both data sources provided a window into the teachers' experiences with their induction/mentoring program, and their perception of their effectiveness with student achievement during their first year.

I have worked as a part-time instructor for PACE intermittently between the years 2005 and 2009. My role as an instructor in the program did not have an impact on either phase of the data collection because the participants completed their formal PACE training by the time the data collection commenced. From the participants' perspective, I was a researcher and not a PACE instructor. I conducted and transcribed the semi-structured interviews and analyzed both sets of data. The interviews took place at a time and location convenient to each participant. I met the first participant at a library to conduct the interview and used a speakerphone in my office to conduct the interview with the second participant.

Researcher Bias

I am a teacher with 17 years experience and a part-time PACE instructor. I understand I may have possible biases because I am researching first-year PACE ACTs.

Compiling the data from an academic yearlong journal assignment to self-describe the participants' first-year experiences in the classroom minimized the possibility of researcher bias. Individual interviews followed the review of the journal entries. The interview questions were peer-reviewed and given to the teachers prior to the interviews. Study participants had the opportunity to review the data gathered from their journals and the transcriptions of audio-recorded interviews to ensure the accuracy of information presented in the findings. As noted in the American Psychological Association (2009) manual, researcher bias was checked when I asked the participants in the case study to read the researcher's account of the case to ensure accuracy. The participants agreed my analysis of their data was accurate. Participant 2 asked the researcher to correct one omission. The researcher corrected the omission as requested to complete the member checking process.

Effects of the Research on the Participants

The researcher sent invitation letters to PACE Cohort 6 teachers to volunteer for this study. The researcher randomly selected two participants from the volunteers who responded to the invitation. The researcher protected the participants' identity by using the pseudonyms Dana and Tom in this study. The identity of the participants' school districts was not revealed and their schools were described as located in the suburbs in two different regions of South Carolina. The letters XXX were substituted in this study whenever references to a school, district program name, administrators' name, or any other identifiers located in the data to protect their identities.

Researcher's Thoughts Regarding the Study

Like the PACE teachers, I am also a career changer. I entered teaching several years after obtaining my teaching certificate. I received my training as a teacher, by obtaining a Bachelor's degree in Education, which required student teaching experiences. Once I entered the teaching profession, I was fortunate enough to have a good induction program experience and good mentors throughout my teaching career. This study heightened my awareness of the importance induction/mentoring plays in the role of training new PACE teachers. The PACE program does not have a student teaching component in their training and relies on quality induction and mentoring programs provided by the school districts to make up for this deficit. These induction/mentoring programs are critical to the successful transition to the profession.

As I read the PACE teachers' journals for this study, I felt a connection to the teachers as they navigated through their first year in the classroom. I remembered some of the hurdles I encountered as a new teacher and could relate to them. The interview process in this study helped me understand the problems these PACE teachers experienced. When I spoke to the teachers, I could hear their emotions in their voices, making their experiences come alive. The PACE teachers in this study had a desire to make a difference but did not receive the adequate induction/mentoring support they needed to become effective teachers. The results of this study have changed the way I think about the training needs of PACE teachers. I believe exploration of curricular and

program modifications to induction/mentoring programs are necessary to meet the needs of our new teachers and their students.

Conclusion

PACE ACTs are career changers who have made a life decision to dedicate themselves to the teaching profession. PACE teachers are well-educated individuals, many holding advance degrees. They bring a vast array of real life experiences that brings relevance to the content area in which they teach. As a PACE instructor, I have heard many PACE teachers tell me they chose to change careers because they felt they needed to make a difference. It is this desire to make a difference that helps these teachers as they endure difficult classroom situations.

The PACE program provides a shortened training experience to potential teachers prior to placement in the classroom. There is no student teaching component in the PACE program. The PACE training is supplemented with the districts' induction/mentoring programs to help the teacher transition into the profession. Many induction/mentoring programs do not meet the needs of the new teacher and the teachers resort to seeking help from other sources. It is this break-down in the PACE teacher's training that leads to the teachers' feeling less effective with student achievement. Research to identify PACE teachers' induction/mentoring needs might ease the transition into the profession and ultimately improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Curricular modifications and regulation of the implementation of the induction/mentoring programs may need consideration to assist the new PACE teacher.

The PACE teacher is a valuable resource that needs to be nurtured and developed. Their professional development should include the best possible induction/mentoring experience possible.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

Name of interviewer _____

Date _____

Name of interviewee _____

Interview location _____

Semistructured Interview Guide

“Good morning/afternoon. I am _____ (introduce self). This interview is being conducted to ascertain your experiences of your first year in the classroom as an alternately certified teacher in South Carolina and your perceptions of the support you received from induction and/or mentoring services in relation to teacher effectiveness and student achievement. So that I may focus on your responses to my questions, I plan to make an audio digital recording of this conversation for the purpose of collecting the details of the conversation. I assure you that your responses will remain confidential; that is, I will not use your name or information for any purpose outside of this research project. If you agree to the interview and the audio recording, your name will be disguised in this study to assure you of confidentiality is maintained. Is that acceptable? (Wait for response). May I interview you?” (Wait for response). Would you sign this consent form? (Wait for response and give consent form to participant).

1. “Would you please describe for me your induction and/or mentoring experiences during your first year teaching?” (May need to probe for more detail or clarification.)

2. “How would you describe an effective teacher?” (May need to probe for more detail or clarification.)
3. “Can you tell me a time when you were effective?” Ineffective? (May need to probe for more detail or clarification.)
4. “How have your experiences with the induction/mentoring program affected your effectiveness in the classroom in terms of content standards implementation and classroom management?” (May need to probe for more detail or clarification.)
5. “How would you define student achievement? (May need to probe for more detail or clarification.)
6. “How would you describe your experiences with classroom management and the use of content standards in the classroom in terms of student achievement?” (May need to probe for more detail or clarification.)
7. “How have your induction/mentoring experiences affected students’ achievement in your classroom?” (May need to probe for more detail or clarification.)
8. “Has the electronic journal affected your teaching practice? How?” (May need to probe for more detail or clarification.)
9. “What are your thoughts on how the induction/mentoring experience might be improved?” May need to probe for more detail or clarification.)

10. "Do you have anything you would like to add that I may not have asked?"

(May need to probe for more detail or clarification.)

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate in Study

March 19, 2010

Dear Cohort 6 PACE teachers,

I am a doctoral candidate researching the first-year classroom experiences of alternately certified teachers in South Carolina. This research is intended to focus on the induction and/or mentoring experiences of alternately certified teachers and the impact those experiences have on a teacher's perception of his or her effectiveness and student achievement. Your participation in this study will provide valuable information on the experiences and perceptions of alternately certified teachers in South Carolina and benefit both policy makers and teachers.

I am seeking volunteers willing to participate in this research as part of a case study. If you are selected from the pool of volunteers, your participation in this case study will require one or more interviews with you at your convenience and include the use of your archived weekly electronic journals submitted to the PACE program via Blackboard.

You would be one of two PACE teachers involved in this case study and would represent the voice of many alternately certified PACE teachers. Participation is strictly voluntary; your involvement or decision to not participate will be kept confidential. Your identity will be disguised in the text to ensure confidentiality unless you give me permission to use your first name only. I will be happy to provide you with a copy of

your interview transcripts and the results of the research to prove accuracy of your accounts.

I look forward to working with you and request that you accept or decline this invitation by e-mailing me at xxxx by March 31, 2010. Please provide your telephone number in the body of the e-mail if you elect to join the pool of volunteers from which participants will be selected for this study. If you have any questions, please contact me at the e-mail address provided.

Thank you for your support of this case study,

Charyl L. Pace

Appendix C: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research case study of alternately certified PACE teachers' experiences and perceptions of their induction and/or mentoring program in terms of teacher effectiveness and student achievement in their classrooms. You were chosen for the study because you have completed your first year as an alternately certified PACE teacher. This form is part of the process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Charyl L. Pace, who is a doctoral student at Walden University and a PACE instructor.

Background Information

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to examine alternately certified teachers' perceptions of their teacher effectiveness and student achievement based on the alternately certified teacher's experiences in the classroom in South Carolina, and to determine if a relationship exists between these perceptions and the quality of support received from their mentoring and/or induction program.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

- consent to the researcher using your archived electronic journals as a source of data,
- participate in one or more digitally audio-recorded 30 minute interviews, and

- review transcripts of our digitally recorded interviews and my interpretations of the data generated from this case study for accuracy (optional).

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that I will respect your decision to participate or decline to participate in the study. No one at the PACE program will know if you do or do not participate in the study and no one treat you differently regardless of your decision relative to the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the study, take a break to rest, and skip any questions that you find to be too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

There are no risks associated with your participation in this study. The data collected for and compiled in the case study will not identify you. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity, unless you grant me permission to use your first name only.

You may realize several benefits from this study. Your story as a first-year alternately certified teacher will be told and allow you to share your perceptions of support from your induction/mentoring program in South Carolina as it relates to your teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Your perspective, as communicated in your story, will contribute to the existing professional body of knowledge and may promote policy changes to the existing mentoring/induction programs.

Compensation

There will be no compensation for your involvement in the study.

Confidentiality

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your information for any purpose outside of this research project. Your name will not be included in any documentation maintained by the researcher, unless you allow her to use your first name only in the transcripts and resulting case study. No other information will be utilized that could identify you in any reports related to the study.

Contacts and Questions

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher by e-mail at xxxx. If you want to speak privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott, the Walden University representative assigned to oversee this study's process. Dr. Endicott can be reached via phone number at 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 03-17-10-0361849 and it expires on March 16, 2011.

The researcher will give you a copy of this signed form to keep if you choose to participate in the study. Another copy will be retained in the researcher's records and maintained in a locked cabinet for a period of 5 years following completion of the study. Only the researcher will have access to this locked cabinet.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed name of participant _____

Date of consent _____

Participant's written or electronic* signature _____

Researcher's written or electronic* signature _____

* Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act.

Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, his or her e-mail address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

Appendix D: Secondary Interview Questions

Reflect on your first year in the classroom when answering these questions.

Personal information:

1. Tell me about yourself, your education, your employment background, and your reason for entering education.

Demographics:

2. Would you consider your school to be rural, suburban, or urban?
3. How would you describe your classes? How many preparations? How difficult were the classes?
4. How would you describe the socio-economic level of your school, your classes?

Mentoring/Induction:

5. Tell me about your induction program.
6. Tell me about your mentoring experience.
7. Tell me about your mentor.
8. Was your mentor certified in your area?
9. Did your mentoring program require reflection activities?
10. How often was your mentor in your classroom?
11. Did your mentor provide demonstration lessons?
12. How would you describe your mentor's involvement with your curriculum planning and development?
13. How would you describe the amount of collaboration with your mentor?

14. Were you given the opportunity to observe other teachers teach?

15. Describe your non-instructional duties.

Additional support systems:

16. How would you describe your support from your administrators? Did they encourage effective teaching strategies? Did they provide additional support?

17. How would you describe your support from your co-workers?

18. Were you given the opportunity to observe other teachers' lessons?

19. How would you describe your professional development experiences?

20. How would you describe your induction program? Was it versatile and meet your needs?

21. Did you have access to an instructional coach? Did they help you assess your strengths and weaknesses?

22. Did you participate in any alternate forms of mentoring? E-mentoring, networking?

23. How would you describe your work environment?

Self-evaluation/reflection:

24. How would you describe your feelings about your first year in the classroom?

25. Did you ask for help from colleagues and administrators? If you asked for help, how did they react? Were they supportive? Did you avoid asking for help? Why?

26. How would you evaluate your overall teacher training and support provided from induction/mentoring in terms of preparation for the classroom?

27. How would you describe your ability to make connections with your students?
28. How would you describe your perceptions of your teacher effectiveness? Your perceptions of your students' achievement?
29. How would you rate yourself in the following areas: prior academic performance, communication skills, professionalism, creativity, pedagogical knowledge, student evaluation and assessment, self-development, lifelong learning, personality, talent or content area knowledge, and the ability to model concepts in your content area?
30. How would you rate your skills and competencies in the following areas prior to entering the classroom: your ability to interpret the way students view the curriculum and adjust the lesson to accommodate the student, listen to students, motivate students, structure lessons and task to provide feedback to encourage effort, obtain resources and be familiar with integrating technology into the curriculum, and analyze and reflect on your teaching to improve your instruction.
31. Give some examples of how you delivered lessons that enhanced student understanding, assessed prior knowledge, motivated students, and allowed for cultural differences.
32. How would you describe your rapport with your students?
33. How would you describe your desire to enhance your professional growth?
34. How would you describe your perception of your effectiveness?
35. How would you describe your perception of your students' achievement?

Appendix E: Participant 1—Sample Journal Entry

PACE Cohort Six – Seminar Three

Weekly Reflective Journal: Week of: 10/13/2008

The week of Oct 13, 2008 was filled with individual conferences. The math department agreed to speak with each student individually for about 3-5 minutes. This created some timing issues for me personally. I'm still struggling with how much material is enough material and how to keep students on task. I was not looking forward to the task at all.

I was very surprised at the outcome of the conferences. I gained a lot of insight into my students through these conferences. We discussed MAPS testing results, PACT testing results from last spring, their grade at interim and what their grade was now. I had a chance to really talk with the student about their grade and see what motivated them. It was refreshing to see the students who really wanted to improve and liked the individual attention, even if it was just for a few minutes. It was also discouraging to see some of my quite capable students not seem to care at all about their scores. Overall I was pleasantly surprised at the how much useful information I gained.

Lesson planning is still a struggle. I seem to have too much to cover one day and not enough the next. My Algebra 1 Part 1 students are really having a hard time grasping "number" word problems. I've spent, what seems like weeks, on the topic and still the quiz was a real struggle for most of them. I've tried all sorts of different approaches. We've gone over lots of word problems, built charts of words that directly translate to

algebraic equations, provided example after example and still they struggle. I need to research and find other methods. I also understand that word problems are a maturity thing. The students can only really learn when they are out of their comfort zone and really exercising their brains. Word problems provide them with this environment, but the discomfort seems to get in the way of the learning. I must work on patience – it seems so obvious to me at times, but it is a really big leap for my young student minds.

The classroom management of this class is tough. I have a room full of energetic young teens. They are talkative, disruptive and a bit arrogant at times. I have three students with IEPs in the room (all with front row seating required and only 4 front row seats). To my surprise the three IEP students give me the least amount of problems, and seem to be the most focused and pleasant kids in the class. I turn my attention to the more talkative, disruptive ones. One day this week, I ended up with 5 out of the 16 in recess detention, just because they could not stay in their seats while doing class work. I have a procedure in place for them on how to do class work, but still they chose to work outside those boundaries. The lack of recess (they only lost $\frac{1}{2}$ and they were outside, just in a segregated area) seemed to have the desired effect on 4 of the students. I informed them all that I sent an email home indicating that they had been assigned recess detention and why. I hope the combined effort from home and class will improve their behavior.

Appendix F: Participant 2—Sample Journal Entry

PACE Cohort 6—Seminar 3

Weekly Reflective Journal: Week of April 20, 2009

Content and Standards: This week we moved on to Newton's 2nd Law of Motion (Standard 8-5.3).

Planning/Pacing/Lesson Plan Implementation:

We had a quiz on the Newton's 1st Law last week so we spent the first half of the class on Monday reviewing before introducing the 2nd Law. Then students took notes from a slideshow and we had a discussion on the difference between the two laws. Tuesday we did a lab from the science kit using cars, weights, yard sticks and ramps. The purpose was to illustrate how adding weight to a car increases its speed due to gravity and how this increases inertia making the cars roll farther. Because of the poor quality of some of the cars, the students tables and graph were somewhat skewed but most of them got the idea, nonetheless. Wednesday, we did a similar lab but this time the kids used a stop watch to time the first meter for acceleration and the second meter for speed. This, again, illustrated the affect of adding more mass (weight) to the cars and although the results varied this was good practice. Thursday, we reviewed for Friday's test and I spent a lot of time demonstrating problem solving using $F=ma$. We also played jeopardy. Friday, after the test the kids were introduced to the 3rd Law with a worksheet.

Mr. X (researcher omitted name to protect participant) called me in his office after school and went over my XXX(researcher omitted name to protect participant)

evaluation. It was mostly positive with the negative focusing on my classroom management. No surprises here.

Classroom Management: This week I continued to stay with my new discipline program. It was very difficult to stay consistent since Core 4, as expected, tested me at every turn. I made sure they realized that I was going to follow through with every thing I said I would do. If they lost a lot of points I called their parents and if they were good all week they are going to be rewarded with extra points on their test. I need to do a lot better job with calling parents. I lost my parent contact sheet so I have to get some of the numbers from other teachers. Many of the students' contact information is incorrect in the system so we have to do some investigative work. For one student, I had to put him in recess detention until he coughed up a number for his mother. It took three days for him to break. Many of the kids seem to be really trying to behave better but still can't or won't stop the chatter when they are supposed to be quite. I do, however, have about five that are doing better because they are seeing how their behavior has been affecting their grade and now are in crunch time to pass and not have to come to school this summer for "Content Recovery" (a watered down version of summer school). The labs we did this week went surprisingly well. I'm not sure I would have even let them do it before I started this new program with the teacher coach. At one point, the principal did a walk through and saw them doing the lab and I think he was a little pleased. He said that he wanted the kids to be up and actively involved more in this class and this is exactly what he saw.

Case study: X's (researcher omitted name to protect student identity) mother came in three days this week so X's behavior was pretty good. She expressed her dissatisfaction with me on Tuesday because I would not give him full credit for his homework that was turned in at the end of class. There's no wonder X doesn't respect authority.

Appendix G: Participant 1—Interview Transcript

Dana (pseudonym) interview transcript

Interview date: 4/8/10

Time: 1:00- 2:03 pm

Place: Public library

Note: (R: indicates researcher, P: indicates participant)

R- “Good morning/afternoon. I am Charyl Pace. This interview is being conducted to ascertain your experiences of your first year in the classroom as an alternately certified teacher in South Carolina and your perceptions of the support you received from induction and/or mentoring services in relation to teacher effectiveness and student achievement. So that I may focus on your responses to my questions, I plan to make an audio digital recording of this conversation for the purpose of collecting the details of the conversation. I assure you that your responses will remain confidential; that is, I will not use your name or information for any purpose outside of this research. If you agree to the interview and the audio recording, your name will be disguised in this study to assure you of confidentiality is maintained. Is that acceptable?

P- It is.

R- May I interview you?”

P- Yes you may.

R- Would you sign this consent form? And you have already done that. Number one, Would you please describe for me your induction and/or mentoring experiences during your first year teaching?

P- um let see the induction classes met once a month they were held at all the different schools in the district they were held typically by one instructor I guess we had three or four different guest speakers that came and talked about specific different areas of teaching. I personally found the guest speakers more helpful and certainly more engaging than the person who was over the whole thing. We did a lot of breaking up into groups and um doing little exercises but the groups were completely at random and we had a mixture of from elementary school to high school teachers all mixed together from guidance counselors to math teachers and sometimes the cohesiveness of the group we didn't have any of the same goals or the same approaches to things so the grouping was bit of a problem. And the instructor herself later said that that would be something she would want to change maybe break up the elementary school induction people so that wouldn't have been a problem. Um the group was large too, it was huge and I think added some um you couldn't get as much done. It wasn't very effective. There were so many people everybody couldn't even get a word in. There were several times I sat in a group and never said anything, gained stuff from it but actually couldn't get around to all 25 of us in a group in the limited time to move around. So some of that was a problem. The guest speakers were neat. We had a guest speaker from special ed. I learned everything I know about how the special ed department works from that guest speaker. Um she was with our

district so that was really nice to see how things worked there. Um some of the other guest speakers we had a librarian that came for awhile. Although I don't use the library as much in my discipline she was still helpful in what they could provide support for different things in the classroom. The mentoring part of my first year- I had an unusual experience where I was tossed around to, I had four mentors before I actually showed up for the first day of work. The lady who was supposed to be my mentor actually ended up being my teammate, um and she was working on her masters and had to go defend her theses and couldn't attend the induction stuff therefore they disqualified her from being my mentor. The next one ended up in the hospital. And a third one something else happened and her and she didn't even end up teaching at my school. And the fourth one finally I think just got me out of desperation and they picked a teacher. She didn't teach my grade level. Um and she taught all the honors classes and I taught all the grade level classes so we had some issues there she didn't really know the standards for my grade level a lot so helping me with what it really meant whether it was applying or analyzing all those different words. She wasn't a lot of help there. I ended up getting what I would call most of my mentoring information from the original lady who was my teammate. She provided me probably most of the assistance and obviously she didn't get paid for it though. Somebody else did. She was um she was very helpful but the mentor itself, the only time I ever saw her was when deadlines were showing up and she had to come by and check boxes. Very nice lady. You know and an excellent teacher she had been

teacher of the year at that school several different times, very knowledgeable and stuff just not the best of mentors- didn't have a lot to share there.

R- How would you describe an effective teacher?

P- Effective with an "e" meaning results is kinda how I look at that. So how does a teacher get results? To me that would have to be somebody who could engage the students at their level, could you know come up with a relationship with the students that would make it with what you are teaching relevant to them so that they would buy in to learning the new topic. And then of course you're hoping and with the effective stuff and if you can do all of that it shows up either in your own test scores or some kind of standardized benchmark testing.

R- In your first year teaching, and all of these questions are going to be based on your first year because I know you are in your second year now can you tell me a time when you felt your were effective?

P- There were a couple of different times, different lessons um where the kids really were engaged and were asking lots of probing questions, questions I actually hadn't even thought of when I prepared the lesson. It almost took me by surprise, took me by surprise in a good way. And then great that means you are going down this path that means you're really listening, you're really thinking about how this applies to different stuff. My first year with a particular group of kids I really spent a lot of time trying to show them how you can use math in the real world, how it really, what jobs and what professions really use different types of math. So if we were talking about percentages, who uses

percentages. Really tried to make it specific. And that particular class really got into it after Christmas sometime anytime I would bring up that – Well what kind of person does this? They would really expand on it and I thought that was effective they could really see how that could apply outside of the classroom. I like that.

R- I think that is kind of important because I think that's relevance to- equal to learning and if a child and adults don't see the relevance then they don't want to learn it. They just say I'm not going to be invested in this. So I need to find out why I need to learn this. Um how have your experiences with the induction/mentoring program affected your effectiveness in the classroom in terms of content standards implementation and classroom management?

P- Hmm, Well we did have a couple of different speakers in induction that did talk about classroom management. Some of that was in more in structuring your class and some of that was more in discipline management. Um I think, I think those speakers actually gave me some neat ideas. They were actually geared toward elementary students and I am teaching the middle school level but some of those same techniques work pretty well with the middle school people as far as the discipline goes. Just the old writing your name on the board which I would of actually never thought of doing until I saw them doing it in a middle school. I was like hey that worked, pretty good. But just the people who wanted to self correct, self corrected pretty quick. Um the mentoring, I mean I went around and watched my mentor teach which was neat. I did watch the other teachers in that group that were supposed to be my mentor. They um in fact I think I watched three of those

people. And I was specifically was really watching them how they managed their classroom. I looked for how the desks were centered and which kid really commanded the room and how they either isolated them or allowed them to depending on what their objective was that day. But I think I gained a lot by watching them. I don't know if they necessarily told me to watch them or I was told to watch them. I learned a lot from those mentor teachers so I think whoever picks those mentor teachers is picking the right type of teachers. Um they necessarily have the right skills, I just don't know if they have that skill to transfer it to you orally. I didn't personally get that. But what watching the teacher I personally gained a lot from seeing what they did.

R- How many times were you afforded the opportunity to watch?

P- My first year, four different times. I went four different times. Three of them were supposed to be my mentors and the fourth time I went and watched our department head um teach.

R- Tell me how many, was it once a month, every two months? What was the interval of time or was it all at the beginning so that you could kinda of

P- Two of them were in the beginning that really got me going and the other two happened both after Christmas so really I guess it was two each semester. The first two were closer together while I was trying to kinda gather ideas.

R- Were they um, did you initiate them or did someone else initiate them?

P- Um the very first one I was asked by my mentor for me to come watch her and I think that was one of the sections on the mentoring I called it a checklist that both of us had that we had to accomplish, that was on hers and mine that I needed to go watch her. She was the

one who prompted that. Then after that it kinda just snowballed and I would go ask and sometimes didn't ask and just showed up.

R- So you think the first initial contact was because of um a requirement by the district?

P- Right

R- Okay How have your experiences, oh I did that one. How would you define student achievement?

P- Well student achievement, I have been fortunate, unfortunate, not sure to teach the grade level and below grade level people um in all of my teaching experience so far. Um really you know on the top level of achievement to be met is on one of those standards on the benchmark test or whatever the proficiency or all those different words they have for different tests. However in teaching them success is letting them enjoy some success I've decided. And it's not that you dumb down your tests or anything but try and get something they can really understand and then build on that. Um but those grade level people that so many of them are over aged and they just haven't seen any success in math whatsoever and therefore they've withdrawn. And have no intentions of learning anything this year either some of them show up with, but the achievement is for me to see them grow to me to know for sure that from August to June they have definitely gained something somewhere, hopefully a lot and um and I use the MAP test a lot. I don't really say much about the MAP tests in the fall just let them take it, kinda see where they're at and I know they have had the summer to forget somethings but I really do kinda push and make it out to be a great thing the MAPS in the spring that I really want to see what you

can do and I know you can do it. And I really have a lot of success last year and this year with the MAPS scores going up tremendously. So I don't know if that was my prompting them to do better or them recalling somethings or hopefully them learning a few new things to but they definitely were very excited. This year they were running up to me. What was my score last time? How much did I go up? That was a lot of growth.

R- It sounds like you helped them get the confidence they needed to um be successful.

P- Well and you know I read this in an article and I don't remember where I read it that says and I remember the author saying I have never personally tried this but have often thought that if you told the kid there's some generated program there that thinks it knows what your number will be in the spring um I think it's too low. I don't think they've got you figured out. Could you do higher? And I actually did that with one class and that class went up the most so I don't know if that actually worked or not. But of course I didn't have such a program a little white lie. But I had one kid go up 22 points and I had one kid in that class go up 10 points which barely got him up to a 4th or 5th grade level but at least he is not on the 2nd or 3rd grade level anymore.

R- So there was some growth.

P- For sure

R- definite growth and that's just as important rather than a flat test score. How would you describe your experiences with classroom management and the use of content standards in the classroom in terms of student achievement?"

P- Those two things kinda seem different to me.

R- Okay

P- Classroom management, um that's taken a little bit of getting used to for sure. I have been surprised at what kids will do. And I am old at times I tell myself gosh if I had ever done that I would have died but my parents would have killed me. And I know I would be in trouble for some of the stuff that they do and don't get into trouble for now. And sometimes parents don't see the same way of disciplining that I do but I have had to really work on that to figure out um I just the other night had a conversation with my husband that there were kids that I pointed out in August and this one is going to be a trouble maker and just the way they do it. And it's just discipline it's not to do anything with their achievement level. They just don't want to do what you need them to do. They don't want to sit still. They won't remember their homework, lots of don't come to class on time. And in every one of those cases last year and this year all of those people are expelled right now. And that's in April. All of those people I identified in August and it's not that I did all the writing up of them and I certainly was not the last straw that got them expelled. But there's some kids that I wish I knew some trick with the discipline to get them engaged quicker because I've identified them quick enough that they are going to be an issue but I can't figure out how to get them turned around. I do know one common thing is the parents are not able to get hold of and when I actually talk, I had a parent this year tell me one of these kids that is no longer there, well you nor I can make him do anything. That was there statement to me, and my statement was I thought you would have a little more influence than I would. I don't think they did because the child is not at

school anymore. And that particular kid had lots of ability just wouldn't do anything. So classroom management I think is a growing thing for me. I've got to keep figuring it out. I have really learned about how the room is physically organized has really um been really huge for me. I have had a couple of teachers in my second year say come look at this room it's not working these people are talking you watch and you tell me how to get them isolated. And they have come up with some really good on literally physically moving desks and people to see if you can do it. And right now I have one class I don't think I have enough real estate to get the talkers apart. They're just a very talkative class. But classroom management is something you've got to work on. And from talking with the veteran teachers in my school and they say I remember when that used to happen. Now they are teaching a whole different group of kids so I am not sure if the honors kids behave a whole lot different than the others. I tend to think they may be a lot more goal oriented so they do want to get something out of the class. Where some of my classes, we're there to socialize. That's hard to get them to turn this around a little bit but.

R- Do you think your second year was a little easier than your first as far as classroom management?

P- I think I had a lot of better ideas early on. I was very surprised. I actually switched schools from my first year to my second year. And um from the talk in the district and the reputation I switched from a school that maybe had more discipline problems to one that had less. I did not see that in my classroom however I had much more issues in my second school which surprised me a little bit. I bought into the reputations of the schools

but what I think what that really ultimately showed me is that kids are kids are kids. They come in all kinds of bunches and they can be at any school. I figured that out really quick. Um I think it worked out better. I think I jumped on it a little sooner in my second year than in my first year I was a little more reluctant to okay how many chances do I really want to give him before I go through the discipline route. The second school had a much more delineated out, here's what you do for these different discipline issues. It was very specific and I followed that. Looking back I'm not sure maybe I should have added a few layers before I started that too. But I think my second year was better at it than the first though overall. As far as the content standards go I think the first year a mentor who could have helped me navigate what the 8th grade standards were would have helped a little bit because they do have what I call those confusing words in there. Analyze this, apply a formula to do this. What is that really looking for? I certainly knew how to do the things but as far as making sure I targeted what they were trying to get you to target. I wasn't sure, towards the end of the year I think I got a lot better at that some teachers just literally listening to them talk about the standards helped. This year several teachers have really delved into what does that really mean. We have had several different meetings and a cohort and different kind of things like that have really helped. So my first year that was almost a mystery to me. What some of that exactly meant to do. But so my kids learned a lot so I know that I hit a lot of those standards. Um so I saw it took me until a just few weeks ago to see the PASS scores from last year because of changing schools and because it wandered around and it finally showed up to me. And they didn't do so

good. I think it was 49 – 51. Fifty one met and there was a few exemplaries in there and there were 49 of them that did not meet which I was not happy with but my first year teaching I really thought a lot of those kids knew more that I thought they did. It was the first year of PASS for them. But I'm not sure still. I'm hoping that they will do a lot better this year.

R- That's good, alright. How have your induction/mentoring experiences affected students' achievement in your classroom? What can you relate to those experiences? How can you draw from those experiences to student achievement?

P- Well a couple of different things in induction, some of those guest speakers. There were a couple of them some of them that talked about the standardized tests. Um not so much in teaching to the tests but in preparing the kids for that kind of test because especially in math we spend so much time with the open response and then here we are given a color in the bubbles which is multiple choice. So really helping them to understand the multiple choice and teaching them a few tricks of them taking the test. I mean I learned that from induction where we had a whole day of where we talked about how to teach kids how to take a multiple choice test. Which was kinda interesting. I hadn't really thought about that. It was just one of those things I thought you knew. But until your taught you don't know. That helped, I don't know. Um mentoring I know that my mentor told me on several occasions that once a quarter that she gave a multiple choice test so that the kids weren't completely blindsided by a multiple choice test. And she tried really hard to make all the possible mistakes you could make to be one of those multiple choice

questions and not throw in the silly ridiculous ones that could get rid of. She tried to make it a, she said it was usually one of her harder tests so that was interesting. And I have done that this year. I didn't do that my first year, but my second year I've given two multiple choice tests for them to a least see what that might look like.

R- Has the electronic journal affected your teaching practice? And what I mean by electronic journal and I reference that in my whole dissertation is the journal you did for PACE, that was electronically sent to Blackboard. Has that um affected your teaching practice at all when you were doing it? And after you answer that question, did you have to do a journal for your induction/mentoring practice also?

P- Well um the electronic journal was interesting to keep up with. At times when I started to write, well what happened this week, nothing really happened this week. Well then it was worth putting in the journal, but when you started writing almost every time I had to cut it down because there were so many things that when I started writing it was like oh wow, this was there and this was there. And the more I wrote was the more I realized that this wasn't very good. Oh now I see went wrong with that. As I was writing it had almost helped me work through what had gone right or what had gone wrong. I thought that they were very good. Um I picked out from some of my journal because I read some of it because I printed mine out. The ones that I could tell from reading that I was excited about well then I definitely need to do that again. Not only were you excited about but some of the things looking back month after that happened. Yeah they really did know how to do this because apparently that was really good for them on some level. So that

was nice. It kinda helped me to pick out what to definitely put in and what to do different the next time. Which that is just reflection and growth period. I think you are going to have to do that all the time you teach. The induction journals um we did have to write journals. We wrote them on a monthly basis and um I'm thinking yeah it was just a monthly, but you just wrote one a month and she was very specific about what we had to write. For the life of me I couldn't tell you how she figured that out. But it was like pick a lesson and really detail what went right, what went wrong one time. And the next time it was pick a child, you know, really focus on a child and see how that particular and some aspect of that child was working. And then one time it was pick the overall school environment how that was supporting you or not supporting you. She was very specific about what she wanted us to do but we only did it on a month basis. So we didn't do very many of them.

R- Which do you think improved your practice?

P- Well I think doing it more often improved my practice and not being so restrained about just talking about the school environment. You know in this particular, it seemed like it was pretty good, you know. That was a little harder for me to do to pick out. I think I would have been better to pick out this is what's bothering me, or this is what's working. I am seeing would have been more beneficial in the end.

R- What are your thoughts on how the induction/mentoring experience might be improved?

P- Well I learned that the induction thing we spent two or three different meetings talking about the long range plan and then eventually she had us write a long range plan. And then we

all wrote the long range plan then she decided to have us put it on the actual South Carolina Department of Education forms. And that was frustrating as all get out because we had already written it. And it wasn't a cut and paste like everybody thought we would be able to do. It didn't quite work that way with their forms. So I'm not sure she had a clear idea on what we were supposed to do. I don't know if that was her fault or if that was an evolving thing with ADEPT. I don't know if something was changing with ADEPT. I am not even sure that's true. But they definitely, the flow of it didn't seem very helpful. So hopefully, that's gotten better. She jumped around the instructor from month to month. We could never really tell what we were going to talk about. She was not a very good classroom manager. We had tons of conversations going on. I actually got better and better at picking out - do not sit near this group from particular schools that would talk the entire time at with absolutely nothing with what we were talking about. And you couldn't hear for them talking. So she needed to, every now and then she would say something to them but there was never any real consequence just like in your own room. So I'll just keep doing it. There is never an end in sight to fixing it. And it was an interesting experience to see what it might be for my own children sitting in my own class. If the kid next to him keeps talking and I keep giving him a verbal and verbal and you know you never do anything to him. That other kid is distracted like I was in the class. I wouldn't sit near some people. I just wouldn't. Flat wouldn't. Couldn't handle that so. The class was huge though as I have said before the groups I think it was too overwhelming.

R- How big was the class do you think?

P- I think there were almost 200 of us that year. It was huge. We had trouble finding places. With one instructor.

R- So you would hold this in libraries?

P- Libraries and cafeterias. And in cafeterias you know the echoing was hard to hear at times. It was crazy.

R- Was the one instructor um from the district? Was it a teacher in the district?

P- It was a teacher in the district.

R- Oh my.

P- So they had a caseload of teaching on top of teaching us. The monumental paperwork of course, you do something and turn it in and it would take forever to get it graded. But I can imagine with her own grading and then the 200. I finally didn't even worry about it. It was a little disorganized. And I, she made reference to that several times so I think it was not necessarily her entirely. It was what she was being told to do or how it was changing as she was told.

R- Think about the curriculum. You said it bounced around and it seemed almost in cohesive.

P- It did, it did bounce around. Um the one thing that I kept hoping and I know from talking with other members of my induction class. It seemed like it was very theoretical at first. And this was the ideal way to do it, and this is the ideal way to do when really being this is the first year teacher the August, September, October, November stuff would have been nice to have been very practical because you're just thrown into the classroom. I really want

some practical, how do you do this stuff right now. And she got to that but it was later in the year. And at time I was going why didn't you tell me that in August? Because it was helpful information it wasn't in the right time. It was already past that issue. Well I was like I can use that next year but not now. So I think they hit the right things. I don't think the order was right. I really enjoyed the special ed person and that particular time frame. It may have just been me. I had several special ed kids in my class that were causing me all kinds of issues that I didn't know what to do with or where my rights were to say what to do with. And that person just made all of that into a 20 minute speech. She told me what I could do and I could ask her questions on the floor. You know it was wonderful. That would have been nice to have earlier in the year too. Now that problem for me didn't arise until the end of the year so it worked out. But I often wondered who might be needed that earlier. Practical stuff needs to go first for sure. How do you really maneuver these different meanings and what's important, who do you talk to and who do you not talk to necessarily would have been helpful.

R- It sounds as if you may have had a tough induction/mentoring experience.

P- yeah

R- Do you have the energy to continue?

P- Sure that's fine.

R- I know this is kind of backwards and this is an afterthought, but um for personal background tell me about yourself, your education, your employment background, and your reason for entering education. Because why I ask these things, I think it is very important, since

this is a case study, to kind of build that as a background and then get to the meat of my actual research.

P-Yeah, uh let's see. I have a bachelor's degree in computer science and a master's degree in industrial engineering. I have somewhere over 20 years of practical experience either in engineering or finance and accounting fields. Um decided to go into education after my third child was born. Really he has a lot of educational issues and my jobs I had at the time were very very demanding and not allowing my support that I needed for him. It really became clear that he did not function well in what I call chaos situations, like summer camps and stuff. Just or even long times after school. He needed more structure. And you can't ask a place to provide this child more structure. I understood that. So I needed to be there for him. So I had to find something different to do. So I kind of ended up with hey I like to teach. I've taught basketball coached for years and I've taught Sunday school for years and I have tutored several different people in math over the years. You know friends of family you know that needed help. Well then I said that education might be a good idea. I have a long line of educators in my family. My mom retired from educating. And the more I thought about it I said this is this is something that I think will work for the family and for me. That's kind of how I ended up in education. Which is really a ended up then aimed for but I have really enjoyed it. The more I have been around the kids it's like this is neat to be actually be able to watch a light bulb go off every now and then.

R- That's why I do it I think. Well let me ask you about the demographics of your school and so forth. Would you consider your school to be rural, suburban, or urban?

P- I'd say suburban.

R- How would you describe your classes? How many preparations? How difficult were the classes?

P- Both years that I have taught I have taught the exact same schedule. I have one I guess they call it below grade level and two that are grade level. Um the classes themselves are, so it's two preparations each time, each year. Difficulty for me to teach – not at all it's very simple math to me. But what I've learned of the difficulty of teaching them is these kids haven't experienced success and they really have lots of holes in their basic math skills. So introducing the algebra concepts to them is very foreign to them. And I spend a lot of time spiraling around and around and around the same topic the whole year through. So teaching them is more difficult than I would have thought for that level of math. I really have to admit I think I was more intimidated when I first moved to this school they had said they were going to give me geometry. And I haven't taught geometry. I have done geometry in a long time. So I got a little nervous about that. But looking back on that might have been the thing to do.

R- How would you describe the socio-economic level of your school, your classes and do you think that your classes were different or mirrored your school?

P- My very first year teaching I think the socio-economic would have been fairly low. Um and I think that mirrored the school very closely. The second year it's really a mixture in my

class. I do have some who are social economic very low and then I have some fairly affluent people in my class. And the school that I'm at the second year again I think it does probably mirror it maybe just a touch lower than the overall school is what I'm seeing. But I have a very broad group this year.

R- Question number five on this is about your induction unless you have more to add I think you have highlighted a lot of that. But if you would like to add more please do.

P- I don't think so.

R- Okay, now how about your mentoring experience you did tell me a lot about that. Do you want to add anything more?

P- Um I don't think so but looking back on it I don't know why um the original mentor who had to go defend her theses and couldn't attend those first few classes and that was the classes before school started. So kinda their induction to induction/mentoring I guess. I don't know why that precluded her from being a mentor. I don't know why that couldn't had been worked out because she really wanted to she did it anyway. And I don't think she was doing it for the money by any means. The stipend wouldn't be enough to do that for her I don't believe but I think that started an avalanche for me. Of her not being able to do then it got shifted around of who will do it. Cause the other people hadn't jumped up wanting to do it. They were very gracious and did but that would be something I would love for them to look at. Is that meeting so important that it happens on that day and that time that it couldn't be rescheduled or somehow worked out but she could have done it since she wanted to.

R- Now the person that was assigned to be your mentor um how would you describe that person?

Um tell me about her as much as you would like to.

P- She um as best as I could tell she had um been teaching there and I don't know how many years but I would say four or five years she had been at that school. She had taught a ton overseas. Um um really in stature looked like one of the kids. Very young, in fact we had a dress up day one day and many teachers stopped her and asking her where her student ID was because she was a teacher she didn't have a student ID. Very young, track star, all that stuff, so she was very energetic. Really, really connected with the kids but the thing that really impressed me with her is I never really heard her raise her voice and yet the kids knew exactly when she, you had crossed her line. She was very much in command of the students and had just phenomenal scores. It was just amazing. You would hear the kids grumbling I don't want to go to her class. I can't believe we have this. I can't believe we have homework on the weekend. We have homework on spring break. But so they shined for her. But whether they liked it or not they did very well for her. I was always um thoroughly impressed. I still tell lots of people I think she is one of the smartest teachers I know in this district.

R- Was your mentor certified in your area?

P- Yes she was.

R- Okay and did your mentoring program require reflection activities? And you mentioned that earlier that once a month.

P- Hm

R- How often was your mentor in your classroom?

P- She was actually in my classroom um I think four or five times. Um a couple times more than she was required to be. I had asked her a couple of times to come look at specific things and she came once on her own to look at something.

R- You may have answered this before did your mentor provide demonstration lessons? You had observed her.

P- I had observed her but other than that.

R- But she never came in to demonstrate a lesson.

P- (sound representing a negative answer)

R- for your classroom.

P- No she did not.

R- How would you describe your mentor's involvement with your curriculum planning and development?

P- I did that on my own and with other teachers in my grade level. She didn't she did not help with that.

R- How would you describe the amount of collaboration with your mentor?

P- Except for um me asking her questions about a specific thing how to do something or other there really wasn't much collaboration. And most of that I felt like the barrier was that we were in different grade levels.

R- Were you given the opportunity to observe other teachers teach?

P- Yes

R- Okay and that was kind of an open door policy?

P- HmHm it was.

R- Okay, describe your non-instructional duties.

P- Um my first year teaching um we had recess everyday so twice a week I was actually on recess duty. We had morning duty where they had provided hand written passes to breakfast. Um I did that once a week and then they had an actual day that the entire school had all the after school um tutoring because they provided a late bus. Which was nice because they provided that transportation. And that was much better attended this year without the late bus so that definitely is effective. So once a week we did that. And the way we did detention at that school too we rotated that around so twice a month you held the detention for anybody who had an afterschool on your team.

R- So do you think people gave less detentions because they didn't want to do duty?

P- You know I

R- Do you think that would affect that?

P- Honestly I don't think I ever thought of it that way. But um I don't think so. I don't think in that group. And I don't think in the way they did detention it was the detentions of the people on your team. So there could have definitely could have been that. But I don't know it was always well attended. So I'm not sure that ever happened.

R- Just a little food for thought. How would you describe your support from your administrators?

P- Um my first year of teaching um the seventh grade administrator of course I very rarely saw.

Very helpful, um super polite and very nice. Just didn't have much interaction with her.

The discipline 8th grade um one didn't have a whole lot of interaction with him although he also um was helpful. He, every single one of those people except the 7th grade teacher came and observed me one time. They had a very rigorous observation policy where they all came and walked through your room at times. So that was nice. Because you got a lot of different feel for what people saw and what they didn't see. Um the instructional um assistant principal was very helpful, very open door policy. Um you could just walk in there and ask her anything and she would sit down and take time to do it which always amazed me cause she was always so busy. But she was very good at that. She was very good at helping instructional wise, figuring out why this kid having a problems. What can we do to help this kid? And came up with a lot of good ideas I thought for me. The um principal at that particular school was really more over the discipline than the instruction. I found that's different from school to school. But I didn't have a whole lot of interaction with that one but she also was very open door. And a couple of different times I went and talked to her and she was um Johnny on the spot and picked up the phone and solved whatever I needed solved. One of them was with this mentoring program. I had been observed and had no feedback. None whatsoever and everybody else in basically in a couple of days you saw the feedback in your mailbox or saw an email or something. And this person had gone six weeks without sending me any feedback. And I was well how can I fix anything or am I doing everything right either way I would like to know. And I finally asked her. I said I don't even know if I am stepping on toes coming to you but this is I think you're the level I want to be at. And she made a phone call and I had um

information the next day. I don't know how irritated that person was but I had information the next day.

R- Okay it looks like you um did they encourage effective teaching strategies?

P- They did she had lots of good ideas and books that she would loan you and suggest for you to.

R- How would you describe your support form your co-workers?

P- I think at both schools that's been wonderful. In both schools I teach at teach in a team environment. Um and that team environment is great. Um as far as I can tell even the ones in the different you know totally different disciplines that you wouldn't think how in the world how would they help me. They come up with some good ideas and some support for different students sometimes you can talk about different students and what are you doing. And someone would say I'm not having a bit of a problems with this student so what are you doing? And that actually has helped a couple of times. You find little things to key in on what they like to do. Or who to keep them away from sometimes. I think the support there has been wonderful.

R- How would you describe um your professional development experiences?

P- The um the first year our faculty meetings and um were um I thought were almost professional development. We always has what I call the little admin stuff where you got whatever you needed to do to run the school you know went through. But they always had little guest speakers at our faculty meetings that first year. Which is really kinda neat. You heard little things about different programs. Sometimes its technology tip program thing. But I thought that actually helped a lot for a first year teacher seeing all of these

different things that were available. Um the professional development like what we have on the in-service days some of that has been useful some of that's not. I think at every single one I have gleaned away something that I am going to try or use. So as far as I am concerned if you can get that you've done okay because you're not going to please everybody.

R- Um as far as your induction program was it versatile enough to meet your needs?

P- Except for maybe wanting it to be more practical up front. It definitely gave lots of insights into all the different pieces of education.

R- Of course if it was smaller group sizes that would of helped you.

P- It would have helped a lot yeah for me.

R- Did you have access to an instructional coach?

P- It both schools had an instructional coach. Um my first year the instructional coach um I found useless. And that's the best word I can come up with. Couple of several different times she would come in and ask me stuff and plop something down on my desk and said I'll get back with you. I never once heard back from her on anything that she said she would get back with me on ever. Until the point I stopped asking her anything. The instructional coach I have this year is incredible and I consider her a mentor. And I mean I asking her tons of stuff. She has helped me in so many different ways. And just night and day difference. So it is definitely a useful program. Maybe just a little bit of personality differences there.

R- Piggyback off the instructional coach, did they help you assess your strengths and weaknesses?

P- Um Hmm First year no, I don't know that the second year she said so per say if she has she has been very politically correct about it that you don't think you are doing anything wrong. She is very good at um I think you could do this. You know just the way she phrases it she's definitely excellent at doing that. Now looking back on it yeah she was trying to tell me don't do it that way ever again. But she still um I don't think it was a specific here's what you do, here's what you don't. She's just good at helping you figure out your problem.

R- That's good did you participate in any alternate forms of mentoring? By that I mean that sometimes networking with other new teachers or E-mentoring is something that's out there where you can get onto, you can actually email people and just hey I've got this problem I need help here.

P- There are and I did use a lot of um blogs or type of things that I found online that were interesting. Most of those weren't actually talking back and forth to different people more of what they had posted. I didn't do a lot of posting myself. But that's because I found a lot of the same issues there and read about them and I did learn some really neat stuff. Especially for the beginning of the year kinda of how to break the ice with the kids and stuff. I learned a lot of stuff that I have used both years and have passed on to other teachers that they have used. So some of that was super valuable. I think our cohorts helped a lot too with just some interaction. Even though maybe it was based around a

different topic. My first year was based around technology use which I needed to learn about in the school. And with other teachers' approach they weren't all math teachers, they weren't all English teachers, lots of different teachers' approach to using it. And listening to them talk. I think actually I got a lot of stuff from them and they were very helpful. One of the people who helped me the most my first year um especially when I was at my wits end. I think she got appointed by my team to come talk to me. But she was invaluable. She was a very veteran English teacher. You wouldn't think would have anything to do. And she quite often said I have no idea what you are teaching. Don't even begin to tell me what you are teaching but here's what you might do or here's what I do when everything goes to heck in a hand basket. And she had some neat what I call survival techniques that really were nice. Okay I'll come back tomorrow. Kind of things when you just had enough that first year going I'm not doing the right thing. She was definitely helpful so sometimes I think my mentoring I actually after a little while figured out I'm going to have to seek out some people. And you could find them if you start seeking. There are plenty that want to be helpful. They just don't want to step on anybody else's toes.

R- Exactly, yes, how would you describe your work environment?

P- Um my first year it was wonderful um and I keep saying my first year cause that's what I want to concentrate on not because there is anything wrong with my second year. But like I said I really enjoyed the team, um the team concept. The first year our team actually had a particular table we all sat and had lunch together and stuff free from where the kids

were which was wonderful. Um they had a big calendar where they celebrated birthdays and stuff. I mean it was very nice and we belonged together kinda thing and I enjoyed that.

R- Um how would you describe your feelings about your first year in the classroom?

P- What a learning experience. I don't know what I got into. No I really do I'll never forget that very first day. I had a flat tire on the way to school. And I was like this is not how this year is going to go. Please tell me I'm going to be late for the first day. I wasn't late but I was panicked the whole time because of it. But it got better. I mean it really was very enlightening I mean just from seeing how this age kids act. I have one that is exactly the same age who doesn't act like the ones I teach. And I tell her all the time you better not be putting on a show for me. You better be acting different. Um that was an eye opener it really was. But um different expectation of different parents or maybe not even the parents or maybe just not knowing what to do with the kids at that age. It's a difficult age. They're one step to high school. And they are also one step to really messing up their academic career at times. And that was difficult to try and figure out how do you tell them that without just getting into their face and being mean and still make your point. Because they still don't want to listen to you at times when you start telling them that you are not doing the right thing. That was an eye opening experience and just from the fact that physically how the room is arranged totally changed how the room worked. I mean just little subtle things I learned were just amazing. One of the most amazing things I figured out from you during PACE was um reading that children's book to them. Um I

was like there is no way in heck this is going to work. They are going to laugh at me. And they were mesmerized. And I've done that a bunch every year I've taught I have read more and more books. This year we read tons of books and it's like story time. Which you think it's funny for a bunch of teenagers. But just seeing those little things work and not work. That's just a huge eye opener. I mean I have three kids of my own at times you think, okay I know how these kids act. But you don't there are so many different types.

R- You have touched on this quite a bit um throughout this interview but we will just highlight whatever we can here. Did you ask for help from colleagues and administrators?

If you asked for help, how did they react? Were they supportive? And did you avoid asking for help? And why?

P- Um I think at first I did avoid a little bit not wanting to appear that I didn't know what I was doing. Um but I did start asking um I asked the math department head. Um my first year teaching to come and watch because I could figure out how to get these couple of kids to behave at all. And um that was an eye opening experience too. She went and sat right between the middle of the two of them. She knew exactly who they were without me even. When she saw the class, she knew where to go sit. I didn't tell who the kids were. And the way that she interacted with those kids and the way she talked to those kids is still nothing I could pull off today. But it worked for her. And that to me was an almost an eye opening experience to start seeing the way different teachers can interact with different kids um just the way they can relate to them. It is very different. And some will work for you and some won't. That's just not me I could never pull that off with a

straight face but she could. And the kids act very differently so I think what I learned was yes she would come in there and yes she would straighten them up her way or get across her point her way. And it actually still ended up helping me because they didn't want her to come back. Not that she was mean. But I think they got the gist of you are not pulling this. You know don't pull this. We know better than that. And that was nice. Um anytime I asked the instructional coach for help she was very helpful um a couple of times she just picked up the phone and said okay let's get a meeting. I want these people together and we are going to solve this issue you know surrounding a certain child or a certain event. Um I thought that was great. And that took a little while to get used to walking into a principal's office. Going wow okay they have a lot going on she has one of 86 of us, does she really want to talk to today. The second year I think I did that better. I think it helped and hurt the second year. Some people were very receptive to helping and some people weren't the second year so it was a learning process there.

R- I guess you have to know the people you are working with.

P- Yeah

R- How would you evaluate your overall teacher training and support provided from induction/mentoring in terms of preparation for the classroom?

P- Well I think I basically knew what was going to happen but you can't possibly get all of the details from induction and um the mentoring. I mean I saw my mentor twice before the first day of school so and she helped me hang up posters and gave me a cute little goodie bag with little things that really I have used to this day. And it was stuff that I wouldn't

think of, a screwdriver and few little funny things. So she helped me on that path of you have no idea of all the little things that you are going to need. So I think it helped. I definitely think it could have been better. There are a lot of little holes in my education of being a teacher too that I'm still filling in.

R- How would you describe your ability to make connections with your students?

P- That's something that I have really tried to do. Um there are several that I have made great connections with and um several times I have gotten un-solicited emails from parents with just glowing remarks that I print out and keep in my little sunshine file. Go back and read when everything is going bad. Oh look you did do something good this one day. Um and they don't know it and just recently I sent an email home before spring break that said I'm missing this permission slip for this kid to walk to the high school. And I've got to have it. I mean my principal is after me we have got to have it. I didn't say all that really why I was sending this one email that seemed strange to this one kid who was doing very well in my class. And she said, I gave it to him and it's signed. Of course that means he had to have turned it in to you. Just being funny. And she goes, oh by the way I've never had the chance to say this but I wanted to tell you that you have worked miracles with my son. And it was just like wow I love that. But I don't have that permission slip though. I'll get it though. So every now and then yeah you see something wonderful.

R- Yeah, how would you describe your perceptions of your teacher effectiveness?

P- Hmm You know I have had a couple of very interesting comments from fellow teachers. One is a fellow PACE participant and second year teacher at my school that became real good friends during PACE. But she sent an email to me she said you know here is a homework assignment I have made if you want to use it for this particular topic feel free but I know it is not nearly as stringent as what you require your kids to do. Um but you can work with it. And I thought that just an interesting comment apparently I have a reputation of having harder homework. Or I like to think of it as higher standards but I don't think any of us really have a higher standard for them. It's just somehow or another people think I have harder homework. My kids do well.

R- More rigorous.

P- Yeah more rigorous I guess is the right word. I mean I thought that was interesting that she made and several other people had come to me and asked can I borrow this, I've seen that you did this. I had several over spring break email me. I saw in your lesson plans that you had this because we have to post a very um a very outline-ish lesson plan. I saw you did this can I borrow that and stuff. And so that I would like to see at least they think it is effective.

R- How would you describe your perceptions of your students' achievement?

P- Well I was super excited about their MAP scores this spring. I really have um, I have very small class sizes. I think partly because I got moved at the last I kinda got the last of the overflow of the classes that were just too big. I only teach a total of 52 kids all three classes. And that's gone down, because I have a few started school that didn't work but

of all those 52 all but six had growth. Um this year. Not all of them met their target but I looked at their targets and I said okay we could look at it that way and we could look at it did you grow at all? And all but six grew at all. And I don't know the percentage but a very high percentage did meet their target too but. I look at that as being nice. I've really enjoyed giving them the test and letting them do test corrections. And I let them tell me why they got it wrong. Not just fix it but tell me why you got it wrong, what did you do? Careless mistake, didn't understand the concept whatever it is. That's helped them especially with the careless mistakes. I'm seeing less and less of that on my tests now where the answer is a careless mistake. Now we're fixing that. Which is good. That's helping them. I'm seeing them grow too. And I always tell them their mathematical mind is growing.

R- How would you rate yourself in the following areas, let's start with prior academic performance for you?

P- For me?

R- What kind of student were you?

P- My prior academic performance, I've always done real well at school. And I enjoy doing well at school.

R- How about your communication skills?

P- Um I actually got all my scholarships to school on my writing abilities. So I think I write well. Sometimes I don't think I necessarily convey it orally what I am trying to get across. Or

I've at least noticed that a little bit with administration especially at times I think they took it wrong. And that's not how I meant it. So I think I have to work on that a little bit.

R- your professionalism?

P- I think I do that very well. I have never had any complaints about that.

R- Creativity?

P- I um hmm I think I, I definitely am very creative as a person. Sometimes it's hard for me to get the creativity into the classroom especially where it is a struggling class where they just need a lot of drill. Really and truly it's hard to make that creative at times. And working on that.

R- Your pedagogical knowledge?

P- That I'm learning everyday. How does this all supposed to work? But I'm definitely am growing there. I've done a lot of reading on that this year for sure.

R- Your student evaluation and assessment?

P- That has definitely improved just I mean a 100%. In fact some of the tests and quizzes I wrote in my first year. I'm like oh my gosh I can't believe I gave that quiz. It didn't test what I wanted to test at all. You know so I definitely really honed in on what did you teach and what are they supposed to know and how do I make sure they know it exemplary? You know what's the little fine tweaked really know if they know it.

R- Your self-development?

P- That's an ongoing process for your entire life. So I am very open to constructive criticism and change. I am definitely all about developing.

R- That ties along with life-long learning obviously you've answered that. Your personality?

P- Personality, how do you rate yourself on your personality? I think I get along with most

people. I am by nature actually a very shy person. Um quiet is I guess the better word.

Because I know when you gotta speak up. So I get over the shyness every now and then.

But I am one of those people who is quiet in the room and evaluates what's going on and then decides where I'm headed.

R- Your talent or your content area knowledge?

P- I think that's very good. I have used that all my life forever.

R- The ability to model concepts in your content area?

P- Now that's one of things that most of my, in fact I think all of my um evaluations and

observations from all of the different people who have been in there have said um that I am very good at modeling especially what I am doing to how it is used in the real world.

That type of modeling, everybody's always liked that.

R- How would you rate your skills and competencies in the following areas prior to entering your classroom: your ability to interpret the way students view the curriculum and adjust the lessons to accommodate the student?

P- Well before I had no idea they had so many views on it for sure. Um and that's definitely

something that's been an eye opener to see that sometimes the main concept that you beat

home for four days. They have no idea what that main concept is cause they're

interpreting it ever so slightly differently than you anticipated. And really choosing the

right word to use. And sometimes I've noticed even in my tutoring of late just the little

notations they make that aren't quite right. If you let it go it gets into this big problem.

You got to fix it earlier. And I wouldn't have thought of that before.

R- How about listening to students or motivating students? How would you rate your skills before you entered the classroom?

P- Hmm Before I entered the classroom I don't um I thought I was pretty good with my own kids. And coaching basketball, I thought I was pretty good at motivating um a team to play together and produce the right thing. Motivation is something that if I ever do my doctorate. I am doing it on motivation. How do you do that?

R- And um how would you rate your skills and abilities to um structure lessons and tasks, lessons and tasks to provide feedback to encourage effort?

P- That um that's something I've definitely worked on a lot. I don't think um I mean I've always been one of those to call on people in class and have them come to the board and work out problems and stuff. Um what had been noted in my evaluations and the more I thought about it and reflected on it too was you tend to get only a subset of the kids if you are not careful. Um I tend to call on the ones that I know that will participate. Not necessarily the brightest or the least of them. But the one that will actually interact with you. Well you don't necessarily get the shy kid over here. And you need to know what they know too. So I've used a lot of the individual white boards. We have actually written on the desks and erased off the desks. We've done a lot of different things so that everybody is interacting. And I can get a little better feedback on everybody almost at one time.

R- Um how would you have rated yourself prior to entering the classroom about obtaining resources and be familiar with integrating technology into your curriculum?

P- Wow the school technology, um I had no idea of some of the stuff they have. I am very good with the calculator. I have used the calculator all my life, the graphing calculator. So I was good with that and how I could use that for lessons and stuff. But the smart board and some of the other things they've got in the library are just phenomenal. That I had no idea about before so.

R- How about your prior to entering the classroom to analyze and reflect on your teaching to improve your instruction? How would you have rated yourself?

P- I thought I did that actually pretty well. I have always been pretty reflective. And especially with the coaching thing you know if the game didn't go right. You are going back and what do we do wrong and what did I say wrong. And um try and fix it for the next time.

R- Give some examples of how you delivered lessons that enhanced student understanding, assessed prior knowledge, motivated students, and allowed for cultural differences.

P- Well let's see to do all of that. Um the reading the books has been neat because one of the lesson I do with Pythagoras's theorem is read a book. And there is a neat little streaming video that we do also there. So I have them read the book and I have what I call a book guide. Where they have to take a few notes to make sure everybody is on task. Same thing with the video in that same lesson. And then we do some examples and then we actually do a hands-on activity of re-creating Pythagoras's discovery. Um and that's been that particular lesson has been well both years. The first year I didn't do it with my below

grade level class. This year I did it with them and they ate that up. They absolutely loved it. Um and I thought that was neat. We integrated a lot of different things. And it was a very active class. So we were moving around a lot.

R- How would you describe your rapport with your students?

P- I think that um for the most part I think that um we get along fairly well. There are a couple I'm quite sure I will be their least favorite teacher both years. Um we have had several conversations me and the child and the parents in both years. I firmly believe and I don't say this to them but I wasn't hired to make friends with everybody. I was hired to hopefully help you grow in your mathematical knowledge. Um that doesn't mean we have to be friends. I'd like to be at least on a social be able to get along well. But um being confrontational all the time neither one of us will be able to enjoy it. But there are a few that are very hard to figure out personality conflict with.

R- Do you have anything that you would like to add that I may not have asked?

P- I don't think so. You did pretty good with your list.

R- Well, I want to thank you.

Appendix H: Participant 2—Interview Transcript

Tom (pseudonym) interview transcript

Date: 4/14/08

6:30- 8:00 pm

Telephone interview (speaker phone)

Researcher's office

Note: (R: indicates researcher, P: indicates participant)

R: Good afternoon. I am Charyl Pace. This interview is being conducted to ascertain your experiences of your first year in the classroom as an alternately certified teacher in South Carolina and your perceptions of the support you received from induction and/or mentoring services in relation to teacher effectiveness and student achievement. So that I may focus on your responses to my questions, I plan to make an audio digital recording of this conversation for the purpose of collecting the details of the conversation. I assure you that your responses will remain confidential; that is, I will not use your name or information for any purpose outside of this research project. If you agree to the interview and the audio recording, your name will be disguised in this study to assure you of confidentiality is maintained. Is that acceptable?

P: Yes

R: May I interview you?

P: Yes

R: Okay and you have already signed the consent form and we've got it on the computer. So I would like you if you would to tell me about yourself, your education, your employment background, and your reason for entering education so that we can kind of build this case study. Tell me about your background.

P: Okay, uh I graduated with a degree, an undergraduate degree in geology back in 1984. And I was a geologist for a few years. And then I was all of the geologists were out of work. OPEC raised prices so all of the geologists were out of work. So I went to work in the business field for a medical company. Lived here in xxxx [omitted to protect participant]. And I was a manager for several years and I got laid off. Then I was self-employed so I started a couple of businesses and I ran those for seven or eight years. Then I was in the mortgage business, uh computer business, computer consulting business, the mortgage business. And in this last recession when I got laid off, my company went out of business. Uh the mortgage banker so we were all out of work. And I decided that I always wanted to teach so I decided it was a good time to for me to lay back and kind of figure out how I could get into teaching because I didn't go into it before because it didn't pay much. But now in my, my, I'm a saver and my wife and I are savers so we did pretty well. And so it was a good chance for me to go into teaching. Well I have a master's degree in business and I have a geology degree. So PACE gave me a choice whether to go into I had a choice either science, middle school science. And I passed all the tests (inaudible). And I actually had a choice of going into middle school science or teach business classes in the middle school and/or high school. There wasn't that many

openings for high, for business, so I ended up teaching eighth grade science through the PACE program. Which was fine with me because I love both subjects and I had an opportunity to get into teaching. Before that I had while I was taking tests and while I was getting ready for the certification that I uh. I just drew a blank on what, what certifications (inaudible) my resume. Anyway while I was getting ready for that I also uh did a long term I did some uh some substitute teaching around here in xxx (omitted to protect participant) county. And I've been a long term sub for a seventh grade um sixth grade math class at xxx (omitted to protect participant). So that gave me some experience before I started the PACE program. And then the next year through the PACE program I was teaching as an eighth grade science teacher.

R: Okay, so your reason for entering was because of the economy basically.

P: Well I've always wanted to teach.

R: Hm, hm

P: And I just couldn't do it because it did pay enough and I was trying to raise a family.

R: Right

P: But uh once I got at this point in my life and the company went out of business that I was working for, it was a perfect time for me to re-evaluate it and try do something I want to do and that I enjoy doing. Cause I used to I used to be a trainer for a medical company. And I trained professionals in um using medical equipment. And uh loved it. But uh you know that was several years ago. And I always wanted to get back to teaching. And then

when this happened it was like perfect time for me do something and teach. So I tried I tried the PACE program.

R: Well that sounds good. When um you worked in the school you worked in your very first year with the PACE program would you consider that school to be rural, suburban, or urban?

P: It's suburban.

R: Okay and how would you describe your classes? And how many preps did you have? And how difficult were your classes?

P: What do you mean by how many preparations?

R: Um did you teach just one course? Or sometimes I know math teachers end up teaching two different courses or three different courses.

P: Now in the PACE program I taught eighth grade science.

R: Uh ha

P: Which is uh earth science. And uh

R: You weren't asked to teach any other course. Some teachers end up with two grade levels.

P: No I just taught, taught that. And I taught four blocks.

R: Hm, hm

P: Or four classes a day. And the classes were um when you say how difficult. Do you mean academically.

R: Well academically and how difficult were they um you know just to teach.

P: First of all it was a big time culture shock. And you know I had not been in the public schools since you know back in the 70s when I graduated from high school. And my children are

not there yet or they are now but one of them is just in kindergarten. But I was kind of in a culture shock because I was really surprised at how the discipline was handled. And how it was just different from when I went to school.

R: Hm, hm

P: Kids they had a lot less discipline.

R: Hm, hm

P: Um and they were more difficult and there was less things you could do with them you know.

R: Right

P: Um the preparation in my class I was lucky because we did a team preparation. So I didn't actually have to do lesson plans everyday by myself.

R: Hm. hm

P: The science teachers in the eighth grade. There was three others. They already had these things. Well they had been there awhile. And I just kind of piggybacked off of them and they supplied me with um you know the lesson plans. And I just had to learn the lesson plans and then teach um. So I didn't have to you know reinvent the wheel which was a life saver.

R: Of course, of course I think that is excellent that the team would help you do that your very first year teaching. How would you describe the socio-economic level of your school, and then your classes, did your classes actually mirror your school?

P: And uh yeah the classes mirrored my school. We had uh it's a suburban community. Kind of middle class, not upper middle class, but middle class. And um uh it was a pretty good

group of kids. There was about 20, I had about 98 or 99 kids. And I would say about 10 or 15 of them were kind of a problem.

R: Hm, hm

P: Part of it was because I did not know how to handle them. Part of it was because I was new.

Part of it was because some of them had come over from failing schools and were problems and they didn't know what to do with them.

R: Right

P: And there was probably about 10 kids that I had a reoccurring problem with the entire time.

R: Hm, hm

P: Now the classes were it was weird. And all this time kind of shocked me too. I had four classes. And I was in a trailer. And I had one class that had 12 students in it were the ones that were advanced. We don't do honors in the science but they were grouped together that way because they were honors in English or math.

R: Okay

P: So one class had 12 kids in it. The other class had 13 kids in it. The after lunch, block three I had 33 and then block four I had 32.

R: That's amazing.

P: Yeah it just blew me away. And nobody could give really me an answer but basically what was happening is the kids that were advanced they got priorities. They got to be in a small group. And those classes were a dream. I mean it was a dream. I couldn't believe

they were paying me to go in there. And these kids there's 12 kids in a class and they're engaged and they're smart. And it was just wonderful.

R: Hm, hm

P: And then after lunch it was a totally different story. So it was harder reaching the kids. Thirty-three kids and you've got four or five of them always acting up.

R: Yeah

P: It just didn't make much sense to me.

R: Alright going back to the socioeconomic level can you tell me about how what was the percentage of free and reduced lunch in your school?

P: um

R: If you can recall.

P: I think it was about I want to say 30 to 35 percent, 30 percent something like that.

R: Okay Can you tell me about your induction program? Did you go through an induction program?

P: Yeah it was XXX (omitted to protect participant) county. XXX county had what was called XXX.

R: Okay

P: And we did an induction which was we had to write some reports and you had to do a meeting once a month where you did the little seminars. And they gave you advice and you know and like I said you had some reports you had to do. And you had to work with your

principal and your mentor. And get these reports done and for the life of me right now I can't think of the reports now. You probably have them on your journal.

R: Hm, hm right tell me about your mentoring experience.

P: Oh lord have you read the journals yet?

R: Oh yes

P: All of them?

R: Um yes I've got a few gaps that I sent you an email telling you I needed a few more.

P: Yeah and I sent you an email back.

R: Okay

P: But um didn't get much mentoring from the administration. At the beginning I did but it was so vague and so just kind of do the best you can. Um the principal uh it was his second year there. Second year as a principal. The first year I understand he had almost 30 or 40 percent of the teachers walk out on him.

R: Hm, hm Were these experienced teachers or?

P: Yeah

R: New teachers?

P: they'd just walk out, they'd move, they didn't re-up, they'd move to another school. And then this one, the year I was in you know there was a lot of unhappiness a lot of teachers that were still there were looking to go somewhere.

R: Now I will piggyback off that what your statement is, is that because of um of the way he didn't do well tell me why they were unhappy.

P: Well

R: I am trying to make this open-ended.

P: One um there is a lot of reasons. One uh he was very condescending.

R: Okay

P: Wasn't very helpful.

R: Okay

P: Didn't support the teachers. The parents were always right.

R: Okay

P: And I was told that. And I learned that over the course of the year. And the counselor, one of the counselors came to me the beginning of the year knowing I was having trouble said "He's a racist." I went what. And she said, he's a black man and she said "He likes black women. If you're not a black woman" and she was a white woman, she said, "He makes it difficult for you." Just knowing that going in. And I'm like holy cow what have I gotten myself into? And what was the other, the other thing was the teachers did feel like they were supported because if there was a problem with the child the parent was always right. Um I know he had a least two um he had at least two um um harassment suites against him pending. And I know that there was another teacher that they were that they were getting ready to file another one on him.

R: So these harassment suites from teachers?

P: Yes from teachers.

R: Okay

P: She, this girl, this lady in my block was an English teacher she basically she said she was getting ready to file one. And um so it was just a mess and I'm like well now I know how I got the job there because everybody else was leaving.

R: Right, they need somebody.

P: Yeah and so I am the newbie and I do the best I can. But he assigned me to my mentor. My real mentor was a nice lady and she was a great teacher. She was teacher of the year that year. And she tried her best but she was teacher of the year, she was doing her own class, uh she was mentoring two other people, and didn't just get much time with her.

R: Okay

P: I was (inaudible) to go into her class anytime I wanted to. But uh I was just overwhelmed by what was going on. And I went in a few times and watched her teach. And it was good. But she just didn't have much time. I mean she would come in and sit and I don't know maybe I want to say three or four times to sit in my class. And she didn't stay the whole time. She'd write notes down and help me out. Told me what I could be doing to be improving. You know there just wasn't much time. She was just covered up. She had just gotten her uh her uh what's the master one?

R: Oh the plus 30?

P: The what?

R: The master's plus 30? Or the specialist, education specialist?

P: No the one where you get like \$10,000 a year.

R: Oh the national board

P: Yeah the national board. She had just gotten that. She was burnt out and I kind of felt sorry for her because she had a lot on her plate.

R: Was your mentor certified in your area in eighth grade science?

P: Yeah she was a well I don't know. She was a seventh grade science teacher.

R: But she had the middle school science certification.

P: Yeah

R: Okay

P: Yes and the principal tried to get her uh to teach eighth grade science before he hired me and she said she couldn't do it because they were kids just too out of control. She had a hard time handling the eighth graders but the seventh grades she did great with them.

R: Did your mentoring program require reflection activities on your part?

P: Yeah we did some reflection. Some reflection um I did it with the mentor. And some reports we had to do to submit to the principal and it was kind of a reflection. But there wasn't much. Nothing like this weekly reflection.

R: Hm, hm so you feel like the PACE program was probably a better reflection activity for you?

P: Oh absolutely. Yeah.

R: Did your mentor provide demonstration lessons?

P: No

R: No

P: You mean himself?

R: Wasn't your mentor a female? You said.

P: Oh the mentor, uh did she provide lessons you mean?

R: Well did she provide you with demonstration lessons? Did she actually come in and demonstrate how to do certain things?

P: No

R: No

P: No

R: But you did get to observe her?

P: Yeah I got to observe her a couple of times.

R: Hm, hm

P: And we actually went together to another school down the road. There was a sixth grade who was teacher of the year. And we actually got to sit in one of her classes. And she was phenomenal. She was as good as anybody I had ever, well I didn't see a whole lot. But she was phenomenal. My mentor tried to get me into see an eighth grade because it is just a different. What do you teach?

R: Well I teach math, eighth grade.

P: Eighth grade.

R: Yes

P: Well then you know it's a totally different, sixth grade and eighth grade are different animals.

R: Right they are.

P: But I didn't get to see anybody do an eighth grade class. With that eighth grade, I saw sixth and seventh. One time I saw sixth, and then I saw my mentor I was in there about three times I think watched her teach seventh grade.

R: How would you describe your mentor's involvement with your curriculum planning and development? Was that a problem?

P: Well she didn't help that much because we were doing it uh we were I was doing it with the eighth grade team.

R: Right

P: Science team.

R: Right and so because she was seventh grade she really didn't have the same planning period as you. I'm guessing. Is that correct?

P: Yes. She didn't have any of the lesson plans. She never even taught eighth grade.

R: How would you describe the amount of collaboration with your mentor? Was there a lot or?

P: Um I'd say minimal. Minimal, on a scale of one to ten, I would give it about a five.

R: And you know you said you actually observed her maybe four times you said?

P: Three or four times.

R: She came to you. Okay, I asked this question already. Were you given the opportunity to observe other teachers? You have seen other teachers in other schools. Did you see any other teachers in your own school?

P: Uh no

R: No

P: I mean I didn't know when there was uh I had kids that were up to I guess. We had planning period, but that planning period was used to get ready. That was the only time I could go in to see another class. I just didn't seem to find the time for anybody else.

R: Right

P: To go into another class.

R: Did you see your classes every day or every other day? Did you have an A/B schedule or did you see them every day of the week?

P: I saw them everyday.

R: Okay, I'm going to switch gears into the support systems from the administrators. How would you describe your support from your administrators?

P: Um Pretty I guess pretty good til about February. And then the whole thing kind of changed and fell apart. Um I did uh there was rumors and I found this out later. There was pretty much rumors going around that that from my mentor too. Saying that the seventh grade class coming up was a smaller class. And with the budget cuts and all that that they were going to eliminate a block. And, and I know um the whole the whole thing changed. I got support. Then after that it was kinda like then he didn't really care. I didn't seem to get much support after that. It was just like the principal was I'd ask for some support and he'd say "Just put your thumb on them." You know if you're having trouble with them put your thumb on them. He uh he told us and it was not just me if um if um. let's see how did he put it? If we um if we give he said if we gave any of the kids below a 60 on a grade whether they turned in something or not, then he would not support us because

what we've done is made them give up. And I didn't find that out til later. Um when I'd already done that. Cause if a kid came in and he didn't turn in an assignment I gave him a zero. Well I got in trouble for that. And uh he wouldn't if I had trouble with a child a kid I would send him to the office. I mean he did come in and say I want you guys are going have to behave and I want uh and I want Mr. XXX (omitted to protect participant) to send you straight to my office. And he kind of scared them for like a week. Then when I started doing it. They'd just come back and laugh. And nothing happened to them. So they got the (inaudible) quick that there's no consequences. And they weren't scared of him. So it was kind of a nightmare but after that after I was told I wasn't going to be asked back. That's when I went to get uh. I hired. My teacher coach, I don't know if you read the part that I only saw her one time. He assigned me a teacher coach uh from XXX(omitted to protect participant) county.

R: Right

P: And I saw her one time and she was supposed to come back but she had a death in the family and took a leave. Think it was her mother. And never saw her again. So I was like okay. And then I would go to the principal and he didn't have time for me. The whole attitude changed by then. And uh it was and of course my mentor was so busy. So the only recourse I have to get a referral is to improve. So I had to go out and hire my own teacher coach. Out of my own pocket cause I wanted to learn this. And I wanted to get better. And I really wasn't getting much support there. So once I started doing a lot better my teacher coach really gave me I mean she was really good. She did a lot of XXX county

uh coaching. And she helped me a lot and I made some improvement. And you can probably see that on the journals. But he wouldn't let her come on site. And so she had to come and do it from what I told her. But there was improvement. I don't know if you read this too I can't remember if I put this in there or not but after I worked four or six weeks with her I could. Before that before that when they said I wasn't going to be asked back the administrators were in there almost everyday. And then after I got my own teacher coach I could not I begged him to come in to see me after I started improving. And I couldn't get him to come in there at all.

R: I saw that in the journals.

P: And my teacher coach she just she couldn't believe it. Uh and I couldn't get him in so a lot of that I don't know if a lot of that is they weren't they didn't want to be proven wrong or they just didn't care because they knew I was going away anyway. I don't know.

R: Well I guess we'll never know. Um did your administrators encourage effective teaching strategies at all?

P: Did he what?

R: Did they encourage effective teaching strategies?

P: Oh yeah I mean uh yeah he was familiar with the PACE program. And I tried to do some of the a lot of I mean the PACE gave a lot of ideas and they gave me a lot of things to do. In the beginning in the first half of the year yeah the administration was like all for it. Uh the hard part was I didn't have anybody kind of show me how to do it. Yeah we did a little bit and the PACE program and we got ideas. And we I knew kind of what to do but

I didn't know how to implement those things. And I didn't have anybody to show me. I couldn't get my teacher coach in there to show me first hand. And my first teacher coach from the county I only saw her once. And my mentor was so busy she had hardly any time to come in there. When she did she didn't stay long. It was like I see what PACE is talking about. I see where they want me to go. And how they want me to engage the kids. But it was just tough because my other three other three science teachers were not doing that at all. They weren't doing much of that at all.

R: They weren't doing any diversified instructional strategies is this what you are referring to?

P: Well they weren't doing it. They were doing it some. But it was much it was pretty traditional.

Stuff that I was used to back in the 70s. So for me to step out of the box and implement this stuff. I had to kind of do my own my own thing and I was so overwhelmed. I didn't and I tried a few times and it failed miserably and it just and it just so I just went with the flow because that's what the other teachers were doing. And the administration was fine with that. And for me to step out of the box and do these strategies. I mean I did some but doing it on my own and kind of break out of that was near impossible.

R: Right

P: Just so overwhelmed.

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R: Right

P: Just so overwhelmed.

R: Right, right you had the practical experience that you could bring real life to the students which is so valuable.

P: Right and I didn't have to and I mean like the principal tells me. If you want to see the, the uh you are welcome to see my uh referrals from the principal, assistant principals, the mentor. I will be glad to share those with you because it kind of gives you an idea they all said you know your subject matter so well. I'm sure you don't even have to read the book before you teach. But it was the class management. It was the problems with the problem kids. I mean I had one kid that the year before he had poisoned a teacher. I had one kid that slashed the teacher's tires. You know I had another kid that was sixteen turning seventeen. And I had that kid that was so bad that his mother came in every, you saw that, every week.

R: Right

P: And uh the other teachers had experienced that too. That was a that was the hard the hard part cause you couldn't do anything with them. And the other thing, did you read, did I put in there about the A+?

R: Yeah and I didn't know what that was.

P: Well that was another shock. They could go in. This was countywide. Well they were implementing it. They said it worked it worked in a couple of high schools and they were implementing it in some of the other schools. But okay for instance I had this one kid who came in. He did absolutely nothing. Nothing. I couldn't you know I talked to everybody well there's nothing you can do about it. He's a big guy. You can't he kinda sits there and interrupts other people because he doesn't do anything. Well he had he had a 34 average the first semester, the first nine weeks. And I was being generous. Well all he had to do was go to the lab for a couple of hours and take this program that had the material. And at the end he's out of there and that 34 gets turned to a 70. And once the kids figured out they could do that a lot of them said "what's the point?" (Inaudible) 70 and even if they failed they would go to the A+ lab come out and they would have a 70 and they would pass. And my administrator, principal, he met with us toward the end of the year. Well I guess it was spring maybe actually spring break. And he said he said with my block in the eighth grade well it was the whole eighth grade teachers. In the eighth grade there is 25 kids uh that are going to fail. That are on track to fail. And he said that's not going to happen in my school. You will not fail them. You will find a way to pass them. And I was just like, my mouth dropped you know. And I was talking to the teachers and they looked at me and they said do whatever it takes. Don't fail them. And that's how they keep passing them on. Guess how many kids failed in the eighth grade?

R: Probably zero.

P: Yeah a big goose egg.

R: Oh goodness.

P: Can you imagine we had we had uh 400 I think 350 or 400 eighth graders and not one of them failed? Not one of them was retained.

R: That was many of them deserved to be.

P: Oh yeah, and that was the whole point. That was the message the kids were getting. That, What's the point?

R: Right

P: This is just you know this is uh an exercise. You know we're just to going to go through this and show up.

R: And will pass anyways.

P: I had kids good kids that were more in danger of failing because, because they didn't show up. They were out too many days. Uh than the ones who didn't do anything. Never turned in their paper. Never did anything. Never did any homework. Some of them wouldn't even take a test. Some of them would hand me the you know the test back with their name on it. And I'd go to the counselor and say what do we do? Well he's you know he's this, he's that, he's that. They get a chance to do it over again at their leisure. But so I was in culture shock about the whole time.

R: I can imagine you were. How would you describe your support from your co-workers?

P: Uh they helped me a lot. My co-workers and the other three teachers in my block were awesome. There was actually one that was a PACE teacher. And uh the other two the

English teacher was PACE. And that was her third year. She was just finishing up. She had the same problems that I had her first year in PACE. And she barely made it and she cried at night and almost went home and almost quit. But she ended up sticking it out. It wasn't there, oh yeah it was there. It was with another principal. And uh so they were very supportive. They helped me any way they could because they knew what I was going through.

R: How would you describe your professional development experiences?

P: You mean with the school or with PACE?

R: With school.

P: Um I mean there wasn't much. I mean there was but I don't know. That's a tough one.

R: Okay, How would you describe your induction program? Was it versatile and meet your needs?

P: Um it was okay. I mean you went once a month. You sat in a class and they covered different things. Uh how to do that report that was due to XXX county had this. I drew a blank on it, on the reports you have to do. And uh every month was a class that was helpful. There was at one point that I stayed after class to ask the instructors, there was two of them. And I asked them "What the heck do I do I am having so much trouble with this class management?" And I got the same answer it was basically you just got to figure it out for yourself because every class, every person is different. And so I mean you know it was fine.

R: They didn't give you any strategies to work with or anything?

P: We had yeah there were some things sometimes we had strategies that were reinforced that we learned at PACE. That I recognized from PACE. But I would always try them. And some of them were I mean some of them were really good. And I could see PACE, PACE just seems like PACE is ahead of the just so far ahead of the is so far ahead of the strategies than the main stream education. Um that's what I saw. I didn't see. I saw in my block my science block I didn't see any of those strategies being implemented. But I did see it in other places. Like my mentor and her colleagues in the seventh grade science were implementing a lot of those. So I could see it in hers, but mine were just kind of set in their ways. It was just it was just easier just to go along with it and not I was just having so much trouble with the class management mostly one block. That I was just happy to get home by six o'clock.

R: Alright now your instructional coach, you hired one and you had one from the district. Did either of them help you assess your strengths and weaknesses?

P: Yes both of them did.

R: Well that's good.

P: And the teacher coach from the county. She was awesome. But I only saw her once. She gave me a lot of tips. And uh you know she was going to come back the next week and see how I implemented. But I just never saw her again.

R: Okay and you described your work environment for me. Would you tell me how would you describe an effective teacher.

P: Oh lord um

R: Because see I'm trying to get a baseline of your perception of what an effective teacher is first.

P: An effective teacher is no different I don't think than an effective manager or effective worker. They're prepared, they know what they're doing, they're organized and they know their customer they know their clientele. Uh and uh they developed their own technique along with some that they've learned. But they know how to handle different situations. And when the kids see that, they see you're prepared, you know your stuff, you were organized, and you kept them moving and engaged. Uh then the rest of it just flows. And I don't pretend to even, even uh I was so far away from that you know I wasn't even in the ballpark you know. But I wasn't I did that I was I didn't think that I was so below average as a first year teacher. Especially from the PACE people I talked to they were having the same problems I was having. And it seemed like the difference was the administration. Now the time is bad too. You got all these you got all these budget cuts and everything. Everybody is stressed out.

R: Right

P: Everybody's doing more with less. And uh so that was part of it too I think. But I saw some really good teachers. My mentor she was a good teacher and that one lady I saw at that other school. Uh there's an art to it. And I would be selling the profession short if I said I could learn it in a year or two or five years. I mean uh it's a lot harder than I ever thought it would be. But I also saw how rewarding it was when you got it right.

R: I agree with you. Can you tell me a time when you felt you were effective in your first year?

P: Um Well it depends on the class. I thought I was very effective in the first two classes. With the small class, with the bright kids, I should say motivated kids. And the fourth block after lunch and the third block after lunch uh the kids were great. There was just so many of them. And I was effective more, I was effective but less effective I think. But that fourth block I had all the troubled kids. I had all the troubled kids in the fourth block. The other teachers seemed to have them spread around. And I had them all in the same block. And they just fed off each other. Yeah I had lynching, I had fights in my rooms, uh and a lot of that was I mean the principal said it was you because you were taking your eye off the ball. And you weren't and that's true I am sure in a lot of cases but, but uh. Uh I was effective I think I was very effective for those first two classes because uh I had the environment. I had the easy environment. But I but I was, they were so engaged that it was just fun. You know that hour and a half went so fast. So I think I was effective for the first you know the first half of the day. And that got less and less effective because it was more challenging.

R: But then I was going to say also on the flip side ineffective. But I think you have kind of answered that anyways. How have your experiences with the induction/mentoring program affected your effectiveness in the classroom in terms of your content standards implementation and with your classroom management?

P: Wait, what number are you on?

R: I am on number four. How have your experiences the first um the first set of questions I sent you.

P: Um I don't have that. I printed the second set.

R: I'm sorry.

P: Can you read that question.

R: I will. How have your experiences with the induction/mentoring program affected your effectiveness in the classroom in terms of content standards implementation and classroom management? So your induction/mentoring experiences as a whole, how did that help you become effective or ineffective with your content standards and your classroom management?

P: You mean the mentoring, my mentor?

R: Yes, your mentoring and your induction program.

P: Oh the induction the county induction.

R: Right both well those are. Induction is mentoring and the county program. So if you want to break them apart that's fine.

P: See I didn't I think I knew that. But I never saw those two as connected. Because, much connected because, my mentor she was trying to help me with things then I had XXX (name of induction program omitted to protect county) and I guess there was a few times that we did reflections and then we did stuff like that. But.

R: You saw them as two separate entities?

P: I saw them as two separate entities yeah. Just because she was trying to help with the school's point and the XXX was going to that seminar and then I had that mentor for one day. Uh

that teacher coach for one day. But if you put them together you know I would say on a scale of one to ten maybe a six.

R: So you feel like they helped you with your effectiveness in your standards implementation?

Why don't you speak about that individually.

P: Now on the standards yes because I had no idea. Because I knew what the standards were but I didn't need a lot of help from that for the mentor because the science team was helping with all that.

R: Okay

P: With the classroom management, there was my mentor at the school. Uh she was helping me with that and the science teachers they had no idea uh how to help me.

R: Okay

P: They didn't have the problem and it was because they knew what they were doing. I was fresh meat. You know was I felt like I just kind of fell to the dogs.

R: Oh, so your induction program really didn't help you with the classroom management become with your?

P: No it did it did help me but it wasn't enough. I didn't get anybody come into my class and show me how to do something. Uh I mean it was lacking but it. Everybody was doing the best they could I guess. Uh I mean my mentor was doing the best she could. The science teachers were doing the best they could to get their stuff done. Um

R: Alright, how would you define student achievement?

P: Uh I was very proud of my student achievement because on average, believe me I let my administrator know this later on, uh that uh that we all took the same tests. I did the lesson plans that they had already and they made copies and gave them the same tests. And my grades were my kids grades were uh half the time about half the time they were better and the other half they were right there and the same. Because we'd compare and I know I know several times where my grades were better than their's. So I kept I kept an unofficial tally of that and I let my administrator know and my assistant principal. Now my assistant principal was, was he was he was first year in middle school. And he was about as lost as I was. He was nice, he was trying to help but he was so overwhelmed. And I let them know that look you know whatever I'm doing and whatever you think I'm doing wrong or right the kids are actually testing just as well or better than these seasoned teachers. Which I was very proud of. But it didn't seem to matter much.

R: So your

P: Oh I know when the principal asked me to come in and he told me they weren't going to ask me back. This was uh March uh March, no yeah early February whatever it was. Anyway I said wait a minute I said have you looked at my grades because I know you can pull them all up? Have you looked at my grades? My kid's grades, they are testing just as well or better than the others. And he said, didn't look at those that doesn't matter. And that was another culture shock. (inaudible) I mean I don't know.

R: So can you tell me how you define student achievement though, you told me you were proud of your student achievement, but how do you define student achievement?

P: Well the management of them taking a test and scoring just as well or better than.

R: Is your definition?

P: Well that's not my definition but that's one way because that's why we test them to see how much they know. How much they retained. But uh no I think I think we should be teaching the kids how to learn. Not just take back what they just you know what they can read or do on a test. How to explore especially in science how to explore and how to do projects and how to formulate you know ideas and equations and those things. And I really hammered the uh the uh scientific method for everything we did cause I wanted them to go to high school being able to think. Uh I probably wasn't very effective in doing that, but that's what I want, that's what I want to do. I want a high school teacher to come back to me and say "Your kids really think. They kind of look at the whole thing and they try to figure something out rather than just reading something and regurgitating it back on a test."

R: Okay

P: So to me if they can think and think a problem through then I figure I figure I've done my job pretty much.

R: Okay, now how would you describe your experiences with your classroom management and the use of content standards in the classroom in terms of student achievement? You talked about how you had difficulty with the afternoon classes as far as classroom management and not so much in the morning but as far as student achievement goes did you see or did they correlate together or how did your experiences work with that?

P: You mean as far as the morning and the afternoon?

R: Well if classroom management was a problem did it relate in it's student achievement?

P: Oh yeah, oh yeah that fourth block was rough. I had half the kids in that fourth block should not have passed. Uh but I was under pressure to pass them. Uh, uh that fourth block was just a nightmare. And I don't know if they learned anything. I feel sorry for the kids that had to endure that. That were really trying. Because I got no support for the ones that were acting up. Um now the other three classes uh yeah I think they did I think their achievement was pretty good. I mean I'd say that third block probably only a couple of those kids maybe three or four out of 30, 33, 32 whatever it was, uh should have should have probably not gone on. But the rest of them should of and of course the first two blocks were, yeah they were, they were great.

R: Alright, how have your induction/mentoring experiences affected students' achievement in your classroom? Do you think induction affected that at all?

P: Um not much I mean not like I said my mentor helped me. Uh but it was minimal. It wasn't her fault. She was just so busy. Um she would write little notes on what to do. And then we had some formal things we had to turn in but I do them but I didn't really have enough no somebody showing me how to do it. Uh I mean I got things like keep them moving, don't let them sit too long, get them all involved. Then when I asked it was how do I do that? Like my principal would say you got to find a way. You got to find a way to reach that kid. You know and I am like how do I do that? You know I didn't get a lot of real help from that.

R: Okay, alright has your electronic journal and I mean electronic journal is the PACE journal because you sent that electronically at the end as an assignment um how did that affect your teaching practice? And how did it if it did?

P: Oh I think that journal was one of the best things I did all week. Cause it really gave me a chance to reflect and uh try to just figure out what happened that week you know. Had some really good weeks but I think that journal is very important. Uh you know I wrote it uh you know I didn't really think anybody was going to read it much. But uh but it was for me. And it helped and it helped me vent and it helped me kind of look forward to the next week. Now I just (inaudible) going to try this and I'm going to do a little more of that. And uh it was very helpful.

R: Okay what are your thoughts on how the induction/mentoring experience might be improved?

P: Um I think just a little more hands on. Now this might be another whole different story had I had access to that teacher coach. And she had time to help me develop. Uh

R: And you mean the teacher coach from the district?

P: Yeah

R: Or the one you hired?

P: Yeah from the district.

R: Okay

P: If I would have had access to her sooner. And if she could have followed through and been with me I think it would be a different story. Because she was sharp, she knew her stuff, and I just saw her once and it was frustrating. Um and uh but I don't think the system, I

don't know. Maybe the system failed but uh, uh. The way they did I don't really have anything to compare it with. I don't know how it could have been done differently. I mean they had their seminars. They had they were there when we needed help. But they said they were but I didn't use them that much. But then I asked for the teacher coach and that finally came you know.

R: How were you made aware about the teacher coach? Was that something that someone tipped you off to?

P: Um I think, no I think we were at one of the classes and somebody mentioned it and I asked someone about it. That I could really use one. And then they contacted my principal I think. And he said yeah. And I mean you're welcome to come in. And they were kind of working together.

R: Okay and now I'm going to that questionnaire that I sent you earlier today. Um question number 24, how would you describe your feelings about your first year in the classroom?

P: It was the best of times it was the worst of times.

R: It's so cute that you say that because the title of my dissertation is "The tale of two teachers".

P: Oh what a coincidence.

R: That is quite a coincidence.

R: Okay

P: So but you know that's it I mean I mean like I said those classes before lunch were a dream. And I'm like I can't believe they are paying me for this. Um but after that it kind of just went south. Uh slowly but my feelings were I really was surprised. I really would like to

keep teaching and I am going to. But uh I am really surprised that uh there was less discipline and less support from the administrator for a new teacher. It really was surprising.

R: Alright how would you evaluate your overall teacher training and support provided from induction/mentoring in terms of preparing you for the classroom?

P: Read that one more time.

R: How this is 26 how would you evaluate your overall teacher training and support provided from induction/mentoring in terms of preparation for the classroom?

P: Uh like I said on a scale of one to ten, I would give it a six. It was the setup I think the structure was fine. It was the um implementation of it I think that failed. Uh and like I said it may be it may be a whole different story if, if uh they were looking uh they needed new teachers and they weren't budget cuts and everybody wasn't so stressed out. Uh my mentor her husband had just lost his job. And she was mentoring me and two other people and she was teacher of the year. She had all that stuff. You know it was like it was too much for her. And she had just come off of being board certified and she was burnt out. And I kind of felt bad when I was asking her a lot of you know a lot of help. But the way it was set up you know it was set up with XXX and you have (inaudible) and you have your mentor helping you. The structure was fine it just wasn't executed very well.

R: Okay

P: For a lot of reasons.

R: Alright how would you describe your ability to make connections with your students?

P: Oh it depends on which students. Most of them I thought loved me. I thought really responded. I'm sitting here in my office and I've got all these on my wall. I've got these notes and posters and stuff from the kids written me and these little you know. "You're the best teacher ever. We're so lucky to have you Mr. XXX". You know and all these around here and so I connected with a lot of them. Uh now some of them I hadn't I didn't even phase I know. But I don't think I connected with them any less than the other teachers I was around.

R: Okay

P: Any more or less. I didn't see any big difference. You know they had their kids they connected with and I had mine. So yeah I don't have problems with connecting with people usually. They kind of they meet me half way.

R: How would you describe your perceptions of your teacher effectiveness?

P: Oh I would say and I keep in the morning I think I was pretty effective, in the afternoon I was not so effective. Just because I didn't know how to handle these kids. I mean I wasn't taught how to do and I really wasn't shown. They said basically just figure it out. Here's some pointers. You've got to figure it out. And I just didn't, I tried to figure out how to get support. You know I spent, I bet you I spent most of my time after class calling parents. And I did that a lot. And I've got the logs to prove it. You know its like but that was effective but was I an effective teacher? Did they learn anything? That fourth block, I don't know if they learned anything in that fourth block because they had six or eight kids that were just hard to handle and the other kids just kind of lost and uh. I was

frustrated. I don't know but the first the first two blocks of classes were wonderful. And the kids really, really responded. I really connected with them because they were trying.

R: Okay, how would you describe your perceptions of your students' achievement?

P: Um well like I said the same thing. The first two blocks they achieved. And they were probably going to achieve without me. But we did get far we did get it was kind of hard because we could have gone so far ahead of the other two classes but I didn't have the experience or I didn't have the structure to go farther with them. I was just trying to figure out how to implement that for the day. The lesson plan for the day. And I know an experienced teacher would have would have had them doing different projects and going the extra mile. I just didn't know how to do it. I was just so worn out from the last two blocks, the fourth block. I was just trying to keep them all kind of you know not one class from going so far ahead of the other. That I didn't, I was over my head.

R: How would you rate yourself as far as your prior academic performance? You as a student.

P: How was I as a student?

R: Right

P: Uh I'm a student that tries to get an A in everything. I've never missed a day. I never missed a class, never missed a report, never missed homework. I'm kind of anal about that.

R: Okay

P: Um I'm probably I'm what they call a teacher pleaser I guess. I'm a perfect student. I've always have been. So.

R: Okay so how would you rate yourself with your communication skills?

P: With whom, with the students or just in general?

R: Well in general would be good.

P: I think pretty good. I think I can communicate pretty well.

R: How about your professionalism?

P: Um I think excellent. I think if you look at my uh my referrals they said very professional, very this very that. It is just you had trouble with classroom management. I had perfect attendance. I didn't miss a day that whole year. And here I was going through all that and I didn't miss one day. Uh that's just who I am. I'm just uh so being professional everybody on my referrals said you are very professional, very mature, very this, very that. But it was just the classroom management that gave me a headache.

R: Alright, how about creativity?

P: Um I'd say above average because I try to be creative you know because I was so naïve and uh I was I trying to tell the kids they weren't studying. And I'd been told that kids in the eighth grade don't do their homework. Well I told them if you would study 15 minutes a day you could get an A. Well one of my kids came in like two days later she had a video. She made a video an animated video of 15 minutes a day you can get an A. And they had a rap song. She had this plan. And so what I did was try to figure out how a way to do it and I had this jar for each class. And I told them if they would study 15 minutes a day they could come in and drop a penny in the jar. And the one that won at the end of the nine weeks got a party. And they came in with pennies man and they were dropping those pennies. And they were still on the honor system. But it worked and it kind of got them

excited about doing a little bit every night. And not just waiting til before the test and cram.

R: Right

P: Well it worked. But it was a little disruptive and I didn't have the classroom management enough to where I didn't in the big classes to where it wasn't disruptive. And the principal didn't like it because it was a little disruptive cause they didn't come straight into the room and they didn't sit down and they didn't start their warm up. They kind of you know talked about it and dropped the pennies in. Hey can I borrow a penny? You know stuff like that.

R: Right

P: So I didn't have all the bugs worked out you know I mean it's all about keeping a flow.

R: Right what about your pedagogical knowledge?

P: I didn't have a lot of, I didn't have a lot of knowledge about teachers until I did the I did the long term sub. Before that and teachers I didn't have a lot of knowledge about what was going on until then. And then I was kind of surprised. Well actually the sub, the sub I did was at the I don't know if you heard of it XXX?

R: No I haven't.

P: Well the kids that are the advanced kids so I had a lot less trouble. That was kind of that was like whoa these kids are bright, they are engaged, you know they are responding. Um I even had a principal come in and said Man you did a great job. What I did was math, it was sixth grade math. And I had them come in to do math puzzles, bring in a math

puzzle. I'd go online and get uh what do you call it. You probably know since you are a math teacher it was uh you know if you add these numbers together you know or whatever or something that's kind of math magic.

R: Right, right.

P: And I went online and every week, Friday they would come in and bring stuff in and I would let them present in class. Well they just loved that. I got teachers coming in saying that's pretty cool. But they were the smart kids and they were motivated.

R: Right

P: So once I went to this other school it was like holy cow.

R: How would you um rate your knowledge of your student evaluation assessment before you started your teaching?

P: My evaluation.

R: Student evaluation and assessment. How would you rate that?

P: You mean assessing the kids?

R: Right

P: Oh I had no idea what I was doing. Um I had no idea how to assess. I had no idea that there was so many different kinds of learners. I mean you sort of know they learn different ways. But I didn't know it was down to such a science. And it was so advanced. Because none of this was when I was back in the 70s.

R: Right

P: Uh and uh so I you know it was all very new to me.

R: Right, how would you rate your self development?

P: Uh I'm a sponge. I mean I learn everything I can learn. I don't like taking chances but I like learning. I like learning techniques that work. And I learned a lot from the PACE and a lot of that I just didn't know how to implement. And I didn't really have time or the help to kind of figure out how to implement them. I mean in the PACE we would do it. We would do the exercise and they would give us the handouts whatever and it worked. But no we didn't really we weren't trained much on okay what if some kid starts talking trash to another kid you know. So I don't know. Some of these kids moving around is like mixing up the pot you know. So I didn't know how to handle it. Other teachers knew how to do it. And I didn't know how.

R: How would you rate yourself with your personality?

P: Um I'm a great guy.

R: How about your talent and content area knowledge?

P: Well my content area is I know as much as any eighth grade teacher out there in science. Uh I don't know my personality is kind of a personality to teach and help other people. Um like I said I mean I had I was the only teacher on my block that had, I had um two days I stayed from um we were out about 3:30 and I stayed from 4:00 til 5:00 every single, well I take it back, two days a week where kids could come in and I would do a tutoring. And I tutored classes. And none of the other teachers did that. The ones that were getting behind and I was feeling bad about some of those in that third and fourth block because they were trying but they were being interrupted so much. I couldn't get these kids out of

the classroom. I mean one kid somehow gets the principal's uh passwords, goes into this A+ lab, logs in as a principal and changes a lot of kid's grades in several classes. He got he got three days detention. I mean and he was still there. I am like how can this kid, and this is the kid that um slashed the teacher's tires last year. And I'm like how does this kid stay in school? And what about the other kids? I mean, well he's got every right to be here and it's no child left behind. And I'm like what about the other kids? Why do we slow the bus down so much that you don't leave anybody behind but the other kids aren't going anywhere. You know what I am talking about.

R: Oh I understand your point of view. Alright how would you rate yourself in your ability to model concepts in your content area?

P: I'd say excellent. I had them doing stuff the other teachers were, were uh. You mean how do I model?

R: No how would you rate yourself with your ability to model you know concepts in your content area? So you said you feel like you are very comfortable with that.

P: Yeah oh yeah I have no problem with I had no problem with anything related to the content.

R: Okay

P: And getting the content relayed to them. It was the strategies and how to get them to participate was the tough part.

R: Okay I would like to know how you rate your skills and competencies before you entered the classroom on your ability to adjust your lessons to accommodate the students.

P: Before I went into the PACE program?

R: Well, well yeah actually into any classroom.

P: I didn't know. I didn't have a clue to what I was doing.

R: Okay

P: I don't know how old you are but in the 70s they had a blackboard, a textbook, and a desk.

You know and that's what teachers taught with. That sort of how naïve I was about going in. Well at least when I went to school whether they like it or they were half asleep or whatever at least they sat there and listened quietly. And they were at least they didn't cause trouble.

R: Right were you familiar with how to obtain resources or were you familiar with integrating the technology into the curriculum?

P: Oh yeah, yeah I mean I was a computer consultant for a while. I was helping other teachers with the computers and uh the black and the uh, uh.

R: The smart board?

P: Yeah the smart board. And uh I was helping them with that stuff.

R: Well that's good. Can you give some examples of how you delivered lessons that enhanced student understanding, and assessed prior knowledge, and motivated students, and allowed them and allowed for cultural differences?

P: Hmm I mean I don't I did this rocket project that uh we built we built a rocket and uh launcher. Where we did that. That was probably something I was really proud of. But I can't think of how I implemented the cultural. Um I can't think of anything I did that

really I tried to treat everybody the same. So I didn't think that much about cultural differences. I don't know how to answer that one.

R: Well don't worry about it. Alright do you have anything you would like to add that I may not have added asked you at all?

P: The one thing I want to add is what you brought up in the beginning was uh I think as far as I know with my limited experience there are probably a lot of people like me that are in these programs that that have the knowledge, and the will, they have personality to be a good teacher but they're not really they don't really see what they're supposed to be doing. And they don't really have for whatever reason might not have the training or the exposure. Um I would have been in PACE we were, we were I remember asking early on I said my biggest fear and it seemed like everybody's biggest fear was classroom management. Nobody was really worried about the content. How do we get this to and we hear all these stories about kids not behaving in class, and, uh. I don't think PACE didn't even cover that until second the pre, the in-service. Uh, we didn't really get anything. And basically the answer we got was well I'm going to cover that in here. But you have just got to do the best that you can. And then we got some instruction in the in-service. But it was too late. After that you had already been in. Now I heard some awful horror stories. People had it a lot worse than me. But if they had gone in a TA or a teacher or roam around or just kind of take notes. And, hey, this works for this teacher and this works for that teacher. Cause I tried a whole lot of things that didn't work for me. And somebody said well it doesn't work for everybody. Or you know and somebody

tells me something and it works. But it works for a while but then what do you do. And I really think you really lost a lot, PACE has lost a lot of teachers, I think from not letting them actually, um because we are just throwing them in there without any kind of training or without being able to observe for x amount of time.

R: That's very interesting. I'm going to stop the recording now.

Curriculum Vitae

Charyl L. Pace

 PROFILE

Experienced school teacher with doctorate in Teacher Leadership. Strong background in mathematics and teacher training. Experienced in leadership activities including providing professional development, coaching, and mentoring for new teachers.

 EDUCATION

Doctor of Education	2010
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Walden University

Dissertation topic: Alternately Certified Teachers: Their Experiences With Teacher Mentoring, Teacher Effectiveness, and Student Achievement

Master of Science	1988
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Central Connecticut State University
Degree in Administration and Supervision

Bachelor of Science	1985
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Central Connecticut State University

 DISTINGUISHED RECOGNITIONS

Star Teacher Palmetto State Teachers Association 2007

Published author April 2005 Focus Issue of Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School. (NCTM)

National Board Certified Teacher, Early Adolescence Mathematics 2003

 EXPERIENCE

Mathematics Teacher	2005-Present
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Chapin Middle School, Chapin, South Carolina

Responsible for planning and implementing differentiated curriculum based on data-driven decision-making. Served on the district mathematics leadership team.

Instructor

2005-Present

South Carolina Program of Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE)
 Implemented PACE curricula and evaluated the participants' readiness for the classroom.

Teacher Specialist on Site

2001-2005

South Carolina Department of Education
 Demonstrated standards based lessons using best practices for teachers in schools rated unsatisfactory on the SC school report card. Served as an instructional leader by providing information and assistance relevant to improving teacher quality and curriculum, and provided support and training to promote changes in the classroom. Assisted the administrative team with the development and implementation of school related policies and procedures, in the design and implementation of a homework center, breakfast program, and summer school program. Provided assistance in writing grants.

Mathematics Teacher

1993-2001

Chapin Middle School, Chapin, South Carolina
 Crossroads Middle School, Irmo, South Carolina
 Irmo Middle School, Irmo, South Carolina
 Hopkins Middle School, Hopkins, South Carolina
 Responsible for planning and implementing differentiated curriculum based on data-driven decision-making. Member of the strategic planning committee. Served as Technology Teacher Leader training and assisting teachers in the use of technology in the classroom. Coached the Academic team and the Odyssey of the Mind team. Served on the district Goals Based Evaluation committee. Director of the "Jump Start" program designed to provide instruction for Carnegie Units to "at risk" high school students.