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Teacher Perceptions about Retention and Classroom Climate in Remote Schools in Western Canada

Chris de Feijter
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College of Education

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Chris de Feijter

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Walden University
2015

Abstract

Teacher Perceptions about Retention and Classroom Climate in Remote Schools in

Western Canada

by

Chris de Feijter

MSc, Walden University, 2012

BEd, Educatieve Faculteit Amsterdam, 2003

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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August 2015

Abstract

In rural and remote schools in Western Canada, researchers have discovered that high teacher turnover affects school climate as well as student achievement. The purpose of this project study was to explore novice teachers' and administrators' perceptions about the influence of school-related and classroom activities on decisions to stay or leave permanent teaching positions at a large remote school in Precambrian Shield School Division. Boylan's theory of teacher retention was the conceptual framework for the study. The guiding research questions were focused on teachers' and administrators' perceptions of various aspects of school and classroom activities in remote schools that might influence decisions to stay or leave. A bounded case study design using purposeful sampling was adopted and 11 novice teachers in their first 2 years of teaching experience in a remote school and 1 administrator agreed to participate in the study. The sample included 4 elementary and 4 middle/high school teachers along with 3 teachers with diverse teaching assignments and 1 experienced administrator. Data collection included qualitative questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document reviews that were coded and analyzed for common themes. Key findings suggested that classroom climate, professional support structures, and student achievement were perceived to be of negative influence on retention decisions, especially inconsistent professional support structures. These findings were used to create a professional development plan to support and provide mentoring for novice teachers in remote schools. This support plan, particularly the mentoring framework, will likely reduce turnover at this school and will provide a model for helping other districts with similar high turnover in remote schools.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my son Benjamin as an example of determination, passion, and embracing the philosophy of being a lifelong learner. Many times Benjamin asked me why I was still in university at my age, as his own teachers were already finished with their schooling. Benjamin, the time has come to answer your question, following the example of your Dad and your Grandpa (Opa): Never stop learning or to take knowledge for granted. Develop a deep understanding of the things you truly love doing to turn your job, hobby, or life into a passionate drive to do good and to make change happen.

Acknowledgments

I have been blessed with the opportunity to begin and finish this doctoral program; an adventure many of the students I started with did not accomplish for diverse reasons. I believe that the secret to successfully completing this degree program partly lies with effort and dedication, and much more with the sacrifices my family made during these 40 months to ensure enough time was always available for me to go work downstairs on my assignments, writings, mind puzzles, data collections, and the final write-up.

On this journey, I came across many outstanding mentors and instructors. Most of my enormous thanks goes out to Dr. Falvo, who not only accepted me as a demanding Fast Track student, but who was also very patient and committed to making this journey come to a good end. Thank you for being a critical co-thinker, academic challenger, and peer reviewer of every letter I put on paper.

I owe another great thank you to Dr. Robertson, my second committee member for most of the journey. Your "notes to self" gave me insight into the thought patterns of an experienced researcher and scholar. Close towards the end of my journey your professional life guided you into a different direction, and Dr. Montgomery rescued your empty seat. Thank you Dr. Montgomery for your willingness to pick up the last few weeks of my journey, especially for your comprehensive edits of my manuscript.

I would also like to thank the participants in this project study at Precambrian School Division (PSD). Your honest replies and answers to my questions during the

interviews truly opened my eyes to further embark on the journey of making the

professional lives of novice teachers in remote schools become more enjoyable.

To my family members, my wife and son, I would like to say thank you for

allowing the past 40 months to be dedicated to my doctoral journey. It must have been

difficult sometimes to allow so much family time to be dedicated to course work, writing,

revising, and thinking.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Schools in North America, as well as in other parts of the world, are struggling with finding and retaining highly qualified teachers. Many educators leave the profession prematurely, often within the first 5 years of their career (Ingersoll, 2012; Karsenti & Collins, 2013; Maciejewski, 2007). Leaving a teaching position affects student achievement (Chell, Steeves, & Sackney, 2009; Marzano, 2007; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013), increases governmental and institutional costs for recruitment and training of new teachers (Fall, 2010; Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008), and impacts the overall climate in the school (McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009).

Rural schools and remote schools have even larger challenges when it comes to finding and retaining highly qualified teachers. Moreover, geographical challenges, other factors affect teacher turnover in rural and remote locations. Job satisfaction (Carlson, 2012; Grissom, 2012), workloads, beliefs and attitudes of teaching in a rural or remote location (Huysman, 2008), as well as school and classroom experiences (Boylan, 1993), have been shown to influence teacher's decisions to remain or leave a teaching position. Researchers at national and international level have thoroughly researched teacher retention and attrition in urban, suburban, and rural schools, yet rural and remote schools in Western Canada have been exposed to much less research. The turnover rate of novice teachers in rural and remote schools in Western Canada is high (Mueller, 2013), especially in isolated schools. Through this project study, I explored the perceptions of novice teachers on classroom and school-related activities and how these perceptions

influence their decisions to remain in or leave their current school. I conducted this study at a remote school, Precambrian Shield School Division (PSD; a pseudonym).

In section 1 of this project study, I focus on attrition and retention in rural and remote schools in one school division in Western Canada. The purpose of this study was to determine which perceptions of teachers on classroom and school-related activities influence their decisions to remain or leave a permanent teaching position in their current school. Boylan developed a conceptual framework (1993) on which the study was based, focusing on within classroom activities, whole school activities, and touching on community-related activities and family factors. Recent research that fits with the conceptual framework, the problem statement and purpose of this study was introduced. Research questions derived from recent research focuses on job satisfaction, working conditions, instruction and school climate, as well as perceptions on supports and professional development. Implications may include recommendations for policy changes on retention practices to decrease novice teacher attrition. Attached to these recommendations is a tentative project that may focus on creating a support system for novice teachers to decrease attrition rates.

In regard to research methodology and design, I chose a qualitative holistic single-case study design for this project study on the *how* and *why* of teacher retention decisions in PSD (Yin, 2013). Yin suggested that such a design is appropriate when the behavior of participants towards a critical or unique case cannot be influenced. In addition, Yin mentioned that one of the problems with a holistic design was "that the entire nature of the case may shift" (2013, p. 55). Preventing such a shift in this project

study was accommodated by providing a list of predetermined factors for the selection of participants. Participants consisted of novice teachers in rural and remote schools in Western Canada. Further details about the research method analysis, findings, and recommendations can be found in Section 2 of this Project Study.

Definition of the Problem

Teacher attrition in rural and remote schools in Western Canada continues to be a problem. For years, many recently graduated teachers start permanent teaching positions in communities far away from their hometowns. These educators are often from urban or metropolitan areas, turning to school divisions in rural and remote locations for finding employment. Many novice teachers discontinue their permanent teaching contract within the first few years of their contract, often within or after 1 year of teaching (Ingersoll, 2012; Karsenti & Collins, 2013; Maciejewski, 2007). In my role as an educational consultant, indirectly working with PSD, I have seen many novice teachers start and abandon their position, often before the school year ends. Such turnover was also reported by PSD, which had stable attrition rates over the last twelve years, with percentages as high as 100% in small, remote schools, and an average attrition rate between 6 and 20%.

The personal story of an experience I had illustrates the emotional impact teacher attrition has on students. One late afternoon I arrived in an isolated community somewhere in the North of Western Canada. It had been a six-hour drive mostly on unpaved, narrow, curvy roads, rocks flying everywhere. People had warned me to watch out for the other drivers. After arriving at my teacherage, I started to unpack my

belongings out of my pickup truck. A young boy, probably around eight years old, suddenly appeared out of nowhere. Carefully, he watched every move, and each transition of my personal belongings. He did not know me, although it was obvious that I was a teacher, because who else would arrive brand new to town just before the start of the school year? Within minutes of turning the engine of my truck off, the young boy slowly started to walk towards me. With his eyes fully focused, he seemed to be on a mission. As he became very close to me, he asked: "Teacher, are you going to stay here for a long time?" (J. Fisher, personal communication, August 30, 2007). I had to think this one over for about 20 seconds, and then replied I was not sure since my job had not started yet. He looked away for a few seconds, seemingly disappointed with my answer. Then he suddenly asked: "Do you like Kentucky Fried Chicken…?" I replied positively. That answer made him smile, and he took off as suddenly as he had appeared. Although I left that school around seven years ago to accept a different job in the same school division, this young man still attracts my attention whenever I visit the school for professional reasons.

Attrition of teachers is a problem in schools in North America as well as in many countries around the world (McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008). Billingsley (2004) defined several forms of teacher attrition, including leaving the teaching profession or transferring to other teaching and educational positions. Novice teachers are leaving the profession at a faster rate than any other category of teachers (Ingersoll & Perda, 2011). Specialized positions such as science and mathematics are reaching critical levels of unavailability of qualified educators endangering the delivery of instruction to thousands

of students in rural schools in Australia (Handel, Watson, Petocz, & Maher, 2013). For specialized positions in special education, McLeskey and Billingsley (as cited by Lemons, 2013) reported that some of the highest attrition rates exist in mostly urban and rural schools.

Teacher attrition often negatively affects the physical and emotional atmosphere or feeling in the classroom and school (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral. 2009) and can result in students achieving below expectations (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Brackett, Reyes, Rivers, Elbertson, & Salovey, 2011; Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). When an experienced teacher leaves a teaching position, school divisions are left to hire inexperienced or provisionally certified educators to fill the position. These new teachers need to establish relationships with school staff (Fall & Billingsley, 2011), with students and parents, as well as with other stakeholders such as community members (Epstein, 2011). Attrition is also costly for schools and school divisions, who need to spend time and funds on advertising, hiring procedures, as well as providing professional development for new teachers (McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008). Public and private institutions sometimes provide capital such as grants and bursaries, as well as time and personnel costs for new teacher skill enhancement.

The purpose of this research was to explore perceptions of novice teachers on classroom and school-related activities that might influence their decisions to remain in or leave a permanent teaching position in their current rural or remote school in PSD. Researching these perceptions assisted in determining what type of supports PSD provide

to these teachers to retain them in their current teaching position. Such supports are outlined in Section 3 as a professional development plan for teacher retention.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

PSD consisted of 22 K-12 schools that were located in rural communities, as well as in remote communities. According to a human resources clerk at PSD, in schools within 100 kilometers one-way from a large community (rural schools), from 2002 to 2012 the average teacher turnover rate was 5.96%. According to this same clerk, in schools beyond 100 kilometers one-way from a large community (remote schools), teacher turnover rate in remote schools in Northern regions in Western Canada in those same years was on average 20.23%, with a range from 0% to 45.45%. The clerk also indicated that, for 2012, rural schools in this school division experienced turnover rates of on average 6.26% and remote schools experienced turnover rates of on average 21% (range 0% to 100%).

The turnover rate remained stable over the last 10 years, even though PSD leadership launched many initiatives to provide support to prevent teachers from leaving. A generous local teaching agreement, on top of the provincial agreement, includes incentives such as subsidized housing, northern living allowance, bursary programs, various forms of leaves, as well as paid flights for teachers living in remote locations. A 3-day new teacher orientation training has been implemented to prepare educators for working in schools in PSD. In addition, specialist consultants continue to provide support to novice teachers in the area of curriculum and instruction, special education, and First

Nations and Metis education. Although many novice teachers have indicated an appreciation for these initiatives when they start their career in PSD, they often cannot compete with the reality of teaching in northern communities.

Since 2010, PSD and other school divisions in Western Canada have been attracting novice educators from other provinces such as Ontario, where teacher unemployment numbers are higher (Ontario College of Teachers, 2013). Many of these educators are not considered highly qualified teachers as their current teaching certification from another jurisdiction often has practice restrictions or limitations. Western Canadian provinces issue a provisional license to these candidates with requirements to complete further university coursework, or the successful completion of one teaching year as determined by the School Division's Director of Education.

Additional coursework adds on to the workload of these educators who are pressured to complete the courses as soon as possible (T. Smith, Personal Communication, September 3, 2014). Hiring educators from elsewhere is only a temporary solution for managing the continuously high teacher turnover in PSD, as many new hires originating from other provinces keep applying for jobs back home. They often do not experience the community they work and live in as their new home, contributing to being distant from local community members.

When Plunkett and Dyson (2011) surveyed 102 novice teachers in rural schools, they discovered that many teachers accept positions in rural schools without the commitment to remain employed there, let alone invest time to establish meaningful relationships. Other educators teach in a rural school as a career choice or as a lifestyle

choice (Jenkins, Reitano, & Taylor, 2011). Such meaningful relationships have been found to be foundational for academic success (Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, & Ponitz, 2009; Kearney, McIntosh, Perry, Dockett, & Clayton, 2014).

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Teacher attrition in general education in North America is high, especially among teachers with less than 5 years of experience (Ingersoll, 2012; Karsenti & Collins, 2013; Maciejewski, 2007), as well as in teachers who are getting closer to retirement age (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Borman & Dowling, 2008). Finding and retaining highly qualified, experienced teachers for teaching positions in remote and rural schools has been a challenge for many years (Ashiedu, 2012; Atwill. Blair, & Barley, 2010; Barley & Beesley, 2007). In one study, researchers found a large number of novice teachers (40%) were leaving teaching positions in schools in Alberta, Canada within their first five years, with the highest departure rates between years 4 and 5 (Clandinin et al., 2012).

Ingersoll (2012) also found attrition rates of first-year teachers to have increased by 33% in the past 20 years. Brownell, Bishop, and Sindelar (as cited by Berry & Craville, 2013) stated that special education teacher turnover in rural schools was as high as 35% annually. Added work responsibilities as well as opportunities for employment outside of education cause specialist teachers to exit education and find other professional careers. Teacher turnover is a serious problem and as an inherent and universal problem that affect all teachers (Swars, Meyers, Mays, & Lack, 2009).

Principals in rural and remote schools are at a disadvantage in retaining highly qualified educators. Differences in wages, isolation conditions, and difficult working conditions (Hughes, McClure Reeves, & Salgado, 2005; National Education Association, 1998) make working in rural or remote schools less attractive, resulting in hiring young, inexperienced and sometimes unqualified teachers. Solutions such as increasing wages have been suggested to increase teacher availability, although school districts remain to have the final say how those additional funds will be spent (Shields & Lewis, 2012). Additional extrinsic motivators such as housing and other benefits were appreciated by participants in one study, but not seen as a factor reducing teacher turnover (Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching, 2004).

Definitions

Community-related factors: Geographical location of the school, safety of school and classroom environment, community involvement, and parental support (Boylan, 1993).

Family factors: Quality of personal lifestyle, personal welfare and health, and contentment with rural living (Boylan, 1993).

Highly qualified teacher: Teacher with full State certification (Philips, 2010). In this study, State is substituted by Provincial.

Leavers: Educators who leave the education profession (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009).

Movers: Educators who transition between schools (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009).

Non-Aboriginal teachers: Educators who are not considered original inhabitants of North America: Indians, Métis and Inuit (Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development of Canada, 2012).

Remote schools: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is more than 10 miles from an urban cluster (Office of Management and Budget, 2000). Due to the sparse density in northern parts of Canadian provinces, this study extends the above definition to schools being beyond 100 kilometers from a larger rural community.

Rural school: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles, but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster (Office of Management and Budget, 2000). Due to the sparse density in northern parts of Canadian provinces, this study extends the above definition to schools being within 100 kilometers from a larger community.

Stayers: Educators who have remained teaching in their current school for at least five years (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009).

Whole school factors: Professional relationships, work-related duties, as well as professional supports. (Boylan, 1993).

Within classroom factors: Influences that relate to satisfaction with teaching, as well as the level of commitment to teaching (Boylan, 1993).

Significance

This study was unique because it focused on a gap in practice of teacher attrition as it related to classroom climates and the school environment in rural and remote communities in PSD. Difficult working conditions in rural schools included discipline issues and ineffective leadership responses to support requests that caused stress for new teachers (Hughes, McClure Reeves, & Salgado, 2005), and influenced classroom climates (Kukla-Acevado, 2009). Kukla-Acevedo (2009) suggested that a qualitative study focusing on understanding causes inside the school and classroom on turnover among novice teachers would be a valuable addition to research on attrition. The results of this study provided needed insight into the process of how perceptions of novice teachers in PSD influence high turnover rates and classroom climates. Findings from this study should assist PSD with providing support to novice teachers to improve classroom climate and working conditions in remote areas, and thus decrease a high teacher turnover and improve the classroom climate. Such support may be provided in a tentative mentorship model that addresses researched needs of participants in this study.

Creating school and classroom environments in which educators want to stay for a longer period will assist in helping them become part of the community instead of long-term visitors. Social change will be influenced positively when support systems help teachers stay longer in remote communities, when lost expenses on teacher turnover are reduced, and most importantly, when the education of children in the locality improves.

Guiding/Research Question

In the qualitative research questions that guided this case study, I focused on factors inside the school and the classroom that influence the attrition decisions of teachers in one rural and remote school division in Western Canada. Although the conceptual framework included other factors that influence retention decisions, these factors were difficult to control (Butler, 2014). The research questions therefore were focused on influences that play in the school and classroom only in public schools in northern remote communities in Western Canada.

1. How do novice teachers' perceptions of satisfaction with the school environment influence their decisions to stay or leave during their first two years of teaching?

2. How do novice teachers' perceptions about within classroom activities affect the learning climate in their classroom?

3. How do novice teachers' perceptions about student achievement in the school influence their decisions to stay or leave during their first two years of teaching?

4. Which types of leadership supports related to classroom and school activities do novice teachers perceive as being important for new teachers?

5. How do school administrators assist novice teachers within their first two years of teaching?

6. Which types of professional development topics related to classroom and
   school activities do teachers perceive as being important for newly hired
   teachers?

Job satisfaction and working conditions have been shown to strongly influence retention decisions of novice and experienced educators (Carlson, 2012; Grissom, 2012). Such conditions affect within-classroom activities as well as whole-school activities. In addition, previous researchers suggested the need for more study around factors in the classroom and at the school level that influence teacher's decisions to stay or remain in the classroom (Kukla-Acevedo, 2008). Carlson (2012) investigated many factors related to job satisfaction with the school and classroom. These included student achievement, relationships with students, as well as experiences from preservice programs.

Teacher attrition has an impact on student achievement. Students continuously taught by novice educators tend to score lower on standardized assessments than students taught by more experienced educators (Marzano, 2007). Retention decisions based on classroom and school perceptions may also have an influence on the choice of instructional strategies, thus affecting the classroom and school climate (Boylan, 1993). Research Question 2 was focused on gathering information about how perceptions on school and classroom activities affect creating a high expectation atmosphere for students, as well as to determine how the learning climate itself influenced retention decisions. In addition, I used Research Question 3 to investigate how the learning climate and in particular student achievement influenced retention decisions.

Although induction programs and other leadership supports are widely used in North American schools, the effectiveness of such programs has yet to be determined in empirical research. Some researchers have shown positive effects while others have shown effects to be questionable (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Long, 2009; Long et al., 2012). Besides induction programs, other supports, including pre-service training programs, administrative supports and mentoring systems, have been shown to influence retention decisions (Cornelia, 2010; Reitano & Taylor, 2011; Sharplin, 2010). In Research Questions 4 and 6, I looked at specifics of leadership support and professional development needs related to everyday classroom and school activities in rural and remote communities. Additionally, Research Question 5 looked at similar supports from the perspective of the administrator.

Review of the Literature

This subsection contains a review of scholarly literature on the topic of teacher attrition in general and in rural and remote locations. I describe themes found in the literature that are of influence on teacher retention and attrition decisions. These themes were connected to Boylan's (1993) model for teacher retention, and includes influences from school activities, and classroom activities. In addition, community-related activities, as well as personal factors were explored. The purpose of this literature review was to provide a background of the research presented about teacher attrition in general, and in rural and remote schools. In this subsection, I describe the conceptual framework used in this study, as well as a summary of broad themes with common causes for teacher

attrition. The broad themes are then narrowed down to connect to elements of the conceptual framework.

Strategy Used for Searching the Literature

I completed a review of the literature on teacher attrition in rural and remote areas through a comprehensive search through the Walden University library. A large body of articles was found using the search terms *teacher retention and attrition*, *teaching in rural and remote schools*, *teacher job satisfaction, teacher recruitment and retention in rural schools, teaching attitudes and school climate, and student achievement* and *teacher experience*. Several databases were used to find current research articles, including Thoreau, ERIC, Education Research Complete, Academic Research Complete, and Sage. After reading the abstract, each article was categorized in the online database management system Zotero. The articles were printed per broad category and read and analyzed entirely. Internet searches were conducted to find current statistical data on teacher retention and attrition in rural and remote schools. Search terms for statistical data included *teacher retention and attrition*, *rural teacher shortage*, and *rural and remote schools*.

Conceptual Framework

Boylan (1991, 1993) conducted extensive research in rural schools in remote areas in Australia, which led to the development of a model for teacher retention. The research involved a 2-year study on attitudes towards teaching and living in rural communities of 1,100 teachers with at least 6 years of experience in their schools. This

model for teacher retention was used as a theoretical framework for this study. It consists of four spheres with the teacher in the center of the model.
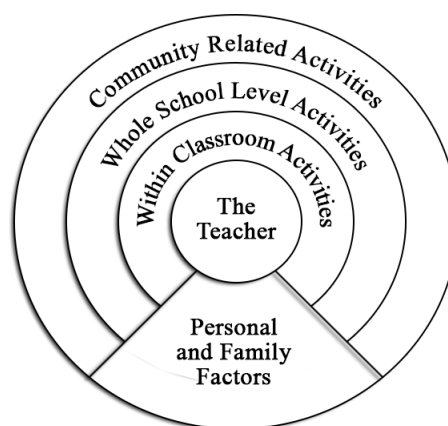
Figure 1. Model for teacher retention. Reprinted from "Retaining Teachers in Rural Schools: Satisfaction, Commitment, and Lifestyle" (p. 124), by C. Boylan, R. Sinclair, A. Smith, D. Squires, J. Edwards, A. Jacobs, . . . B. Nolan, 1993, in C. Boylan (Ed.), *Rural Education Issues: An Australian Perspective* (pp. 111-129). Bathurst, Australia: Centre for Rural Social Research. Copyright 1993 by C. Boylan. Reprinted with permission.

Each sphere around the teacher contains factors that can influence an educator`s attrition and retention decision. These factors include within-school influences, whole-school influences, community-level influences, and family and personal influences. The within-school and whole-school influences will be used as a framework for this study as these fit with the purpose to understand teacher attrition and retention decisions based on their perceptions on the classroom and school environment. Mueller, Carr-Stewart and Steeves (2013) found that teacher retention and attrition is considered a critical factor that influences the quality of student learning, as well as affecting the delivery of quality educational services in rural and remote areas.

Research by the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching (2004) concluded that in rural and remote schools in Western Canada community-level influences such as housing, facilities, and recreation do not directly influence teacher attrition. In addition, family and personal influences such as personal safety and retention bonuses were rated as not influencing attrition significantly. Davis (2002) found that relationships with students, enjoying the rural lifestyle, and parental support had the most impact on teachers' decisions to accept and remain employed in a position. Of these three aspects, enjoying the rural lifestyle, and parental support are the most difficult to influence by novice educators. Therefore, this project study was limited to within-school influences and whole-school influences, and in particular to the classroom climate (relationships with students) as well as to various forms of professional support at the school level.

Teacher attrition has been studied extensively from various angles as well as in various settings. Many themes emerged from studying the literature, including broad themes around general attrition and retention, attrition decisions and working conditions, job satisfaction and motivation, attitudes towards teaching, and teacher supply and demand. A large number of researchers investigated teacher retention and attrition in elementary and secondary schools (Fall, 2010; Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Ingersoll, 2012; Karsenti & Collins, 2013; Maciejewski, 2007).

Other researchers investigated retention and attrition in specialized teaching areas such as special education (Connelly, & Graham, 2009; Sindelar, Brownell, & Billingsley, 2010) and specific high school courses such as mathematics and science (Ingersoll, &

May, 2012; Ingersoll, & Perda, 2009). Many of these studies focused on retention in urban and suburban schools. Fewer researchers have looked at teaching retention factors in rural and remote schools.

Prior research (Ingersoll, 2001; Kelly, 2004; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009) on factors influencing teacher turnover has resulted in the creation of a classification for dividing teachers into three groups: teachers who stay (stayers), teachers who move from one school to another school (movers), and teachers who leave the profession altogether (leavers). Kukla-Acevedo (2009) investigated whether organizational factors had a different impact on novice and experienced teachers. These work conditions fall into three areas, being behavioral climate, classroom autonomy, and administrative support (Buchannan, 2010; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Their findings included that the novice teacher's decision to leave or move were more affected by working conditions than the decisions of experienced teachers. Such working conditions, including behavioral climate and administrative support were found to have a negative impact on teacher turnover rates, especially among novice educators working in schools with low-income, non-White, and low-achieving students (Boyd et al., 2011).

Cochran-Smith et al. (2012) found that stayers, movers, and leavers are not necessarily "homogeneous groups" (p. 873). In their research, they defined multiple categories and configurations of stayers, movers, and leavers, based on various aspects of teaching practice and career decisions at different times in teacher's careers. One recommendation made is the need for further research on the various configurations that make up the broad and often misleading categories stayers, movers, and leavers.

Several researchers focused on factors that encouraged or hindered former teachers from returning to teaching as well as why some teachers leave and others stay teaching (e.g., Ashiedu & Ladd, 2012; Buchanan et al., 2013; Karsenti & Collins, 2013; Sharplin, 2009). Other researchers looked at job-related factors such as job preparation, working conditions and workload, collegial collaboration, and salary and other benefits that influenced teachers to stay or leave the profession (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Buchanan, 2010; Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012). Typical recommendations included improving the working conditions, as well as focused recommendations looking at moderating characteristics of teachers' work conditions focused on sustaining teachers rather than retaining them (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012).

The next subsections include a summary of the literature review. Broad themes were further explored as subcategories of Boylan's (1993) model for teacher retention by using the four spheres around factors that influence retention decisions (within-classroom activities, whole-school activities, community-related activities, and personal and family-related factors). Findings from the literature review around factors that influence retention and attrition decisions suggested that positive relationship with students, as well as participation in a preservice program focusing on living and teaching in rural and remote schools, could be of major influence on teacher retention decisions. Both had a direct influence on student achievement, especially when supported by effective administration leadership, as well as professional development options and other supports aimed at locally identified challenges. Such effective leadership from administrators and teachers could assist in removing barriers by creating community partnerships and other

opportunities for community involvement such as working together with a parent. Other

supports such as mentorship for teachers may assist in dealing with some of the other

challenges identified, including the divide between personal and professional community

involvement. Lastly, family factors, often difficult to control for by teachers and schools,

were found to be of influence on teacher attrition decisions.

Within-classroom Activities

Boylan (1993) described within-classroom activities as influences that relate to

satisfaction with teaching, as well as the level of commitment to teaching. Examples of

such activities include interactions with students in the classroom, challenges with

teaching children, collegial relationships with other teachers, as well as previous teaching

experience. These activities can be connected to the classroom autonomy, and behavioral

climate classification mentioned. Boylan (1993) reported that high levels of job

satisfaction were found to correlate with high levels of commitment to teaching ($x^2 = 358$,

$p < .0001$). Storey (1993) also found that teacher satisfaction with their teaching

appointment as well as positive interactions with students influenced their retention

decisions.

Relationships with students. The quality of the relationship with students in their

class was a very potent and significant factor in determining whether educators choose to

stay or to leave (C. Boylan, Personal Communication, August 7, 2014; Cochran-Smith et

al., 2011). Kearney, McIntosh, Perry, Dockett, and Clayton (2014) investigated positive

relationships with indigenous children, families, and communities. Supportive teacher–

student relationships and effective classroom management were also related to healthy

classroom climate (Jennings & Greenberg, 2007; McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). Although positive relationships were found to improve student achievement (Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, & Ponitz, 2009), Kearney, McIntosh, Perry, Dockett, Clayton (2014) found that novice educators often struggle with connecting their own knowledge and experiences to the educational and cultural contexts they work in for creating a positive relationship.

In addition, Kearney, McIntosh, Perry, Dockett, Clayton (2014) found that although educators work with the best intentions of the children in their classrooms, tensions arise that act as potential barriers to promote educational success. Often, such tensions develop from different levels of expectations among educators and community members, as well as a potential lack of continuity of different pedagogical approaches. Russell (2008) concluded that satisfaction with student characteristics including attitude towards school, learning, and collaborating with peers and with the teacher, influence retention decisions. Such student characteristics affect student performance and achievement positively or negatively, influencing the level of ease of managing the classroom (Karsenti & Collin, 2013). Buchanan (2010) reported that classroom management challenges, as well as resistance to learning, were the main reason teachers had left the teaching profession, especially when parents were not supportive of learning.

Experiences from preservice training. Researchers revealed positive results from pre-service training. Sharplin (2010) investigated whether a six-day volunteer Rural Education Field would familiarize eight pre-service teachers with the rural teaching context. Using a pre- and post-trip questionnaire, Sharplin reported the pre-services

teacher had "overwhelmingly evaluated the trip as beneficial" (p. 25), in such a way that they had "overcome their anxieties and develop confidence in their skills and abilities as rural teachers" p 25). One recommendation Sharplin made based on the findings of this study was the need for mentorship systems to assist novice educators with transitioning into the field.

In another study, Trinidad et al. (2012) investigated whether preservice teachers ($n = 64$) would increase skills and knowledge of teaching in a rural or remote school by participating in a practicum experience outside of a metropolitan area. The majority of pre-service teachers indicated they would expect to "improve their knowledge and skills across a wide range of questions associated with regional, rural and remote education" (p. 49). This finding validated previous research (Boylan, 2005; Munsch & Boylan, 2008) who found that extended practicum experiences, as well as five to six-day intensive teaching immersion experiences in rural and remote areas, were beneficial for preparing teachers to take on a teaching appointment in a rural or remote school. In addition, Munsch and Boylan (2008) found that these preservice teachers had gained confirmation of the desire to want to teach in a rural or remote school. Further research is needed looking at long-term effects of rural experience programs to further justify immersing pre-service programs as an important addition to teacher preparation programs.

Researchers in two studies investigated experiences from attending preservice programs focused on teaching in rural and remote areas. Lock (2008) researched one preservice training program in Western Australia, the Teacher Rural Experience Program (STREP). STREP aimed at supporting the Western Australian Department of Education

and Training's efforts and initiatives to attract and retain teachers in rural schools by providing scholarships to preservice teachers to gain work experience in rural schools.

Lock (2008) mailed a four-part survey to 159 to teachers who had participated in STREP. Part A and B of this survey consisted of sociobiographical characteristics, as well as questions about whether STREP made a difference in applying for a position in a rural or remote area. Part C consisted of 23 Likert-scale type questions targeting skill development and knowledge about living and working in rural and remote areas. Part D explored qualitative information around the questions in part three. Of the 159 surveys, 30 were completed. The information was analyzed using a one-way ANOVA formula, and the qualitative information from part D was coded and themed.

Lock (2008) reported four themes emerging from the analysis of how STREP may be improved. The first theme was around establishing a peer-network system, as well as improving supports from the university. The second theme emerged around providing increased finances to cover costs. Theme three consisted of suggestions to create an information booklet about living in rural and remote locations, as well as information prior to a preservice practicum consisting of increased liaison between school and student. The final theme covered recognition of successful completion of a STREP practicum by providing increased chances of gaining employment, as well as formal recognition by the university.

Overall findings included STREP participants being positive about the influence of the program on their skill development and knowledge for working in a rural and remote area. Three-quarters of the participants also indicated the program had encouraged

them to work in a rural or remote location (Lock, 2008). These results were similar to findings in research by Boylan (2008) and Boylan and Wallace (2002) who found that pre-service teachers who had participated in a rural practicum in Alaska developed increased understanding of rural teaching in general and perceived to be better prepared for rural teaching assignments.

Researchers in a related study looked at educators' first experiences of teaching in rural areas (Hudson & Hudson, 2008). Participants ($n = 17$) participated in an inaugural program, exposing them to working and living in a rural community. Data collected consisted of anecdotal notes about the anticipated participation in the program before the inaugural program took place, as well as a post-participation questionnaire. Questions included reflections on participant's personal and professional experiences of the inaugural program, viewpoints on teaching in rural settings, and recommendations for future programs. The analysis was done by sorting data into emerging common themes. Hudson and Hudson found that the majority of participants ($n = 12$) had not considered teaching in a rural or remote location, but most participants were not opposed to such placement. Similar to findings by Lock (2008) some students were concerned about finances. Overall finding included that "instilling confidence and empowering pre-service teachers to teach and live in rural areas require first-hand experiences to create attitudinal changes" (Hudson & Hudson, 2008, p. 74). The reported attitudinal changes towards teaching in rural and remote locations was very significant, concluding that pre-service placement programs may enhance the recruitment of teachers for rural and remote

schools. In addition, such programs may assist with retaining teachers who participated in a pre-service for employment in a rural or remote school.

Although pre-service programs can prepare pre-service educators for rural and remote appointments in schools, they do not affect novice educators who recently graduated from university programs. Although induction programs exist for the initial preparation for rural and remote placement, longer-term effective support structures are often absent in rural schools. In addition, one study showed that aspects of pre-service training had not prepared novice teachers for working on responsibilities (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009) that are directly connected to within-classroom and whole-school activities. These included long-term planning and report-card writing, tasks for which pre-service teachers had developed little knowledge during their pre-service experiences.

Relationships with colleagues. Researchers (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Russell, 2008) found that teachers who kept good relationships with their colleagues tended to be highly satisfied with teaching. In addition, a higher level of collegiality among teachers in schools tend to create a higher organizational commitment (Shah, 2012). Such relationships can extend into the classrooms in the form of collegial support for day-to-day teaching activities such as planning and choosing instructional strategies. Allowing educators to interact with teachers has a positive influence on job satisfaction and can influence retention decisions.

Student achievement. Teacher turnover has a significant and negative impact on student achievement in both math and ELA, in particular in schools with a large population of low-performing students (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Researchers

who examine student achievement have shown that when students are taught by more experienced teachers, their average achievement gains are larger than of students of first-year teachers (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2010; Henry, Bastian, and Fortner 2011; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2008). Teacher experience was, therefore, an important factor when analyzing student achievement (Buddin & Zamarro, 2009; Henry et al., 2011; Staiger & Rockoff, 2010). Furthermore, Henry, Bastian, and Fortner (2011) reported that less effective teachers are more likely to exit the profession, as they perform significantly worse than teachers who choose to stay. They recommended that policies to identify less effective teachers had less effect on student achievement than policies directed to improving novice teachers' effectiveness.

Participants in a study by Hellsten, McIntyre, and Prytula (2011) connected student achievement to high workload. The nature of teaching in a rural or remote community, often with split or multigrade classrooms, increased the amount of planning and often increased the demands for teaching students at different levels to the level of "very high needs" (p. 15). One participant expressed that average achievement scores would be considered "below average down south" (p. 15).

Marzano (2007) found that students who were taught by inexperienced teachers two years in a row were likely to fall behind their peers in other classrooms who were taught by experienced teachers. Novice teachers replacing veteran teachers are less effective than their more experienced colleagues, since the rapid development of essential teaching skills tends to happen in the first years in the classroom (Kraft et al., 2012). Experienced teachers build high-capacity classrooms that include value-added education

on various cognitive, affective, structural, and cultural aspects of learning that enable

students to learn and feel successful (Harris & Sass, 2011; Mitchell & Sackney, 2009).

Students in classrooms run by ineffective teachers may be affected by negative short-term

learning outcomes as well as negative long-term learning effects when looking at wages,

attendance of higher education, housing, and savings (Chetty et al., 2011).

Whole School Activities

Boylan (1993) described whole school activities as the variety of activities

educators perform and engage in outside of the classroom. Examples of such activities

include relationships with colleagues and educational leadership, as well as all work-

related duties such as administrative duties, access to professional development, and the

physical condition of the school. Boylan found that many of these activities were

affecting job satisfaction negatively.

Administrative leadership. Principal leadership skills affect school organization,

culture, and working conditions, which, in turn, affect job satisfaction and teacher

retention (Cornelia, 2010). Novice teachers tend to leave schools when administrative

ineffectiveness affect teacher's job satisfaction (Carlson, 2012; Grissom, 2012). Such

administrator ineffectiveness as rated by teachers may be a predictor of job satisfaction

and teacher turnover (Grissom, 2011).

Effective leadership from principals has been found positively to influence

teacher retention and attrition (Carlson, 2012; Grissom, 2011; Wynn et al., 2007). In one

of the larger historical studies on reasons for teacher retention, Hirsch (2006) surveyed

4,200 educators on reasons for staying in their current position. He found that supportive

leadership from administrators had a major factor that influenced their decision to stay. In another study, Ladd (2009) found that teachers' perceptions of school leadership were predictive of teachers' intentions to remain in the school or to find a different position.

School setting characteristics such as the condition of the school building, availability of support and training, as well as effective leadership responses to classroom management challenges are directly connected to effective leadership. In a meta-analysis of 34 studies of attrition factors, researchers revealed that such setting characteristics influenced teacher retention (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Principals who were found to provide effective leadership in these areas had a major influence on retention decisions of teachers, especially in challenging schools (Greenlee & Brown, 2009). Albrecht et al. (as cited by Henderson, 2014) came to a similar conclusion for special education teachers.

Professional development and support strategies. Professional development for teachers could have a positive impact on student achievement, classroom climate, as well as retention of novice and experienced teachers. When professional development was offered that focuses on skills and content that relate directly to the teaching practice of participants (Hirsch, 2006; Killion & Roy, 2009), a direct connection has been reported to teacher retention (Hirsch, 2006; Brill & McCartney, 2008).

Support Strategies such as induction programs and mentoring systems assisted with the formal socialization of teachers into the profession, workplace, organization and community. Induction programs are widely used in North America and Australia although the effectiveness of many programs has been described as unclear or questionable (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Long, 2009; Long et al., 2012). Effective

programs for induction have been associated with retaining teachers, student achievement, and developing instructional skills (Ingersoll, 2012), as well as with meeting diverse needs of novice educators (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010), although Long et al. (2012) determined that less effective induction programs influenced teacher retention due to too much variety in quality and method way induction programs are delivered.

Delivery of induction programs should not only focus on academic content such as curriculum knowledge, but also on the school context, networking, managing people, and creating work-life balances (Hudson, 2012). In addition, teacher induction supported by mentors (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009) may assist in developing resilience (Keogh, Garvis, & Pendergast, 2010), resulting in increasing job satisfaction and lower teacher attrition. Professional development on other content can also be beneficial.

Jenkins, Reitano, and Taylor (2011 focused on perceptions of working in rural schools. They interviewed mid and end career educators (n=100). Concerning the professional development, the participants revealed they would benefit from additional professional development on leadership and pedagogy. Barriers for acquiring such professional development were identified and included geographical distances, time restraints, the cost of face-to-face training, as well as the unavailability of substitute teachers to cover classes. In addition, participants mentioned the lack of experienced mentor teachers, which was perceived as a negative influence on professional growth.

One recommendation made was to tailor professional development into an action research framework to promote ongoing professional development.

Community Related Activities

Boylan (1993) described community-related activities the involvement of teachers in community activities through various organizations, parental support for schooling, as well as the ecology of living and working the rural lifestyle. Boylan's analysis of community-level activities suggested that many educators value involvement in the community, although communities "held various definitions of 'local'" (p. 17). He concluded that the community has an important role to play in retaining teachers in rural schools by assisting them in becoming local community members and by promoting advantages of living and working in rural communities.

Community involvement. Recent research regarding community involvement of teachers in rural and remote schools was scares. In one study where participants were interviewed by phone, novice teachers who were experiencing their first year in a northern rural school in Saskatchewan, Canada, reported "challenges in attempting to understand their community, the community-school and community-teacher relationships, and the expectations of their community" (Hellsten, McIntyre, & Prytula, 2011). One of the participants had a positive view to share about how the community respected their teachers although other significant factors affected the ability to teach significantly. Other participants shared difficulties with meeting community expectations such as the "dictated" (p. 14) level of teacher involvement in extracurricular activities. Two participants stressed the importance for making connections with the community to

get to know the parents and students well. Another participant discussed the importance of connecting to other professionals in the community "to be accepted as a newcomer into the community" (p. 17).

In a study involving 12 participants from a rural school, Lester (2011) further explored community relationships. Similar to participants in the Hellsten, McIntyre, and Prytula study (2011), the importance of connecting to the community for building relationships was discussed as being beneficial to successful principal and teacher leadership. Lester (2011) found that principals could create trust and respect relationships with rural communities when they connect to community members. Such relationships are important for establishing community support for new programs in and outside schools.

Community involvement could also relate to connecting to rural and remote lifestyle. Becket (2009) studies factors that influence retention in one school district in North America. Enjoyment of rural lifestyle/location ranked third, together with relationships with students, professional development, and career goals. Positioned on one and two were noncommunity related factors. Similarity to hometown was rated high as having no influence on retention decisions.

The Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching (2004) conducted one of the most detailed research on community aspects in 2004. Although dated, the Dr. Stirling Foundation for Research into Teaching investigated with high detail reasons for attrition decisions in remote and rural schools in Western Canada. Several of the questions were connected to community involvement. Data were collected

through a survey of 229 participants, as well as through telephone interviews with 63

participants. Concerning the community-related activities, nearly half of teachers

responded that recreational opportunities in their community either motivate them

strongly or moderately to stay teaching their rural and remote school. A quarter of

participants was either moderately or strongly motivated to quit because of the recreation

opportunities available in their community. Teachers who were of the opinion that

recreational opportunities were inadequate did not engage in outdoor activities and

expressed they were missing activities they were used to doing in their home community.

In addition, personal safety in the community was rated high as 65.1% of participants

reported either strongly or moderately safe in their community and another 23.8% did not

think community safety would influence their retention decisions. Community-related

factors that are perceived to influence retention decisions were not directly related to

activities teachers could participate in. Factors such as inadequate medical and dental

care in remote communities influenced attrition decisions negatively (44.5% of

participants), whereas 57.2% of participants in rural communities indicated no influence

of such care.

Community-related activities in urban, suburban, rural and remote communities

rely on strong administrative involvement. In their study, Epstein, Galindo and Sheldon

(2011) concluded, "Principals' active support for family and community involvement

remained a significant predictor of the quality of school-based partnership programs"

(p.24). Such active support has a direct link to within-classroom activities, especially

when the principal uses effective leadership skills to provide support to the teacher for

establishing a positive relationship with parents. Besides supports from administrators, Huysman (2008) suggested that teachers from outside the community also benefit from creating relationships rather than knowing how to create relationships. In his study, interviewed participants shared similar quotes such as "it's not what you know, but it's whom you know" (p. 35). Some of the participants in the study by Hellsten, McIntyre, & Prytula (2011) made similar recommendations.

      Parental support. Relationships with students in aboriginal rural and remote communities were often influenced by the quality of home-school partnerships. Santoro, Reid, Crawford and Simpson (2011) reported that according to educators such home-school partnerships were poorly developed due to the parents' experiences in school. In addition, teachers often did not invest in becoming involved with community activities. Such "lack of personal investment can be due, in part, to many teachers' aspirations to return to the city or larger regional centers as soon as they can obtain transfers" (p. 70). Participants in a study by Hellsten, McIntyre, and Prytula (2011) shared similar thoughts in more extremes. They commented that it was often difficult to separate personal from professional lives, resulting in a lack of privacy in a welcoming small community. It was, therefore, important to connect with people in and outside your school, for instance, colleagues or the school administration.

Family Factors

      Boylan (1993) described family factors as familial and personal influences that affected a teacher's retention decision. Examples were decisions around home ownership,

family commitments, quality of personal lifestyle, as well as contentment with rural living.

Family factors were unforeseen circumstances that resulted in teachers leaving their teaching position. Teachers nor the school administration control many of these factors. Butler (2014) summarized some of those family factors, including death in one's family, illness and health problems, the birth of a child, as well as relocation to a better home. Kerstaint et al. (as cited by Butler, 2014) found that family factors also included the amount of time teaching took away from the family.

One other family factor to consider was salary and other financial benefits related to living in rural or remote communities. Researchers in many studies found that salary was not a major driver for terminating employment in past research (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Karsenti & Collin, 2013; Ondrich, Pas, & Yinger, 2008; Perrachione et al., 2008). In contrast, Butler (2014) reported the need to increase teacher salary to be fair and competitive with other college degree level careers. Becket (2009) also found competitive wage to be the most beneficial benefit. Increasing salary may not be an option for many teachers in Canadian provinces, where provincial teacher associations bargain with provincial governments about the height of teacher's wages. Schools and School Boards do not have the option to set their pay scales. Tax breaks for teachers working in Northern communities, as well as localized Northern Living Allowances sometimes compensated for a higher cost of living by adding an additional 10 to 15 percent of the base wage. In addition, specialist teachers earned additional percentages when appointed to a consultant position or succumbed to a position in the provincial government.

Summary of Literature Review

The above summary review of the recent literature revealed several major themes connected with the within school and whole school activities. Concerning within school activities, relationships with students in rural and remote schools were reported as essential but sometimes difficult to maintain due to differences in expectations and expertise. Difficult relationships with students negatively affected classroom management and classroom climate, resulting in lower student achievement, decreased job satisfaction, increased workloads, and as a result, negatively influence retention decisions. Such difficulties may be prevented by having pre-service teacher participate in pre-service training in a rural or remote community. Participants of such training reported positive and beneficial experience that prepared them better for a possible future teaching appointment in a rural or remote school.

Major themes relevant to whole school activities included effective support for novice teachers from school administrators. Effective leadership in schools was linked to reduced teacher attrition through the creation of a school-wide positive climate and classroom climate, as well as through providing direct support to teachers. Effective leadership included providing structured professional development, as well as induction and mentoring programs focusing on job-related aspects unique to living and teaching in rural and remote communities. In addition, related to whole school activities were major themes discovered under community-related activities: the quality of the community, school and home relationships. Different expectations among schools, teachers and communities sometimes made it difficult for such partnerships to be positive or

productive, especially when teachers were experiencing challenges in dividing personal life from professional obligations. Nevertheless, connecting to the community and creating relationships, even under difficult circumstances, has been identified as beneficial.

The findings of this review that was connected to Boylan's teacher retention model (1993), clearly supported the problem and purpose of this research on teacher retention. Difficult relationships with students (Cochran-Smith et al., 2011; Jennings & Greenberg, 2007; McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009), ineffective support structures and pre-service experiences (Carlson, 2012; Grissom, 2011;Sharplin, 2010; Trinidad et al., 2012; Wynn et al., 2007), as well as challenges connecting to community-level initiatives ((Hellsten, McIntyre, & Prytula, 2011; Lester, 2011), were identified as potential factors affecting the high attrition rates in Pre-cambium School Division (PSD). The research questions, investigating perceptions of novice teachers on within-classroom and whole-school activities (Boylan, 1993) can potentially provide insight for changing policy and procedures to start decreasing the high attrition rates in PSD.

Implications

In the research review, I revealed themes that were consistent with structured support systems for novice teachers in northern communities in Western Canada. Such supports spread across within-classroom and whole-school activities, and can reach towards community-related activities. These included supports from administrators, as well as through other means.

Researchers have presented enough evidence for providing supports beyond a teacher induction program, especially when teachers had not participated in a pre-service program in a rural or remote school. Such supports may consist of a school division-wide mentoring framework. The creation of a mentoring framework as a professional development plan, connecting to specific elements related to Boylan's (1993) within-classroom and whole-school activities was project that connected to this study. This mentoring framework could assist novice educators with the development of attitudes and beliefs that fit with a lifestyle in rural and remote locations.

In addition, a structured mentoring program focusing on challenges associated with living and working in rural and remote locations may assist with dealing with challenging within-classroom and whole-school factors, including discipline issues, overwhelming workload, as well as establishing an identity in the school. Since PSD consisted of schools in various rural and remote locations with different teacher and student populations, the mentoring framework included options for localization at the school level, as well as components for differentiation based on characteristics and needs of individual teachers that were found in the research phase of this study.

Assisting novice educators in finding their drive and place in rural and remote communities in PSD may affect social change significantly. Providing structured supports through a tentative mentoring project does not only strengthen professional relationships with colleagues, students, and community members, it may also influence retention decisions for choosing a rural or remote community as a place of employment of choice. Creating school and classroom environment in which educators want to stay

for a longer period will assist in helping them become part of the community instead of long-term visitors. Social change will be influenced positively when support systems help teachers stay longer in remote communities, when lost expenses on teacher turnover are reduced, and most important, when the education of children in the locality improves.

Summary

Attrition of teachers is a problem in North American schools, as well as in schools in other parts of the world. Teacher attrition affects student achievement (Marzano, 2007), increases governmental and institutional costs for recruitment and training of new teachers (Fall, 2010; Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008), and impacts the overall climate in the school. In rural and remote schools, teacher attrition is an even larger problem, as novice teachers are often not prepared for a teaching appointment in such a school.

Teacher attrition in rural schools is caused by several factors connected to within-classroom activities, whole-school activities, community-related activities, as well as family factors. Job-related perceptions, expectations and attitudes of novice teachers, as well as skill development, were explored in the literature as factors that influenced the decisions of teachers to remain or stay teaching in rural and remote schools. Such factor influence job satisfaction directly. Community-related activities were addressed in previous studies and found to have less influence on the decision-making process than expected. Family factors are difficult to influence as there if no direct connection to job-related duties.

School administrators can be of direct influence on how teachers experience within-classroom and whole-school activities by providing focused and structured

support. These factors often are addressed in initial induction programs. Further support

could consist of a mentoring program designed around the individual teacher's

characteristics and professional needs.

In Section 2 of this study, I describe the methodology to answer the guiding

research questions in Section 1 in detail. The methodology that I used is qualitative in the

form of a holistic single-case study (e.g., Yin, 2013) was a questionnaire and interviews

with novice teachers in rural and remote locations in Western Canada. In Section 3, I

describe the project outcome connected to findings of this project study. Lastly, in

Section 4, I reflect on my journey through this doctoral program.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

In Section 1 of this study, I overviewed the problem of high teacher attrition in remote and rural schools in Northern communities in Western Canada. I conducted a review of the current literature to explore and understand how teacher attrition is a problem at the local level, in North America, as well as other regions of the world. The literature review resulted in guiding research questions around the purpose of this study: to determine which perceptions of teachers on classroom and school-related activities influence their decisions to remain or leave a permanent teaching position in their current school.

In Section 2, I describe the methodology for this study. I choose a holistic single-case study design to investigate perceptions of teachers on teacher retention in an isolated school in Western Canada. These participants were selected using a nonprobability purposeful sampling strategy. Each participant completed an open-ended questionnaire and participated in an interview. In addition, a document analysis on retention strategies was performed to substantiate findings from the questionnaire and interview.

In Section 2, I also describes the relationship between the researcher and participants, since I have a role in the research school as an educational consultant. I describe how I protected the participants from harm by using confidentiality measures. Collected data was transcribed, and coded into the two themes reasons for leaving and reasons for staying, with under each several subunits. Most participants mentioned more perceptions of reasons for leaving their current position in a remote school than reasons

for staying in their position. These perceptions were used to justify findings and to frame recommendations to address the gap in practice as identified in Section 1.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

The research design for this study was qualitative. Qualitative designs are used to describe an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2009), which is consistent with describing and understanding how with-in classroom activities and the whole school environment influence retention decisions of novice teachers in northern remote rural public schools in PSD. This was the primary focus of this doctoral Study and fits well with Boylan`s (1993) model of teacher retention.

I selected a holistic single-case study methodology to explore the research questions involving the perceptions of novice teachers in northern remote rural public schools. Such a method studies the *how* and *why* when the behavior of participants cannot be influenced (Yin, 2013). Case study methodology allows researchers to function as the primary collection and analysis instrument to explore the research questions within a bounded system consisting of a group of teachers (Bogdan & Biklen, 2009; Creswell, 2012, Yin, 2013).

The reason why I choose a case study was because the case of the perceptions of novice teachers on teacher retention cannot be considered without the context, a remote school in PSD, and more specifically the activities that occur in the school environment and classroom setting. Although other influences may exist, binding this case to explore only school and classroom activities as influences on teacher retention will assist in

containing the research findings within the scope of this research, which may prevent the case from shifting (Yin, 2013). Baxter and Jack (2008) suggested that binding a case is considered the equivalent of establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria in a quantitative study for keeping a study focused.

A holistic single-case study fit well as the aim of the study was to describe and understand perceptions of teachers in PSD, since the study was bounded by one particular school in PSD in a critical or unique setting with the researcher having firsthand knowledge of the situation within the context of this study. A qualitative case study provided multiple sources of information to reveal information to understand the perceptions of a particular group of educators that influence teacher retention decisions and high attrition rates in PSD, as well as to also produce the subgroups that are lacking in single-case holistic design (Yin, 2013).

A quantitative research methodology may provide knowledge of how participants perceive activities related to whole-school and within-classroom settings (Boylan, 1993), but such a study would prevent the researcher from discovering new anecdotal information. Quantitative studies, including survey studies, use predetermined factors to which participants respond to and these predetermined factors do not allow a researcher to discover the voices of the participants while they are constructing an understanding of their perceptions related to the guiding research questions and the purpose of this study. Such also severely limits the "shift" that Yin (2014) described as both a strength and weakness of the single holistic case.

Other qualitative research methodologies were contemplated. In this study, I focused on one problem in a local setting. Creating a new theory for use in the larger educational setting was not the focus of this study. Therefore, a grounded theory methodology that would develop a new theory based on the views of participants in the study was not selected.

An ethnographic study focuses on describing a particular focus or pattern related to beliefs, values, and attitudes of a group of participants in their natural setting by collecting mainly observational data (Creswell, 2012; Fetterman, 2010; Merriam, 2009). I did not choose this as such studies require the researcher to be immersed in the culture at the local setting for an extended period. In addition, I considered a phenomenological study. Such design would be done when the phenomenon is based on "intense human experiences such as love, anger, betrayal, and so on" (Merriam, 2009, p. 25) to identify the essence of those human experience; such design would not fit with the purpose of this project study. A narrative study design did not fit as such design follows a chronology of events in a story told by individuals who are willing to tell their stories (Creswell, 2012). This project study does not include a chronology of events shared by individuals with as purpose to study the lives of the individuals.

Participants

I used nonprobability, purposeful sampling to select 11 volunteer teacher participants for this study. Such purposeful sample allows the researcher to select participants for providing the specific information needed to describe and understand the perceptions of the participants to be studied (Creswell 2012; Merriam, 2009). In addition

to the 11 volunteer teacher participants, one administrator was invited to participate in this study. Yin (2013) suggested that a multiple data sources from various participants adds to the credibility of the research. The perceptions from an administrator who has been working in the research school for a longer period in addition to the knowledge shared by the teacher participants added to understand why teacher attrition in this school has remained stable during the last 10 years.

The information collected using such a sample should not be generalized (Merriam, 2009), but rather provide new insight or acknowledge information regarding the setting and participants. Although the research context and the assumptions that are central to this study were described thoroughly, the transferability of this study should be assessed by the reader. The reader needs to determine if the richly detailed and thick description provided in this study provides enough similarity with the reader's own site (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010).

The first step for selecting participants was to create a list of attributes that will allow teachers and administrators to participate in this study. These attributes assisted in selecting participants who met criteria related to the purpose of this study, and who were in a position to provide breadth and depth of information about the case being studied (Merriam, 2009). Due to the large geographical distances in school divisions such as PSD, choosing multiple schools for selecting volunteer participants was not viable. In addition, many isolated schools tend to be small, making it difficult to protect the identity of the participants. The attributes identified for participants to fit this study were

- participants in this study were from one larger size school in a remote area in Western Canada;

- participants were fulfilling diverse roles from teaching pre-kindergarten to proving special education services;

- participants had moved from another community to the remote community in which they teach;

- classroom teacher participants were within their first two years of teaching in a remote school;

- participants who are administrators had been in such position for at least four years in the current school.

I requested from the school principal in one school in PSD a list of all teachers who fit with the above attributes. I cross-checked this list with the Human Resource Department to ensure teachers had moved to the research school from another community. All these educators received an invitation to participate voluntarily in this study. Participants who responded to the invitation were individually asked to consider participating in this study and to review the information on this study's consent form.

When they agreed to participate, I asked each participant to sign the informed consent form after at least 24 hours of consideration. Patton (as cited in Merriam, 2009) recommended specifying a minimum sample size to provide reasonable coverage of the phenomenon studied. Such reasonable coverage assisted in achieving credibility and reliability of the study data. For this study, the minimum participants were 10. To maximize breadth and depth, I gathered information from each participant by using

various data sources including one qualitative questionnaire and one interview with query

questions until the point of saturation was reached (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). At

that point, no new information was revealed that added to explain the purpose of this

study.

Gaining Access to Participants

Permission from the PSD Director of Education was granted to perform research

related to this study in any of the PSD schools. For this study, I choose one large remote

school in PSD as such a school employs enough teachers to form a sample. Before formal

permission was obtained from the school principal, Walden's Institutional Review Board

(IRB) provided permission to conduct this study (approval number 12-02-14-0133095).

After I obtained permission to conduct the study, the school principal received

full information that includes disclosure of the study proposal. Once the school principal

granted permission to conduct this study in the school, I invited all educators that fit with

the identified attributes by email to participate in this study. I had obtained the list of

email addresses from the school secretary. This email introduced me as the researcher,

described the purpose of the study, as well as the expectations for participation.

I met, individually, with educators who responded positively to wanting to

become a participant in this study. In my role as educational consultant, I had not worked

with most of the participants directly before. This meeting was the start of establishing a

researcher-participant working relationship. I explained all aspects related to this study,

including the purpose of the study, the minimal risk of participation, the nature of

participation as well as the participant's right to withdraw at any time during the study. I

also explained how the identity of the participants would be protected by outlining the confidentiality measures taken. Potential participants were asked to reflect on this information at least 24 hours before making a decision to wanting to participate or not, and before signing the consent form. If participants agreed to be participants in the study, they could return one copy of the completed and signed informed consent form in a sealed unmarked envelope in the internal school mail to my office.

Measures for Ethical Protection of Participants

During the initial individual meeting with possible participants, educators received a written and oral explanation of the confidentiality measures to protect participant's identity as well as to protect participants from harm. Educators who agreed to voluntary participate were given at least 24 hours to review the consent form before signing and returning two copies of a participation letter with informed consent, from which they keep one copy for their records. In addition, I explained to participants orally that participation in the study was voluntarily and that each participant could withdraw from the study for any reason and at any time. Measures to ensure confidentiality consisted of a random two-digit code for each of the interviews to identify participants throughout the study. I was the only person who had access to the coding system. This coding system was stored as a TrueCrypt encrypted file on my home computer. A paper copy of the coding system was also kept in a locked drawer at my residence. Other identifying information was not used to ensure confidentiality and to ensure staff members could not match data to participants. All collected and recorded information was stored in a lockable briefcase during transport.

Recordings of interviews were transferred to my home computer and password protected. A second copy of each recording was encrypted as a TrueCrypt file on my computer. The original recording was erased from the digital voice recorder after each file was transferred to the computer. Analysis and validity and credibility checks were done at locations other than the participant's school, such as a private office in the town library as well as a private office in the School Divisions' Central Office.

The participation letter with informed consent provided to each participant contained a sentence explaining the confidentiality measures taken. In addition, a signed written Promise of Confidentiality (Bogdan & Biklen, 2009) was provided to each participant. Copies of the participation letters and Promises of Confidentiality were scanned and stored as a TrueCrypt encrypted file, and the paper copies were stored in a locked drawer at my residence.

Data Collection

Yin (2013) suggested utilizing multiple sources of data as evidence in a case study (convergence of evidence). Such data may consist of interviews and questionnaires, documents, archival records, or various forms of observations. For this study, I used multiple data sources to allow details of the case to emerge (Creswell, 2012). One data source was an open-ended questionnaire. Another data source consisted of semi-structured interviews, one the most common sources of data for case studies (Yin, 2013). Such interviews use open-ended questions to allow participants to voice their experiences accurately without being influenced by recent research or the perspective of the researcher (Creswell, 2012). Interview questions allowed a researcher to find useful

information that could otherwise not be readily observed (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2013). An additional data collection tool was a document analysis form to classify resources and materials in schools on how those relate to teacher retention decisions.

The first data collection method was an open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix B). This questionnaire was developed based on Boylan's theory of teacher retention, following the review of the literature. This questionnaire was linked to central themes in the research questions, based on Boylan's model for teacher retention. After participants had been selected, each participant was asked to complete the questionnaire online on a secure website during their own time. The paper version of the questionnaire was available upon request when the participant did not have access to the online version on the Internet, or when the participant preferred to complete a questionnaire on paper.

The second method of data collection consisted of open-ended semi-structured one-on-one interviews with teachers (Appendix C) and with administrators (Appendix D). The interviews were guided using an interview script with probing questions (Lodico et al., 2010) for steering conversations around the purpose of this study. The questionnaire data was used to adapt the interview guide for each of the participants for further individualization, for example to clarify information from the questionnaire or to deepen understanding of the information provided. I conducted each interview in a location outside of the classroom without external interference, to allow the participant to speak freely and share ideas comfortably. When an interview could not take place in a one-on-one setting at the school, the interview would be conducted through Skype using Audio only or through teleconferencing. Audio from each Skype conferencing or

teleconferencing session would be recorded for later analysis. The length of each interview was at least 45 minutes and took place outside of classroom instruction time. Each interview was recorded using a digital voice recorder. An iPad also recorded each session for backup purposes in case the digital voice recorder malfunctions. In addition to interviewing at least 10 participants, one school administrator was invited to participate in an interview about teacher retention and school and classroom factors that may influence teacher's decisions to remain in or leave the school. The data collected provided additional information to be used for triangulation.

Each interview recording was stored on my home computer in a password-protected folder with a randomly assigned two-digit number. A unique two-digit number was used for each participant through the duration of this study. The name of each participant with matching two-digit number was documented on a coding sheet, which was accessible only to the researcher. This coding sheet was stored in a TrueCrypt encrypted folder on the researcher's computer, and a paper copy was stored in a lockable drawer.

The third method of data collection consisted of gathered documentation around teacher retention strategies and supports in the research school. Participants were asked in person to submit sample artifacts related to teacher retention strategies and supports, for example information on teacher induction training. A document analysis matrix (Appendix E) was used to analyze the artifacts. I examined formal and informal retention strategies and supports for novice teachers in the research school, as well as other documentation around how novice teachers were supported in school. Each of these

documents was analyzed through the lens of Boylan's model for teacher retention. These documents were used to substantiate the interview data collected from the participants.

For the duration of this study, I kept a research journal. This journal contained important reflection notes, suggestions by the research committee, as well as observations made while being engaged with the participants and their working environment. In addition, I used a digital voice recorder to record emerging reflections while being on the road.

Role of the Researcher

The school where I performed my research was a school I previously worked at as an educator. I choose this school as I was aware of the setting, and had expert knowledge that assisted in understanding information related to the purpose of this study. Since I worked in this school as an educational colleague in a position where I established a non-supervisory trust relationship with many colleagues, I believed participants would feel comfortable in sharing information for the purpose of the study that would otherwise not be shared. Access to such information was paramount to create a deep and rich understanding of the problem studied. Although some of the staff in the research school had worked with me in my previous role as an educational colleague in the same school or my current out-of-school role as a special education consultant, I informed all participants of my research role as an observer to gather information around the purpose of this study. For the duration of the study, I deferred all consulting duties for this school to another colleague. I wanted to refrain from mixing duties to avoid researcher bias and conflicts of interest. Although my role as a consultant did not include any supervisory

duties over staff in the research school, I wanted to make sure participants understood the nature of my role as an objective researcher. Any questions related to special education or topics I normally consult about were immediately deferred to my colleague.

Although I was looking to investigate perceptions of novice educators in this school, I did have information pertaining to perceptions on teacher retention decisions that could influence the data of this study. When I worked in the research school, I was already an experienced educator who had chosen to commit to working in schools such as the research school. This experience placed me in a different category than the novice educator participants. Nevertheless, I documented my knowledge around the research topic as personal experiences in my research journal before conducting interviews with participants to make sure I understood how my knowledge could become a bias. In cases where I felt that my bias interferes with collecting data, I fully documented the occurrences in my research journal as a separate entry.

Data Analysis

Analyzing and Coding of the Data

Since 12 educational professionals such as teachers and administrators were asked to participate in this study, I had to establish an efficient manner for organizing and analyzing the data. Merriam (2009) recommended that all data is brought together to make the vast amount of data more manageable. Yin (2013) suggested creating a case study database. A tracking sheet in Microsoft Excel was used to record each step of the data collection and analysis as a case study database, for keeping all resources organized. This Excel sheet also functioned as a data trail of evidence (Yin, 2013).

Data collected through the questionnaire was sorted into broad codes to adjust interview questions where applicable. These broad codes were further developed using first-cycle coding through the lens of the conceptual framework used in this study. Specifically, data was sorted by whole-school and within-classroom activities. Second cycle coding was used to further analyze the data from these two codes into subcodes that fit with the themes found in the literature review. Additional information collected through the questionnaire underwent second analyzes before being disregarded. Any collected data that fit within Boylan's model for teacher retention (1993) but in another category than whole-school and with-in classroom was reported separately.

The findings from the questionnaire data collection were used to individualize the guiding interview questions for each of the participants. Although the guiding questions for the study and the main interview question remained consistent, the results of the questionnaire were used to modify follow-up question for a more personal approach to each individual interview. One example was related to student achievement. Some participants indicated the challenges of getting students to progress towards curriculum grade level. Rather than asking the standard question about student achievement level, I reworded the question to ask specifically about those challenges. In another example about professional relationships with colleagues, if a participant had already indicated that such relationships were perceived difficult, I reworded the question to describe such difficulties. These adaptations assisted in individualizing the interview questions to get to the central concepts that each participant had to contribute about the topic researched. This adaptation extended the depth and breadth of the data collection from the interviews,

and assisted in providing a thick description of the setting and context in which the participants function.

Before the analysis of the interview data started, each interview was transcribed using software on website Otranscribe.com. Each interview transcription was reviewed by the researcher by reading the transcribed data and listening to the recordings at the same time. This procedure assisted in correcting transcription errors.

I preliminary explored all interviews were to obtain a general sense and direction of the data, similar to what Yin (2013) calls a theoretical proposition. Salient data was set aside for further use after the data was sorted. Secondly, the data was sorted by whole-school and within-classroom concepts as well as through the lens of the research questions. The sorted data were arranged into initial codes using first-cycle coding and second-cycle coding (Saldana, 2013), and selected to best fit with Boylan's (1993) within-classroom activities and whole-school activities. Emergent codes were determined through a second cycle analyzes of the interview transcripts and questionnaire data. These emergent codes were then refined to fit the data from both instruments. An example would be the emergent code of "asking for help" into a code of "support structures". The website Dedoose.com was used to organize codes and themes in a structured and visual manner (Creswell, 2012). Pattern matching, explanation building (Yin, 2013), and inductive analysis was used to assist in narrowing down codes into themes. Other data that did not provide evidence for these themes were separated, and underwent a second round of analysis before disregarded.

The information from the document analysis form (Appendix E) was used to support possible descriptions from participants of teacher retention support strategies and support resources in the school. I themed the information as per the category identified in the form, following Boylan's model for teacher retention (1993). Any emergent codes were connected to those found in the questionnaire and interview data through triangulation.

While analyzing and coding the data, I started to make notes regarding interpretation on a separate document per found theme. These documents became part of the data collection database as suggested by Yin (2013). The notes consisted of loose thoughts with organizing happening after all the data had been coded and analyzed. In addition to making notes, thoughts were recorded on a digital voice recorder when the option for writing down thoughts was not available. These recordings were transcribed and became part of the data collection trail (Yin, 2013) in the data collection database. Notations and codes were transformed into emerging themes for presenting findings as well as to frame conclusions about the research findings to answer the research questions and to address the gap in practice described in Section 1.

Credibility of Findings

Establishing credibility of the findings in this project study was most important, and a driver for every step in this research. A member checking procedure called "respondent validation" (Merriam, 2009, p. 217) was implemented to allow each participant to provide feedback on the research findings from their data. Each participant was provided the preliminary research findings and results and was asked to review those

based on the data they provided. This procedure allowed preliminary findings to be

brought back to the participants to determine if they found their voice or experiences

accurately represented in the interpretation and analysis of the data (Merriam, 2009).

Participants were asked not to add new information but only to review findings based on

what they shared on the qualitative questionnaire and during the interview (Creswell,

2012). They could however suggest "fine-tuning to better capture their perspectives"

(Merriam, 2009, p. 217). An individual meeting with the researcher regarding the review

of the preliminary results was provided to the participants within one month after the

interview took place to review feedback from each participant. The member checking

procedure resulted in one participant requesting a rewrite of a sequence of words, as this

participant felt that others would be able to identify the participant's words. Although I

did not quote this participant's words, I felt that I needed to protect the identity of this

participant. Therefore, I corrected one sequence of words that this participant had

requested.

 Next to the member checking explained above, enhancing the credibility of the

study was done by asking one colleague to review findings from the data collection

including cross referencing the found themes, interpretations. The colleague chosen to be

a peer debriefer was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement (Appendix F). This peer

debrief provided additional interpretation or perspectives of findings in the data set, as

well as critical feedback on the general analysis of the researcher's logical development

of themes and recommendations. One suggestion from the peer debriefer was to exclude

statements from participants that directly described personalities, attitudes, or work ethics

of the participant's colleagues. This suggested was made due to the professional ethics of certified teachers and for further de-identifying of the data.   In addition, data from the three independent sources of the data collection were triangulated (Patton, 1999) to substantiate findings, similarities, and differences from participants.

Researcher's biases were noted in a separate journal and acknowledged where applicable to allow transparent and ethical data analysis and interpretation. The colleague who also did the peer debrief was asked to review my notes on researcher's bias and indicate anywhere in the data analysis section where such bias may need to be clarified. This resulted in one recommendation about separating my knowledge of why some teachers were having more challenges with certain students than other teachers had. I isolated this knowledge and did not take that into consideration during the data analysis write-up to address the gap in practice as identified in Section 1.

Process of Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to determine which perceptions of teachers on classroom and school-related activities influence their decisions to remain or leave a permanent teaching position in their current school in Precambrian School Division (PSD). Participants were identified using purposeful sampling by requesting from the school principal a list of names of teachers who would fit the study attributes. A list of 18 names was returned to me. I then emailed these 18 potential participants, and received an immediate response from five potential participants who were interested to participate in my study. The next week I traveled to the research school to speak to these 5 potential participants about the research and to explain all the information in the consent form. I

gave a copy of the consent form to each potential participant and requested that they

reflect on the information for at least 24 hours before making a decision for participation.

In the meantime, I needed to find at least five more potential participants. After

consulting with the principal about the best procedure to approach staff members, the

principal chose to introduce my research during an all-staff meeting. After this staff

meeting, four potential participants individually approached me in the allocated research

office to ask for more details about the research process. I went through the research

process with each of the potential participants individually and went over the consent

form with each person.

The next day, I collected consent forms from nine participants. I then emailed

each of these nine participants the link to the qualitative questionnaire with the request to

complete the questions. Within a few hours, I received an email notification that four

participants had completed the questionnaire. During the rest of the day and evening, I

coded the data on the qualitative questionnaires, and then used the data to individualize

the follow-up questions for the semi-structured interview. I selected questions that would

best fit with the codes I had come across in each qualitative questionnaire, and I created

query questions to follow up on specific information I had found in the qualitative

questionnaire. One example of such query question was around why novice teachers had

chosen a position in a remote school. Since many had indicated that they needed a job, I

phrased a query question about why novice teachers then applied for a position in a

remote school, since many urban school divisions also had positions available.

The next day, I approached each of the five participants to select a time for the qualitative interview. Each interview took place after school hours when the instructional time was over. The interviews were conducted in a private office in the community library. After starting the digital voice recorder to record the interview, I asked the participant for verbal consent to be recorded to confirm the written consent I had received. Each participant provided verbal consent, from where the interview was started. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour, keeping in mind the selected time slot for each participant. A slot of 15 minutes was placed in between each interview to allow for getting some refreshments, as well as to get organized for the next interview. In addition, participants would not see other participants arrive or leave.

During the initial week of the data collection, four interviews were conducted. Each interview was copied to my laptop to a protected folder directly after the interview was finished. Transcribing each interview started right after I was finished with the first interview, and took several days for each interview.

In the week after the first data collection, I emailed the additional five participants to schedule a time for the follow-up interview, as well as a reminder to complete the qualitative questionnaire. Four questionnaires were completed within two days. While working on further transcribing the completed interviews, three additional participants responded to my initial invitation. I emailed these participants the consent form and booked a time during the next week to discuss the research as well as the information in the consent form.

When I arrived on the first day of week three, I visited the three additional participants and explained the research process and the information on the consent form. Like the other participants, I requested that they wait 24 hours to decide if they wanted to participate. On the same day, I conducted two interviews in the same manner as in the first week of data collection.

The next day, I received consent from three participants, which brought the total to 12 participants. During the next three days, I analyzed the qualitative questionnaire for each of the 8 participants to be interviewed in that week to individualize the interview questions, and I conducted the interview with each participant in a similar manner as in the first week of data collection.

Finishing the data collection, I collected a total of 11 qualitative questionnaires and 11 interviews. One participant was on sick leave and could therefore unfortunately not participate. On my return home, I emailed my research committee Chairperson and asked permission to conduct a phone interview with the last participant, since I could not justify driving multiple hours to conduct a 45-minute interview. After I had received permission to conduct the last interview by phone, I contacted the last participant to schedule the phone interview.

In week four of the data collection, I completed the transcribing process of each interview I had collected. After each transcription, I listened to the interview again while reading the transcript. Any transcribing errors were corrected. At the end of week four, I had scheduled the last interview. This interview had to be canceled. The research committee chairperson suggested that I would only reschedule this last interview in case I

needed to collect additional data. I emailed the participant this suggestion. An additional person also contacted me indicating she would like to participate in the research. I emailed her indicating I would contact her if I needed additional information to inform my findings. She agreed to that.

At the end of week four, I deidentified each piece of collected data. I asked my peer debriefer to double check that each document had been de-identified. After the peer debriefer had confirmed that each document was anonymized, I uploaded the qualitative questionnaires and the transcribed interviews to Dedoose.com. Dedoose.com is a research organization website for sorting, coding, theming, and analyzing research data. I checked each document to ensure they were uploaded correctly and completely by comparing them to a version I had on the second display on my desktop computer. As soon as I had confirmed the completeness of each document, I entered overarching codes that connected to the conceptual framework. These codes were "Within-Classroom Activities" and "Whole School Activities". I also entered the themes I had found during the literature review as guiding codes to provide a framework for the data.

Results

I collected data from 12 teachers. Shirley, Janet, Paul, and Mary were middle years and high school teachers. Simon was a school administrator. Gloria, Miriam, Josy, and Cindy were elementary teachers. Jack, Laura and Lily were teachers who had other teaching duties assigned. All names are pseudonyms.

To assist the readers of this project study and for general clarity, I first introduced the participants to provide a context and connection to the roles they serve and their

unique setting. First, I will introduce the elementary school teachers, from there I will introduce the middle year's teachers. The remaining several participants will then be described in one paragraph.

The first elementary teacher was Gloria. She had moved from a different province to teach in the current remote school. During one of my conversations with her, I noticed her openness and kindness towards her students. Although appearing to be a gentle person, I noticed her classroom management style to be rigorous.

Another elementary teacher was Miriam. During an informal visit in her classroom, I observed her use nonfiction materials to entice students to read more books. Merriam provided a resource table at the back of the classroom. Students were able to find at this table with the preselected books. Miriam mentioned to me that she liked to use such assignments to understand her student's interests better for creating a bond.

The third elementary teacher was Josy, who like Gloria moved from a different province to teach in the research school. Josy told me how passionate she felt about having classroom expectations that focus on building trust and lasting relationships. The last elementary teacher was Cindy. She was introduced to me a few months earlier when I connected to her to discuss learning needs of one of her students. Cindy mentioned to me that she found it important to connect to students at a personal level by understanding as much as possible about the children's lives at home.

One of the middle years' teachers was Shirley. I had met Shirley during a previous visit to the research school and I remembered her dedication and commitment for finding a job in a different province from where she came from. In her classroom,

Shirley appeared to enjoy the subjects she taught, and liked to connect those to everyday experiences of her students. Another middle year and high school teacher was Janet, a teacher who enjoyed exploring cultural and professional diversity in herself and in her students. Janet's classroom was very organized, with desks in rows and walls without clutter.

Paul was another middle year and high school teacher. Paul told me he had some exposure to northern communities and cultures through a previous job not related to teaching. He enjoyed working in Northern communities in various positions, and believed that teaching in a northern remote school was very rewarding. The final participant who worked with middle year and high school students was Mary. Mary had previously worked in another remote community where there were even fewer resources available than in the community where the research school was located. She mentioned a strong connection with her students, even though many of them were often difficult to reach.

Other participants had different roles in the school. Simon was an experienced administrator, who had worked much of his life in northern remote schools. Some of these schools were multigrade, where other schools were single-teacher buildings. Another participant with other duties was Jack. During an informal observation I was conducting on one of his students during a previous school visit, I perceived Jack to be a well-organized and thoughtful teacher.

Laura had similar skills. Her classroom was structured in such a way that students could find materials and resources without any difficulty. During the consent phase,

Laura had mentioned she really wanted to take part in my research as she believed it to be

the time that someone addressed the problem of teacher turnover in the research school.

The last participant to introduce was Lily. I got to know a little bit about Lily after a

discussion about the importance of building trust relationships with colleagues and

students in the school's staff room. Lily mentioned that good teaching relied on how well

the student and teacher interact and how meaningful those interactions can be.

The dedicated teachers who I described in the previous paragraph participated in

my study about how the perceptions of novice teachers on classroom and school-related

activities influenced their decisions to remain or leave a permanent teaching position in

their current school. During the analysis of the vast data sets, I sorted the formulated

codes into two main themes: reasons for leaving and reasons for staying. Under each of

these two main themes, I identified several major themes that could be connected to

perceptions of teachers that influenced them to remain in their position, or to leave their

position. Connecting to Yin's (2013) iterative nature of explanation building used for the

process of refining ideas and to build causal links, four themes emerged that could be

connected to perceptions why teachers want to leave their current position in a remote

school (see Figure 2). One theme could be connected to why teachers wanted to stay in

their current position in a remote school (see Figure 3).
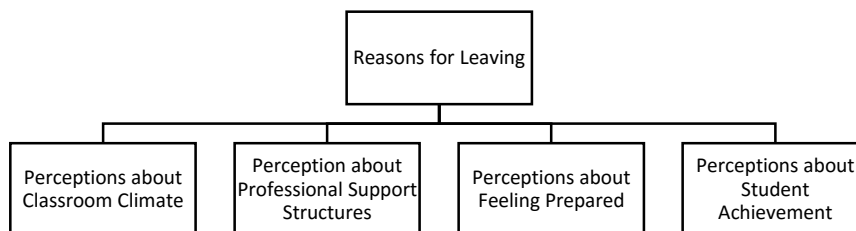
Figure 2. Reasons for leaving.
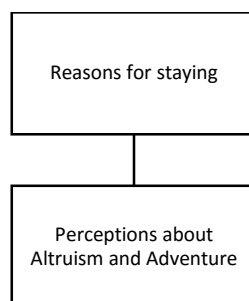
Figure 3. Reasons for staying.

Each of these main themes was further divided into subthemes, described on the following pages to provide a rich description of the problem studied. Each of these subthemes was connected to the conceptual framework used for this study, with themes found in the literature, as well as with the research questions.

This case study was the result of high teacher turnover in PSD, especially among novice teachers and teachers new to teaching in a remote school. Boylan (1991) described four factors that influence teaching retention in remote schools, including School activities, within-classroom activities, family factors, and community factors. The scope of this study was to explore factors in the school and within the classroom that influence teachers to remain or leave their current teaching position.

Themes from the Analysis of Reasons for Leaving

Perceptions about classroom climate. The first major theme of the data analysis for reasons for leaving was perceptions of the classroom climate. This theme was related to the first research question: How do novice teacher's perceptions of satisfaction with the school environment influence their decision to stay or leave during their first year of teaching and with the second research question: How do novice teacher's perception about within classroom activities affect the learning climate in their classroom?

Perceptions of the school environment and school climate varied between participants, depending on their teaching assignment as well as a professional role within the school. The most common perception of participants was around difficult work conditions in the classroom, caused by difficult behavior. Kukla-Acevado (2009) found that such conditions can be of direct influence on the classroom climate. Laura, one of the participants who had assigned other duties than regular classroom teaching, described the general climate in the classroom as follows:

I think that most novice teachers would be very frustrated teaching in this school because you don't get any opportunities to teach or those moments are so seldom. You get a few moments in a day where you actually have the children in a teachable mindset because you spend your entire day trying to keep kids from climbing out the windows or up on top of the cupboards or pinching the other kid.

Miriam, the elementary teacher who has successfully implemented nonfiction resources for creating a bond with students, provided more details about how the climate in the school also affects the classroom climate, by stating:

I think a lot has to be with the behavior of the children. We do have a lot of behavior issues in the school, whether it is because of actual medical disorders or sometimes they act out because of things at home, even something that happened at recess can completely affect the way the child is within the classroom. There have been some teachers... the fact that the way the children are in the classroom completely affected their decision to leave.

Cindy, one of the elementary teachers with some exposure to life in northern communities and who found it important to connect to the personal lives of students, commented on the importance of positive relationships for classroom climates, "You spend the first two months at school building the relationship and if you fail with one kid, you struggle all year. It's a fine balance - of being not too soft and not too hard." Another participant (Jack, a very organized and dedicated teacher) mentioned that he had researched the community where the school is located really well by gathering information from different resources. He connected the classroom climate in the research school to experiences from an internship and some substitute teaching: "Just thinking back to my internship, I did a year of substitute teaching and I didn't remember it being quite as hard as it was here in general. It is different than I thought it would be" (Jack).

Russell (2008) found that satisfaction with student characteristics influence retention decisions of teachers. Such student characteristics affect student performance and achievement positively or negatively, influencing the level of ease of managing the classroom (Karsenti & Collin, 2013). One of such characteristics was attitudes toward school. Laura, the teacher in her second year in the school and whom I had observed to

have great skills in connecting to students as well as a very well organized classroom, described how nonattenders can further influence the classroom climate:

> The ones that don't come to school often, of course they get less and less interested as the year goes by so they come fewer and fewer but the other thing that happens [is] that some of the quieter or more sensitive kids are just so tired of school being a bad place for them that they stop coming. Someone who comes to school and one of these other kids with no self-regulation punches them in the stomach for absolutely no reason except that they were standing there. They may not come back to school.

Cindy, whom you may remember as having had some exposure to live in Northern communities, also comments on how low attendance affects the learning climate and interferes with classroom management:

> I have a whole group of kids that it's like every time they show up – it's the first day at school again and you have to reteach all of the routines at the classroom – you have to teach to this group of kids every time they show up, 'cause they show up once a week or once every two weeks. That's a little bit hard after a while.

> Laura, the elementary teacher with great interpersonal skills to connect with students, remarked: "I mean, we'd say that the school environment is not conducive to good learning and if students don't come to the school, it's hard for us to change that climate." Cindy then connected the learning climate to student achievement by saying:

> They're not trying to be better than everybody else, because they're all peers, all the same age. Now you have somebody who's working at a legit grade level and

someone at a [higher]. The [better achievers] look over at the [low achievers] and

say "Well, they only have to write two sentences, I'm only gonna write two

sentences.

Cochran-Smith et al. (2011) stated that the relationship with students can be a

major factor influencing retention decisions. Some of the participants expressed how the

absence of a relationship of trust and bonding influences the classroom climate. Another

participant was Gloria, an open and kind elementary teacher who moved from a different

province to teach in the current remote school. She mentioned, "They [the students] were

very cautious of me in the beginning and I felt that right away." Laura stated about being

cautious and trust, "It's hard to know but we do know that when you stay the second

year, the kids will actually start to bond with you, not the first year, because you're just

going to leave." Cindy further stated that "[the classroom climate is affected] by the

attitudes of kids towards school. It gets discouraging after a while." Cindy described that

she had come across similar attitudes in other northern communities.

Such discouragement was also perceived by Mary. Mary, who had worked

previously in another northern community, mentioned the following about

discouragement:

> If you're always in an environment that is stressful, emotional stressful, you're not
>
> going to want to stay in it. You know, you're in a group where—well, this one's
>
> fighting with that one, and okay—I don't want to be around for that after a while.
>
> The quality of the relationship with students in classrooms was a very potent and

significant factor in determining whether educators choose to stay or to leave (C. Boylan,

Personal Communication, August 7, 2014). About the quality of relationships with her students, Cindy mentioned that she enjoyed the interaction with students after school hours during extracurricular activities more than the interaction within the classroom during instructional hours. For example, she commented that "[extra-curricular activities] help me interact with the kids [and] make our relationship a little bit more meaningful than just teacher-student.", something she believed to be important for the development of a professional relationship in the classroom. Cindy then added, "'cause you're out in the community laughing and talking and listening, and just being part of it, and then you have connections, you're building bridges and you have more ties here. But Sometimes I feel it's hard to get out there."

Simon had extensive experience with administrative leadership in remote schools. Most of his teaching career had been in northern communities, with some appointments in multi-grade classrooms and single-teacher schools. Simon connected relationship building to classroom management:

> Classroom management is a huge thing, because we all tend to manage as we were managed. And so, that's the only experience we have. And then you come to some place like [this], where not much works. Right? You can't control them. And so, you have to do a mental shift. "How do I deal with student behavior?"

Simon then continued:

> [Classroom management] takes a long time, and it's relationship building. I mean, we've heard that a lot this year. Every time we've gone anywhere, it's: "How are

we building relationships?", and the teachers need to figure out that it's not them and you, it's how can we together—do this?

Gloria, the open and kind teacher, acknowledged that building relationships were an important aspect of classroom climate, "You really have to be open-minded. You have to be accepting and you have to give people a piece of your story. [Then] they make the connection that you [are] okay." Concerning developing relationships, Mary explained that building positive relationships with people in remote northern communities was at times challenging, as she had encountered that in her previous job and also in her current job, "I try to build a positive relationship. I'm not sure if it always works or not. I can reach out, but somebody's got to reach back, too. You're not going to click with every student either." Josy, who felt passionate about positive attitudes and expectations in her classroom, connected her own attitude to relationship and classroom climate by explaining," If you have a positive attitude coming in every day, it's going to affect the way you teach, and it's going to affect the students. You also have to be firm." Josy then continues:

> You can't let one child get away with something and not the other. That does not happen in that classroom. I set the rules the first day they get there, and we go over it every day for the first two to three weeks, and we oftentimes have to go back to it. The rules are on our walls and they know that. Firm but fair. You have to be fair.

Consistent with current literature was that the perceptions of the classroom climate, and especially relationships with students, impact the direct job satisfaction of

teachers. Although the participants acknowledge that these school activities and within classroom activities are of influence on the retention decisions, it is not an isolated factor for making the final decision to stay or leave a teaching position in the research school. Cindy answered to the question of what influenced teacher retention most in the school, "The Kids."

Connected to classroom climate and learning environment are supports from school leadership. The second theme explained the perceptions of participants on professional support structures, as well as their perceptions of needed support from leadership.

Perceptions about professional support structures. The second major theme of the data analysis for reasons for leaving was perceptions of professional support strategies. This theme was related to the fourth research question "Which types of leadership supports related to classroom and school activities do novice teachers perceive as being important for new teachers?", the fifth research question "How do school administrators assist novice teachers within their first two years of teaching?", as well as the sixth research question "Which types of professional development topics related to classroom and school activities do teachers perceive as being important for newly hired teachers?" Similar to theme one, perceptions on leadership supports varied among participants and depended on their teaching assignment as well as a professional role within the school.

Effective leadership from principals has been found positively to influence teacher retention and attrition (Carlson, 2012; Grissom, 2011; Wynn et al., 2007).

Principals who were found to provide effective leadership in the availability of support

and training as well as effective leadership responses to classroom management

challenges (Borman & Dowling, 2008) were found to have a major influence on retention

decisions of teachers, especially in challenging schools (Greenlee & Brown, 2009).

Participants described their perceptions of professional supports from many

angles, including teachers asking for help as well as teachers who do not ask for help.

Simon, the experienced administrator stated:

> [Administrators] try to get into every classroom. Sometimes, it's from the kids
>
> that come down to them, because of behavior issues. If administrators know that
>
> there's a whole lot coming from one particular room, how can they go and support
>
> them in classroom management?

One perception among participants for not requesting assistance from

administrators was trust. Simon further explained, "[Novice teachers] are terrified of

administrators. They think that if they miss one thing, they're going to be gone. So they

don't come and talk to administrators. The only way to find out sometimes, is through the

grapevine." Concerning asking for leadership support without fear for job security,

Miriam, the teacher who loved incorporating non-fiction into her classroom, explained,

"No. Maybe with two I could sit down, but with one, no." Janet, a middle year's teacher

who told me she enjoyed exploring cultural and professional diversity in a respectful

manner in her professional and personal life, responded that asking support from

leadership without having to fear for job security, "That would be a suicidal mission." A

similar reply came from Gloria, the open and kind teacher, who mentioned, "No, I don't."

Gloria then continued that teachers cannot be sure if shared information was kept

confidential among professional staff. Another participant who made a statement about

job security was Paul. Paul, who you may remember had some exposure to northern

communities and cultures through a previous job not related to teaching, connected

sharing information and keeping knowledge confidential to job security by saying, "You

never know when the next knife is coming." Paul's statement was further emphasized by

Lily. I got to know a little bit about Lily after a discussion about the importance of

building trust relationships with colleagues and students in the school's staff room. Lily

mentioned during the interview, "There is a trust issue." Gloria followed up by stating,

"That would be something where you learn who to stay away from and who you can

trust." Laura connected asking for help by novice teachers and trust relationships by

explaining, "I think they're concerned that they need to do it themselves and I think

they're thinking that administrators will note if you need help, and yet – I don't know.

It's a weird situation."

Some of the participants described that intentionally positive support structures

were sometimes perceived as negative. Administrator Simon explained that

administrators tried to make novice teachers become independent professionals by

stating, "This is your classroom. How are you going to deal with it? You can build up the

confidence. You can do this. [The administrators] will help you deal with your children.

Don't just send the kid [to the office]." Miriam explained, "If you have a negative

professional relationship with an administrator, it completely affects you as a professional

whether you want to stay or go." Miriam then continued about the need for administrators

to spend time in the classroom to create a professional relationship with teachers, "They do not spend a significant amount of time here and the kids there is no stability, consistency in school." Laura confirmed the need for a professional relationship with leadership, especially for novice teachers who are in need of help, "Can you offer me some support or some advice, how should I deal with this, and I didn't get that actually in my very first year of full-time teaching." She then continued:

> [Novice teachers] know that all of our administrators are there to talk and to offer ideas and suggestions and "what am I supposed to do with this kid?" They sit and talk with you and find out something that might work for both of you, so they're always available for that.

Miriam mentioned that professional supports should include a "consistent method of proactive help", rather than a responsive assistance:

> They like to sit down and talk to you about: "how can we do this?" There is a lot of contradicting, especially when they say: this is what we are going to try, and when you try it, they do not come through on their end. That is the biggest struggle we have this system.

Participants shared that they are in need of support, yet they found it difficult to find that from their (school) leaders. As shown in the above quotes, trusting leadership was a major concern for many. In addition, some participants perceived school leadership to be supportive but that due to the multiple challenges throughout the day, the time left for administrators to support novice teachers was perceived limited.

Supports through professional development. A few participants expressed their satisfaction with a support program referred to as Restitution and Restorative Practices, a reactive response to help students take responsibility for their behavior. The school has been participating in this program for two years. Miriam, who preferred a kind way of solving everyday problems with students, mentioned about restorative practices, "We do Restitution, it is a great program. It is to get the kids to own up to what they did, and why did you do it and how can we fix it?" Cindy mentioned that she enjoyed the support from leadership through restorative practices, "I think the principals are doing their best. Sometimes, if a child is acting out or they just need a helping hand, they're pretty willing to have that conversation with them."

Restorative practices as a professional structure for support was recognized by participants as a positive as well as a negative approach. Paul, familiar with living in the North, stated, "We've been trained in a certain way to deal with students and you know if the students needs to go home because that's where they need [to go]." Paul also recognized the importance of the program, "I did not know anything about restitution prior to coming here. There are a lot of advantages to the program and I am attempting to implement them in the classroom." Although recognized as an effective responsive method for dealing with student behavior, other participants mentioned the inconsistent implementation of restorative practices as a professional support structure, as well as the need for a different method of professional development around this support. Lily, passionate about building trust relationships, mentioned, "Bottom lines are not matching up and teachers are not feeling support when their bottom lines are being met and the

leadership is not supporting you." Further explaining the need for support, Gloria

connected the need for students to better understand Restorative Practices. She

mentioned, "I get that we're doing restitution but [the students] are not getting it."

Responses to the question what other kind of professional support would be

helpful for novice teachers were diverse. Many teachers appreciated specific professional

development known as Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NVCI) that taught how to be

aware of signs of escalating behavior. This training was organized during the first week

of school for all staff. Some participants mentioned they would like to learn more about

brain development as well as conditions that affect learning such as Fetal Alcohol

Spectrum Disorder. Other participants indicated the need to learn how to use

differentiated teaching in classrooms with students with extreme diverse developmental

levels.

Although the participants recognized the need for participating in professional

development, many had not participated in such for various reasons. One of those reasons

mentioned by Lily was the generic nature of the current sessions, "What I need to learn to

what a 20-year-old teacher needs in PD is completely different and we are being lumped

into the same PD sessions." Cindy mentioned that some of the internal professional

development sessions "were redundant or non-applicable", and even "superficial" as

mentioned by Janet. As for applicable professional sessions, other participants mentioned

they had wanted to attend such, but as Miriam described, "I do not know if this an

intentional feeling that the administrators give off, but they give off a feeling that you can

go, but we are not going to have a substitute [teacher] for you […] That is honestly

difficult, there have been some professional development I looked at that was good."

All 12 participants realized the importance of participating in professional

development sessions to further strengthen their skills. They also acknowledged that

geographical distances of the remote research school and absence of substitute teachers

makes it difficult to attend professional development in traditional setting. Jenkins,

Reitano, and Taylor (2011) came to the same conclusion in their study.

Boylan (1993) described relationships with colleagues as one component that may

influence retention decisions of novice teachers in remote schools. Several researchers

(Borman & Dowling, 2008; Russell, 2008) found that teachers who kept good

relationships with their colleagues tended to be highly satisfied with teaching.

Participants were varied about their perceptions of collegial supports, depending

on their teaching assignment as well as personal reasons. Administrator Simon

mentioned, "Everybody gravitates to somebody they like or feel comfortable with, and

have some sort of commonality with." Josy explained after telling me how she had

assisted another teacher with setting up classroom expectations, "I enjoy the other

teachers, and how helpful they sometimes are, and I feel that we have a pretty good

handle on things." This was confirmed by Shirley who stated, "Many administrators and

staff offer emotional support through communication or various functions."

Some participants recognized how important support from colleagues was, but

their perceptions were different from some of the other participants. Gloria mentioned,

"From my perspective, I'm trying to stay neutral between everybody because obviously

there are little cliques." Such cliques were also mentioned by Lily and Miriam. Lily

mentioned, "There seems to be some sort of toxic atmospheric cliques. It is superficially

supported and superficial informal groupings are made in the hope that collaboration will

come through, but depending on your group it either works or it doesn't." The cliques

were described in more detail by Miriam:

> It is cliquey. Everybody has their own group of friends, who try to tolerate other
> groups of people. It is very difficult because personal issues, personalities clash, it
> is very hard to have a personal relationship and a professional relationship with
> the same person. We are in such a small area that we essentially only have each
> other and it is very cliquey. I try just to stay out of it.

Many participants mentioned supports from colleagues in an informal mentoring

way. Laura mentioned, "All novice teachers have a "mentor". What those mentor pair

relationships are actually doing will differ from pair to pair, because it is not a structured

mentoring and coaching system." Contrary to Laura, Jack's response to having a mentor

assigned, "No, I don't think so, not that I recall, no." In addition, Josy who found

relationship building an essential component of her job, explained that the relationship

developed with the mentor was mostly due to her own efforts, "We do it all on our own."

Josy then continued:

> We sit down every other day during other common planning time, and we discuss
> issues that I have, issues she has, and we collaborate and we plan together what
> we're going to do next, and so then what-have-you.

Although the described common planning time was directed by school leadership, participants perceived the content of this planning solely to be instructional. Miriam responded that much more is needed than just common planning time in the form of more emotional support, as she mentioned, "I cannot say we do not have that in place." This was confirmed by Paul, who responded to emotional supports, "No, I've never seen any of that." Lily also mentioned the need for emotional support, "I was really looking forward to it, but I am lucky I have good support at home." Lily was also the teacher who mentioned to me the importance of meaningful interactions.

While many participants saw a need for a structured mentoring and coaching system as collegial support, some participants were concerned how that would be formalized. Mary mentioned, "It can't just be because, this guy's been here for 20 years, there has to be some sort of [a] connection or relationship, you can't just go mentor", while Laura mentioned the need for a more personal approach, "I guess I'm nervous about that because I think that personalities differ and personalities can connect other ways more naturally."

Perceptions about feeling prepared. The third major theme for reasons for leaving was the perceptions of feeling prepared. This theme was related to the first research question "How do novice teachers' perceptions of satisfaction with the school environment influence their decisions to stay or leave during their first two years of teaching?", the fourth research question "Which types of leadership supports related to classroom and school activities do novice teachers perceive as being important for new teachers", as well as the sixth research question "Which types of professional

development topics related to classroom and school activities do teachers perceive as being important for newly hired teachers?"

Sharplin (2010) reported that preparation programs such as volunteer Rural Education Field Trips assisted novice teachers in "overcome their anxieties and develop confidence in their skills and abilities as rural teachers" (p. 25). Contrary, Fantilli and McDougall (2009) found that pre-service training had not prepared teachers for essential skills directly related to whole-school and within-classroom activities. The following narrative describes how perceptions of induction programs and on pre-service training affect novice teacher's feelings of being prepared to teach in a remote school.

Preparation through an induction program. Induction programs are widely used in North America and Australia although the effectiveness of many programs has been described as unclear or questionable (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Long, 2009; Long et al., 2012). Hudson (2012) found that induction programs should not only focus on academic content such as curriculum knowledge, but also on the school context, networking, managing people, and creating work-life balances. One study showed that aspects of pre-service training had not prepared novice teachers for working on responsibilities (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009) that are directly connected to within-classroom and whole-school activities.

Precambrian School Division (PSD) invited all new teachers from all schools to their induction in August of each year, before school starts. All participants in this study participated in the induction program. In general, participants described the induction program as full days of listening to school division policy and procedures, as well as

learning about simple community related facts such as where out-of-province teachers can switch their driver's license and insurance. Josy described her experiences during the induction program in detail:

> Let's be honest. I just arrived, they're throwing all of this information at us, I barely retained any of it because we get to drive six and a half hours to the middle of nowhere tomorrow -- oh my god, what am I getting myself into? It was just way too much information thrown at once. It really was. The one thing that I did like was, we got to sit with our colleagues that we have today. All [of our new school staff were] sitting at one table. That, I really enjoyed.

Although the induction program was set up to help new and novice teachers prepare for their teaching appointment in their schools, perceptions on the effectiveness of such support were diverse. Laura mentioned about the induction system, "It's hard to say because they talked about going to the beginning teachers training and apparently, past teachers have said it was completely useless for teachers in the north. It just doesn't apply." Lily explained the teacher induction as well, "the beginning of your first year, you go to teacher induction sponsored by the Division and when you come to this school, you get 20-page booklet saying "Welcome to this school" and you get a couple of tours and that is it." Similarly, Janet explained that the induction program "doesn't prepare you for this school."

Discussing the content of the induction program, Miriam mentioned that she had hoped for more specific information about teaching in remote schools:

I learned how do I get cable, and how do I get my license switched over. Watch out for the potholes in the dirt roads. But it did not really prepare me at all for teaching. I found that they focused a lot on everything but the teaching aspect. That would have been very helpful.

Cindy also mentioned that more focus on the teaching aspect could assist novice teachers by explaining:

Something that would be nice, but I'm not sure if they could include it in induction: how to plan a multi-grade, multi-level, multi-ability lesson unit whatever plan that works. Because you come in [your classroom], you're like "Oh, I'm teaching fourth grade" – no, you're actually teaching "one-two-three-four-five-and-six". They [the students] just all happen to be ten [years old].

Gloria mentioned that the content of the induction program made her rethink her decision for teaching in a remote school. She mentioned specifically:

And it terrified me. It terrified me. The things that were said about [this school] were bad. I was like, "Where am I going?" […] They were talking about having to run over your extension cord because it'll get stolen and how many people's places get broken into. And I'm already doing the induction and I was like, "Oh, my gosh. Oh, my gosh." I'm going get this in the car tomorrow. I'm going to drive up there and like, "Oh, my gosh. There's crates in windows. What do you mean by crates." It's completely terrifying because then a young, single woman trying to make a career in teaching and was alone. So I was like, "Oh, no." But then getting here wasn't what it was portrayed to be.

Other perceptions of the induction program were mixed. Some participants enjoyed the interaction with colleagues. Other participants needed more focus on instructional support. Several participants suggested that the induction program be spread out over two sessions, with one at the beginning of the school year, and one after a few months of teaching. This second session would provide novice teachers with a venue for problem-solving based on their experiences in the first few months, as illustrated by Josy, "there should be some kind of meeting for new teachers right off hand, yes. But later on, a couple months down, it would be nice to all get back together […] once we get our feet wet", as well as by Mary:

> It would probably would be useful, because then, you'd get the wider viewpoint that is: "Okay, it's not just you being a new person in your school, it's all of us new people in this division." We all are pulling our hair out, because this kid hasn't shown up to school for three weeks.

Experiences from preservice. Several research studies (Boylan, 2005; Munsch & Boylan, 2008) found that extended practicum experiences, as well as five to six day intensive teaching immersion experiences in rural and remote areas, were beneficial for preparing teachers to take on a teaching appointment in a rural or remote school. All participants were asked about the preparation for teaching in a remote school in university, as well as about their knowledge of First Nation's and Metis people.

None of the 12 participants had received preparation in university that was directly connected to teaching in a remote school. Some of the participants had taken undergraduate training on "Exceptional and Diverse Learners", as well as coursework on

"English as a Second Language". Cindy explained, "These utopian expectations of the world you are given at university, I would say even places that we went for internship I was one of the only rural people." Mary made a similar response, "I don't recall taking anything specifically for northern teacher - This is your class. Your class of perfect students. So I don't specifically recall taking any course work for remote schools." Other participants also expressed their lack of university preparation, as Josy stated that novice teachers were not well equipped for dealing with the challenges in a remote school. Jack replied to the question if university had prepared him for teaching in a remote school with the statement, "Not very much", similar to Miriam's response, "They do not teach you how to deal with situations, they do not teach you any different techniques to try. You pretty much are thrown into the deep end and expected to swim and you do not know how."

Simon talked about how many novice teachers perceive to be prepared for teaching in a remote school before their appointment in such school starts, "When you talk with somebody, they'll always say: "Oh yeah, I can handle it." And it's not until they're actually here, submerged in it, that they figure out: "Well, maybe I can't.", or "Yeah, I can go forward." Feelings of insecurity mainly caused by how students were prepared in university were expressed by Lily,

> I think that in teachers' college there are all these things that ...you are not supposed to hug kids, you are not supposed to do this, and you are not supposed to do that. Then you come here and a lot of those things are true. To get things to work you have to let that kid come up and hug you, you have to give the hug

back. So, I guess there is that insecurity. In schools back home, these were grounds for immediate dismissal. The feedback here is so random and rare here you are constantly feeling that anxiety that you are going to lose your job.

Trinidad et al. (2012) found that novice teachers can improve their skills and knowledge about specific teaching locations, including remote schools by attending pre-service programs. Such programs may also assist in developing specific knowledge needed for working with students who have a different cultural background than the teacher. Jack mentioned he had limited experience working with First Nation and Metis populations, "Not a lot in particularly although there is a First Nation school close to home and they did go to the same high school back home but not a whole lot." Miriam explained that before she arrived at her current school, she did not have any knowledge about First Nations and Metis children, "None before I came here, at all. It was a matter of learning. I learned home life situations. I learned how things happen, how the children are affected." She then continued,

> You have to build a personal relationship. Whether that is getting to be a helper in class, getting them to stay after school with you to do bulletin boards, help you clean the classroom, just to do something to make them feel special. Then they warm up to you very easily. Because I was told that many of the children here have trust issues because home life, and because the teachers leave.

One participant received some training in Indigenous Studies, "I took two or three courses revolved around that, and we actually got to go on to reserves and get a feel of it. So that was really neat, that they did that."

Preparation in university for teaching in for remote schools was not perceived as evident among all the participants. Besides one participant, who took Indigenous Studies as an elective, none of the other participants reported to have received any training that would prepare them to teach in a remote school with a student population that is different from who they taught during internships. Although many researchers have shown the benefits from pre-service preparation programs for teaching in remote schools (Boylan, 2008, Boylan & Wallace, 2002; Hudson & Hudson, 2008; Lock, 2008; Munsch and Boylan; Trinidad et al., 2012), none of the universities that the participants had attended offered coursework on this topic.

Perceptions about student achievement. The fourth major theme for reasons for leaving was the perceptions about student achievement. This theme was related to the third research question "How do novice teachers' perceptions about student achievement in the school influence their decisions to stay or leave during their first two years of teaching?"

Participants in a study by Hellsten, McIntyre, and Prytula (2011) connected student achievement to high workload. The nature of teaching in a rural or remote community, often with split or multi-grade classrooms, increased the amount of planning and often increased the demands for teaching students at different levels to the level of "very high needs" (p. 15). One participant in this current study mentioned a similar experience as the participants in the above study, as Cindy expressed:

It gets discouraging after a while, 'cause you're like "Well, this group isn't moving

up the way they should" and "this group is still at grade one level", because you

try to reach everybody, but then really you don't reach anybody.

Multi-grade teaching in a one-grade classroom was also mentioned by Mary, "It

doesn't matter what classroom you're in, you're in a multi-grade classroom." Miriam

continued along the same perceptions, "I have no kids on grade level, it is hard, you have

so many different levels." She then continued:

I also hate teaching math. It's not because I cannot do it, but it's so hard to teach

in an environment where there are 24 math students ranging from grade K to 4

and they are split according to ability level and trying to work with that is hard.

Paul then gave another specific example related to teaching math and the need for

extensive differentiated instruction when students in one class have such variety in skill

development, "It is difficult teaching a math class and change 5 times just to meet the

needs of the students, and then the students get frustrated." A similar statement was made

by Cindy, "We talk about differentiating instruction all the time", who then continued

with the student population in her classroom:

I have everything from grade one, a lot of grade twos, few grade threes and

smaller amount of grade fours. It just makes it discouraging after a while since it

gets really frustrating, 'cause you're always teaching the same.

Responding to how differentiation influences student achievement, Mary

mentioned she used student grouping to accommodate the learning needs of students who

are behind:

We've set [the classroom] up/structured it differently, so that we have two groups

of students in the classroom. One are the higher achievers, so they're not too far

off grade level, and there's the other students who are extremely low. The

resource teacher can come in and work with the extremely low students, because

they're all in one class, and I can work with the other ones and just trying to

actually get them to be real grade level.

Besides working in multi-grade classrooms, Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff (2013)

found that teacher turnover had a significant and negative impact on student achievement

in both math and ELA, in particular in schools with a large population of low-performing

students. One participant provided an example of results of such teacher turnover for one

group of students:

The group of students that I work with […] didn't know how to read in grade 6.

They did not know letters. They did not know anything about reading and one of

the things that I was told that those kids had two different years in which they had

three teachers in each year.

Simon responded to the question if teacher turnover influenced student

achievement by stating, "We are low regardless." He then continued:

When it happens within the year, and we've had teachers who have been sick, and

so students [have] had a sub for two weeks, -- oh no, now they're going to be out

longer, so now we get a temporary teacher, and those kinds of changes absolutely

make it difficult. I think it's the disruption to the class that might make it more

difficult more so, than the training of the teacher or the expertise of the teacher.

The trust thing, right? They're just getting to trust.

When Cindy was asked about how she perceived student achievement to influence her retention decisions, she responded:

I'd like to say that doesn't, but it gets discouraging after a while and you notice that your students are not bothering showing up and then you have to spend more time calling their parents, reaching out, reaching out again and reaching out again. It gets really tiresome.

Contrary to Cindy's perception's, Lily perceived the influence of student achievement on her retention decision differently:

My satisfaction is whether the kids master something, I don't care whether it is going to reach my curriculum outcomes, I just want them to get into the next grade […] because the whole school is developing the same way.

Most participants perceived student achievement to be below average, often within the range of several grade levels below. The need for extensive use of differentiation as well as teaching multi-grade levels in a single-grade classroom with students of the same age was perceived to be a point of professional frustration for some of the participants. Laura mentioned:

You don't get a chance to actually teach and I think for someone coming out of university, they are gung ho on all of this wonderful teaching they are going to do and they don't even get an opportunity to try any of it. So it's very frustrating."

Other participants perceived academic delay to be directly connected to building relationships as well as the classroom and learning climate.

Theme from the Analysis of Reasons for Staying

Boylan (1993) described within-classroom activities as influences that relate to satisfaction with teaching, as well as the level of commitment to teaching. In addition, Plunkett and Dyson (2011) discovered that many novice teachers in rural schools accept positions in rural schools without the commitment to remain employed there, let alone invest time to establish meaningful relationships.

Throughout the collected data emerged the theme altruism and adventure, related to reasons for staying that was connected to within-classroom and whole-school activities. This theme was related to the first research question "How do novice teachers' perceptions of satisfaction with the school environment influence their decision to stay or leave during their first two years of teaching?"

Participants connected reasons for staying to shortages of teaching positions in other provinces. Many participants applied for a position in the research school because of such shortage. Gloria mentioned the need for a job as well as an adventure, "There were not any full-time positions available where I am from. I needed an adventure in my elementary training." Other participants also mentioned the need for a job, as Miriam illustrated, "When I applied for the current position I am in now is was based solely on the fact that I was in desperate need of a job." Shirley added to the job shortage secondary reasons, "The main reasons for applying up north was because there is

generally a high turnover rate, many expenses are covered or subsidized, and the pay is pretty good."

Some participants explained a connection to northern communities, as Cindy mentioned, "I had spent a little time in a northern community during my youth." General interest in working with First Nations and Metis people were mentioned by Josy, who stated, "I have a strong interest in native communities, especially children." Such statements were further described by her as feelings of altruism and wanting to do the right "thing". Janet described such feelings by saying, "I enjoyed my teaching because I was able to make a difference socially and academically."

All participants were asked if they would re-apply for a position in a remote school now that they had experienced working in a remote school and living in isolation. Many participants mentioned reasons for staying, including Lily, who said, "yes, I have a sense of adventure and altruism, and I enjoy the interaction with students." Another participant indicated that "the people [in the community] are kind and accepting." Gloria specified the type of remote school she would like to work in, "I would not live in a fly-in community. This community is different, but you can drive out when you need to."

Some participants mentioned reasons for staying that are directly connected to within-classroom activities as well as a sense of altruism. Miriam described how she combined her passion with teaching, "I very much enjoy teaching novel studies. Many of the kids are not exposed to novels as they cannot read or do not have access to books at home." Janet described another altruistic reason for enjoying being in a remote school that can be connected to social studies, "When they ask me questions about different

cultures." One participant stated that he enjoyed working in the remote school, because
he can take his curriculum to the outdoors, "[I enjoy the] ability to teach courses I am
passionate about such as Wildlife Management and Northern Life Styles."

One of the most inclusive descriptions for reasons to stay teaching in a remote
school shared by participants came from Gloria, who described,

> It is not about the money or about the impressive math marks, but about making a
> difference in these students' lives for the good. It is about doing curriculum but
> also about kindness, friendships with each other, and learning to have confidence
> in themselves. […] Here, we deal with crazy situations and do the best we can
> with what we have at the moment. I couldn't see myself starting my career
> anywhere else.

Discrepant Case

The above results about the perceptions of novice teachers that influence their
decisions to remain or leave their current position in a remote school included within-
classroom and whole-school activities. During the interview, participants framed their
responses to fit with activities in the classroom and the school. As the interview
continued, three participants included a different perception why continuing teaching in
the remote school would not be considered: family factors. Although this perception can
be connected to a different part of Boylan's (1993) conceptual framework (Family
Factors), the data did not fit with the guiding research questions. The following
statements were discrepant cases, as they provided additional information about
perceptions novice teachers had for remaining or leaving their position in the remote

school. Lily mentioned that relationships with staff and community members would not necessarily influence her retention decisions, but that her family needs did, "My family at home is higher on my priority." Shirley responded to the question if she would return next year to the school with a different reason connected to family factors, "Probably not. I hate to use the word never, but things are getting more difficult at home with me being away." Related to family factors, Simon stated:

> If it's a young person who's looking to have a relationship and start a family, they're probably not going to do it here. If you have a young family, you're probably okay here, but once the kids get to a certain age, they don't want them picking up the traditions that our students have. So they don't want to be here.

The analysis of the collected data in this project study resulted in two major themes reasons for leaving and reasons for staying. Participants shared many perceptions on within-classroom activities and whole-school activities that negatively influenced their retention decisions for remaining or leaving their current position. Besides the perceptions mentioned for these two themes, a few participants provided reasons that were not related to the guiding research questions. These discrepant cases were mentioned separately.

Salient Data

Data gathered from the participants disclosed an area where needs of novice teachers in this remote school were unmet. This area was related to relevant support from school division consultants, but not entirely compatible with whole-school activities. Five participants mentioned that they were aware of the roles of school division

consultants, but were confused about how to access such supports. Cindy mentioned that she would like to receive specific support for challenged learners by stating, "Some of my students really need help that I cannot give them. Whom can I ask? I know consultants visit schools, but it is difficult to know exactly which consultant to ask for help." Miriam shared similar perceptions but also adds that sometimes consultants have different views, "This consultant recommends doing it so, but the other consultant says it needs to be done this way. I am confused. What do I do?" In addition, Josy mentioned that supports from consultants was very well received, but sometimes difficult to schedule, "I do not really have time left to schedule necessary meetings with consultants. I want to, but when?"

One participant who was a school administrator mentioned that supports from consultants was sometimes difficult to access, "Consultants have more than 20 schools to visit. I know my teachers need help, but supports are difficult to schedule as other schools need help as well." Another participant who was a teacher also recognized difficulties with scheduling, by reflecting on a previous meeting with a consultant, "The meeting was very good but a bit rushed. I which we had more time to look at these important strategies for my students."

Supports from consultants did not directly fit with whole-school activities as consultants are not part of the school team. Nevertheless, these supports were perceived as important, and were included in the project proposal in section 3.

The following paragraph describes these findings in more detail, organized by each of the six guiding research questions. These findings are also connected to the

conceptual framework from Boylan (1993) used in this study. Where possible,

recommendations for a possible project were highlighted.

Discussion about the Results

The purpose of this study was to determine perceptions of teachers on classroom

and school-related activities that influenced their decisions to remain or leave a

permanent teaching position in their current school in Precambrian School Division

(PSD). These perceptions were framed through the conceptual framework from Boylan

(1993) as well as six guiding research questions, using a holistic single-case study design

(Yin, 2013).

Triangulation of data sources (Patton, 2002) and a member checking procedure

were used to address the accuracy of the data. The different components of the data

collection were compared for similarities and differences, from there they were coded

and themed. A summary of the findings was emailed to each participant to provide an

opportunity for reflection and feedback on the results. In addition, a peer debriefer

provided constructive feedback during the data collection, as well about the thought

patterns that appeared during the analysis. The peer debriefer also provided feedback on

how the participants were described in section two, to ensure the identity of each

participant was protected.

The first guiding question in this project study addressed perceptions of

satisfaction with the school environment and the influence on decisions to stay or leave

during their first two years of teaching. Boylan (1993) described whole school activities

educators perform and engage in outside of the classroom. Most participants described

the school environment as of negative influence on their retention decisions. Challenges with access to professional development, difficult relationships with colleagues, as well as inconsistent support from educational leadership were perceived as of major influence. In addition, the realization from many participants about their lack of feeling prepared to work in a remote school influenced their retention decisions negatively as well.

The second guiding question in this project study addressed perceptions about how within classroom activities affect the learning climate in their classroom. These were activities that were connected to everyday teaching in the classroom that influenced the ability for students to learn and develop skills in the most optimal setting. Boylan (1993) described within-classroom activities as influences that relate to satisfaction with teaching, as well as the level of commitment to teaching. Similar to aspects in the school environment, participants perceived often difficult relationships with colleagues and educational leadership to influence the learning climate. In addition, many participants perceived behavioral choices of students and significant challenges with classroom management to negatively affect the learning climate in the classroom. Such challenges were also perceived to influence retention decisions for leaving the current teaching position.

Student achievement was another within-classroom activity as classified by Boylan (1993). The third guiding question focused on how novice teachers' perceptions about student achievement in the school influence their decisions to stay or leave during their first two years of teaching?" focused specifically on student achievement. Most participants perceived the student achievement to be below to very below, increasing the

difficulty of the everyday teaching tasks. Many participants mentioned that single-grade

designated classrooms were more multi-grade classrooms due to the extreme variations in

the academic development of students. Such variety resulted in many participants

experiencing challenges with teaching and choosing differentiated strategies.

The fourth guiding question examined which types of leadership supports related

to classroom and school activities novice teachers perceived as being important for new

teachers. This question was connected to Boylan's (1993) within-classroom activities as

well as the whole-school activities. Leadership support in this study was described as

professional support structures including access to professional development, as well as

preparation programs participants had participated in. Support structures, including the

induction program in Precambrian School Division (PSD) as well as the lack of

preparation in university for teaching in a remote school were perceived as inadequate.

Participants mentioned a need for a sequenced different induction system that would

focus on specific skills needed in classrooms in remote schools, including learning how

to manage multi-grade classrooms spread. In addition, participants mentioned the need

for a structured mentoring system for novice teachers in remote schools. Both

components were combined in a project described in section 3 of this study.

Guiding question five focused on perceptions of novice teachers on the assistance

they receive from school administrators. This question was connected to research

question four as it covered administrator leadership related to within-classroom activities

(Boylan, 1993). Most participants perceived the administrative leadership to be

inconsistent, mainly due to the fact that administrators had to spread their time among the

various daily challenges. Some participants perceived trust between staff and administrators to be challenging. Both factors were perceived to influence opportunities for support in the classroom, as well as opportunities to attend professional development sessions, especially when school leadership mentioned the lack of substitute teachers available for coverage. Some participants mentioned that trust and inconsistent support were main reasons why they would not remain in their current position.

The last guiding question looked at which types of professional development topics related to classroom and school activities were perceived as being important for newly hired teachers. Most participants expressed the need for knowledge about the cultural heritage and beliefs of student populations in remote schools. Such knowledge was perceived to be school specific and therefore was not perceived as a component of an induction system. Rather, some participants expressed the need for school-specific training on classroom management to enhance skills of novice teachers that may influence the learning climate positively. Many participants perceived training in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NVCI) and Restorative Practices as essential for managing challenging student behaviors.

Although the perception of most participants provided evidence for each of the guiding questions, the majority of the perceptions fell into the major theme of reasons for leaving. Some of the participants also indicated reasons for staying and provided suggestions for future direction to possible impact social change. The following sub-section summarizes the findings.

Conclusion

In Section 2 of the project study, I provided a detailed overview of the research methodology, followed by a detailed description of the findings and conclusions of this project study. I used a qualitative, holistic single-case study design to explore the perceptions of novice teachers in northern remote rural public schools on their decision to remain or leave their current position in remote schools in PSD, based on with-in classroom and with-in school environment influences. Purposeful sampling identified 12 participants.

As a data collection strategy, I used a qualitative questionnaire and semistructured interviews. First cycle and second cycle coding were used to transform data into emerging themes for presenting findings as well as to frame conclusions about the research findings to answer the research questions and to address the gap in practice addressed in Section 1. Findings were sorted into two major themes, reasons for leaving, and reasons for staying. Most participants perceived the whole-school and within-classroom activities to be of negative influence on their retention decisions as many participants indicated more reasons for leaving than reasons for staying in the remote school. Inconsistent professional support structures, challenging classroom climates, as well as the need for extensive and unreasonable differentiated instruction, were perceived as largest contributors for reasons for leaving. Reasons for staying included the need for a job, a sense of adventure, as well as perceptions of altruism.

In Section 3 of this project study, I describe the details of project outcome that is based on my findings and a subsequent literature review related to my findings. I intend

for this project to address potential problems found within the current professional

support structure in the research school.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

I have developed a professional development plan as the project outcome of this study to address the retention issues as framed by the results of my research and my exploration of the recent literature related to these results. This professional development plan consisted of a document describing teacher retention, accompanied by a sequence of three professional development sessions about supporting novice teachers in remote schools. This professional support structure provided specific knowledge to retain teachers to provide a consistent and stable learning environment for students. Furthermore, the project provides the basis for a professional coaching structure that was separated from summative and evaluative procedures by school administrators. The project goals connected directly to findings from this project study, as presented below.

In this qualitative single-case holistic case study, I explored how perceptions of novice teachers in a remote school influenced their decisions to remain or leave a permanent teaching position in their current school, PSD. These perceptions were gathered through a qualitative survey and a semistructured interview with 12 participants. The findings indicated more reasons for leaving than staying in a current position in a remote school. Participant's perceptions for leaving their current position included an inconsistent professional support structure, challenging classroom climates, and extensive and unreasonable expectations to differentiate instruction. The perceptions for reasons for staying included the need for a job, a sense of adventure, as well as perceptions of altruism.

In Section 3, I describe the mentoring program and list of recommendations to assist novice teachers in a remote school in their job as it relates to Boylan's within-school and whole-school activities (1993). In addition, I provide details from the literature review that guided my project development. In the literature review, I showed what quality supports for novice teachers entailed, supported by a conceptual framework.

Appendix A contains the project. Following the perceptions of novice teachers in PSD, I designed a professional development plan that included three professional development sessions, background information, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, and evaluation tools for creating a structured mentoring system for retaining teachers to provide a consistent and stable learning environment for students. This professional development plan was intended for mentors of novice teachers, to gain understanding what kinds of supports novice teachers may need to further develop an identity as a professional educator, to influence student achievement positively, as well as to impact the classroom climate.

Description and Goals

Because I choose professional development about mentoring novice teachers as the project for this study, this plan focused on setting up a structure for providing professional supports to novice teachers. Several elements of within-school and whole school activities (Boylan, 1993) that were perceived as reasons for leaving a teaching position at a remote school were addressed in this plan. These perceived reasons were inconsistent support from school leaders and colleagues, challenging classroom climates, as well as extensive and unreasonable expectations to differentiate instruction to address

the needs of students. All these perceived challenges were implemented by combining

elements from the conceptual framework from Wood and Stanulis (2009) and a

mentoring structure from Boogren (2015). When implemented, this project may assist

novice teachers with mentoring and support that has been separated from a formal

evaluative support structure by school leaders.

The project consisted of a three full-day professional development session,

focusing on establishing a framework for ongoing mentoring through the rest of the

school year. This framework was based on a conceptual framework from Wood and

Stanulis (2009), which consisted of criteria for educated mentors, reflective inquiry and

teaching processes, systematic and structured observations, formative teacher assessment,

administrator involvement, and school culture supports. Each of these components

connected to perceptions participants shared in the current project study.

In addition to the three full-day professional development sessions, an example

schedule was provided to guide an ongoing mentoring system throughout the school year.

These sessions and schedule followed a framework from Boogren (2015) that specified

the need for supports in four distinct areas, physical support, emotional support,

institutional support, and instructional support.

Three goals were identified to support this professional development plan. The

first goal was to create a framework for a structured mentoring system for providing

consistent support for novice teachers in the remote research school. The second goal of

this project was for the participants (mentors) to acquire specific and relevant knowledge

and support that would assist novice teachers in creating a learning climate in which the

diverse needs of students in the research school could be met. The third goal was to provide novice teachers a professional coaching structure that was separated from summative and evaluative procedures by school administrators, in order to reduce perceived fear that resulted from perceived inconsistent professional support structures.

Rationale

Mentoring structures and induction systems have been widely used in North America in diverse forms, yet the effectiveness was yet to be determined (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Long, 2009; Long et al., 2012). Effective and supportive leadership from principals was found positively to influence teacher retention and attrition (Carlson, 2012; Grissom, 2011; Wynn et al., 2007). Participants in this study perceived the professional support structured to be inconsistent. They indicated the need for a structure that would provide quality supports, including consistent support from school leaders as well as support from mentors beyond the regular instructional and planning sessions that were held. Designing a mentoring system following a conceptual framework from Wood and Stanulis (2009) about quality indicators of an effective mentoring system, combined with an applied method from Boogren (2015) may address some of the perceived needs participants in this project study shared.

Review of the Literature

This subsection contains a review of scholarly literature on the topic of professional support structures for novice teachers. In particular, themes describing mentoring structures and connected supports were found in the literature that were of influence on teacher retention and attrition decisions. These themes were connected

findings from this project study as described in section two, as well as to Boylan's (1993) model for teacher retention, and to the conceptual framework from Wood and Stanulis (2009) for creating a professional development plan for providing mentoring support to novice teachers. The purpose of this literature review was to provide a background of the research presented about professional support structured for novice educators. In this subsection I described the conceptual framework used in this study, as well as a summary of broad themes for creating professional support structures for novice teachers. The broad themes were then narrowed down to connect to elements of the conceptual frameworks from Boylan (1993) and Wood and Stanulis (2009).

Strategy Used for Searching the Literature

I completed a review of the literature on supporting novice teachers through a comprehensive search through the Walden University library. A large body of articles was found using the search terms *mentoring novice teachers, preservice teacher preparation, mentor relationship, learning communities, sustaining teachers, early career teachers, mentoring beginning teachers, teacher socialization, cooperating teacher, beginning teacher induction, professional development for novice teachers, teacher development, developmental mentoring, administrator roles, mentor teachers*. Several databases were used to find current research articles, including Thoreau, ERIC, Education Research Complete, Academic Research Complete, and Sage. After reading the abstract, each article was categorized in the online database management system Zotero. The articles were printed per broad category and read and analyzed entirely.

Conceptual Framework

One of the findings of this project study was the perceived absenteeism of a professional support structure for novice teachers. Some of the participants perceived that the little support they were provided could be improved by a more comprehensive mentoring system. Wood and Stanulis (2009) provided a description of such a comprehensive mentoring system, "quality induction systems are delineated by their comprehensive systems of organization" (p. 1). This description included educative mentor assistance, professional development, and formative assessment of novice teachers in their first through third years of teaching. Wood and Stanulis created the following definition for quality teacher induction, "a multi-faceted process of teacher development and novice teacher's continued learning-to-teach through an organized professional development program of educative mentor support and formative assessment" (2009, p. 3). This definition and conceptual framework were used to frame a review of the current professional literature around structured supports for novice teachers.

Martin (2013) described in his dissertation that novice teachers were in need of more types of supports from their mentor than just administrative support. Although Martin stated that administrative support is necessary, he also indicated the need for new teacher supports in other areas, including conversations about the curriculum, differentiation for meeting student needs, learning communities, and dealing with parents (Feiman-Nesmer, 2003; Hallam et al., 2012; Kardos & Johnson, 2010). Providing such quality supports was confirmed by Richter et al. (2013). They found that the quality of

mentoring explained the successful start of a career of a novice teacher much better than the frequency of mentoring sessions. Such combination of quality supports fit with Wood and Stanulis' multifaceted process for a professional support structure.

Boogren (2015) designed a multifaceted process of professional supports by categorizing supports in four groups: physical supports, emotional supports, instructional supports, and institutional supports. Many of these supports fit well with the whole-school and within-classroom activities from the conceptual framework from Boylan (1993). The categories also covered analyzed perceptions of teachers in this project study. Following Boogren's professional support structure through the lens of Wood and Stanulis conceptual framework (2009), but limiting to whole school and within classroom activities (Boylan 1993), a review of literature to inform a project will be summarized in the following paragraphs.

Quality Supports

Much of the literature reviewed on induction systems focused on formal principles of mentoring (Clandinin et al, 2012). Other researchers looked also at a combination of formal and more informal forms of mentoring (Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009; Hellsten, Prytula, Ebank, & Lai, 2009). The conceptual framework used (Wood and Stanulis,2009) described formal mentoring structures that described nine quality supports components:

1. Educative mentor's preparation and mentoring of novice teachers.

2. Reflective inquiry and teaching practices.

3. Systematic and structured observations.

4. Developmentally appropriate professional development.

5. Formative teacher assessment.

6. Administrator involvement in induction.

7. A school culture supportive of novice teachers.

8. Program evaluation and/or research on induction.

9. A shared vision of knowledge, teaching, and learning.

Components two and seven fit with Boylan's (1993) within-classroom activities. Components four, six, and nine connect to Boylan's whole-school activities. The other components fall somewhat outside of Boylan's framework for teacher retention but were deemed important enough to discuss below as well.

Furthering Wood and Stanulis' work, Gillingham (2011) condensed this list into Identification and Training of Appropriate Educative Mentors, Effective Professional Development Plans, Target Feedback, and Supportive School Culture. Each of these components had a direct link to Boylan's (1993) within-classroom and whole school activities. Following Boylan's framework, the identification and training of mentors and a supportive school culture could be tied to the further development of positive relationships with colleagues, while effective professional development plans could assist with strengthening teaching skills during within-classroom activities.

High-quality support systems in North America were considered as essential by various researchers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). When novice teachers were placed in conditions without high-quality supports, for example teaching in a classroom with a high student and teacher ratio or in a classroom with students with

special educational needs or behavioral difficulties, novice teachers were likely to fail (Patterson, 2005; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Many of these conditions and supports were found to be within the responsibility of school administrators, who had a key role in creating and sustaining a supportive school culture (Barreraa, Braleyb & Slate, 2013). One administrative quality support was formative assessment and targeted feedback (Gillingham, 2011; Wood & Stanulis, 2009) that could assist with making educators feel more confident of their teaching practice (Winstead Fry, 2009). Such assessment and reflection may also be done by mentors who were trained in effective mentoring.

Mentors who had received specific training in how to be a quality mentor tended to reflect on their professional practice from which they could develop a better understanding of the struggles their mentees went through (Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009). For instance, such mentors also benefited from receiving specific training in empathic listening skills (Young & Cates, 2010).

Hobson and Malderez (2013) found that mentoring novice teachers without the appropriate conditions for effective mentoring could lead to what they described as judgemental mentoring, or "judgementoring" (p. 2). Judgementoring happens when a mentor judges the work of a mentee. Rather than judging, mentors may adopt supportive roles, including being an educator, a model, or a provider of emotional support. In addition to being in a supportive role, mentors often found that the scheduled time to provide comprehensive mentoring was too limiting, preventing the development of good mentor and mentee relationships (Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009; Piggot-Irvine et al., 2009)

Wood and Stanulis (2009) described the above supportive roles as assisting novice teachers with their development by interaction "in ways that help them learn in and from their practice" (p. 5) through observation, reflection, assessment, and planning and coteaching. Barreraa, Braley and Slate (2013) provided a similar description of mentoring, being "Mentoring occurs when a senior person (the mentor in terms of age and experience) provides information, advice and emotional support to a junior person (i.e., the mentee) in a relationship lasting over an extended period of time" (p. 63). Perry and Hayes (2011) suggested that such period lasted between two and three years. From the two descriptions of mentoring provided, elements connected to the perception of teachers as described in section two of this research project. Such perceptions included the need for emotional support and the need for providing information (reflection).

Mentor Relationships

Russell and Russell (2011) found that most mentors of student interns did not receive "comprehensive or coordinated preparation" (p. 1) for their mentor role. Being a mentor of a student intern could be considered different when it comes to the working relationship with the mentee. Mentoring student interns may be more supervisory whereas mentoring a colleague could follow the supporting framework as defined by Wood and Stanulis (2009). Yet, the same term *mentoring* was often referred to in the literature to describe both forms of mentoring.

Mentoring according to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), who referred to Zey's mutual benefits model (1984), suggested that both mentor and mentee entered into a mentoring agreement as long as both parties benefit from this agreement. In addition, Zey also

suggested that the school organization as a whole could also benefit from such mentor and mentee relationship, especially for creating a shared vision of knowledge, teaching, and learning (Wood & Stanulis, 2009).

The development of a professional relationship between mentor and mentee started with matching a mentor with a mentee. Findings of this project study revealed that participants saw challenges with matching mentors and mentees for reasons such as personality differences. Establishing a mentor and mentee relationship was determined not to be without difficulties. Baker-Doyle (2010) found that many mentoring systems such as induction programs focused more on providing administrative support than on assisting teachers in developing relational skills such as collaboration and shared teaching. Such collaboration skills and shared teaching practices are currently driving educational practices (Marzano, 2007), and can greatly assist novice teachers with moving from being a professional student to a professional educator. Therefore, Barlin (2010) suggested that school leaders should be tasked with finding high-quality veteran teachers who wanted to focus on establishing a relationship with a mentee as well as to provide instructional supports. These mentors could then mentor novice teachers following a school or school division framework that would be beneficial for mentees as well as the school as a whole. This finding was consistent with research by Piggot-Irvine et al. (2009) who found that the right match between mentor and mentee was an aspect of a respected mentor program. Besides differences in personality as perceived by the participants in this project study, Piggot-Irvine et al. suggested that school leaders also investigate factors such as mentoring experience, mentee's preferences, teaching areas, as

well as the proximity of support availability. Iriniga-Bistolas, Schalock, Marvin, and Beck (2007) studied the importance of proximity of supports was confirmed by novice special education teachers who reported that their needs were met better by mentors in the same building).

Feedback and Reflection

Participants in this project study perceived reflection and feedback from school leaders as well as asking for professional supports to be inconsistent and sometimes a daunting task. Reflection and feedback from others in the school were often perceived summative rather than formative. Research on reflection structures for novice teachers revealed that such opportunities for professional dialog were essential for creating a professional identity as an educator (Cook, 2009; McCormack, Gore, and Thomas, 2006).

Teaching in remote areas such as the school in this project study made accessing opportunities for reflection by others outside the school to be limited. One option that was identified during the interviews was the use of offsite mentoring, possibly through an online conferencing system. The literature on providing feedback and reflection through digital means such as video conferencing was limited. One study West et al. (2009) found that the use of video recording analysis was limited as teachers were experiencing difficulties identifying their own teaching attributes. Lieberman and Pointer-Mace (2010) revealed that the use of other digital representations of the teaching practice of novice teachers assisted in a better understanding of the teaching complexities in everyday teaching. Due to the limited amount of research found around offsite support systems, it

was hypothesized that more traditional feedback systems such as observations may be more beneficial for novice teachers.

Mentee Observation

The research on benefits of mentee observations by a mentor was found to be inconclusive. Wood and Stanulis (2009) included in their description of quality supports for novice teachers the use of systematic and structured observations. Scanning through mentoring and induction systems currently available for schools, it was found that many of these included some form of observation (Clandinin, 2012). Although observations were perceived to be beneficial for novice teachers, researchers in two studies found limited effect of formal observations of novice teachers (Roehrig, Bonn, Turner & Pressley, 2008; Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008) when compared to mentoring programs without an observation structure. In addition, Yusko and Feiman-Nemser (2008) also found that observations as analyzed through the perceptions of mentors had a negative impact on the quality of the mentor and mentee relationship. Contrary, Hudson (2013) found that observation did contribute as a tool for reflection and professional development when connected to current pedagogical knowledge.

Leadership Roles

Clandinin et al (2012) found that the research connecting the school leaders to teacher retention in general was very limited. Participants in this project study perceived the supports provided by school leaders as inconsistent and sometimes threatening. As outlined in section 1 of this project study, the role of school leaders evolved around the development of policy and hiring practices of new teachers and mentor selection. School

leaders were also connected to the evaluation of school induction programs (Brock & Chaitlin, 2008).

Clandinin et al (2012) found that novice teachers who were guided by school leaders on student learning, teaching practices, and building relationships were encountering fewer challenges than teachers who did not receive such support (2012). In addition, Boogren (2015) found that school leaders need to develop an understanding of "the unique perspectives and needs of beginning teachers" (p. 8). These needs followed Moir's (1999) five phases of emotional and mental challenges that may occur during the first year of teaching: (a) anticipation, (b) survival, (c) disillusion, (d) rejuvenation, and (e) reflection. Although many novice educators moved along this continuum of first-year teacher's attitude towards teaching, school leaders needed to recognize that novice teachers experience the full range of duties and responsibilities from their first day on (Moir, Barlin, Gless, & Miles, 2009) even when their skills were not yet matured enough to assume them.

Supporting Emergent Skills

Most of the participants in this project study perceived learning how to teach as an element of effective supports. Walder-De Vose (2010) confirmed these findings from a larger body of professional literature on perceptions of success in teaching. Such perceptions were support from mentors, colleagues, parents, and administrators, effective classroom management, reduced assignment and workload, availability of instructional resources, and student performance. Participants in this project study also mentioned many of these perceptions.

Connecting Boylan's framework for teacher retention, and in particular the within-classroom and whole-school activities (1993), teaching skills that fit with this framework were identified as classroom management, and support from other stakeholders, including strong school leadership. Many of such skills were found to fit with a practical mentoring framework from Boogren (2015), who organized various supports into physical supports, emotional supports, instructional supports, and institutional supports. Physical supports included mainly materials and logistical supports. These supports connect to whole-school activities, and only some participants in this project study perceived such as an area of need (communicating with parents).

Boogren (2015) categorized emotional supports to include strategies for teachers "who struggle to keep up with their workload" (p. 39). Participants in this project study perceived workload to be of negative influence on their job satisfaction, especially when they were expected to implement every aspect of their job roles (Moir, Barlin, Gless & Miles, 2009). The third category from Boogren's model (2015) was instructional support, which includes guidance from mentors on using effective instructional strategies and reflection on how to improve the level of expertise. Some of the participants in this project study perceived that the ongoing re-teaching of the same content to students was a reflection of teaching skills rather than a representation of the current level of performance of these students.

Although some of the participants reported that common planning sessions were held, none of the participants discussed guidance on effective instructional strategies and assistance with further developing teaching skills. Yet, Walder-De Vose (2010) found

such supports drivers for teaching success. The last category of supports Boogren's

model (2015) was institutional supports. These supports included ways to develop the

professional identity of novice educators by navigating them through connections within

the school, school division, as well as to become more involved in the organizational

aspect of education as a whole. Similar to providing feedback and reflection (Cook, 2009;

McCormack, Gore, & Thomas, 2006), institutional supports were found to assist more

experienced teachers in their progression from a novice teacher to a veteran through

working in collaborative teams (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Some of the participants in

this project study expressed the need to have a better understanding the school system.

Boogren (2015) described institutional supports as the right kinds of supports to address

that expressed needs, especially during times of the initial anticipation and survival

phases (Moir, 1999) and towards the end of the school year when reflection takes place to

make job retention decisions.

Summary of the Literature Review

In the he above summary review of the recent literature, I revealed several major

themes that could be connected to providing professional supports to novice teachers,

aiming at reducing teacher turnover and creating a positive classroom climate. Following

Wood and Stanulis (2009) multifaceted framework for a professional support structure

with quality supports, I reviewed the literature through the lens of Boylan's whole-school

and within-classroom activities (1993).

Major themes identified were quality supports, the relationship with the mentor,

feedback and reflection, observations, the role of the school leader, and emergent

teaching skills. Many of these themes were identified as being part of Boogren's (2015) applied structure for mentoring support, which included four categories of support. Each of these categories connected to findings from this project study as reported in section 2 in the following ways. The first category of Boogren's supports was physical supports. These types of support assisted teachers with the material and physical needs that they have. Participants in this study revealed perceptions about acquiring supports for creating a positive classroom climate. The second category of support was emotional supports. Many participants in this study perceived a need for emotional support, as they were struggling with trust, and perceived a toxic relationship with colleagues. In addition, participant perceived supports from school leadership as being inconsistent and often threatening. The third category included supports for instructional procedures, to assist teachers with developing evidence-based teaching practices.

Participants in this study perceived the classroom climate as well as the inconsistent supports to influence student achievement directly. Some participants perceived the need for more direct instructional supports about teaching in a remote school. The final category of supports focused on institutional supports for assisting teachers in developing their professional identity. Some of the participants shared that they perceived to be held back from pursuing professional opportunities that would further develop their skills. These four categories of supports are consisted with what Wood and Stanulis (2009) describe as quality supports for developing a structured mentoring support system, and justify inclusion in a professional development plan for supporting novice teachers.

As shown above, the examination of theory and research supported the development of a professional development plan in the form of a mentoring system as a professional support structure. Such mentoring system could address the perceived needs of novice teachers in PSD, and may affect teacher turnover and classroom climates. Findings from this study evidently pointed to the perceived need for a consistent and professional support structure for novice teachers in remote schools. Consequently, I developed a comprehensive professional development program that may increase teacher job satisfaction, reduce teacher turnover, and provide novice teachers with additional tools to influence the classroom climate positively.

Implementation

Based on findings in this project study as detailed in section two as well as supported by recent professional literature, I designed a comprehensive professional development plan as a professional support structure for the research school in Precambrian School Division. (PSD). This professional development program consisted of three sessions, focusing on three aspects of Boogren's framework for supporting beginning teachers (2015). The first session introduced participants to findings from this project study and findings from recent literature to frame the professional support structure through the lens of the conceptual frameworks used in this study. The second session focused on introducing participants to the two specific types of supports novice teachers can benefit from (Boogren, 2015) including examples and response strategies for mentors and mentees. Session three deepened knowledge of the content introduced in session two by connecting the experiences from mentors through reflection, as well as

case study reflection and response. This session also introduces two other specific types of supports from Boogren's model (2015).

Concerning the implementation timeframe, I projected that the beginning of the school year 2016-2017 would be an appropriate start, since the research school does currently not have a policy in place for providing consistent support. Therefore, the school year 2015-2015 could be used to develop a policy and practice document as an administrative policy to further frame the project as well as to provide enough resources to support and sustain the professional support structure.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

Within Precambrian School Division (PSD), various locally developed methods for supporting novice teachers existed, as well as an integral teacher induction system at the beginning of each school year. Both these resource were perceived as inadequate by participants in this project study but could be considered part of a revised administrative policy throughout PSD. In addition, PSD specialist consultants in various portfolios could be considered as veteran teachers and expert mentors for providing supports to novice teachers in the area of institutional support. Such supports could be extended to the regular supports that these consultants already provide to schools in PSD.

Potential Barriers

One potential barrier for effective mentoring that was identified during data analysis was the ratio of novice teachers to veteran teachers. In PSD, the majority of teachers in remote schools have less than 4 years of teaching experience. Besides limited exposure to teaching, and often limited to one after-internship school only, most of these

teachers did not have any formal training in professional mentoring of colleagues as their mentoring experience is based on the type of mentorship they experienced during their internships. The burden of selecting veteran teachers therefore lies with the school leaders, who most likely would need to select mentors who have been teaching in the school for more than 5 years. That limits the number of qualified staff to provide quality support as outlined in this project study. These same veteran teachers were often locals from the community with different cultural background and different educational values that may make it challenging for the school leaders to match novice teachers with mentors who choose the mentor role rather than being appointed one (Barlin, 2010).

A second barrier would be the structure of the allocated time. Currently, mentoring does not have a designated slot on the administrative calendar. Adding the mentoring task to the calendar of mentors and mentees may be seen as an add-on, while replacing another task with the mentor structure may be perceived as removing another important task in favor of mentoring. A solution to this barrier may be to remove some of the teaching duties of mentors and mentees to have those covered by another teacher using team teaching or collaborative teaching (Dufour & Marzano, 2011).

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

Upon final approval of this project study, a copy of the dissertation will be presented to the administrators in the research school, as well as to the director of education of Precambrian School Division (PSD) to consider implementing the project proposal after administrative policy has been created. Following the framework as outlined in the project (see Appendix A) is important to allow for limited interference that

may affect the effectiveness of the project. Since PSD does currently not have a structured professional support system in place, I am anticipating that the school leaders as well as the director of education will be in favor of implementing the framework as is, may it be as a trial project.

Timetable and Content Distribution

The professional development plan is constructed to be implemented at the beginning of the school year. The implementation of the professional development starts with the selection of mentors by school leaders. When remote schools have a high turnover, the number of experienced teachers for mentor roles may be limited. However, experienced teachers should be selected for providing quality supports. Beutel and Spooner-Lane (2009) found that when teachers had received specific training in how to be a quality mentor, they tended to reflect on their professional practice from which they could develop a better understanding of the struggles their mentees went through. Inexperienced teachers selected as mentors may not possess such understanding due to their own limited exposure to the teaching profession. Appendix A contains a checklist of quality indicators to consider when selecting mentors.

The second component of the professional development plan is around self-study using the background information in Appendix A. This information assists mentors in creating an understanding of teacher turnover in remote schools, as well as the types of quality supports that can be provided to novice teachers. In addition, the information provides the lens through which the mentoring system was designed. Mentors can also

use that information to educate their mentee(s) about teacher turnover and supports, as well as to explain the structure of the support that is available to novice teachers.

Three professional development sessions were designed to build on the background information. These sessions assist in preparing mentors for providing various types of quality supports using a structured approach (Boogren, 2015; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). The following paragraphs describe each of the professional development sessions. Slides and handouts can be found in appendix A.

The first professional development session should be implemented during the first day of the school year, preferably before students are at school. The goals of professional development session one are to deepen knowledge about teacher retention and supports, and to provide opportunities for staff to reflect on the local school setting as it connects to the presented theory. This session also introduced the various influences from Boylan's model of teacher retention (1993) on teacher turnover. This information may assist mentors in separating influences they may not have control over (community influences as well as family and personal influences) from influences in the classroom and school that may be controlled by school staff and other stakeholders. The theory component of session one can be completed during one morning, whereas the reflection component as well as a guided discussion about the theory and how it connects to the local school can be completed in the afternoon sessions.

The second professional development session's goals are to gain knowledge about physical and institutional supports for novice teachers, as well as to connect physical and institutional supports to their school setting by identifying opportunities for providing

such supports. This session should be offered right after session one. Participants will learn about two specific types of supports as described by Boogren (2015: physical supports and institutional supports. The session looks at different types of physical and institutional supports mentors can provide to novice teachers, for example assistance with arranging classrooms, or a tour of the school building. The morning session looks at physical supports, whereas the afternoon session looks at institutional supports. Since this professional development session looks at various forms of these supports, school teams should localize the content of this session, especially when specific or specialized physical supports are required. An example of such supports could be explaining how a hoist would work to lift a student out of a wheelchair (physical supports). An example would be the creation of a list of outside agencies or school division consultants who can provide additional professional development opportunities for novice teachers (institutional support). Session 2 directly connects to within-school activities from Boylan's model for teacher retention (1993).

The third professional development session's goals are to gain knowledge about emotional and instructional supports for novice teachers, and to connect emotional and instructional supports to their school setting by identifying opportunities for providing such supports. This session should also be provided at the beginning of the school year, especially the component about providing emotional supports for novice teachers, before a teacher slides into what Moir (1999) called the initial anticipation and survival phases. The afternoon session is about instructional strategies, and provides examples of instructional supports mentors can provide to mentees. This session also provides an

opening for mentors to explore cognitive coaching, an in-depth model for providing instructional mentorship and leadership to novice teachers.

The handouts provided in appendix A are resources for mentors for ongoing mentoring sessions for novice teachers. These mentoring sessions can be diverse in frequency, although I recommend starting the school year with at least 2 to 3 sessions per week. The outline below can be used for creating a mentoring outline.

During week 1 mentors provide physical supports to help novice teachers setting up their classrooms, provide a comprehensive tour of the school grounds, as well as to familiarize the novice teachers with pertinent school administrative procedures. Mentors should also do a student file review with the teacher, providing background information about students and their contexts. In addition to physical supports, mentors can provide institutional supports, such as introducing school division resources and personnel. The frequency of the week 1 support should be every day, so that the novice teacher feels supported and can start to build confidence while getting used to the new school setting.

Starting in the week when students commence their classes, mentors should do frequent check-ins and provide a daily mentoring session so that novice teachers can reflect on their day, ask questions, and problem solve challenges that were not addressed in previous sessions. During these sessions, the mentor and mentee can also work on rearranging aspects of the classroom.

When classes for students start, the mentor should also start with providing emotional support in a pro-active manner. This may be best done by introducing a double-entry communication journal (see Appendix A). The mentee writes experiences

on the left side of a page and the mentor provides reflection on the right side of the page. Additionally, the mentor and mentee can work on celebrating successes to further build the mentee's confidence.

Mentors and mentee should do a needs-assessment once per week. Such needs assessments can be done while a mentor is observing the mentee or co-teaching a class. Another way to complete a needs assessment is by reflecting on the day, and documenting which of the four types of supports should be provided. When mentors identify a higher need for emotional supports, more frequent check-ins should be planned for (see handout 4 in Appendix A) and provided during times when the mentee is likely to be in need of support.

Collaborative sessions with all the mentors and mentees should be scheduled once per month. During these sessions, common themes of needs can be discussed and support strategies can be identified and shared. Additionally, mentors can start to provide common instructional supports that specifically emerged from working with mentors.

Once per month, mentors complete with mentees a formative evaluation. The Formative Evaluation for Mentors template and Formative Evaluation for Mentees template can be found in appendix A. This evaluation form looks specifically at the type of support that each mentee received, as well as the types of supports the mentors provided. After completing the evaluation forms, the mentors and the coordinator come together to analyze the evaluations using triangulation of data to set future directions for providing supports to novice teachers.

After the first year of implementation, the project framework needs to undergo a summative evaluation to determine how teachers perceived the professional supports. Participants in this summative evaluation are the novice teachers who received mentoring support, mentors, the coordinator, as well as a school administrator. This summative evaluation assesses how the professional development plan created a support structure for novice teachers, how the provided supports assisted novice teachers in influencing the classroom climate, as well as how the supports were perceived to be separated from involvement from school leaders. This evaluation can also be the start of documenting the effect of the project on teacher turnover and the classroom climate. Participants in this project will be asked to keep a journal to document positive experiences and potential challenges to be used for the evaluation. Specific information about the formative and summative evaluation can be found in the section Project Evaluation below.

Roles and Responsibilities

I have identified a leading role for one coordinator during the first year of the implementation of the project in the research school. The coordinator will be working together with the school mentors to coordinate the mentoring leadership. In addition, the role is connected to the school leaders who will be guided in how to support the project from their leadership roles. When possible, schools should use available personnel for the coordinator role. Suggestions for personnel for this role could be a resource teacher, career transition teacher, or any professional who is not assigned to a classroom full time.

One of the roles of the coordinator is also to educate school leaders and other participants in this project on what an effective mentor program and the impact in terms

of teacher turnover entails. The coordinator cannot only rely on the research I performed during this project study, as the research is in constant movement. Therefore, the coordinator should stay connected to the peer-reviewed literature on mentoring in schools, teacher turnover, as well as teaching in remote schools to ensure recent knowledge and new understandings of the problem as outlined in section one of this project study.

Another essential role is that of the mentors. Besides attending the three-day professional development training, mentors need to be available throughout the school year for providing any of the four types of supports. In addition, mentors do check-ins as planned using the check-in sheet in Appendix A, participate in debriefing and reflection sessions, as well as group sessions and evaluation sessions. Providing quality supports to novice teachers requires mentors to be flexible in their planning. Therefore, school leaders should when possible relieve mentors of extra-curricular activities, as well as tasks that would prevent mentors from providing quality supports.

A role for me could be assisting the school with the implementation of the project. This could be by providing research presentations, by providing clarification about any of the types of supports that are introduced in the project, or to be present during some or all of the professional development sessions. Additionally, my role can be supportive when I visit the school, or through phone support in times of need.

School leaders, including the superintendent of education can be asked to provide a timetable, organizational, and financial assistance, while this project is being implemented during the school year 2016-2017. School leaders will be asked to allow for

enough preparation time so that the project can be implemented without limitations. Clerical support from a school secretary may be requested by setting up a room for the three-day professional development session, as well as for duplicating materials.

Although it is not projected that the implementation of this professional development plan requires a large amount of additional funding, school leaders may be asked to provide a mentoring budget for hiring substitute educators when mentors and mentees are collaborating. The mentoring budget may also be used to purchase additional professional resources such as resources on cognitive coaching, literature around mentoring novice teachers in general, or books on reflective teaching practices. Some recommended literature is identified in a handout named Recommended Reading in appendix A.

Participants during the implementation phase of this project need to be open to asking for support as soon as they perceive a need for that. Collaboration with mentors as well as the coordinator is very important to allow honesty and sincerity to be important traits of during the mentoring relationship building. In addition, all participants will be requested to provide honest and detailed feedback, including a description of how the support from mentors, administrators, and me was perceived. Since all participants in this project are working towards making social change happen, effective collaboration is very important, a task that needs constant attention. Some novice teachers may not see a need for mentoring, yet all participants will be requested to participate during the full implementation year.

Project Evaluation

Because this evaluation plan will measure the attainment of the project goals and outcomes, the evaluation plan includes a variety of data sources including the perceptions of participants. To address how well the project created a support structure for mentors and teachers (goal 1), used to support novice teachers for creating a learning climate that addresses the diverse needs of students (goal 2), separated from a summative evaluation procedure by school administrators (goal 3), the evaluation plan includes formative and summative evaluation (see appendix A for evaluation forms). Ongoing formative evaluation is used to assess how the stakeholders are progressing the completion of planned actions and the outcomes of those actions (Killion & Roy, 2009). Summative evaluation is used to measure if the stakeholders succeeded in meeting the goals of this project. The formative and summative evaluation methods are discussed in the paragraphs below.

The first method of ongoing evaluation is formative, and assess how participants are progressing with the implementation of the professional development plan as a support structure (goal 1). Lodico et al. (2010) mentioned that formative assessment occurs while a project is being implemented. Such assessment will assist in providing detailed feedback while the project is in progress. Mentees are also asked to write reflection in a journal. These reflections are also used as formative evaluation. The formative evaluation is done once per month. Mentors request from mentees to complete the Formative Evaluation for Mentees (see Appendix A). This questionnaire measures the level of attainment of the professional development plan by looking at how the various

support components are perceived to be helpful for novice teachers. Additionally,

mentors complete a formative evaluation as well, the Formative Evaluation for Mentors

(a template can be found in Appendix A). This mentor evaluation also looks at how the

support structure is implemented (goal 1), and also how mentees are using the supports to

influence the classroom climate (goal 2). Mentors then collect the questionnaires for

analysis by the coordinator. Mentors are also requested to provide important information

from their observation notes, reflection notes, as well as important information from the

double-entry journals. Through triangulation of data sources, the coordinator determines

common themes. These themes are then discussed by the coordinator and mentors to set

the direction for ongoing mentoring, to improve the current structure, or to request

additional support from school division leaders.

The second evaluation method is summative, and is done at the end of the school

year. Participants will be asked to provide summative feedback using a survey to evaluate

the program content as well as the program goals. Lodico et al. (2010) mentioned that

summative assessment could measure outcomes, which may result in positive and

negative evaluation feedback. At the end of the school year, mentors ask the mentees to

complete a summative evaluation. In this summative evaluation, mentees respond to

questions about how the professional development plan assisted with creating a support

structure (goal 1), how mentees used supports to enhance the classroom climate (goal 2),

and how the mentees experienced a support system that was separate from school

leadership (goal 3). The results of this summative evaluation will be analyzed by the

coordinator, who also uses the information that was found during the formative

evaluation for providing examples of themes that result from the summative evaluation.

Mentors are also asked to write a one-page reflection on the success of the mentoring

plan, including the professional development sessions that were conducted at the

beginning of the year. The final data source comes from school administrators, who will

be asked to reflect on how successful the mentoring program was implemented. All of

these data sources are analyzed through triangulating for finding major themes. The

summative themes provide important for the continued implementation of this

professional development plan. I am projecting that a positive evaluation will be

connected to lower teacher turnover, and secondly a better climate in the classroom.

However, any negative summative feedback should be taken into consideration so that

the program can be improved to address concerns as voiced by participants.

Although novice teachers are the key stakeholders, other stakeholders include

school administration. School administrators will be asked to reflect on whether they

observed the project affecting teacher turnover, including reasons that were provided for

increased or decreased teacher turnover. In addition, school administrators will be asked

to provide feedback how mentoring support has influenced the classroom climate.

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

I conducted this project study to explore perceptions of novice teachers about

reasons for remaining or staying in a remote school. One of the major findings was the

absence of professional support structures that were perceived as providing consistent

support to novice teachers. Following the perceptions of novice teachers about the need

for a comprehensive support structure, I designed a project that can provide support to novice teachers around classroom and school activities as well as other diverse duties of the teaching job. The elements in this project are supported by recent peer-reviewed literature and address some of the concerns expressed by participants in this project study. In addition, providing such supports can assist with creating a learning climate in the classroom that sets students up for more success experiences, thus decreasing the need for behavioral and other negative climate interventions.

Novice teachers in a remote school who receive mentoring through this structured project approach may positively influence their teaching methods, quality of instruction, classroom management strategies, as well as the overall climate in the classroom. These positive factors may influence teacher turnover in remote schools positively as novice teachers experience higher job satisfaction. When these teachers stay teaching in these remote schools, they create opportunities for better-developed social connections as they learn to understand the community and become a respected community participant. In addition to job satisfaction, novice teachers who stay teaching in remote schools may have a positive impact on student achievement as they develop imperative knowledge of who their learners are.

Far-Reaching

This project study focused on perceptions of novice teachers in one remote school, located in a geographical area that is unique and yet very similar to other remote locations in northern regions in Canada. Many schools in remote locations experience high teacher turnover. Teachers in these schools can benefit from support structures that

not only assist novice teachers with becoming familiar with the school setting, but also assists them in becoming high quality teachers who provide instruction in an engaging and positive classroom climate in a learning environment that may be very different from their own.

The interview questions that were guiding this study can be used by stakeholders in schools in other remote locations similar to the research school to determine perceptions of novice teachers that fit the predefined participant factors as explained in section 2. In addition, the project framework for providing a professional support structure for mentoring can be implemented in schools similar to the research school in Precambrian School Division (PSD). Such implementation can be done using the project as is, or it can be tailored to fit the exact needs that were expressed by novice teachers in the schools. Therefore, both the research design as well as the attached project may influence teacher turnover and classroom climates on a broader level than just in the research school.

Conclusion

In Section 3, I focused on the development of a project that was connected to findings in this project study. I conducted a literature review was to determine the project direction to address perceived challenges surrounding teacher turnover related to the purpose of this project study. Themes from the literature review revealed that quality supports through a structured mentoring system for novice teachers could be beneficial to reduce teacher turnover as well as improve the classroom climate. A conceptual framework guided the creation of a project consisting of a professional development

document with five sessions focusing on creating a professional mentoring structure for novice teachers in remote schools. In section 3, I also discussed how the project could be implemented, as well as roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. Implications for local and far-reaching social change were highlighted.

The final section of this project study will focus on reflections I have about conducting this doctoral degree program. Strengths and challenges of this project study will be discussed. In addition, I will reflect upon myself as a scholar and as a contributor to educational research as a whole.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

In this project study, I focused on perceptions of novice teachers in a remote school in Western Canada about teacher retention and classroom climates. In Section 4, I describe the project strengths and limitations, and will ground a discussion about how the project study addressed the problem of teacher retention and classroom climates in a remote school in Western Canada. Furthermore, I focus on scholarship, social change, as well as directions for potential future research. Lastly, I reflect on my journey through this doctoral degree program as a scholar, research practitioner, and problem solver.

Project Strengths

I choose to guide this project study by a conceptual framework around teacher retention that focused on within classroom and whole school activities (Boylan 1993) that influenced novice teachers to remain or leave their current teaching position. During the data collection through a qualitative questionnaire and individual semistructured interviews, participants could openly express their perceptions of the classroom activities, school activities as well as the classroom climates in the research schools. The findings of the research resulted in the development of a structured professional development plan for implementing a mentoring system.

One of the strengths of this project is that implementation of the professional development plan could increase teacher job satisfaction and therefore positively influence teacher retention and the classroom climate. Educators who are supported by mentors not only have access to a support network that can assist them with instructional

strategies, it also provides supports for emotional relief, and opportunities to develop a professional identity as a high-quality teacher.

A second strength of this professional development plan about a mentoring structure is the establishment of a trust relationship between stakeholders in school, as one of the findings of this study was the perceived difficulty in trusting colleagues in school. When mentee and mentor can communicate openly about successes, challenges, and problems, both staff members will benefit in their position (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Therefore, the project plan would become a direct response to the expressed needs of the participants in this study.

A third strength of this professional development plan as a project is around the creation of a positive classroom climate. When novice teachers feel supported and have a way of collaborating about problems and challenges in their classroom, a mentor and professional support structure could provide assistance to address these challenges before they become major obstacles that interfere with job satisfaction; these could ultimately influence retention decisions.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

The perceptions of novice teachers about teacher retention and classroom climate were limited to perceptions of the participants in PSD in this study. Although major findings were formed by perceptions expressed by multiple participants, a new cohort of novice teachers in the remote school in PSD may have different perceptions of teaching in a remote school. Similarly, replicating this study in a different school may result in yet another combination of perceptions. One way to address this limitation would be to

conduct a similar study with participants from different schools within PSD, so that

perceptions from a larger sample of participants can be analyzed to provide a more

reliable generalization about the perceptions of novice teachers within remote schools in

Western Canada. In addition, the summative data can be used to better understand

perceptions of teachers who did not participate in the data collection in this project study.

Based on the summative data, the project coordinator could do a follow-up interview with

participants in the mentoring project to determine prevailing perspectives about potential

challenges that novice teachers perceive to face.

Another limitation was that all participants had been employed in PSD during the

last two years. Many of the participants did not have any other teaching experiences than

their internship and their experience in PSD. Although each participant provided a

detailed and thorough description of their daily activities in the classroom, school, and

learning climate as a whole, it was often difficult for them to relate to how novice

teachers in other schools would experience their first years. Some participants provided

an almost romanticized idealistic world outside of PSD. Including teachers who also had

experiences in other schools outside of a remote environment may be a way to provide a

more balanced approach to the everyday successes and challenges experienced in a

remote school.

The project also has some limitations. The first limitation is the limited

availability of more experienced teachers in a remote school. This limitation may be

remediated by connecting to teachers in other remote schools with a similar setting and

student population. Another limitation is time. When a remote school has a large number

of novice teachers, mentors may have to work with multiple mentees, which forces school leaders to reduce the teaching tasks of mentors. One way of remediating this limit would be to dedicate staff to mentoring tasks only, eliminating regular teaching tasks.

Scholarship

The scholarship may be perceived as an abstract concept that can only be understood after having been immersed in it. This happened to me during the course of the last three years. I remember being at the residency during semester three, where many of the speakers provided warnings and insights into many of the challenges we would come across. One of the biggest challenged conveyed was structuring dedicated time devote to thinking, writing, and reflecting. Early, right after the start of this degree program, I realized that a scholarly journey like this can only be done with commitment and passion to the problem studied. That is why I selected a topic that not only had my interest, but the outcome also deeply affected the wellbeing of students in remote schools. I had experienced this myself while teaching in a remote school and had seen how students respond to the constant transition of novice educators. The example I provided in anecdotal form from one student asking me how long I would be staying on the day of my arrival in the community was the beginning of the development of a scholarly interest in reasons for teacher turnover and its effects on the classroom climates in remote schools.

Others have told me that starting a doctoral program was something they fully enjoyed but never wanted to do again. My perceptions on this are different as I truly enjoyed every aspect of the doctoral journey. When I started, I could not have imagined

how my own view of education could be changed by doing course work and working on a capstone project. Although I was familiar with the different aspects of research, I was amazed how a focused approach to a seemingly under-researched problem such as teacher retention in remote schools can change a person from doing simple action-oriented research into hardcore scholarly and peer-reviewed research. I now realize that what others may call research is actually more information gathering than valid and credible digging into scholarly literature to find deeper meaning in the topic studied.

The work on the capstone project also deepened my interest in remote schools in general and in particular in teacher retention in remote schools. My intention is to pursue and further investigate some of the findings from this project study in future research endeavors. I am also looking forward to publishing my future research in this under-researched area of educational research in Western Canada. In addition, I have developed an interest in teaching (under) graduate courses as a lecturer, sessional, or preferably an online instructor at a university such as Walden University.

I already mentioned that I perceived dedication and passion to understand the problem is important. At times, I found walls of frustration that felt like they were moving in, rather than moving away. Nevertheless, I realized that through dedication and commitment, the solutions were often found in the resources and literature. The professional literature and resources provided enough handles to hold on to so that I could continue the scholarly journey without too many setbacks. These resources also provided starting points for the future, as I know understand what to look for and where to find it when I want to conduct a new study.

Before I started this doctoral degree program, I would often scan through peer-reviewed research that "all looked the same". Now, I have developed an appreciation for the hard work, dedication, and commitment that other researchers must have put into their work. Having gone through the same process has also developed a sense of belonging and fellowship with these researchers. Although still a beginner, I see now how I can become one of them. In addition, reading through peer-review research can no longer be called scanning as I understand what to look for other than the purpose and the conclusions. Scholarly skills that I learned in this degree program assists me in determining if what I read makes sense, is reliable and valid, and applicable to the situation I am about to research.

Project Development and Evaluation

A very important skill I learned through this degree program was the translation of research findings into a professional development opportunity. This process has taught me that framing a professional development opportunity through the lens of a conceptual framework can significantly enhance the strengths of a project. These strengths are then rooted in the original research that led to the development of the conceptual framework used, which allows for much more credible professional development opportunities.

Besides choosing a conceptual framework, it is also imperative that the development of a project addresses the expressed needs of the audience. In the case of this project study, I selected a project that addressed many of the expressed concerns within the structure of the project itself. Besides providing important knowledge and

creating understanding of the topic, addressing needs of the audience creates buy-in and encourages participants to stay focused and give dedicated attention.

Looking at the larger project, the complete project study, I learned that being organized and being a problem solver are very important skills to possess or develop early in the program. Learning how to address problems in an early stage prevents these problems to derail the project in a later stage. Looking back at the initial research steps in course 8010, I learned that patiently working on aspects of the project paragraph by paragraph creates an interconnectedness that strengthens the project overall and prevents small problems in the initial paragraphs to become major obstacles.

In addition to being organized and a problem solver, I learned that flexible thinking through an open mindset (Dweck, 2006) is an essential skill that helps moving from one avenue of thinking into a different one. Sometimes heading into one direction creates opportunities that fit better with findings through the data analysis that can assist with further development of the project, or with addressing social change.

Leadership and Change

Although change is a constant factor in the field of education, my observations about how change initiatives are welcomed often resulted in resistance from staff to accept or implement such changes. Many of these initiatives were delivered through a top-down leadership structure, often without accompanying resources such as time, money, or even justifiable explanations. During the literature review for this project study, I came across leadership factors that impacted teacher. One of the findings of this project study revealed that inconsistent support from school leadership affects teacher

turnover negatively, especially when teachers are in need of receiving support. In addition, such inconsistent support from leadership may result in school staff interpreting change as add-ons rather than enhancements to processes and procedures.

Throughout this degree program, I came across various organizational leadership models and analyzed how each of these models works in schools. One of my reflections on analyzing these models is that school leaders should be aware of the different forms of leadership that are required of leading educators who have various needs. Simply applying one leadership style to every situation may result in resistance or a negative outlook on job satisfaction, which was one of the factors perceived by several participants in this project study.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

When I started this doctoral degree program, colleagues and friends asked if I was ready to take on such a commitment next to a full time job. Readiness is indeed an important factor for starting a doctoral program, yet it is not the only factor. I have always looked at learning as a life-long journey to gain, understand, and apply knowledge. This journey should be supported by professional resources, emotional support, as well as physical tools. Before I started this doctoral program, I completed a Master Degree through Walden University, since I wanted to experience the support system available. I realized that Walden University did indeed have the necessary resources and supports in place to complete a doctoral program successfully.

Up to starting this doctoral program, I have been an independent learner who hardly requested assistance. Through this doctoral program, I realized that the content

offered as well as the required skills were stretched beyond what I was used to.

Therefore, I decided to request help from my instructors, as well as through the various

resources that Walden University has available. I believe that to be the largest growth in

my scholarship: requesting assistance, asking the right questions, as well as accepting

constructive criticism and reflection. Not only did that teach me new skills (especially in

the area of research), it allowed me to adopt new perspectives on topics and processes I

believed I understood.

Being a scholar however is more than successfully completing a degree program.

After having completed a few semesters, I noticed that I was transferring skills, ways of

thinking, as well as knowledge of my daily job as an educational consultant. Many of

these critical reflection and analysis skills have not become part of who I am and how I

approach research, change initiatives, as well as thoughts and ideas from colleagues. This

change in scholarship by itself is very valuable.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

It did not take long after I started this doctoral program before colleagues started

to reflect on my choice of program negatively. Some colleagues asked why I choose a

doctoral program rather than for instance a more practical program such as a degree in

business administration. My response to these questions at the beginning of the degree

program was similar in nature and focused on reasons for myself rather than the

organization. Having come towards the end of this program, I have begun to change my

answers. I now see that doing doctoral programs provide much more than theory,

philosophical and conceptual frameworks, and interpretations and findings of research.

Working on the course assignments as well as on the final capstone project almost forced

me to apply and translate (often) dense theoretical jargon into accessible information for

use by practitioners in school.

 Going through the required and recommended resources in the coursework

sharpened my skills as a practitioner in education. Often, the topics I was working on

were not directly connected to my everyday work as a consultant in special education.

However, I forced my thinking to make connections between what I was learning to my

daily job activities to widen the area to which the knowledge could be applied. For

example, in the course Leadership for Todays Schools I learned valuable skills about

leadership that I now use every day for improving processes, procedures, as well as to

bring (change) initiatives to my colleagues in schools.

I would like to reflect on one more aspect as a practitioner: using research. At one

point in this degree program, I noticed that I started to use research in a much more

comprehensive manner than many of my colleagues were. In addition, I noticed that my

supervisor (who also completed a doctoral degree) was using research more organized as

well. The skills I learned from using research not only developed more analytical skills

that I use every day, but they also taught me how to access, review, interpret and

recommend peer-reviewed research much more efficiently. I use this skill every day to

respond to questions from colleagues in the schools that I work with.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

For the last eight years, I have been constructing professional development and

other projects related to topics in the educational field of special education. One focus in

this degree program was around understanding the audience for which a professional development session is constructed. Over the years, the audiences I provide professional development to schools have been broadened to include professionals, para-professionals, as well as support staff. One course in this degree program specifically focused on constructing professional development that was engaged for the audience it was intended.

Besides working on professional development and projects for others, I see this project study as a component that assisted in sharpening my skills as a project developer. One very important factor in especially the final semesters of this degree program was the need for consistency in the different sections of the dissertation. Every component has to fit with what was previously written and concluded, which I now see as very valuable for creating any project in the future. This process may be frustrating at times, but starting to write with keeping consistency and structure in place makes developing any project much more efficient.

At the beginning of this degree program, I had already chosen the focus on my work: teacher retention and classroom climate. I am grateful that completing the coursework in the sequence it was provided assisted in developing skills that would lead to the thorough and interesting research journey I have taken on this topic. In addition, it ignited an interest in related topics, especially when I started to analyze the data I was collecting from the participants. These pieces of information not only focused my thoughts, but they also guided the direction of the final project I developed for this project study.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

The project that was developed as part of this project study focused on different forms of supports that are essential to the success of a novice teacher in remote schools. This project connects to one of the findings in this study around the perceptions of inconsistent support structures in the research school for supporting novice teachers. Although some of the participants were receiving supports, other participants reported they did not receive the support they had been asking for. Perceptions about the inconsistency of supports were found to be of influence on teacher turnover and the classroom climate, which ultimately could be seen as a negative impact on social change.

As a response the perceptions about inconsistent supports and the perceived needs of novice teachers in the remote schools, I choose to construct a professional development structure for deploying mentoring support as the project component of this study. Based on perceptions, as well as founded on peer-reviewed research, I believe that a consistent professional support structure can assist novice teachers in remote schools in better handling their everyday workload in schools that are perceived to be more challenging. Although current professional development models exist, the limited application of these models in remote schools as well as the adoption of models that were designed for significantly different school settings was perceived not to address many of the needs of the participants. Although many of these models use the same conceptual framework I used, I believe that applying these models to a remote setting and to the unique needs as perceived by the participants may result in influencing teacher turnover and the classroom climate. If the project is successfully implemented, the project has the

potential to influence social change positively by increasing the number of teachers who want to stay teaching in a remote school and therefore better the classroom climate for teachers and students.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Throughout working on this project study, it became clear that high-quality supports are essential for influencing perceptions of novice teachers in remote schools on teacher retention decisions and the classroom climate. The project provided a system for deploying structured supports that were identified by participants in this project study. Such supports not only assist novice teachers in remote schools with the tools they need for their daily teaching practice, it also affects the quality of instruction in the classroom, the classroom climate, and ultimately student achievement.

Although the sample of participants was constructed from one remote school, following pre-identified factors to bound the case, the project outcome may be transferrable to similar schools with a similar novice teacher population. This decision lies with the reader with sound knowledge of the external school setting and its teaching staff. In such cases, this project may have an impact on other remote schools with similar teacher population.

Taken the limitations of his project study into consideration. I recommend further research in the area of perceptions on teacher retention and classroom climates in remote schools, in particular the whole school and within classroom activities. Other researchers can duplicate the research methods used in this project study with similar settings to determine if findings in this study can be generalized to such settings. A different avenue

for future research lies in one of the factors that was identified by Boylan (1993): family factors. In this project study, family factors were not taken into consideration since the focus was within-classroom and whole-school activities only. Nevertheless, participants expressed family factors as a perceived influence on teacher retention in remote schools, and was therefore identified as a discrepant case in section 2. Future research could determine how family factors influence teacher retention, including looking at the differences in perceptions of novice teachers who moved to a remote school alone, compared to novice teachers who moved to remote schools with family members.

Conclusion and Final Words

Section four of this project study focused on my reflections about the project study journey, from the start to the end of the degree program. I discussed the valuable skills I gained in various areas of competency while working on the assignments in the courses and on the final project study in the final semesters. Following Walden Universities focus on social change I discussed how the project study might result in affecting social change through the implementation of the project. In addition, I discussed implications, limitations, and opportunities for future research.

This doctoral journey was a quite exciting one, providing new insights on the challenging situation of teacher retention and classroom climates in remote schools. If I were to compare my experiences in becoming prepared for teaching in a remote school to how the participants in this study perceived their professional position, I can only conclude that the challenges of working in a remote school outweigh the positives of adventures and feelings of altruism. I speculate that remote schools in which school

leaders take the time to thoroughly prepare novice teachers for the difficult task can have higher success in retaining novice teachers than school leaders who take novice teachers for granted just because they have a beating heart. As shown throughout this project study, the key to reducing teacher turnover and improve classroom climates lies in the quality of supports that novice teachers are provided. This counts for any novice teacher, but especially for novice teachers who are appointed to a remote school that is significantly different from their hometown or from any teaching experience during an internship.

Remember the story I shared in section 1 about the boy who approached me right after I arrived in a remote community? His question about how long I was going to stay in the community as well as teaching in his school never left my mind. Throughout this study, I kept reflecting on his questions as *his* hope for change, as well as a new opportunity for him to connect to someone who would possibly stay long-term. He is not alone, as remote schools all over northern communities in western Canada continue to be faced with high teacher turnover. My passion to contribute to research about finding means to resolve retention issues in these sorts of schools is largely fueled by one voice of this small boy, who may not even recognize the potential impact of his conversation on teacher retention in remote schools as a whole.

I gratefully thank all the novice teachers who participated in this project study. The stories you shared, many of which were included in the narrative, fueled an internal drive to perform further research and to design solutions for making teaching in remote schools become a meaningful experience for teachers and students. The end of this

passage is only the start of a much longer journey that lies ahead of me. Aut viam inveniam aut faciam: Either I'll find a way, or I'll make one. I did not find a way; therefore, I have started making one.

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Appendix A: Project

Professional Development Plan for Mentoring Novice Teachers in Remote Schools

Overview of the Project

The comprehensive professional development plan for teacher retention consists of a document providing background about teacher retention, a sequence of three professional development sessions about supporting novice teachers in remote schools, as well as supporting PowerPoint slides and handouts. This professional support structure provides specific knowledge to mentors and mentees about creating a learning climate to address the needs of students. The project also provides the basis for a professional coaching structure that is independent separated from summative and evaluative procedures by school administrators.

Quality supports can be provided to mentor teachers by implementing the various aspects of this project. The following paragraphs describe each of the elements. Although components of this professional development plan can be used in isolation, it is recommended that the prescribed outline be followed.

The first component of the professional development plan is a checklist for selecting mentors, the Example Indicator Checklist for Selecting Mentors (see handout in appendix A). School administrators can use this checklist to select teachers for performing mentor duties with novice teachers. The checklist should be used as a guide, especially in remote schools where the number of experienced teachers is low.

The second component of the professional development plan consists of peer-reviewed background information, providing a summary of professional literature on

teacher retention, quality supports, as well as the types of supports that mentors can provide to novice teachers. The information provided can be used by mentors and mentees, as well as any other stakeholder working on reducing teacher turnover and classroom climates in remote schools. Professional references are provided in the text so that readers can follow up on the information presented.

The third part of the professional development plan is a sequence of three professional development sessions about teacher retention and quality supports. The first full-day session provides an overview of the foundational theory of teacher retention through one conceptual framework, as well as opportunities for participants to connect the theory to the local setting of their remote school. The goal of this session is for teachers to apply knowledge about teacher retention supports to the local school setting. Session 1 comes with a handout for each participant to reflect on the current supports for novice teacher in their school. After participants complete the handout, the information can be compared to start a rich discussion about current practices, as well as how supports to novice teachers can be enhanced. The second session of the professional development sequence is a full-day collaboration about two types two quality supports (Boogren, 2015): physical supports and institutional supports. Mentors are introduced to several forms of these supports, and learn how each of them plays an important role in making novice teachers become familiar with their school setting. The third session of the professional development sequence is a full-day collaboration about the final two types two quality supports: emotional supports and instructional supports. Similar to session two, mentors are introduced to several forms of these supports, and learn how each of

them focuses on emotional wellbeing of the teacher, and on enhancing student achievement by guiding instructional strategies.

The last component consists of guidelines for guidance for providing supports to novice teachers throughout the school year, as well as a system to evaluate the professional development plan throughout the year and at the end of the year. This component however is flexible, and depends on the needs of novice teachers in a remote school and on the available resources in the school.

Materials

The following materials are part of the professional development plan:

1. Checklist for selecting mentors;

2. Background information about teacher retention;

3. PowerPoint slides for each of the three professional development sessions;

4. Handouts for each of the three professional development sessions;

5. Evaluation forms for formative as well as summative evaluation.

Roles and Responsibilities

This professional development plan contains diverse roles. Each will be described in the following paragraph. Depending on the size of the remote school and on the available resources, some roles may be performed by the same person.

Coordinator: The coordinator works together with the school mentors to coordinate the mentoring leadership. In addition, the role is connected to the school leaders who guide the project from their leadership roles. The coordinator also educates

school leaders and other participants in this project on what an effective mentor program and the impact of it on teacher turnover entails. The sequence of three professional development sessions is used for that. When possible, schools should use available personnel for the coordinator role. Suggestions for personnel for this role could be a resource teacher, career transition teacher, or any professional who is not assigned to a classroom full time.

Mentors: Besides attending the three professional development sessions, mentors are available throughout the school year for providing any of the four types of quality supports. In addition, mentors do check-ins as planned using the check-in sheet, participate in debriefing and reflection sessions, as well as group sessions and evaluation sessions. Providing quality supports to novice teachers requires mentors to be flexible in their planning. Therefore, school leaders should when possible relieve mentors of extra-curricular activities, as well as tasks that would prevent mentors from providing quality supports.

School Leadership: School leaders, including the superintendent of education are asked to provide a timetable, organizational, and financial assistance. School leaders are asked to allow for enough preparation time so that the project can be implemented without limitations. Clerical support from a school secretary may be requested by setting up a room for the three-day professional development session, as well as for duplicating materials.

Division Support: One consultant can be requested to support the mentoring project from a research point of view. This could be by providing research presentations,

by providing clarification about any of the types of supports that are introduced in the project, or to be present during some or all of the professional development sessions. Additionally, the consultant role can be supportive during school visits, or through phone support in times of need.

Budget Needs

Although it is not projected that the implementation of this professional development plan requires a large amount of additional funding, school leaders may be asked to provide a mentoring budget for hiring substitute educators when mentors and mentees are collaborating. Additionally, a small amount may be needed for the duplication cost of materials.

Program Rollout

Week 0: School leaders select a coordinator for the mentoring project in the school. The school leaders and the coordinator use the checklist provided to select mentors. The number of mentors depends on the number of novice teachers. Following the selection of mentors, the coordinator presents the three professional development sessions to the mentors and one school leader. These are three full-day sessions.

Week 1: Mentors and mentees meet in an informal session, for instance during a potluck. This session provides an opportunity for mentors and mentees to get to know each other, as well as to match pairs, based on interests, personality, and/or teaching subject. Each mentor works with a maximum of two novice teachers to ensure maximum availability of supports. Following this session, mentors start to provide physical supports, to help novice teachers setting up their classrooms, provide a comprehensive

tour of the school grounds, as well as to familiarize the novice teachers with pertinent

school administrative procedures. Mentors should also do a student file review with the

teacher, providing background information about students and their contexts. In addition

to physical supports, mentors can provide institutional supports, such as introducing

school division resources and personnel. The frequency of the week 1 support should be

every day, so that the novice teacher feels supported and can start to build confidence

while getting used to the new school setting.

Week 2: This is the week when the students start their school year. Mentors do

frequent check-ins and provide a daily mentoring session so that novice teachers can

reflect on their day, ask questions, and problem solve challenges that were not addressed

in previous sessions. During these sessions, the mentor and mentee can also work on

rearranging aspects of the classroom, and assist with lesson planning.

In week 2, the mentor also starts with providing emotional support in a pro-active

manner. This may be best done by introducing a double-entry journal in which the

mentee writes experiences on the left side of a page, and the mentor provides reflection

on the right side of the page. Additionally, the mentor and mentee can work on

celebrating successes to further build the mentee's confidence.

Week 3 and ongoing: Depending on the needs of the novice teachers, mentors

start providing frequent supports, based on the results of a weekly needs assessment and

collaboration sessions. Each of these is described in more detail below.

Needs Assessment: Mentors and mentee should do a needs assessment once per

week. Such needs assessments can be done while a mentor is observing the mentee or

co-teaching a class. Another way to complete a needs assessment is by reflecting on the day, and documenting which of the four types of supports should be provided. When mentors identify a higher need for emotional supports, more frequent check-ins should be planned for (see handout 4) and provided during times when the mentee is likely to be in need of support.

Collaboration Sessions: Collaborative sessions with all the mentors and mentees should be scheduled once per month. During these sessions, common themes of needs can be discussed and support strategies can be identified and shared. Additionally, mentors can start to provide common instructional supports around topics such as professional learning communities (PLC).

Evaluation

This professional development plan can be evaluated using formative and summative evaluation. Each of these is described below.

Ongoing Evaluation (formative): Once per month, mentors complete a formative evaluation about the provided supports. Additionally, mentors request from mentees to complete the formative qualitative questionnaire (see handouts). This questionnaire measures the level of attainment of the professional development plan by looking at how the various support components are perceived to be helpful for novice teachers. Mentors then collect the questionnaires for analysis by the coordinator. Mentor are also requested to provide important information from their observation notes, reflection notes, as well as important information from the double-entry journals. Through triangulation of data sources, the coordinator determines common themes. These

themes are then discussed by the coordinator and mentors to set the direction for ongoing

mentoring, to improve the current structure, or to request additional support from school

division leaders.

Summative Evaluation: All participants will be asked to provide summative

feedback using a survey to evaluate the program content as well as the program goals.

The summative evaluation focuses on how the professional development plan created a

structure for support for novice teachers, how novice teachers used these supports to

enhance the classroom climate, and how participants perceived the support structure to be

separated from supports from school leadership. The results of this summative evaluation

will be analyzed by the coordinator, who also uses the information that was found during

the formative evaluation for providing examples of themes that result from the

summative evaluation. Mentors are also asked to write a one-page reflection on the

success of the mentoring plan, including the professional development sessions that were

conducted at the beginning of the year. The final data source comes from school

administrators, who will be asked to reflect on the mentoring program as it was

implemented. All of these data sources are analyzed through triangulating for finding

major themes. The summative themes provide important for the continued

implementation of this professional development plan. I am projecting that a positive

evaluation will be connected to lower teacher turnover, and secondly a better climate in

the classroom. However, any negative summative feedback should be taken into

consideration so that the program can be improved to address concerns as voiced by

participants.

School administrators will be asked to reflect on whether they observed the project affecting teacher turnover, including reasons that were provided for increased or decreased teacher turnover. In addition, school administrators and parents will be asked to provide feedback how mentoring support has influenced the classroom climate. Coordinators are encouraged to select additional stakeholders as well.

The next pages provide instruments for performing the formative and summative evaluations. The first instrument is a formative evaluation form for the mentee. The second instrument is a formative evaluation form for the mentor. The third instrument consists of two summative evaluation tools for the mentors, as well as two summative evaluation tools for the mentees.

Formative Evaluation for Mentee

(To be done once per month)

1. Describe your overall satisfaction with the mentoring training and structure during the last semester?

2. Which forms of mentoring are you currently enjoying most? (circle)

    a. Physical Support

    b. Emotional Support

    c. Instructional Support

    d. Institutional Support

3. What suggestions do you have to improve your mentor guidance for the next semester?

4. Please answer the following true / false questions

    a. My mentor and I meet at least twice a week   TRUE | FALSE

    b. I can ask my mentor for support when I need it   TRUE | FALSE

    c. My mentor is often too busy to help me   TRUE | FALSE

    d. My mentor checks in with me almost every day   TRUE | FALSE

5. Any other suggestions or feedback? Please provide below.

Formative Evaluation Mentor

(To be done once per month)

1. Describe your overall satisfaction with the mentoring training and structure during the last semester?

2. Which forms of mentoring are you currently providing most? (circle)

    a. Physical Support

    b. Emotional Support

    c. Instructional Support

    d. Institutional Support

3. How do you see mentees implement recommendations provided through your supports in the classroom for enhancing the classroom climate?

4. Please answer the following true / false questions

    a. My mentee and I meet at least twice a week   TRUE | FALSE

    b. I can provide my mentee support when I see a need TRUE | FALSE

    c. My mentee is often too busy for support   TRUE | FALSE

    d. My mentee checks in with me almost every day   TRUE | FALSE

5. Any other suggestions or feedback? Please provide below.

Summative Evaluation Mentee

1. Describe your overall satisfaction with the mentoring training and structure during this school year.

2. What suggestions do you have to improve the mentoring training for coming year?

3. Which elements did you feel were needed most in your mentoring sessions with mentors?

4. Which elements were missing from the mentoring training and structure throughout the school year?

5. How did you use the provided supports and recommendations for influencing the classroom climate for addressing needs of students?

6. How did you experience the support structure separate from a formative and summative evaluation from a school leader?

7. Could you ask your mentor for support without interference from a school leader? Please elaborate on your yes or no answer.

Summative Evaluation Mentee

1. Describe your overall satisfaction with the mentoring training and structure during this school year.

2. What suggestions do you have to improve the mentoring training for coming year?

3. Which elements did you feel were needed most in your mentoring sessions with mentees?

4. Which elements were missing from the mentoring training and structure throughout the school year?

5. How did your mentee use the provided supports and recommendations for influencing the classroom climate for addressing needs of students?

6. How did you experience the support structure separate from a formative and summative evaluation from a school leader?

7. Could you provide support to your mentee without interference from a school leader? Please elaborate on your yes or no answer.

Additional Summative Evaluation for Mentees and Mentors

Mentees: On one page, please describe important reflections taken from your double-entry journal. Such can be very detailed, describing challenges and/or successes. These reflections will be used during the summative evaluation of the professional development plan.

Mentors: Write a one-page reflection on the success of the mentoring plan, including the professional development sessions that were conducted at the beginning of the year. In your own words, reflect on the overall professional development plan, and provide any details you think are important for the continued success of mentoring novice teachers in remote schools.

Example Indicator Checklist for Selecting Mentors

The following indicators may be used for selecting mentors for providing quality supports to novice teachers in remote schools. Although mentors can vary in their abilities, it is recommended that most mentors meet at least 5 of the following criteria.

1. Mentors have at least 3 years of teaching experience in a remote school.

2. Mentors have excellent collaboration skills, including effective methods of communication with introvert and extrovert teachers.

3. Mentors are open to multiple and diverse perspectives on teaching and learning.

4. Mentors promote ongoing learning about best practices in education.

5. Mentors are willing to engage in preparation and evaluation activities with novice teachers.

6. Mentors are willing to work collaborative in diverse instruction and data analysis models, including co-teaching and professional learning communities.

7. Mentors have current knowledge of the community in which the remote school is situated, and understand the impact of the remote setting on student development and achievement.

8. Mentors are leaders in instructional planning, and have strong subject knowledge.

Background Information for the Project

Introduction to Teacher Retention

The turnover rate of novice teachers in rural and remote schools in Western Canada is very high, especially in isolated schools. Many novice educators leave the profession prematurely (Ingersoll, 2012; Karsenti & Collins, 2013; Maciejewski, 2007). Therefore, schools in North America, as well as in other parts of the world, are struggling with finding and retaining highly qualified teachers.

Novice teachers are leaving the profession at a faster rate than any other category of teachers. Specialized positions such as science and mathematics are reaching critical levels of unavailability of qualified educators endangering the delivery of instruction to thousands of students in rural schools in for instance Australia. Leaving a teaching position affects student achievement, increases governmental and institutional costs for recruitment and training of new teachers, and impacts the overall climate in the school. (Chell, Steeves, & Sackney, 2009; Fall, 2010; Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Marzano, 2007; McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013).

Rural schools and remote schools have even larger challenges when it comes to finding and retaining highly qualified teachers. Besides geographical challenges, other factors affect teacher turnover in rural and remote locations. Job satisfaction, workloads, beliefs and attitudes of teaching in a rural or remote location, as well as school and classroom experiences have been shown to influence teacher's decisions to remain or leave a teaching position satisfaction (Boylan, 1993; Carlson, 2012; Grissom, 2012; Huysman, 2008).

Teacher attrition often negatively affects the physical and emotional atmosphere or feeling in the classroom and school (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral. 2009). When an experienced teacher leaves a teaching position, school divisions are left to hire inexperienced or provisionally certified educators to fill the position. These new teachers need to re-establish relationships with school staff with students and parents, as well as with other stakeholders such as community members (Epstein, 2011; Fall & Billingsley, 2011).

What the Research Says about Teaching in Remote Schools.

Novice teachers who accept a position in a remote school are often looking for a sense of adventure (De Feijter, 2015), but without the commitment to remain employed in the remote school (Plunkett and Dyson, 2011). In reality, teaching in remote schools is often perceived as challenging (Greenlee & Brown, 2009). This is partly because remote schools are often in areas far away from urban or suburban areas. Another reason is that schools in remote locations are often run by novice teachers who have had little teaching experience beyond their internships Fall & Billingsley, 2011). These novice teachers may have the romanticized idea that teaching in a remote school is similar to teaching in a protected environment during an internship. For many, these romanticized ideas disappear within the first weeks of their appointment in a remote school, which is often called the anticipation phase (Moir, 1999). In addition, many of these teachers do not have specialized skills in for instance mathematics or special education, yet these novice teachers are asked to replace often difficult to fill specialized teaching positions (McLeskey & Billingsley, as cited by Lemons, 2013).

Researchers in Australia have done extensive research on teaching in remote schools (Boylan, 1993). They found that many factors could influence job satisfaction and teaching success. These factors can also influence a teacher's decision to remain or leave a teaching position are diverse. Many of such factors can however be placed in categories such as classroom factors, school factors, community factors and family and personal factors. The first two factors are within reach of educators (Boylan, 1993). Community factors ask for involvement from many other non-educators, whereas family and personal factors such as illness and child conception often appear unexpected.

What does the Research Say about Reasons for Teacher Turnover?

One researcher looked at whether organizational factors had a different impact on novice and experienced teachers (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Such work conditions fall into three areas, being behavioral climate, classroom autonomy, and administrative support (Buchannan, 2010; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Findings included that the novice teacher's decision to leave or move were more affected by working conditions than the decisions of experienced teachers. Such working conditions, including behavioral climate (Classroom Activities) and administrative support (whole-school activities) were found to have a negative impact on teacher turnover rates, especially among novice educators working in schools with low-income, non-White, and low-achieving students (Boyd et al., 2011).

Other researchers looked at looked at job-related factors such as job preparation, working conditions and workload, collegial collaboration, and salary and other benefits that influenced teachers to stay or leave the profession (Borman & Dowling, 2008;

Buchanan, 2010; Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012). Typical recommendations included improving working conditions, as well as recommendations looking at moderating characteristics of teachers' work conditions, focusing on sustaining teachers rather than retaining them (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012).

In a recent study, De Feijter (2015) explored which perceptions of novice teachers on classroom and school-related activities influence their decisions to remain in or leave their current rural or remote school in Precambrian Shield School Division (PSD) in a Northern region in Western Canada. Findings from this study included reasons for leaving a remote school, and reasons for staying in a remote school. Reasons for leaving a remote school included the following: perceptions about the classroom climate, perceptions of professional support structures, perceptions about feeling prepared, and perceptions about student achievement. Reasons for staying were limited to perceptions about altruism and adventure.

The perceptions of novice teachers in Precambrian Shield School Division about professional support structures revealed that such supports were perceived as inconsistent, but very important. This major theme resulted in the development of a mentoring structure that focused on more than just instructional coaching.

Types of Supports for Novice Teachers

Many researchers have studied novice teacher induction systems as well as pre-service trainings in schools (Boylan, 2005; Hudson & Hudson, 2008; Munsch & Boylan, 2008; Sharplin, 2010; Trinidad et al., 2012). Pre-service training was perceived as very beneficial in exposing or preparing novice educators for working in rural schools, as

participants reported to not being opposed to teaching in a rural school. One drawback of pre-service training is that it does not assist novice teachers who started teaching in a rural or remote school. These novice teachers are presented the full responsibility of teaching, but had not been prepared to take on such responsibility with the necessary sometimes specialized skills such as long-term planning and report-card writing (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009).

Induction systems on the other hand are designed to prepare teachers for their newly appointed teaching job. These induction systems are often presented as professional development sessions. When professional development is offered that focuses on skills and content that relate directly to the teaching practice of participants (Hirsch, 2006; Killion & Roy, 2009), a direct connection has been reported to teacher retention (Hirsch, 2006; Brill & McCartney, 2008). Effective programs for induction have been associated with retaining teachers, student achievement, and developing instructional skills (Ingersoll, 2012), as well as with meeting diverse needs of novice educators (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010). Other researchers found that the effectiveness of many induction programs was unclear or questionable (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Long, 2009; Long et al., 2012). One reason why the effectiveness was unclear was provided by Long et al. (2012), who determined that less effective induction programs influenced teacher retention due to too much variety in quality and method way induction programs are delivered.

Two other types of supports for novice teachers exists. The first type is collegial support. Teachers who kept good relationships with their colleagues tended to be highly

satisfied with teaching (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Russell, 2008). In addition, a higher level of collegiality among teachers in schools tend to create a higher organizational commitment (Shah, 2012). The second type is support from school leaders. Effective leadership from principals has been found positively to influence teacher retention and attrition (Carlson, 2012; Grissom, 2011; Wynn et al., 2007). Contrary, Novice teachers tend to leave schools when administrative ineffectiveness affect teacher's job satisfaction (Carlson, 2012; Grissom, 2012). Such administrator ineffectiveness as rated by teachers may be a predictor of job satisfaction and teacher turnover (Grissom, 2011).

Mentoring as Quality Support for Novice Teachers

A widely used framework in research is a model that was developed by Wood and Stanulis (2009). This framework included nine characteristics of quality supports. One of these characteristics was the importance of a structured educative mentor's preparation and mentoring for novice teachers. Hobson and Malderez (2013) found that mentoring novice teachers without the appropriate conditions for effective mentoring could lead to what they described as judgemental mentoring, or "judgementoring" (p. 2). Rather than judging, mentors may adopt supportive roles, including being an educator, a model, or a provider of emotional support. Wood and Stanulis (2009) described the above supportive roles as assisting novice teachers with their development by interaction "in ways that help them learn in and from their practice" (p. 5) through observation, reflection, assessment, and co-planning and co-teaching. Such supports were not only supportive to novice teachers, but also to mentors and the school as a whole, especially for creating a shared vision of knowledge, teaching, and learning (Wood & Stanulis, 2009).

What does Quality Mentoring look like?

Mentoring novice teachers has been target from diverse angles, but most research agreed on the importance of a good match between well-trained mentors and their mentees (Barlin,2010; Piggot-Irvine et al., 2009). In addition, the support should not be limited to instructional coaching, as many novice teachers require guidance in other areas as well. Boogren (2015) provided a practical mentoring framework that included supports for skill development in 4 distinct areas: Physical, Emotional, Instructional, and Institutional. Physical supports included mainly material and logistical supports. Emotional supports were categorized by Boogren (2015) to include strategies for teachers "who struggle to keep up with their workload" (p. 39). Instructional supports included guidance from mentors on using effective instructional strategies and reflection on how to improve the level of expertise. The last form of support was institutional, which focused on ways to develop the professional identity of novice educators by navigating them through connections within the school, school division, as well as to become more involved in the organizational aspect of education as a whole. The four categories of mentoring support should not be placed in a hierarchy; rather mentors should investigate which types of supports their mentees are most in need of.

Professional Development sessions

Three professional development sessions provide the foundation for the mentoring support. The coordinator provides these sessions to participants during week 0 of the school year. These sessions include hands-on activities for connecting the theory to

the context of the remote school. After each mentor has participated in this three-day

professional development, they can start providing supports to novice teachers.

Session 1

The first full-day session provides an overview of the foundational theory of

teacher retention through one conceptual framework, as well as opportunities for

participants to connect the theory to the local setting of their remote school. The goal of

this session is for teachers to apply knowledge about teacher retention supports to the

local school setting.

Title	Introduction to Mentoring Novice Teachers in Remote Schools
Participants	Aspiring Mentors in a Remote School, trainer, school administrator or coordinator.
Time	Workday, from 10:00am to 4pm
Location	Training room in the local setting, free from distractions.
Materials	- Printed copies of the background information in this project - PowerPoint Presentation to guide the day.
Outcome	Teachers will apply knowledge about teacher retention supports to the local school setting.
Objective 1	Teachers will gain knowledge about teacher retention in remote schools
Objective 2	Teachers will connect their school setting to the discussed knowledge

Agenda for Session 1

Morning:
- Introduction to Teacher Retention in Remote Schools
- Introduction to Mentoring in Remote Schools

Afternoon:

- Impact of Teacher Turnover in our Remote School
- Types of Supports for Novice Teachers

Slides for Session 1

Mentoring Novice Teachers in Remote Schools

Session 1 – Introduction

Morning Session

Professional References can be found in the white paper that accompanies this presentation.

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Outcomes & Objectives

- Teachers will apply knowledge about teacher retention supports to the local school setting.
  - Teachers will gain knowledge about teacher retention in remote schools.
  - Teachers will connect their school setting to the discussed knowledge.

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Introduction to Teacher Turnover

- Turnover rate novice teachers in remote schools in Western Canada is **high**.

- Novice educators leave the profession **prematurely**.

- Schools struggle with finding **highly qualified** teachers.

- Special subject areas even *more* **difficult** to fill.

Reasons for Teaching in a Remote School

- Sense of **Altruism** and **Adventure.**

- Sometimes Higher **Pay Grid.**

- The *Challenge* of Teaching in a **Different Location.**

- **Romanticized Ideation** about Remote Schools.

Reasons for Leaving a Remote School

- Geographical Location.

- Heavy Work Load.

- Job Satisfaction.

- Beliefs and Attitudes about Teaching in Remote Schools.

- Challenging School and Classroom Climates.

- Inconsistent Supports.

What influences Retention Decisions?

- Four main categories of Influences:

Classroom Activities	School Activities
Community	Family and Personal

Classroom Activities

- Relationship with Students.

- Pre-Service Experiences.

- Relationships with Colleagues.

- Student Achievement.

- Open Discussion about these Influences on the School Climate (15 minutes)

School Activities

- Administrative Leadership.

- Professional Development and Supports.

- Open Discussion about these Influences on the School Climate (15 minutes).

Community Activities

- Community Involvement.

- Community Direction.

- Parental Support.

- Open Discussion about these Influences on the School Climate (15 minutes)

Family and Personal

- Often unforeseen circumstances that result in teachers leaving their teaching position.
- Home Ownership.
- Family Commitments.
- Personal Lifestyle.
- Contentment with Rural Living.
- Financial Incentives.

- Open Discussion about these Influences on the School Climate (15 minutes)

Mentoring Novice Teachers in Remote Schools

Session 1 – Introduction

Afternoon Session

Teacher Retention in this School

- Discussion Topics
  - How do you see Teacher Turnover Impact student achievement?
  - How do you see the four categories affect Teacher's decisions to stay or leave?

Classroom Activities	School Activities
Community	Family and Personal

Teacher Retention in this School

- What does the school currently have in place to support novice teachers (current inventory of supports)?

  - See Handout 1.

Quality Supports for Novice Teachers

What are we talking about...?

Indicators of Quality Supports

- School Culture Supportive of Novice Teachers.

- Structured Educative Mentor's Preparation and Mentoring of Novice Teachers.

- Reflective Inquiry and Teaching Practices including targeted Feedback.

- Shared Vision of Knowledge, Teaching, and Learning.

Looking Forward

… to Sessions 2 and 3

Mentoring Beyond Instructional Support

- Mentoring support can be divided into four categories:

Physical	Emotional
Instructional	Institutional
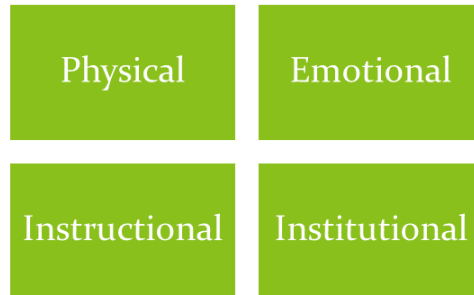
Physical and Institutional Supports

Session Two

Emotional and Instructional Supports

Session Three

Wrap Up of Session One

- What have we learned about supporting Novice Teachers?

- How can we improve our school's support system based on what we know now...?

- Open Discussion (15 minutes).

Handout for Session 1

Guiding Questions for Supports Inventory

1. What kind of supports have you provided to novice teachers during last school year?

   …………………………………………………………………………………...

2. What kind of resources does the school provide for Novice Teachers?

   a. …………………………………………………………………..

   b. …………………………………………………………………..

   c. …………………………………………………………………...

3. Thinking back to your first year in this school, what are some of the supports you enjoyed?

   …………………………………………………………………………………...

4. Thinking back to your first year in this school, what are some of the supports you would have appreciated?

   …………………………………………………………………………………...

Session 2

The second session of the professional development sequence is a full-day

collaboration about physical supports and institutional supports. Mentors are introduced

to several forms of these supports, and learn how each of them plays an important role in

making novice teachers become familiar with their school setting.

Title	Providing Physical and Institutional Supports
Participants	Aspiring Mentors in a Remote School, trainer, school administrator or coordinator.
Time	Workday, from 10:00am to 4:00pm
Location	Training room in the local setting, free from distractions.
Materials	- Printed copies of the background information in this project - PowerPoint Presentation to guide the day. - Two handouts
Outcome	Teachers will apply knowledge about physical and institutional supports to the local school setting.
Objective 1	Teachers will gain knowledge about physical and institutional supports for novice teachers.
Objective 2	Teachers will connect physical and institutional supports to their school setting by identifying opportunities for providing such supports.

Agenda for Session 2

Morning:
- Physical Supports

Afternoon:

- Institutional Supports

Slides for Session 2

Mentoring Novice Teachers in Remote Schools

Session 2 – Physical and Institutional Support

Morning Session

Professional References *can be found in the white paper that accompanies this presentation.*

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Outcomes & Objectives

- Teachers will apply knowledge about physical and institutional supports to the local school setting.
  - Teachers will gain knowledge about physical and institutional for novice teachers.
  - Teachers will connect physical and institutional to their school setting by identifying opportunities for providing such supports.

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Introduction to Physical Supports

- Assistance to novice teachers to start the school year well organized.

- Mentors provide material and logistical supports
  - Classroom setup
  - Paperwork procedures
  - Acquiring and obtaining curricular materials and supplies.

Duration of Physical Supports

- Starts at the **first teacher day** of the school year, before students attend their first school day.

- Continuation *throughout* the school year, depending on expressed or observed **needs**, such as:
  - Classroom rearrangement to address social and emotional development of students;
  - When resources are needed to teach new units or lesson plans.

Detailed examples of Physical Supports

- Arrange and organize classrooms;
- Tour of school building and grounds;
- Explain week day calendar (i.e.: 6-day cycle);
- Facilitate communication with parents;
- Explain administrative procedures.

- Handout 2: a checklist for physical supports

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Arranging and organizing Classrooms

- Exit procedures;
- Washroom routines;
- Small group and whole group instruction;
- Placement of specialized furniture and equipment (for students with intensive needs);
- Decorating the classroom with curricular enrichment learning visuals.

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Tour of School Building and Grounds

- Provide a detailed map of the school grounds if needed.

- Individual arranged tours rather than group tours.

- Explain essential areas in detail (computer rooms, administration areas, duplication room, kitchen & lunch rooms).

- Safety routines: explain fire escapes, lockdown procedures, and areas of supervision.

- School grounds: explain safety routines, use of keys, parking areas, and playground and parking safety procedures.

Prepare for First Day of School

- Explain school day cycle, and assist with planning for a full cycle.

- Provide list with definitions of general and local jargon.

- Help plan the first school day in detail: materials for unit plan, bell-times, meetings.

- Assist with choosing designs, classroom management strategies, and ice-breaker games to get the novice teacher to meet the students.

- Help with creating *student profiles*.

Administrative Procedures

- Attendance
- Classroom Safety Plan
- Home work and form procedures
- Setup system to help teacher organize paperwork

- Handout 3: checklist for administrative procedures.

School Specific Physical Supports

- What is unique to this remote school?
  - Outside safety procedures (bears, wild fire, water)
  - Building Specific Supports
  - Community related supports (where is the post office, etc)
  - Explanation of Technology Supports
  - Detailed procedures for substitute teacher system

Wrap Up of Morning Session

- How can we create support document for novice teachers that include all of the previous identified information?

Mentoring Novice Teachers in Remote Schools

Session 2 –Institutional Support

Afternoon Session

Professional References *can be found in the white paper that accompanies this presentation.*

Introduction to Institutional Supports

- Supports to build professional network in school or larger educational system.

- Mentors provide Institutional Support to:
  - Expand Social Connections;
  - Learn about the School Division or district;
  - Understand formal Evaluation Processes.

Duration of Institutional Supports

- Starts at the **first teacher day** of the school year, before students attend their first school day.

- Continuation *throughout* the school year, depending on expressed or observed **needs**, such as:
  - Requesting consultant support or professional development;
  - At times when formative and summative evaluation occurs.

◼◼◼ Detailed examples of Institutional Supports

- Explain community & school cultures.
- Build support network in and outside school.
- Explain professional learning communities (plc).
- Foster relationships with colleagues.
- Clarify teacher evaluation procedures.

- Handout 3: a checklist for institutional supports.

◼◼◼ Community & School Cultures

- Community & Cultural heritage.
- School culture and organizational climate.
- Expectations related to professional learning communities.
- Professional interactions with colleagues and stakeholders.
- School accomplishments.
- (Mandatory) extracurricular activities.

Social Networks

- Get to know your mentee.
- Assist with arranging meetings between stakeholders.
- Accompany novice teachers on home visits.
- Potlucks and other staff happenings.

- Handout 3: example questions for social connections

Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

- Guide teachers through the school and division PLC structure.
- Discuss the importance of working collaboratively.
- Focus on student achievement.
- Share educational research.
- Introduce professional memberships.

Foster Relationships with Colleagues

- Research in remote schools stresses the importance of healthy relationship with colleagues.

- Establish time to collaborate with mentee and colleagues.

- Introduce novice teacher to school specialists.

- Review division consultant and support structure, and describe specific supports they can provide.

Wrap Up of Afternoon Session

- How can we create support document for novice teachers that include all of the previous identified information?

Handouts for Session 2

Handout 2: Checklist for Physical Supports

Mentor: ……………………………. Mentee: ………………………………………….

Identification of Physical Supports	
❑	Attendance Procedures.
❑	Recess and Lunch Procedures.
❑	How to Collect and Organize Homework and Forms.
❑	Daily Schedule and Day Cycle.
❑	Emergency and Safety Procedures.
Other Physical Supports Desired	
❑	
❑	
❑	
❑	
❑	
❑	

Handout 3: Example Questions for Social Connections

1. If you could have lunch with three people in this school, who would you choose?

2. Why did you choose to become a teacher?

3. Why did you choose to work in a remote school?

4. What can you tell me about the cultural heritage in this remote school?

5. What kinds of activities do you like to do in your own time?

6. Please tell me about your favorite fiction and non-fiction books.

7. What is the best way to spend a weekend day during our cold winters?

8. Do you have anything else you would like to share?

Session 3

The third session of the professional development sequence is a full-day

collaboration about the final two types two quality supports: emotional supports and

instructional supports. Similar to session two, mentors are introduced to several forms of

these supports, and learn how each of them focuses on emotional wellbeing of the

teacher, and on enhancing student achievement by guiding instructional strategies.

Title	Providing Emotional & Instructional Supports
Participants	Aspiring Mentors in a Remote School, trainer, school administrator or coordinator.
Time	Workday, from 10:00am to 4pm
Location	Training room in the local setting, free from distractions.
Materials	- Printed copies of the background information in this project. - PowerPoint Presentation to guide the day. - Handout
Outcome	Teachers will apply knowledge about emotional and instructional supports to the local school setting.
Objective 1	Teachers will gain knowledge about emotional and instructional supports for novice teachers.
Objective 2	Teachers will connect emotional and instructional supports to their school setting by identifying opportunities for providing such supports.

Agenda for Session 3

Morning:
   - Providing Emotional Supports

Afternoon:

   - Providing Instructional Supports

Mentoring Novice Teachers in Remote Schools

Session 3 – Emotional Supports and Instructional Supports

Morning Session

Professional References can be found in the white paper that accompanies this presentation.

Outcomes & Objectives

- Teachers will apply knowledge about physical and institutional supports to the local school setting.
  - Teachers will gain knowledge about physical and institutional for novice teachers.
  - Teachers will connect physical and institutional to their school setting by identifying opportunities for providing such supports.

Introduction to Emotional Supports

- Assistance to novice teachers who struggle with their daily workload.

- Mentors provide emotional supports to:
  - Work proactive to prevent burnout;
  - Teach coping strategies;
  - Promote self-confidence.

Duration of Physical Supports

- Starts at the **first teacher day** of the school year, before students attend their first school day.

- Continuation *throughout* the school year, depending on expressed or observed **needs**, such as:
  - Difficulty balancing work and personal life;
  - Dealing with challenging externalizing behaviours;
  - Questioning teaching abilities.

Detailed examples of Emotional Supports

- Active and supportive listening;
- Daily check-in procedure;
- Validate challenges and feelings of stress;
- Celebrate successes;
- Communication through double-entry journal.

- Handout 4: example of double-entry journal.

Active and Supportive Listening

- Use paraphrasing, probing questions to get to the central core of the challenge.
- Provide guidance without judgment;
- Acknowledge what is being shared;
- Provide building blocks that lead to a solution rather than providing the full solution.
- Watch body language, non-verbal clues, signs of fatique.

Daily Check-ins

- Short conversations about how the mentee is performing and feeling.

- Informal way to support the mentee

- Structured check-in can focus on pre-determined challenges.

- Handout 5: example of structured check-in planner.

Validate feelings

- Share examples from your own teaching experience to illustrate how other teachers deal with similar situations.

- Suggest co-teaching at times when feelings are overwhelming.

- Meet with the teacher at the end of the day to reflect on how the day went.

Celebrate Success

- Organize success celebration for all novice teachers, and provide each teaching with a certificate of excellence in one area. Avoid public celebrations as some teachers do not enjoy these.

- Reward novice teacher with an extra prep time during which a sub takes over the class.

- A note from the school principal thanking for great effort provides a lasting memory when kept.

Communication through Double-Entry Journal

- A journal with two columns, left for mentee, right for mentor. This can be in paper form, or electronically using Google Drive, OneNote, or another collaboration tool.

- Method for asking questions, sharing concerns, anxieties, celebrating successes, and ideas.

- Journal is confidential correspondence between mentor and mentee.

- The journal can also function as a reflection tool.

- Handout 5: example of double-entry journal.

Wrap Up of Morning Session

- How can we create support document for novice teachers that include all of the previous identified information?

- When should a school administrator be involved for emotional supports?

- Discussion on the information for about 20 minutes.

Mentoring Novice Teachers in Remote Schools

Session 2 –Instructional Support

Afternoon Session

Professional References *can be found in the white paper that accompanies this presentation.*

Introduction to Instructional Supports

- Supports to provide students with high quality instruction.
- Mentors provide Instructional Support to:
  - Model effective instructional strategies;
  - Monitor use of best practice strategies;
  - Improve mentee's level of expertise.

Duration of Institutional Supports

- Starts after the novice teacher has had the opportunity to get to know the students and get comfortable with routines and processes.
- Continuation *throughout* the school year.

Detailed examples of Institutional Supports

- Establish common language of instruction.

- Measure teaching success on a 4-point scale.

- Assist creating growth goals.

- Provide focused feedback.

- Develop progress log around growth goals.

- Handout 6: example progress log around growth goals.

Establish common language of instruction

- Besides words and definitions, name common routines.
  - The Art and Science of Teaching (Marzano, 2007). For more information.

- Use cognitive coaching to help teachers become self-directed, and in turn, become self-managing, self-monitoring and self-modifying.

▌█▌ Measure teaching success on a 4-point scale

- Scales are used to monitor instructional strategies and teaching behaviors.

- Scales are tied to specific skills.

0	1	2	3	4
Not using	Beginning	Developing	Applying	Exemplary
Teacher is unaware of skill	Teacher is using elements of a skill.	Teacher uses skill mechanically.	Teacher uses skill and monitors effect.	Teacher has adopted and improved strategy.

▌█▌ Assist creating growth goals

- Select two or three major goals per school year.

- Major goals target performance at "scale 3" level.

- Major goals are within reach within one academic year.

- Identify resources for learning, such as books, videos, professional development.

- Create paper or digital version of Professional Growth Plan.

Provide focused feedback

- Focused feedback from mentors assists mentees with formative reflection while developing skills.

- Best done during debriefs of classroom observations, or in one-on-one meetings.

- Record segments of lessons for formative feedback afterwards (iPad, web camera, smart phone). Destroy recording after the feedback session.

Develop progress log around growth goals

- Progress logs are used as reflection tools while developing skills.

- They work well with difficult yet ongoing strategies.

- Progress logs need to be easy to complete.

- Mentors reflect on completed progress logs.

- Mentor can provide recommendations through modeling growth skills with the students.

Wrap Up of Afternoon Session

- How can we create support document for novice teachers that include all of the previous identified information?

- What are opportunities to engage in cognitive coaching for mentors?

Handout 4: Double-Entry Journal Example

Date	Mentee	Mentor Response
April 3, 2015/	After today, I feel I am struggling with the behavior of some of my students. Why can't they just listen to my instruction? They are always moving around and unfocused. If this keeps up, they will fall further behind!	*Classrooms will always have students who are unfocused. Can we sit down tomorrow and discuss some of the behaviors you are seeing every day that keep these students from progressing in their skill development.*

Handout 5: Structured Check-in Planner

Choose strategies that can be observed by the mentor.

Date to Check-in			
Timed checked-in			
Strategy to work on			
Check-in 1			
Check-in 2			
Check-in 2			

Handout 6: Example Progress Log using 4-point scale

Mentee Name							
Mentor Name							
Current Score	0 Not Using		1 Beginning		2 Developing		3 Applying
I would like my goal to be at			On this date: …………………….				
Instructional Strategy							
Resources							
	Date						
Not Using (0)							
Beginning (1)							
Developing (2)							
Applying (3)							
Exemplary (4)							

Recommended Reading

Author	Title
R. Marzano & T. Boogren	Becoming a Reflective teacher
A. Breaux	101 Answers for New Teachers and Their Mentors: Effective Teaching Tips for Daily Classroom Use.
S. Villani	Comprehensive Mentoring Programs for New Teachers: Models of Induction and Support
B. Harris	Retaining New Teachers: How Do I Support and Develop Novice Teachers?

APA Formatted references can be found in the accompanying reference list.

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Appendix B: Questionnaire

Questionnaire about working in a Remote School

This survey was designed to explore your perceptions on teaching in a remote school. Please visit the following link on FluidSurvey.com to answer the below questions (INSERT LINK HERE). The password to access this questionnaire is: happyteacher Participation in this survey is voluntary. The collected information is confidential and your personal information will not be revealed in the study

Part 1: Questions about applying for your current position and job satisfaction
1. While looking for a teaching position, can you describe your reasons for applying for your current teaching position in a school in a remote location? (RQ 1)
2. When you applied for this teaching position, how did you research the current school, school division, and community? (RQ 1)
3. If you were to choose a different teaching appointment, would you consider a position in a remote school again, and why? (RQ 1)

Part 2: Preparation and Support
4. Describe briefly how pre-service programs in your university connect to supports for teaching in your current remote school. (RQ 4, 6)
5. Describe the kind of supports the school administration and/or school division is providing to you as a new teacher in your current school. (RQ 4, 5, 6)
6. If you participated in Professional Development sessions, how have those sessions influenced the learning climate in your classroom? (RQ 2, 6)
7. How have Professional Development sessions influenced students in your classroom? (RQ 3)

Part 3: Job Satisfaction
8. Which activities in school outside of your classroom make your job most enjoyable? (RQ 1)
9. Which activities in a school outside of your classroom make your job least enjoyable? (RQ 1)
10. Which activities in the classroom make your job most enjoyable? (RQ 1)
11. Which activities in the classroom make your job least enjoyable? (RQ 1)
12. Which most enjoyable activities would influence your retention decisions to remain in your current teaching appointment, and why? (RQ 1, 2)
13. Which least enjoyable activities would influence your retention decisions to leave your current teaching appointment, and why? (RQ 1, 2)
14. How does student achievement influence your retention decisions? (RQ 3)

Appendix C: Interview Guide Teaching Participants

Job Satisfaction in School
1. How would you describe the general culture and climate in the school? (RQ 1)
2. Which activities in school and the classroom do you believe in general affect retention decisions of teachers in remote schools? (RQ 1)
3. Describe which school and classroom activities you most enjoy being engaged in. (RQ 1, 2)
    a. How does such engagement help you be a high-quality teacher? (RQ 1, 3)
    b. How do those activities help you formulate retention decisions? (RQ 1)
4. Describe which school and classroom activities you least enjoy being engaged in. (RQ 1, 2)
    a. Describe how those activities make your job less enjoyable. (RQ 1)
    b. Ho do those activities help you formulate retention decisions? (RQ 1)

Within Classroom activities

5. Describe how the professional relationship you have with your students influences the learning climate in your classroom. (RQ 2)
6. How does connecting your own knowledge and experiences about the cultural context in your school influence professional relationships with students during classroom activities? (RQ 2)
7. How do student characteristics such as attitude towards school, differences in expectations towards school, and learning affect the learning climate? (RQ 2, 3)
    a. Can you describe any positives or challenges with classroom management with your students? (RQ 1, 2, 3)
    b. How do those positives or challenges influence your retention decisions? (RQ 1)

Student Achievement
8. How would you describe the average level of student achievement in your classroom? (RQ 3)
9. Do you feel prepared to provide the level of support to address the learning needs of your students? (RQ 3)
    a. If not, how is that influencing your feelings of being an effective teacher? (RQ 1, 3)
10. How does current student achievement influence your retention decisions? (RQ 1, 3)

Leadership Supports

11. Describe the support you are receiving from your school administrators for working in a remote school. (RQ 4, 5)
12. How do those supports help you be a high-quality teacher? (RQ 3, 4, 5)
13. Do you feel you can discuss challenges you have in your classroom with your school administration without impacting your job security? (RQ 1, 4, 5)
14. How would describe the form of mentoring or coaching you are currently receiving from your school administrators? (RQ 4)
15. How do you see leadership supports influence your retention decisions? (RQ 1, 4)
16. Describe how school administrators are encouraging and supporting collaboration among educators? (RQ 5)
    a. How has such collaboration affected your job satisfaction? (RQ 1)
    b. What kinds of supports are experienced colleagues providing to you as a novice teacher? (RQ 1, 4)
    c. How do those relationships influence your retention decisions? (RQ 1)

Professional Development

17. How did your participation in the school's induction program prepare you for teaching in a remote school? (RQ 1, 6)
    a. How did the induction program fit with what you learned about teaching in remote schools in university? (RQ 6)
    b. How does the induction program influence your retention decisions? (RQ 1)
    c. What recommendations would you have to be included in an induction program for teaching in a remote school? (RQ 6)
18. Describe the professional development opportunities you have participated in within the last few months. (RQ 6)
    a. How did those professional development opportunities assist you with teaching in a remote school? (RQ 2, 3, 6)
    b. What kind of professional development opportunities would you recommend for novice teachers in remote schools? (RQ 6)

Closing Question

19. Taking the school and your classroom into consideration, would you consider returning to this teaching assignment coming school year? Why? (RQ 1, 2, 3)

Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrators

Job Satisfaction

1. How would you describe the average level of job satisfaction among novice teachers? (RQ 1)
   a. What kind of school activities outside of the classroom do you feel many novice teachers enjoy being engaged in? (RQ 1, 2)
   b. What kind of classroom activities do you feel many novice teachers enjoy being engaged in? (RQ 1, 2)
   c. Can you describe reasons inside the school and classroom that may affect retention decisions of novice teachers? (RQ 1)

Supports

2. What kind of support do you think novice teachers need for teaching in a remote school? (RQ 4, 5, 6)
3. Besides the School division's induction program, how does the school assist novice educators to teach in a remote school before the school year starts? (RQ 4)
4. Looking back at last year's teacher turnover, did any teachers who left your school recommend preparation or induction strategies in addition to what was offered to them? (RQ 5, 6)
5. What kind of activities does the school organize for novice educators to become part of the school community as a whole? (RQ 1, 4, 5)
   a. How do those activities make novice educators feel connected to the school community? (RQ 1)
   b. How are experienced teachers encouraged to connect to novice teachers? (RQ 4)

Preparation

Student Achievement

6. Over the last 10 years, the average teacher turnover in PSD was XX%. How would you describe student achievement of students who constantly are taught by inexperienced educators? (RQ 3, 5
   a. How would you describe classroom management procedures of novice teachers in your school? (RQ 2, 3)
   b. How have you noticed an increase or decrease in student achievement in classrooms taught by novice teachers? (RQ 3)

Leadership and Supports

7. What kinds of support do you believe novice educators benefit from in your school? (RQ 4, 5)
   a. What kind of supports does the school offer to novice teachers? (RQ 4, 5)
   b. How do administrators play a role in those supports? (RQ 4, 5)
   c. Do you feel you can discuss challenges novice teachers have in their classrooms without evaluating their job performance? (RQ 4, 5)
   d. What types of support from leadership and experienced teachers do you think would add to novice teacher's support systems? (RQ 4, 5)

Professional Development

8. How does the school identify and select professional development opportunities for novice teachers? (RQ 6)
   a. How do you believe professional development opportunities influence retention decisions? (RQ 6)
   b. What types of professional development opportunities related to teacher retention do you think would be beneficial for your school? (RQ 6)

Closing Question

9. Teacher turnover in your school has been one of the highest in PSD for the last 10 years. Why do you think teacher turnover is so high in your school? (RQ 1)

Appendix E: Document Analysis Matrix

Type of Document
Brief Description

Category   ❍ General Preparation❍ PD ❍ Leadership ❍Support & Mentoring
              ❍ Teaching Strategies ❍ Classroom Management ❍ Community Support
              ❍ Student Relationships ❍ Teacher Relationships ❍ Planning
              ❍ Community Information ❍ Union Supports ❍ Parent Support
              ❍ Other: _____

How does this document assist teachers in being a high-quality teacher in the school?

How does this document influence teacher retention decisions?

Appendix F: Peer Debrief Confidentiality Agreement

This study, (title), is being undertaken by Chris de Feijter (Principal Researcher), a doctoral student at Walden University.

I, _____ (name of peer debriefer), agree to:

1. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g. disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the Principal Researcher;
2. Keep all research information in any form or format secure while it is in my possession;
3. Return all research information in any form or format to the Principal Researcher when I have completed the research tasks;
4. After consulting with the Principal Investigator(s), erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the Principal Investigator(s) (e.g. information sorted on computer hard drive).

Peer Debriefer:

_____   _____   _____
      (print name)   (signature)   (date)

Principal Investigator:

_____   _____   _____
      (print name)   (signature)   (date)

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Walden University, Number 12-02-14-0133095.

Appendix G: Excerpt Sample Transcript

Interviewer: So can you describe the general climate in this school? You walked in, you came here five months ago, you walked into the school, what were your first thoughts?

Interviewee: I was amazed by the resources, the friendliness, the technology that we had. I wasn't expecting that, so that's why I was really happy and excited....

Interviewer: What were you expecting?

Interviewee: Well, I went up to Wellcove in Nunavik to go visit a friend for six weeks a couple of years back, and their school was run down. The library wasn't even open. Zero resources. I was expecting something like that -- which clearly is not the case.

Interviewer: Nope, absolutely not. This is a public school, they're all publicly funded, and it's done really well on schedule, and I have to say, compared to some of the bad schools -- who also have a lot of funding, they often have limited resources -- they tend to spend money on other things, but not necessarily on resources. That's not a bad thing, it's just a difference.

Interviewee: I'm amazed by -- you have a question or a problem, and then all of a sudden, there's a resource to help you with. It's not even questioned.

Interviewer: So in this school, you've been here for five months, so you've had a little bit of exposure, which activities in the classroom or in the school do you believe affect retention decisions of new teachers?

Interviewee: Behaviors?

Interviewer: Behavior, everyone has behaviors for a reason, so you mean acting out behavior.

Interviewee: Yes, absolutely.

Interviewer: Okay, and what does that look like for you? What does that do to you?

Interviewee: It's stressful at times. However, I have a pretty darn good class. And when I compare it to other classrooms, I don't have even close to the behavior issues that they have.

Interviewer: Okay. Teachers tend to project their classroom management on the students -- I believe it's the other way around.

Interviewee: Yes, for sure.

Interviewer: I don't think students can be blamed -- although there's students who have mental health conditions, that's a different category. But in general, I think it's about classroom management and teaching style, all those kinds of things.

Interviewee: And you have to be flexible, and you just have to go with the flow.

Interviewer: Yeah, we'll look at some of those things late on. That's interesting. So this actually is about job satisfaction. So what kind of things in the school and in the classroom do you really enjoy doing? Besides teaching, of course, because you've always wanted to do that. So anything you enjoy doing.

Interviewee: I don't know. I love it all. I don't really have any bad things that I don't like to do. I enjoy having parents coming into my class and that types of things, but I don't know if that's really revolved around the teaching part.

Interviewer: That's okay, whatever you want to share is good. It's my job to figure out if it fits or not.

Interviewee: [laughs] I enjoy the other teachers, and how helpful they are, and I feel that we have a pretty good handle in things down in that elementary lane, so that's what I really enjoy -- is my colleagues.

Interviewer: Okay, so do you think you are pre-engaged with the school and your colleagues? You found your spot?

Interviewee: Very much so.

Interviewer: So how does that make you or help you be a high-quality teacher?

Interviewee: Well, if you're comfortable and you're happy, it's going to show in your classroom.

Interviewer: How does that show?

Interviewee: Well, if you have a positive attitude coming in every day, it's going to affect the way you teach, and it's going to affect the students.

Interviewer: If I were to walk into your classroom, what would be some of the things I would?

Interviewee: After?

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Can't beat them, join them.

Interviewer: Okay. How does that help you formulate your retention decisions?

Interviewee: Well, I'm comfortable and I'm happy. I can see myself being here for a few years. If I didn't feel that security, there'd be no question; I wouldn't be coming back.

Interviewer: Is there anything in the school that makes your job less enjoyable? You said you liked it all.

Interviewee: I wish I saw more parent involvement, but other than that, I have nothing else to compare it to -- if you don't understand this.

(End of Excerpt Sample Transcript).

Appendix H: Permission to Reprint Conceptual Framework

Email dated May 13, 2014

Hello Chris, Thank you for your request.
I am very happy to grant permission to you to use the Model for Teacher Retention in your doctoral research.

I am a little aware of your part of Canada as I have a number of colleagues who work in Toronto, Thunder Bay and Saskatoon.

Staffing these remote indigenous schools can be very challenging.

Keep me informed of your progress.

Best wishes
Colin

Colin Boylan
School of Education
Charles Sturt University
Wagga Wagga Australia