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Mentor Perspectives on Effective Mentoring for Beginning Elementary School Teachers

Betsy Holley Gross
Walden University

Walden University

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Betsy Gross

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Dr. Kathryn Hollywood, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Jennifer McLean, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Michelle Brown, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

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Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2016

Abstract

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

The attrition of beginning teachers is an ongoing problem for public schools as it impacts campus moral, results in economic losses, and maintains the number of newly-hired teachers. Although induction programs for beginning teachers have been found effective in reducing novice teacher attrition, funding for many induction programs have been eliminated due to budget constraints, leaving local school systems with limited support of the mentors and no consistency as to expectations or outcomes. Compounding this problem is that little research has examined what is most successful and supportive for mentors to be able to function most effectively. Guided by Knowles' theory of andragogy, this qualitative study examined the perceptions of experienced mentors about training and ongoing support. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposeful sample of 10 experienced mentor teachers from 4 elementary schools who were of various ages, subject areas, and years of experience. The interview data were coded for key words, repetitive phrases, and analyzed for common themes. Findings revealed that the mentors at the study site valued professional development, respect among participants, and ongoing collaboration. The resulting project was a mentor teacher training program for the study district that incorporated the study findings by focusing on how to best support novice teachers through respectful collaboration. Positive social change implications include providing the study district with a research-based training for teacher mentors which might create a stronger new teacher mentor program and ultimately reduce the attrition of beginning teachers.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to my wonderful family.

To my wonderful husband, Lindsey, who encouraged me to enroll in the Doctoral program, and supported me throughout the process. Thanks for always taking care of things so that I could dedicate my time and effort to completing my study. Thanks for truly believing in me especially when I lost my self-confidence. In a big way, you gave me the strength and courage when I lost my way. I love you.

To my beautiful daughters, Caroline and Elizabeth, I have always tried to be the best role model for both of you just as my parents were to me. I pray that you have seen hard work, self-doubt, struggle, confidence, dedication and a lot of prayer because these are the ingredients that go into success. Thanks more than I can say for always being supportive and understanding in both your kind words and actions. I know there was sacrifice but we finally made it. Together, WE did it!

To my sister, mentor and friend, Rhonda, thanks for all of the late nights we spend discussing this study. You were my sounding board, proofreader and in many ways my sanity. Thanks for not letting me feel sorry for myself more than 5 minutes! I am blessed to have you in my life and will forever be grateful to you. Without you, I could not have made it. I love you, Ra!

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge God as my Lord and Savior. God created me and put the people in my life to help me achieve my goal of earning my Doctorate Degree in Higher Education and becoming Dr. Betsy Gross. *I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13*

I would like to take the time to acknowledge my chairperson, Dr. Katheryn Hollywood. Thanks for all of the support and encouragement you gave throughout this process. I will always be grateful to you for not giving up on me. I know that it has been a test of my commitment but you never wavered in your confidence that I was capable of completing this project study.

I would also like to thank my second member, Dr. Jennifer McLean. I am grateful to you for agreeing to be a member of my doctoral committee. Thanks for your valuable insight, feedback and recommendations which helped me make needed changes to strengthen my project study.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Beginning teachers have a tendency to leave the field of education at an alarming rate during the first three years of teaching. Substantial teacher attrition has been well documented over the past decade (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Markow & Pieters, 2012; Rinke, 2007). Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013) reported that 30% of teachers leave the field within the first five years. Furthermore, the attrition rate at higher poverty schools is 50% higher than at an affluent school (Ronfeldt, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2013). Markow and Pieters (2012) reported "three in ten (29%) teachers say they are likely to leave the teaching profession to go into some different occupation within the next five years" (p. 13). The rate of attrition found by Markow and Pieters (2012) was at a higher percentage than 1986, which was 27%.

Beginning teachers reported environmental, psychological, organizational, and social factors as reasons for their departure (Hans-Vaugh & Scherff, 2008; Irinaga-Bistolas, Schalock, Marvin, & Beck, 2007; Odell & Ferraro, 1992). Torres (2011) identified factors such as low job satisfaction, lack of support and inadequate resources as contributors to beginning teacher attrition. The need for qualified and effective teachers continues. School leaders must work diligently to reverse this situation.

In an effort to reduce beginning teacher attrition, school systems have implemented teacher induction programs to support beginning teachers (Shakrani, 2008). Teacher induction programs include the components of mentorship, professional development and collaboration (Wong 2004). Each of these components is designed to

support beginning teachers. For the purposes of this study, beginning teachers are considered to be just starting their careers with less than two years of experience.

Teacher induction programs created by the Alabama State Department of Education have been suspended due to the lack of funds and fiscal limitations. Dr. Tony Thacker explained that the State of Alabama teacher induction program has received reduced funding over the past three years. Additionally, the State of Alabama's budget for the 2012-2013 school year entirely eliminates funding for the Alabama teacher induction program and continues into the 2013-2014 school year (personal communication, January 23, 2012). Accordingly, local school systems in these states have been left unable to provide a state funded teacher induction program.

The absence of a funded teacher induction program has resulted in a steady increase in beginning teacher attrition for the local school system (D. Jones, personal communication, October 7, 1014). One of the elementary schools in this study lost twelve teachers during the 2013-2014 school term and eight of those educators were beginning teachers (D. Jones, personal communication, October 7, 1014). D. Jones stated "obviously the loss of each beginning teacher costs our system financially but it also results in a decrease in teacher morale, and a setback in our schools' professional development" (October 7, 2014).

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

In the state of Alabama, local school districts are now creating their own teacher induction programs. Many of these programs are in the early stages of development and

lack many of the benefits such as professional development and stipends which are offered through the state induction programs.

The local school system, Oak Street County Schools, is a rural, Title I school district located in the southeastern region of the United States. Oak Street County School District is currently following the state induction program in a loose manner due to lack of resources. Two major differences between the local induction program and the state induction program are that stipends and professional development for mentors and mentees are limited. Instead, veteran teachers are given a copy of the state induction program with no training and asked by the principal to serve as mentors for the beginning teachers. Beginning teachers, in the local school system, attend one day of professional development to prepare them for their responsibilities in the classroom.

During the one day of professional development, beginning teachers are given a copy of the College and Career Readiness State Standards, handouts on strategic teaching, and a list of some helpful websites for beginning teachers (D. Jones, personal communication, December 3, 2013). Much of the day is devoted to listening to different speakers on different topics such as insurance, taxes, technology, strategic teaching strategies and classroom management. A beginning teacher who attended the one day of professional development described the information as interesting, but not very helpful in preparing for the demanding duties and responsibilities of a beginning teacher (P. Smith, August 4, 2014). At the end of the presentation, beginning teachers report to their principals to get the name of their mentor (D. Jones, personal communication, December 3, 2013).

The State Induction model provided a week of training for beginning mentors. In addition, professional development was offered monthly to continue training and collaboration for mentors. In contrast, the local teacher mentoring program does not offer any pre-training or professional development support for veteran teachers; instead, veteran teachers are given a copy of the state induction program with no training and asked by the principal to serve as mentors for the new beginning teachers.

The State Induction program set guidelines and goals for the professional development as well as the interaction between the mentor and mentee. In addition, the personnel director at the central office is required to follow up on these requirements. The current induction program does not require anyone to review any of the requirements.

Mentors in Oak Street County Schools' induction program do not receive any professional development on working with beginning teachers. Consequently, one of the mentors explained that she felt completely unprepared to be a mentor (C. Smith, personal communication, September 4, 2012). The mentor informed her mentee that she would answer questions and provide help as needed. Garvey (2010) noted that in most cases, beginning teachers do not know the questions to ask their mentors. In a local occurrence, a local mentee, not knowing otherwise, asked to meet only two times during the academic year; this is not reflective of a well-structured or monitored mentoring relationship.

A result of not providing stipends as an incentive means that veteran teachers are reluctant to agree to participate in the local induction program. According to archival data over the past three years, only 3 of 30 veteran teachers volunteered for the school induction program. In contrast, 17 of 30 veteran teachers volunteered to serve as mentors

for the local university's induction program. One major distinction between the two programs was the use of stipends.

A lack of mentor' training often results in mentors not understanding their role and functions. Mentors are unaware of the basic requirements of being an effective mentor. Forsbach-Rothman (2007) explained that "without guidance and established expectations cooperating teachers/mentors hold and conduct themselves as authoritarian role models" (p. 245). Forsbach-Rothman (2007) further explained that this type of relationship often creates jealousy and resentment which undermines the productivity that an induction program with trained mentors typically generates. Additionally, mentors who lack proper training often focus on a beginning teacher's emotional support and socialization into the school culture rather than focusing on instructional strategies. G. Austin (personal communication, October 6, 2014) explained that she does not feel prepared to be a mentor because she does not understand her expectations and spends most of the time helping beginning teachers with classroom management. Unfortunately, this approach ignores the beginning teacher's teaching style and student achievement (Joiner & Edwards, 2008).

Additionally, D. Jones (personal communication, October 2, 2013) explained mentors in Oak Street County Schools do not receive any training. A lack of funds was reported as the major obstacle for providing mentorship training. D. Jones (personal communication, October 2, 2013) also added that mentorship training would be an asset for the teacher induction program which would be reinstated once the State Department allocates funds.

Rationale

A significant problem of beginning teachers is teacher attrition. There are numerous research studies, both quantitative and qualitative, regarding teacher retention and attrition (Barnes, Crowe & Schaefer 2007; Brown & Slate, 2011; Gonzalez, Joiner & Edwards, 2008). However, research data are limited regarding exactly which beginning teacher induction programs are better than others. Moreover, research data are even scarcer in the area of effective teacher mentorship training and preparation which are critical components of induction programs. It is important to explore and examine which types of mentorship training programs provide the best preparation for teacher mentors as their role in the new teacher retention process is a critical one. Additionally, mentor selection needs to be explored to understand what criteria are used to identify effective mentors.

On the local level, the lack of preparation and effectiveness of Oak Street County Schools' induction program resulted in high teacher attrition. According to A. Jones (personnel communication, July 8, 2013), elementary curriculum coordinator, Freedom Elementary, a school in the Oak Street County School District, lost six teachers, or 16% of its staff of 38 teachers during the 2010-2011 school year. For the 2011-2012 school year, Freedom Elementary lost three teachers, for an 8% attrition rate. During 2012-2013, five out of 38 teachers were lost resulting in a 13% attrition rate. Moreover, Freedom Elementary is also a Title I school which means it is a school that serves high poverty students (AL State Department of Education, 2013). Schools serving special populations, such as poverty and minority, face a greater negative impact from losing highly qualified

teachers because these schools are harder to staff (Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino & Felsher, 2010).

The creation of an effective teacher induction program presents the intent and purpose for this qualitative case study. This qualitative case study is designed to investigate the fundamental qualities found in effective mentoring programs from the perspective of experienced mentors of beginning teachers. In addition, this qualitative case study includes an investigation of the most effective training as well as supporting factors for teacher mentors.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined within the context of this study:

- *Adult Learner*-a mature individual who develops a self-concept of being responsible for one's own life (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005).
- *Attrition*-teachers who leave the profession for different reasons, such as, retirement, resignation, transfer or change of occupation (Lynch, 2012).
- *Beginning Teacher*- any educator who is brand new to the profession (Rhode Island's Induction Model, 2011).
- *Highly Qualified*- hold a bachelor's degree, obtain a state teaching license and demonstrate knowledge in subjects taught through state testing or administrative observations (Karelitz, Fields, Levy, Gudapakkam, & Jablonski, 2011).
- *Mentee*-the role that a beginning or new teacher assumes when working with a mentor (Sweeny, 2008, St. George & Robinson, 2011).

- *Mentor*-tenured teacher who guides and collaborates using their own experience and knowledge to assist beginning teachers for one year (Phillips & Fragoulis, 2010, St. George & Robinson, 2011, New Teacher Center, 2011).
- *Mentorship Process*- developmental process in which a veteran teacher and a beginning or new teacher are paired together for mutual support and professional development (Sweeny, 2008).
- *Mentor Selection Process*- establishment of a mentor selection committee created to choose mentors based on certain qualifications (New York State Education, 2013).
- *Mentor Training Program*-professional develop for mentors that focuses on best teaching practices, behavior management and adult learning (Stanulis & Ames, 2009)
- *Mentor Engagement*-engagement by the mentor in ongoing activities to help with reflection and refining of one's own teaching practice as well as mentorship skills (New York State Department, 2011).
- *Professional Development*-ongoing learning about such topics as teaching, learning, observation and interaction (Stanulis & Ames, 2009).
- *Teacher Induction Program*-structured process consisting of professional development, mentorship and formative assessment (Wood & Stanulis, 2009).
- *Teacher Motivation*-important reasons influencing individuals to become teachers (Watt & Richardson, 2012).

- *Tenure*-The right to due process and job security after a three year probationary period (United Federation of Teachers, n.d).
- *Veteran teacher*-teacher with a minimum of three years of experience in the classroom (Sweeny, 2008).

Significance

Dillion (2009) reported "one in three beginning teachers will leave the profession during the first three years of service" (p. 1). In addition, Swason (2009) explained "millions of new teachers will be needed in the near future" (p.119). Kain (2011) stated "teacher attrition has grown by 50% over the past 15 years" (p. 3). As a result of teachers leaving the classroom, students are much more likely to be taught by teachers with less than two years of experience (Omer, 2011). The comments of these authors serve to heighten the awareness and importance of examining the role and function of beginning teacher induction programs.

The ramifications of losing and replacing so many beginning teachers creates substantial difficulties for all of the stakeholders in the school system. Beginning teachers who leave the profession early fail to reach their full potential (Dillion, 2009). Additionally, the entire educational process is disrupted thereby directly impacting students' learning (St. George & Robinson, 2011). High risk students are the first victims of losing effective, highly qualified new teachers. Chase (2000) explained that "high staff turnover has devastating consequences for children. B. Jackson (personal communication, November 5, 2014) explained that "student achievement suffers greatly when beginning teachers are lost. He estimated that if students did not have to experience

this, we would see lower below grade level percentages in our K-6 students' grades." Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb and Wycoff (2009) explained that research shows "the single most important factor in a child's education is the quality of his or her teachers—and quality depends in large measure upon years of experience" (p. 5). Additionally, teacher attrition is reported higher at lower performing schools which results in leaving the at-risk students with inexperienced teachers (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2009).

Another casualty in teacher attrition is the schools. Schools suffer financially from losing new teachers. These institutions face high cost in recruiting and training teachers to replace those new teachers leaving the system. Nationally, a conservative estimate for replacing teachers who leave the field of education is somewhere in the range of $7.2 billion a year (Kain, 2011). The school system in this study reports a financial loss of $3,000 per year for the loss of beginning teachers (J. Jenkins, personal communication, November 6, 2014). In short, Shakrani (2008) explained schools are "trapped in a cycle of teacher hiring and replacement, low-performing disadvantaged schools drain their districts of precious resources that could be better spent to improve teaching quality and student achievement" (p. 1).

Furthermore, teacher attrition has a negative impact on teacher morale. Aside from the economic losses of training and retraining, professional development is interrupted each time a beginning teacher leaves the system (Brill & McCartney, 2008). As a result, schools struggle to implement programs and curriculum into the learning process. Teamwork can also be hindered when beginning teachers leave the system

because the faculty is not trained consistently (Kain, 2011). The lack of training often creates resentment when veteran teachers have to spend time helping beginning teachers instead of working in their own classrooms (Brill & McCartney, 2008).

Many factors influence beginning teachers' decisions to leave the profession. Factors such as environment, psychological, and social factors have played a significant role regarding teacher attrition (Hans-Vaugh & Scherff, 2008). Additionally, beginning teachers in rural areas express a lack of resources, acceptance, and a lack of privacy as adversities (Hellsten, McIntyre & Prytula, 2011). Hellsten, et al (2011) supported the research findings that adjusting to school culture and expectations, insufficient resources and feelings of isolation heavily contributed to a beginning teacher's decision to leave the profession. The "sink or swim" mind-set that is prevalent in many U.S. schools today accounts for the high rate of attrition (Ingersoll, 2012).

One initiative found to make a significant impact on retaining beginning teachers in the profession are teacher induction programs. Teacher induction programs have been studied for many years and the process has been beneficial to beginning teachers and schools throughout the world (Kajs, 2002; Moir, 2009; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009 Ingersoll, 2012). Beginning teachers, who were in teacher induction programs, expressed perceptions of becoming more effective in the classroom through the support of their mentor and professional development (Kajs, 2002). Moir (2009) found in a later study beginning teachers' effectiveness is accelerated when they participate in a robust teacher induction program. Additionally, Phillips and Fragoulis (2010) explained that mentorship

"promotes a professional relationship that fosters guidance and support during the mentee's development" (p. 203).

Varied studies have demonstrated that induction programs are constructive to beginning teachers' success in the classroom (Shakrani, 2008; Wood & Stanulis, 2009; Phillips & Fragoulis, 2010). Mentorship and professional development, two components of an induction program, contribute to a beginning teacher's self-efficacy. Beginning teachers gain a sense of self confidence as they explore and identify new roles with additional responsibilities (Phillips & Fragoulis, 2010).

In addition, beginning teachers start to refine their teaching practices to become more effective instructors in the classroom (Shakrani, 2008). Beginning teachers are also more aware of the expectations in their new working environments. Through participation in mentorship in a teacher induction program, beginning teachers begin networking with veteran teachers (Phillips & Fragoulis, 2010). Structured and scheduled interactions offer beginning teachers opportunities to engage in conversation which facilitates a deeper understanding of the policies and procedures of the school (Phillips & Fragoulis, 2010).

Exchanging ideas through interacting with mentors and other teachers is another significant benefit for new teachers in a teacher induction program. Wong (2004) explained, "Teachers remain in teaching when they belong to professional learning communities that have, at their heart, high-quality interpersonal relationships founded on trust and respect" (p. 50). Moreover, Gilles and Wilson (2004) stated "teachers work to

create knowledge from their own knowledge from their own experiences. This process often occurs through collaboration, inquiry and mentorship" (p. 88).

Teacher induction programs are more comprehensive programs that include professional development, mentorship, and collaboration that have often demonstrated effectiveness in retaining new teachers and reducing attrition. For many years, research has shown that the support of mentorship, professional development and scheduled interactions make new teachers feel supported in their new occupation (Wong, 2004). Ingersoll (2012) supported this idea but notes beginning teachers' participation in some activities like common planning time to collaborate with other teachers and a mentor were more effective at reducing attrition (Ingersoll, 2012).

For many years, research has shown that the support of mentorship, professional development and scheduled interactions make new teachers feel supported in their new occupation (Wong, 2004). Ingersoll (2014) supported this ideas but notes beginning teachers' participation in some activities like common planning, time to collaborate with other teachers and a mentor were more effective at reducing attrition Furthermore, Carroll (2007) reported that "a national study of support for new teachers found that comprehensive approaches to teacher induction can reduce teacher turnover by more than 50%" (p. 7).

From another perspective, Kaufmann (2007) reported that the lack of mentorship and induction programs have negative effects on retaining beginning teachers. Teachers who did not participate in the teacher induction program described their perceptions in terms like sink or swim or being lost at sea (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004, Fantilli &

McDougall, 2007). Still, Buchanan (2010) noted in a recent study that "lack of support emerged as the single biggest predictor of a decision to leave the profession" (p. 205).

Induction programs are not a panacea for the issues facing beginning teachers; however, as discussed by Ewing (2010), even with established induction programs including mentorship, beginning teachers continue to resign due to lack of professional support and unrealistic expectations of expertise for teachers new to the profession. This cycle occurs because, in many instances, neither the beginning teacher nor the mentors have input into the development of the mentorship or, the induction program. In order for programs to be successful it is imperative that parties involved help to create the expectations and outcomes for the program and that it be regularly evaluated to ensure that it is a useful program, not just additional work for those involved. In addition, the financial support of these programs must be allotted and maintained.

Despite the general agreement on effective outcomes of teacher induction programs, particularly with trained, qualified mentors, many school districts administrators chose to cut these programs in response to fiscal challenges. E. Keese, (personal communication, June 15, 2011) stated "unfortunately, most schools in the southeast have experienced a reduction of money to fund many schools' needs. As a result, State funded teacher induction programs have been temporarily suspended leaving school systems without teacher mentoring." Often these school districts are the most likely to have the highest percentage of beginning teachers and the greatest need of the induction programs, both to retain teachers and improve the stability of the school system and instruction.

Guiding/Research Question

In this qualitative case study, I explored and examined the mentor selection, mentor training and mentor support in a beginning teacher induction program. I integrated a review of literature and an in-depth examination of mentors in the schools in this study to address the following questions:

1. What type of professional development provides an effective training experience for mentors in a teacher induction program?
2. How do mentors in an induction program describe the factors/forces that support effective training for mentors?

Review of the Literature

Education is essential to a nation's wellbeing, development and future (Watt, Richcardson, Klusmann, Kunter, Beyer, Trautwein & Baumert, 2012). Unfortunately, education is facing the perfect storm as record numbers of baby boomers are retiring and beginning teachers are leaving the field of education at high rates (Freemyer, Townsend, Freemyer & Baldwin, 2010). Schools are witnessing extremely high numbers of retirements along with a beginning teacher attrition rate that has steadily increased over the past 15 years (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2010). Now more than ever, it is imperative for administrators to retain beginning teachers.

One of the most effective methods for retention of new teachers is the support of a qualified teacher mentor but determining what makes a mentor qualified and supportive can be challenging. The goal of this research study was to explore mentors' perceptions and experiences to identify the most effective induction training programs as well as the

most effective training programs for mentors. The researcher built upon previous studies by identifying key components that supported best practices for selecting and training effective mentors in a teacher induction program.

Theoretical Assumptions and Conceptual Framework

The study focus was an investigation of the factors that influenced successful mentors for beginning Elementary School Teachers. The conceptual framework that guided this research study was based primarily on constructs of the Adult Learning Theory (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005). In addition, this qualitative research case study incorporated descriptive information from individuals identified as successful mentors regarding factors most supportive of effective induction programs.

Adult learning theory includes six characteristics of adult learners (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Although these may often be used in discussion of development of college courses, several of these characteristics are also applicable for the learning required of adults socializing into a profession such as education. Recognizing these essential characteristics and providing support for them this will enhance teacher performance with benefit to the beginning teachers as well as their students, the school system, and ultimately the community with better prepared students that progress in education.

Essential qualities of adult learners that are of importance in this study included the following:

- Need to Know-Adults expect to have influence upon work decisions.

- Orientation- Adults are problem centered and respond best by working on issues that directly relate to their lives. Therefore, self-assessment, a peer relationship, and initial support are essential to a successful induction program.
- Readiness-Adult learners desire information applicable to their professional needs and that will enhance their performance and self -confidence.
- Self-Concept- Adults feel the need to take responsibility for their lives. Mentors and school administration must convey respect to beginning teachers for them to value the information provided and integrate it into their practice
- Foundation –Adults have life experience as well as recent educational experiences that is useful and should be integrated into a successful mentorship.
- Motivation-Adults are motivated by internal motivators instead of external motivators. Incorporating background knowledge into an induction program allows self-motivated adult learners to benefit and build on their own life experiences.

In addition, types of professional development for effective training experiences for mentors, and factors that mentors identify as supportive of effective training were explored. This last component of identified factors that supported effective mentorship was particularly relevant to this study as there has been very little research that addressed

this and no study that focused on the specific questions of this research. The study constructs are illustrated in the Conceptual Framework developed by researcher. (Refer to Figure 1).

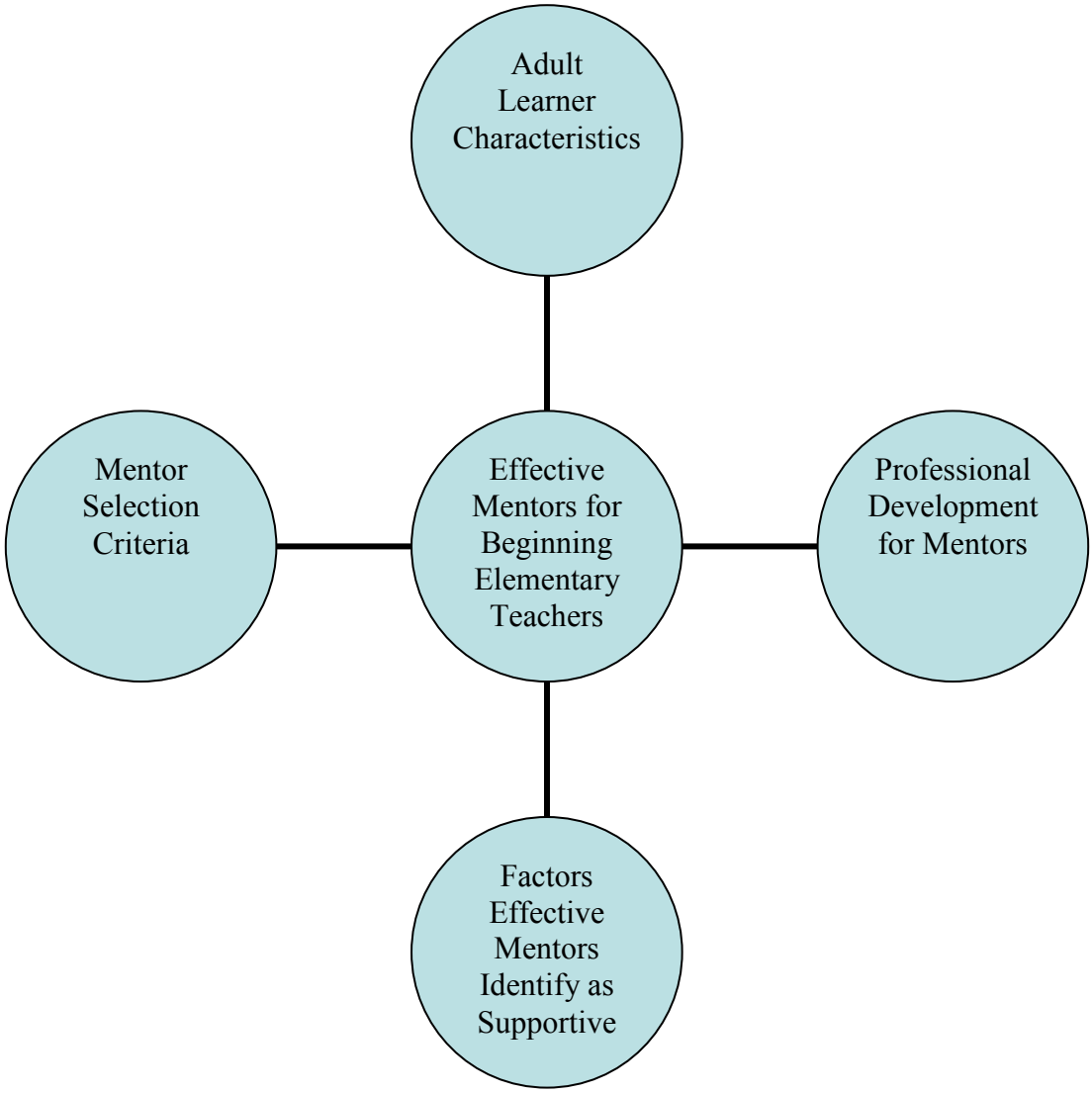

Figure 1. Conceptual framework: An Investigation of the factors influencing successful mentors for beginning elementary school teachers.

Organization of the Literature Review

The literature review included an exhaustive search of the literature focusing on varied topics related to the study interest including teaching as a career choice, teacher attrition, teacher induction programs and teacher mentorship. General searchers in ProQuest, ERIC, SAGE and Thoreau databases at Walden University were performed. The search terms were listed using Boolean terms like teacher induction programs, mentorship, beginning teachers, attrition, and teacher induction programs. Additionally, I researched professional websites such as National Education Association, Alabama State Department of Education and numerous other State Department of Education websites. The search led to a wealth of information on reasons beginning teachers leave the field early. Also, the investigation revealed a substantial quantity of material for supporting beginning teachers through the implementation of numerous induction programs. Surprisingly, limited research exists on the support for preparing and supporting teacher mentors in an induction program.

The literature review was presented in three essential sections. Section one focused on teaching as a career choice. Section two addressed the issues and effects of teacher attrition. Section three explored teacher retention programs being used to keep beginning teachers in the system.

Data indicated an increase in the need for more teachers in the workforce. According to the National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], there were approximately 3.6 million full time elementary and secondary teachers in public and private classrooms during the 2011-12 school term (2013). This number is projected to

rise by approximately 7% throughout the years leading up to 2020 (NCES, 2011). Moreover, 17% of that increase is projected to be beginning teachers. This prediction could result in approximately 429,000 beginning teachers (NCES, 2010). Figure 2 illustrates the prediction for more teachers in the classroom. Figure 3 provides a representation of new teachers through 2020.

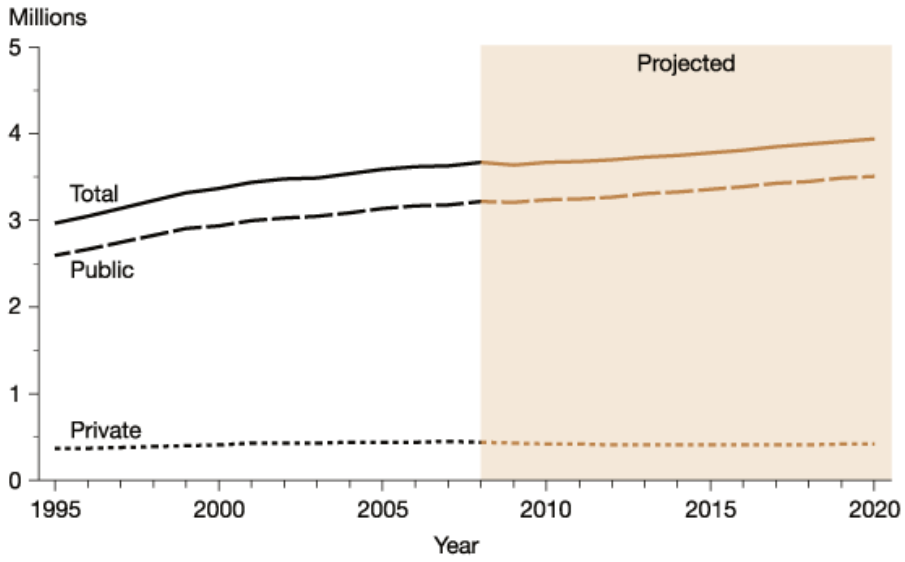

Figure 2: Projection of increase of teachers (NCES, 2011).

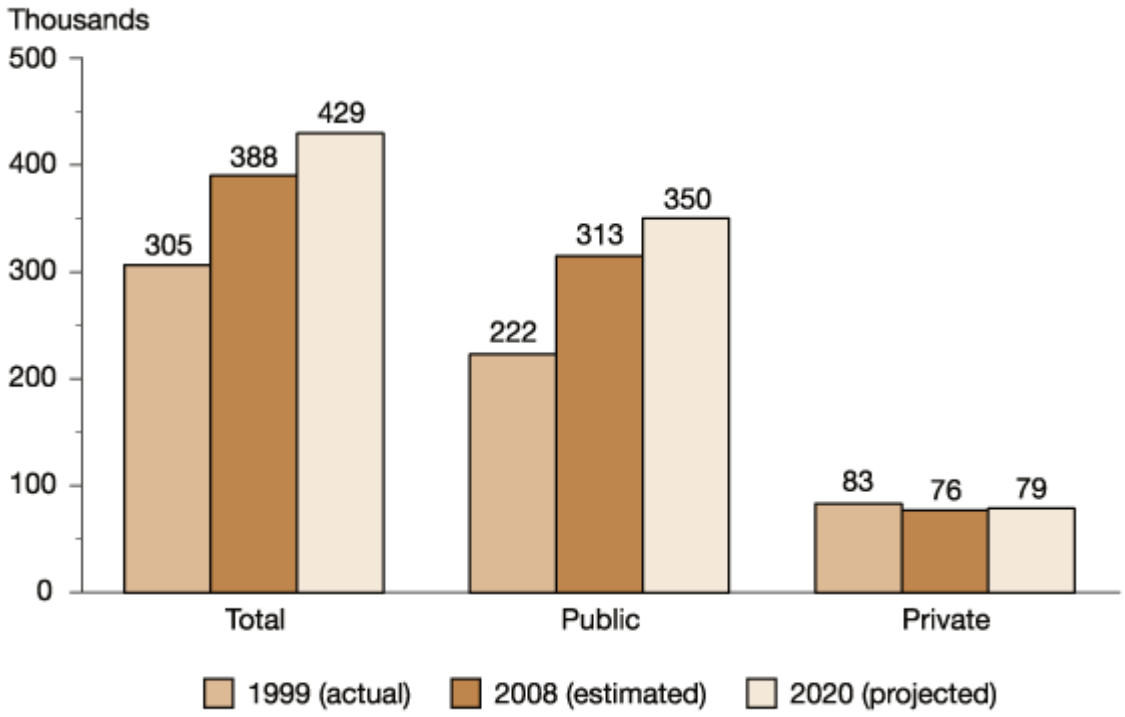

Figure 3: Projection of New Hires (NCES, 2011).

Teaching as a Career Choice

Teaching is a significant career choice and should not be entered into without careful consideration. Teachers should possess certain qualities such as competence, efficiency and knowledge to carry out the tasks of educating others (Lingam, (2010). Koing and Rothland (2012) suggested looking into motivations that led individuals to becoming teachers. The motivation for choosing to become a teacher has a significant impact on admittance, progression and graduation from teacher education programs. Additionally, this rationale is an essential factor in a beginning teacher's excitement and ambition in the teaching profession (Konig & Rothland, 2012).

Extensive research has been conducted on the motivating factors that lead to a person choosing to become a teacher (Martson, 2010; Pop and Turner, 2009; Wadsworth,

2001; Watt, & Richardson, 2008). Watt et al. (2012) explained that the *Factors Influencing Teacher Choice Scale* (FIT-Choice) allowed researchers to compare research and assess the primary motivations of teachers. Additionally, the FIT Scale has been shown to predict positive and negative outcomes among beginning teachers (Watt et al., 2012). Research suggests the reason a person chooses to enter the teaching profession can offer valuable insight into one's best placement. Lingam (2010) explained "the underlining reasons for entering the teaching profession will in turn determine their orientation to performing the core business of teaching and learning as well as adjunct roles and responsibilities" (p. 141). For this reason, it is essential to examine the reasons individuals decide to become teachers.

As discussed, individuals choose teaching as a career for a multitude of different reasons. Lingam (2010) conducted a research study and found that pre-service teachers rated liking to work with children, very satisfying job and observing their own teachers provided the most motivation for entering the teaching profession. Additionally, Pop and Turner (2009) suggested that individuals who chose teaching as a career fell into one of three categories: altruistic, intrinsic, and extrinsic. Each of these categories validates the different motivations for a student's decision to enter the teaching profession.

Individuals who express altruistic reasons for becoming a teacher, cite ideas such as making a positive impact on the world (Pop & Turner, 2009). Moreover, in a research study, Hughes (2012) noted that helping students learn was a strong motivation for individuals wanting to become teachers. Mee, Haverback and Passe (2012) cited altruistic reasons as highest rated regarding becoming a teacher. Students with intrinsic reasons for

becoming teachers refer to positive aspects of the job like love of subject matter (Pop & Turner, 2009). Finally, students entering the teaching career for extrinsic reasons focus on aspects such as holidays and benefits (Pop & Turner, 2009). Hughes (2012) agreed with Pop and Turner's research by also identifying such motivators for becoming a teacher as vacation time, salary, working climate and helping others.

Teacher Attrition

Surprisingly, after all of the preparation, expense, education requirements, and training one expends to become a teacher, beginning teachers are leaving the field at an alarming rate. Kain (2011) suggested that the teacher attrition rate is at 16.8 % and in urban schools is over 20%. Kilinc, Watt, and Richardson (2012) explained fewer individuals are entering into the teaching profession and record numbers of beginning teachers are leaving within the first 3 to 5 years.

Pop and Turner (2009) suggested "the teacher attrition problem must be understood in a larger context, connected to teacher quality and quality teacher education" (p. 697). Colleges and universities are responsible for prepare pre-service teachers. Through careful planning and education, pre-service teachers gain the experience and knowledge to begin their teaching career. Pre-service teachers perceived teaching as a desirable career choice when they had a clear understanding of the goals of teaching and self-confidence to do the job (Pop & Turner, 2009). Conversely, pre-service teachers who reported negative beliefs and experiences about teaching perceived teaching as a challenging and overwhelming job (Pop & Turner, 2009).

In an effort to understand the high rate of beginning teachers' attrition, a southeastern governor implemented a commission on quality teaching. This taskforce was charged with examining the necessary reforms to reduce beginning teachers from leaving the field and recruiting individuals who were highly qualified to teach (Hirsh, 2006). The taskforce found that reported that leadership and empowerment issues were the most critical issues for teachers deciding to leave their school.

Multiple experts have stated that beginning teacher support must be carefully developed and provided in order to decrease the accelerating attrition rate. Without carefully planned induction programs which include mentorship, professional development programs, and collaboration, school districts will not have effective teachers who are capable of producing high performing students (Wong, 2004). Although this was recognized several years ago, the essential issues continue to negatively affect school districts across the country. Barnes, Crowe and Schaefer (2007) expressed a link between student performance and teacher turnover. Students with experienced teachers demonstrate better outcomes that students with beginning teachers. Moir (2009) reported "the single most important element in a child's education is the teacher" (p. 14). The teacher's knowledge and performance in the classroom are directly related to student performance (Moir, 2009). Hirsh (2006) explained that higher qualified and experienced teachers are essential to closing the achievement gaps and maximizing student learning. The vicious cycle continues when teachers exit the classroom, the constant use of inexperienced teachers result in lower students achievement scores (Barnes et al, 2007).

Therefore, beginning teachers must receive the support needed to remain in the profession and reach their full teaching potential.

Beginning Teachers and Support

Beginning teachers are leaving the classroom at an alarming rate (Kain, 2011). Mihan (2008) reported "teaching is the only profession that requires the same responsibilities of its beginning practitioners as it does its masters" (p. 763). Unfortunately, schools have failed to understand an important factor that other industries have realized from the start. Comprehensive, consistent professional development is vital to success of beginning employees including teachers (Wong & Wong, 2011). Teachers want to be effective in helping students learn and master content Wong & Wong, 2011). For beginning teachers to remain in the field of education, they must feel supported, successful, and part of a group striving to achieve a common goal (Wong, 2003). Induction programs are used in school systems to provide necessary support and assistance to beginning teachers.

Many systems provide a new teacher orientation to introduce new teachers into the school system. These orientation programs generally offer no training for people designated to be mentors and provide little ongoing support to beginning teachers. For example, orientation may include policies of the school system, specific forms to complete, a notebook of state teaching standards and a general layout of the school with a clear expectation that teachers should be able to function appropriately with this information. Beginning teachers are often overwhelmed and have no place to go for additional explanation, support, or answers to questions. Even if they are able to find a

supportive veteran teacher, this is a voluntary arrangement, not one provided by the school system.

Induction programs.

Unlike general orientation programs, school induction program are comprehensive and include professional development for beginning teachers, an established format, trained, qualified, motivated mentors selected based on their qualifications and support collaborative teams at grade level. Quality Induction programs provide a coherent, comprehensive and structured approach to supporting new teacher (Wong, 2004).

Components of an induction program include collaboration, professional support, and mentorship. Hans-Vaugh and Scherff (2008) found that a component of an induction program used for reducing beginning teachers stress is collaboration through networking. Reflection, competency and a reduction in isolation are some of the benefits for beginning teachers who engage in collaboration with other teachers (p.24-25).

As a component of an induction program, mentorship provides beginning teachers with a valuable resource to mentees. The mentor is possibly the most important component in an induction program (Wong, 2004). Therefore, the selection, training and support of mentors is vital to the success of an induction program for beginning teachers and mentors. Considering the important influence that mentorship has on mentors, beginning teachers and the school, one must consider how adults learn and increase their knowledge.

Induction programs have proven to be effective in reducing beginning teacher attrition (Taranto, 2011). It is essential to gain an understanding of various types of induction programs, mentorship and effective mentor training to identify the most effective components in selecting and preparing mentors who support beginning teachers.

Research has been conducted regarding the positive impact on beginning teachers who participate in an induction program (Barnes, Crowe & Schaefer, 2007). Barrera, Braley and Slate (2008) found that teacher attrition rates are lowered when beginning teachers participated in an induction program. These authors (Barrera et al., 2008) stated "it is the first years of teaching that are the years where beginning teachers gain their most proficiency" (p. 2).

Additionally, research supports the belief that beginning teachers benefit from teacher induction programs. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) reported benefits such as "job satisfaction, efficacy and teacher retention" as benefits from induction programs (p. 684). Ingersoll (2008) found professional networking and professional identity development were additional benefits for beginning teachers. However, it is important to acknowledge that teacher induction programs vary greatly regarding infrastructure, goals and outcomes (Mullen, 2008). Parker, Ndoye, and Imig (2009) study indicated that induction programs rely solely on mentoring while other programs include comprehensive components such as professional development, mentor observations and teacher. Mentorship selection and mentor training are also two additional characteristics that may differ between teacher inductions according to the findings of their study. Teacher attrition and teacher retention are essential in evaluating the effectiveness of an induction program.

Mentorship.

Considering the important influence that mentorship has on mentors, beginning teachers and the school, one must consider how adults learn and increase their knowledge. Brookfield (1986) advised that leaders who instruct adult learners must act as facilitators and understand that adult learners bring a multitude of experiences, skills and knowledge with them.

As a component of an induction program, mentorship provides beginning teachers with a valuable resource to mentees. Portner (2005) explained that "induction programs provide beginning teachers with their introduction to career-long, team based professional development through which they continue to improve their teaching and student learning" (p. 241). Zachary and Fischler (2009) stressed the importance of establishing goals and working to accomplish them as key to a successful mentorship relationship.

The mentor is possibly the most important component in an induction program (Wong, 2004). Therefore, the selection, training and support of mentors is vital to the success of an induction program for beginning teachers and mentors. Portner (2008) stressed that a good mentor is created by training and continues to grow over time. Moreover, research reveals that mentorship, provides benefits to the mentor, as well as, the beginning teacher (Phillips & Fragoulis, 2009). Mihans (2008) explained that many veteran teachers have a desire to mentor beginning teachers so they can learn from others and share ideas. This exchange between veteran teachers and beginning teachers serves as an incentive for veteran teachers to remain in the field (Milhans, 2008).

Mentoring involves different skills than teaching children. Mentors must be able to work effectively with adults. Effective mentors have similar characteristics such as being challenging, expressing empathy, being honest, listening and showing respect (Long, 2014). Stanulis and Ames (2009) identified tasks such as effective questioning, problem solving and providing specific feedback as requirements for mentors. Hahs-Vaugh and Scherff (2008) explained that mentoring requires "strong collaboration and excellent interpersonal skills and this relationship cannot take place when mentors do not want the role, are not comfortable in the role, or are not provided with professional development to take on the role" (p. 25). Zachary (2005) discussed that time is necessary to build a mentorship relationship and establish a mentorship culture. Zachary also explained that even though mentoring seems like another job the long term effects are tremendous for all parties engage in a mentorship relationship.

Quality mentors are vital to an effective induction program. The conceptualizations of what mentors should know and be able to do, however, is not commonly agreed on by those in the field (Stanulis & Ames, 2009). Irinaga-Bistolas, Schalock, Marvin and Beck (2007) explained that "mentor teachers need training and support in their new roles" (p. 15). Additionally, Anderson (2011) explained that adults learn most effectively from combining theory and practice in a respectful environment. Furthermore, Anderson (2011) stressed the importance of continued support and guidance.

Implications for Positive Social Change

Selecting, training and supporting beginning mentors was examined through this qualitative case study. The mentor is essential to the success of an induction program which supports beginning teachers. Accordingly, beginning teachers will be better prepared and more effective. A reduction in teacher attrition will lead to more experienced teachers capable of producing higher performing students. Ultimately, society as a whole will reap the benefits through more educated and informed citizens who will be capable of successfully functioning in a global economy.

Summary and Transition

There is intense concern over teacher attrition in the United States. Section 1 shows that induction programs are very effective in retaining beginning teachers; however, many state departments of education have eliminated budget allocations that maintain teacher induction programs. This contradiction between research and action creates a dangerous barrier for supporting beginning teachers. Consequently, local school systems are left without needed funding to train and supplement mentors. Additionally, there is a lack of funding to design and implement professional development for mentors and mentees alike leading to escalating teacher attrition.

During the beginning stages of the review, I identified numerous reasons beginning teachers leave the profession and found that, primarily, most beginning teachers leave the field of education due to a lack of support. Based upon findings from the literature review, I identified a need to explore mentors' perceptions for the most effective training, communication and interaction with beginning teachers. Determining

which factors are most supportive of mentors provides school systems with essential information for the development of effective induction programs which lead to a better qualified and motivated teacher population and improves student performance and outcomes. These improvements ultimately result in a more highly educated society.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

This section details the research methodology process utilized in this study. A qualitative case study was selected to explore the professional development and support for mentors of beginning teachers. Research supports teacher induction programs, which include mentoring, collaboration and professional development, as effective in reducing beginning teacher attrition, improving beginning teachers' effectiveness and advancing students' test scores (Shakrani, 2008, Freemyer, Townsend, Freemyer & Baldwin, 2010, Taranto, 2011). Unfortunately, comprehensive induction programs are being sporadically utilized by school systems, often without the central component of training for mentors of beginning teachers. The teacher is the most important factor in the success of the classroom just as the mentor is the most important factor in guiding the mentorship relationship (Moir, 2009).

A comprehensive induction program includes mentors of beginning teachers, professional development and teacher collaboration. The teacher mentor is the crucial component of this process and yet schools widely vary in resources provided to the teacher mentors. Ineffective mentors result in unproductive programs and insufficient support of beginning teachers leading to increasing teacher attrition and loss of valuable resources to students, school districts, and society. It is imperative to expand in-depth knowledge regarding the opinions and beliefs of effective teacher mentors regarding training and ongoing support to determine effective methods for beginning teacher

mentor support and thereby to enhance comprehensive induction programs to provide quality foundations for beginning teachers.

The objective of this qualitative case study was to explore experiences of mentors of beginning teachers in order to identify effective methods for mentor professional development and mentor support. Section two described the research design and approach, participants and population, research questions, data collection, and data analysis of this study.

Research Design and Approach

This study employed a qualitative case study research design for data collection and analysis to explore in-depth viewpoints of mentors of beginning teachers regarding successful mentorship experiences including expectations and beliefs about appropriate mentor professional development, and mentor support. Merriam (2009) described "qualitative researchers as interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 5). Additionally, Creswell (2008) explained "they [qualitative researchers] focus on an in-depth exploration of the actual case" (p. 476). This design was also supported by the work of Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010), who stated "case study research is a form of qualitative research that endeavors to discover meaning, to investigate processes, and to gain insight into and in-depth understanding of an individual, group" (p. 269).

A qualitative rather than quantitative design was selected for this research because of the desired focus on in-depth experiences of participants. Quantitative

research involves testing a hypothesis to determine relationships between variables (Creswell, 2009). The quantitative research approach was rejected because it did not match the purpose of this case study. Varied qualitative research methods were carefully considered; case study was selected as most closely aligned with the research problem and research questions. The participants in this study varied in demographics and culture so ethnography was not selected (Creswell, 2009). Phenomenological research was excluded because this study was not focused on understanding participants' views of a particular phenomenon such as love, anger, etc. (Merriam, 2009). Grounded research was rejected because this study was not designed to generate a new theory (Creswell, 2009).

Research Questions

Based on the conceptual framework and the information discovered in the literature review, the following research questions were developed as central to this study.

1. What type of professional development provides an effective training experience for mentors in a teacher induction program?
2. How do mentors in an induction program describe the factors/forces that support effective training for mentors?

Role of the Researcher

At the time of this study, I was employed as an Instructional Coach at one of the elementary schools in the study school district. My curiosity for this study developed as I observed many beginning teachers enter the school unprepared to handle the demanding

requirements of a classroom teacher and their increasing frustration, as they felt abandoned to "figure out everything on their own." Despite having spent considerable time and effort preparing for their teaching career and being initially dedicated to the teaching profession and committed to quality teaching of students, many of these beginning teachers leave the field within the first three years.

Although school districts recognize the need for mentors of beginning teachers, training and support of these mentors is often random and chaotic, and rather than a respected and important role, mentorship is often considered simply an additional workload that they have neither the time, commitment, or training to perform. In the past, many State Departments of Education provided State mentorship training for qualified mentors of beginning teachers and a stipend was provided as well. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, these programs have predominately been eliminated and it is left to the individual school system to determine and develop procedures for training mentors of beginning teachers and the results are disheartening.

Often, classroom teachers are selected at random by the principal and assigned to offer limited assistance to beginning teachers (C. Smith, personal communication, October 13, 2014). Even with the best of intentions, with no training as a mentor and a full teaching load in addition to the additional responsibility, inadequate support of beginning teachers is the normal outcome. As a result, many beginning teachers leave feeling frustrated and defeated. This situation became increasingly evident to me due to my position and working with teachers throughout my school as well as noting progressively more literature discussing the same general themes.

After a careful review of the current literature, I learned that teacher attrition is a costly problem throughout the United States (Amos, 2014). I also discovered that mentorship offered to beginning teachers has the potential to reduce teacher attrition. The literature review also supported the fact that mentorship selection and training for mentors of beginning teachers is imperative (Cheng & Yeung, 2010). With this new insight, I reflected on areas that might influence mentors of beginning teachers to be motivated and dedicated to improving the support offered to beginning teachers. I decided to explore traits that mentors of beginning teachers had and considered as most conductive to successful mentors. The research questions that guided this qualitative study were developed. This specific inquiry was a result of my interest in gaining an understanding of mentors of beginning teachers' perceptions on mentor training and mentor support.

During my 26 years of teaching experience in varied schools including my current position as an Instructional Coach for the past nine years, I have positive rapport with teachers, administrators and other Instructional Coaches throughout the school system and across the state. Although I did not have any administrative authority, I chose to exclude the school for which I work from the study in order to avoid any potential related researcher bias.

Participant Selection

For the purpose of this study, purposeful sampling of tenured teacher mentors, as defined in the definition of key terms, was used. According to Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010), "purposeful sampling is a procedure where the researcher identifies key

informants: persons who have some specific knowledge about the topic being investigated" (p. 140). Similarly, purposeful sampling allows a researcher to select individuals that will help understand the research problem and answer the research questions (Creswell, 2009).

The school district of the study is located in the Southeastern region of the State of Alabama. The school district has a very diverse socio-economic status of the student population ranging from very low to very high. Ethnic background for the school system in this study consist of 76% Caucasian, 16% African American, 5% Hispanic, 1% Pacific Islander, and 2% Asian. There is a general 50/50 division between male and female students throughout the district. Unlike the student population, the teachers are predominantly Caucasian and female. Socioeconomic groups ranging from high, middle and low are present in similar proportions throughout the school district.

There are five elementary schools, four middle schools, and five high schools that comprise the schools in this district. The school system consists of approximately 725 teachers and support personnel and approximately 6.400 students in the school system. Four of the elementary schools serving students in grades 1-6 were the location selected for this case study (A. Jones, personnel communication, July 25, 2014).

In order to minimize bias, as previously mentioned, one elementary school was excluded from the study because the researcher is employed at this location. The target mentors were selected by the principal based on the research criteria and experience in order to provide a diverse sample. An invitation email was sent to select mentors of beginning teachers according to the established criteria of the study (Appendix B). A

goal of four participants from School A (the largest in the district), and two participants from each School B, C and D (similar size) were identified for a potential of ten possible participants. Glesne (2011) explained that purposeful sampling leads to information rich research. For this reason, the number of participants was kept small so that the data could be carefully investigated even though a smaller sample size resulted in a possible limitation for the study.

Selected individuals were invited to participate in the study based on the following criteria:

- Participants had to be employed as a certified (highly qualified) teacher in the designated school district
- Participants had to have a minimum of three years of teaching experience in the grade and school in which they were acting as mentors of beginning teachers
- Participants had to have acted as mentors of beginning teachers a minimum of two times prior to this study
- Participants had to be a classroom teacher in Grades 1-6
- Participants varied according to age, and years of experience

Participation was voluntary and participants were informed of the right to withdraw from the study at any time as well as the fact that no positive or negative consequences related to their position would occur as a result of their decision to participate, or not to participate in this study. I did not have any supervisory powers over any of the participants therefore, retribution or coercion was not an issue. All ethical

principles were maintained as discussed later in this section and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. In addition, efforts to minimize the researcher's bias was strictly maintained throughout the study.

Ethical Treatment of Participants

Walden University's procedures and ethical guidelines to protect the participants were followed throughout the study. The researcher completed the National Institutes of Health's "protecting human research participants" course required by Walden University. The case study began after Walden University's Institutional Review Board gave its consent. Also, principals of schools selected to take part in the study gave their approval prior to the beginning of the investigation demonstrated and documented by signing a letter of cooperation (see Appendix C). Individuals who agreed to participate in the study were required to sign a consent form but were informed that they could chose to leave the study at any time without giving a reason (see Appendix D). Each participant was given an informational letter with the following contents: the purpose of the study, discussion questions of the study and a promise of confidentiality (see Appendix E). Additionally, participants were asked to agree to audio recording by the researcher during the interviews. Participants were coded to protect their identity. There was no benefit or penalty based on an individual's decision regarding participation in the study and participants were assured that they could refuse to answer any question/s they chose. In addition, there were no incentives being offered for participation.

All data collected in the study were maintained for accuracy and confidentiality. Audiotapes and transcripts from the interviews along with all field notes and journals

were stored in a locked file cabinet. In addition, all electronic files were stored on a password protected computer. The file cabinet and computer were only accessible by the researcher. After the five years, all data will be destroyed as required by Walden University's IRB.

Instrumentation

Interviews included the interview protocol used to gather data for this qualitative descriptive data study. Informal semi-structured interviews with each participant were conducted and recorded for through investigation of responses obtained. Using the study interview protocol, each participant was asked the same six open ended questions (see Appendix F) for comparison and detailed investigation. In addition, participants had the opportunity to provide additional information. The purpose of these interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perceptions of effective mentorship training and preparation.

Data Collection

IRB approval was obtained prior to initiation of data collection for this study. During the IRB process, researcher gained consent from the county school Superintendent as well as the Principals of the individual schools of interest for the study.

Following approval by the IRB of Walden University, I provided the participant' criteria to the Principals of the individual schools and they selected potential participants. This process was used in an effort to control bias as the researcher did not know the teachers and was not unduly influenced. Using purposeful sampling, the number of

participants from each school was established with a total of 10 potential participants invited to participate in the study.

Selected potential participants were contacted by email to explain the study purpose, criteria, and parameters and an invitation to participate was included. It was made clear to those invited that participation in the study was strictly voluntary with no positive or negative outcomes for agreeing or declining to participate. Potential participants were also assured of confidentiality during and after interview data collection. The researcher answered any questions regarding study and consent for participation was obtained from participants. Consent also included agreement for audio taping of interviews.

The data processes for this case study took place in the schools in which the mentors worked with beginning teachers. Each participant was emailed a list of the planned interview questions in advance to allow her to think and reflect on the information requested and to increase each participant's comfort with the interview process (see Appendix F). Open-ended questions with familiar language for the participants were used as an interview protocol in order to explore perceptions and experiences of mentors of beginning teachers. Merriam (2009) explained "the way in which questions are worded is a crucial consideration in extracting the type of information desired" (p. 95). Hancock and Algozzine (2006) explained that case study research should take place in a natural environment.

Following an explanation of the study focus and procedures and answering any questions, individuals who agreed to participate completed and signed the informed

consent form (see Appendix E). The researcher was the only one who had access to participants' responses and all information and responses will be kept confidential. Confidentiality was maintained throughout data collection as each participant was given a pseudonym to protect identity and only researcher had access to interview findings and recordings.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant. The interviews took place in the guidance counselor's office and lasted approximately 30-45 minutes to allow for detailed discussions from each participant. During the interview, participants had the opportunity to add any additional information they chose. The researcher conducted all interviews during a four-week period. Each interview was audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher. Designating patterns and responses were recorded in a field notebook in order to fully mine the data gathered through recognized data analysis methods.

Data Analysis

Merriam (2009) explained that "data analysis is the process of making sense of the data" (p. 175). Exploring the data, looking for patterns and themes were vital to answering the questions in the study. Merriam (2009) explained that data analysis should begin during the data collection phase. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) stressed the importance of developing a system for "labeling, storing and gaining access to information acquired during the research effort" (p. 57). The researcher analyzed the data following the data analysis approach noted in Creswell (2008).

Creswell's (2008) data analysis approach was customized for this study as discussed through the following measures. Using the study interview protocol each participant was asked the same six questions (see Appendix F). During each interview, the researcher was actively involved with each participant exploring their thoughts and opinions. The researcher created electronic documentation to catalog each participant's data and noted any repeating patterns as well as individual points. The key words of the study included training, professional development, collaboration, observation, experience, and release time. Each of these key words were assigned a number which were recorded in the field notes each time these words were used by study participants. In addition, related comments were documented and relevant, recurrent themes extracted for further review. Repeated phrases were noted for adding, collapsing and refining the data during data analysis. These data were aggregated for exploration and findings reported. These field notes, along with the researcher's reflective thoughts, were kept in a journal. Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010) explained keeping a working journal with the researcher's reflections helps to monitor one's bias and subjective perceptions.

Audio-recording of individual interviews were carefully reviewed and member checks were utilized to ensure accuracy of transcribed data. All collected data including field notes and researcher's reflections were scanned into electronic files and stored on a password-protected computer. Hard copies were stored in a locked file cabinet accessible to the researcher only for a period of five years.

Audio-recordings of individual interviews were carefully reviewed and member checks were utilized to ensure accuracy of transcribed data. All collected data including

field notes and journals were scanned into electronic files and stored in files on a password-protected computer. Hard copies were stored in a locked file cabinet accessible to the research only for a period of five years. Initially, the data were separated based on the participant. After recording individual identifying information, the hard copies were shredded upon the completion of the dissertation study.

The researcher printed copies of the transcribed interviews to review; reading and rereading the data several times to get an initial understanding of the data, later making notes in the margins and coding the data detecting and recording emerging themes, similarities and differences in the data. The researcher made a list of all codes and separate them into groups based on similarities and redundancy. During review of data, emphasis was to detect similarities within and across the data and search for any additional patterns. The participants reviewed the researcher's interpretation to ensure accuracy providing member checking for the study.

In this qualitative case study, semi-structured interviews was conducted with strict attention to rich data collection. Patterns of responses were carefully coded and recorded in order to ensure accuracy of documentation and researcher neutrality was stressed. The review of participants' responses and emphasis on detailed responses further highlighted the reliability of the findings.

Data Tracking

Data tracking started during the study's planning with a timeline and checklist established for data collection and progression. Study began with gaining approval from the IRB, Superintendent and individual Principals of the schools selected for the study.

After potential participants were nominated by the principals, dates for providing consent forms and participant information was established. As forms were sent out and returned, recording of this information was maintained.

As interviews were scheduled, the dates and times were recorded and the established timeline was maintained. Furthermore, I noted the dates that typed transcripts were sent and returned. Interviews were conducted in similar circumstances for the established time in order to maintain consistency and limit introduction of bias. These methods helped to maintain consistency with data collection and compliance with the IRB and study timeframe.

Data for the study were generated by use of paper and electronic copies. An electronic folder was created for each participant to help separate data. All paper copies were placed in folders in a locked file cabinet in my home office. In addition, electronic copies were kept on a password protected computer in my home. The electronic documents were transcribed and coded for data analysis. The data were read and reread for the purposes of identifying themes and developing categories.

After data were transcribed by the researcher, member checking was used to ensure accuracy of the data. Participants were asked to review the interview transcripts for accuracy. Transcripts were returned by the participants which indicated their approval. There was no request to change the transcripts. In order to triangulate the data collected, field notes, interview transcripts, and the researcher journal was used.

Results of Research

The findings for this study were based on the participant responses and the information in the literature review in Section 1. The participants in this study consisted of 10 mentors of beginning teachers. Each of the mentors met the participant criteria. Moreover, all participants had between seven to 32 years of teaching experience.

Purposeful sampling was used to select a targeted audience of participants who had knowledge of mentoring beginning teachers. In addition, participants were selected from different grade levels and with different years of experience which offered diversity in study's sample.

Table 1 displays the participants' profiles along with a brief detailed description of their current position and educational backgrounds.

Table 1

Participant Profiles of Experience, Gender, Education and Current Position

Participant Pseudonym	Teaching Experience	Gender	Education	Current Position
Participant 1	32 Years	F	BS Elementary Education	Grade 6
Participant 2	8 Years	F	Master's Degree Elementary Education	Grade 1
Participant 3	11 Years	F	BS Elementary Education	Grade 5
Participant 4	11 Years	F	BS in ECE	Grade 2
Participant 5	24 Years	F	Masters in ECE; Board Certified	Grade 5
Participant 6	16 Years	F	Masters in Elementary Education	Grade 4
Participant 7	7 Years	F	Masters in Elementary Education	Grade 4
Participant 8	7 Years	F	Masters in Elementary Education	Grade 1
Participant 9	11 Years	F	Masters in Counseling	Grade 3
Participant 10	7 Years	F	Masters in Elementary Education	Grade 3

Participant 1 was a classroom teacher who taught a sixth grade class. She taught in a departmentalized classroom, which is a classroom that is divided between teachers based on subject matter. She performed in the role in the role of mentor for beginning teachers for the past 25 years. Through the years, participant 1 described many changes in education and being a teacher today is much harder than when she started teaching 32 years ago.

Participant 2 was also a classroom teacher. She taught in a first grade self-contained class. She had acted as a mentor for six beginning teachers. She described the Common Core Standards as a big challenge for beginning teachers due to the increase in rigor for students. In addition, she described watching many beginning teachers with lots of potential leave the classroom because of frustration and isolation.

Participant 3 was a classroom teacher who taught fifth grade in a self-contained classroom. She also had experience in teaching in 3rd and 6th grades. Participant 3 had acted as a mentor for four beginning teachers. She expressed feelings of mentoring being very beneficial for beginning teachers as well as mentors. Additionally, she explained that teaching in different grade levels gave her background knowledge that made her more valuable as a mentor.

Participant 4 was a classroom teacher who taught in a second grade classroom. She had taught in Kindergarten and first grade. She said acting as a mentor required a willingness to give lots of time while demonstrating patience to help a beginning teacher reach her full potential. She mentored six beginning teachers in her past 11 years of teaching.

Participant 5 taught 5th grade in a self-contained classroom. She was the only mentor in the study who attained National Board Certification. This certification is an advanced certificate that demonstrates a teacher's attainment of meeting a higher set of standards. Participant 5 has mentored 18 beginning teachers during her 25 years of teaching. She expressed a strong belief in being a life-long learner. Additionally, she believed mentoring offered an exchange of ideas between mentor and mentee.

Participant 6 was a fourth grade teacher who taught in a self-contained classroom. She has been a mentor for 11 beginning teachers. She stated that nine of them were still teaching in a classroom. She also explained feeling a sense of pride from supporting and observing beginning teachers as they grew into professionals.

Participant 7 taught in a 4th grade self-contained classroom. She has mentored two beginning teachers during her seven years as a teacher. She said mentoring was beneficial to the mentor and the mentee. The mentor learns new ideas and the mentee learns practical knowledge.

Participant 8 was a first grade teacher. She has mentored three beginning teachers. She said she started mentoring beginning teachers during her fourth year of teaching. She described mentoring as very rewarding because mentors are helping beginning teachers who often feel frustrated and unprepared to teach.

Participant 9 taught 3rd grade in a self-contained classroom. In addition, she has taught 5th and 6th grades. She was the only participant in the study with a Master's Degree in Counseling. She had mentored six beginning teachers during her 11 years of

being a teacher. She described collaboration between mentor and mentee as a powerful instrument that helps facilitate learning.

Participant 10 was a second grade teacher. She taught in a self-contained classroom. She has taught in three different school systems during her seven year career. During her career, she acted as a mentor for two beginning teachers. She explained that mentees have the same concerns regardless of the school system. Mentors are in the position to help mentees become competent and skilled teachers. For this evolution to happen, Participant 10 explained a need for helping beginning teachers with tasks like strategic teaching, classroom discipline and lesson plans.

Finding Themes

There were two goals of this study regarding teacher mentors and their effect on successful mentorship programs for beginning teachers. The first goal of this study was to explore mentors' perceptions regarding which types of professional development were most effective in training mentors in a teacher induction program. The second goal of the study was to identify and analyze mentors' beliefs concerning the factors and forces that support effective training for mentors.

Data were collected from a variety of sources including participant interviews, field notes, and researcher's journal to answer the study research questions and the findings presented are a culmination of the data obtained. Research Questions guiding the study included:

RQ 1. What type of professional development provides an effective training experience for mentors in a teacher induction program?

RQ 2: How do mentors in an induction program describe the factors/forces that support effective training for mentors?

Methods

There were two guiding questions that directed this study. In addition, an interview protocol was used to guide the researcher during the interview process. The questions used on the interview protocol were created and used as sub questions. The interview protocol questions assisted the researcher with remaining on track to explore and understand the participants' responses. Additionally, the researcher was able to use the data from the interview protocol questions to answer the two overall questions of the study.

Research Question (RQ) 1 in this study was as follows: What type of professional development provides an effective training experience for mentors in a teacher induction program? Interview protocol questions (IQ) 1, 2, 3 and 6 addressed Research Question 1.

IQ 1. Why did you decide to become a mentor for beginning teachers?

IQ 2. What do you think are the characteristics of an effective mentor?

IQ 3. What type of professional development do you believe provides an effective training experience for mentors in a teacher induction program?

IQ 6. How often and for what duration do you believe mentor' training should occur over one year?

The second Research Question (RQ) 2 was stated as follows: How do mentors in an induction program describe the factors/forces that support effective training for mentors? Interview protocol questions (IQ) 4 and 5 addressed Research Question 2.

IQ 4. How do you describe the factors/forces that support effective mentors in working with beginning teachers/mentees?

IQ 5. What do you believe are the strongest components of a mentor training program and why?

Each participant participated in an individual interview. Following each interview I transcribed the audio tapes from the interview. Transcribing data were a tedious process that started with typing words from a digital recorder onto a Microsoft Word document. After transcribing all of the interviews, the typed transcripts were sent to the participants for member checking. As each transcript was returned, I verified that the participant agreed with the data by reviewing the data to looking for any highlighted items with requested changes. I did not find any marks or comments on the transcripts which indicated that all participants were in agreement with the transcripts

I triangulated the data by comparing field notes, interview transcripts, and researcher journal. While there are different types of triangulation used in qualitative research, I selected "method triangulation". Carter, Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe and Neville (2014) defined method triangulation as "... the use of multiple methods of data collection about the same phenomenon" (p. 545).

During this part of the data analysis, I read and reread the transcripts to develop emerging patterns and themes. Then, I highlighted and color coded responses from each participant's interview to identify similarities and differences.

Codes were developed based upon the commonalities found in the data. Saldana (2013) stated "coding is a method that enables you to organize and group similarly coded data into categories or "families" because they share some characteristic" (p. 9). Also, Saldana explained that codes become categories and categories develop into themes. The codes in this study were used to identify major patterns, categories and themes.

Thematic analysis was employed to identify themes and create meaning from the data. Flick (2014) explained "Thematic analysis refers to the process of identifying themes in the data which capture meaning that is relevant to the research question, and perhaps also to making links between such themes" (p. 147). Patterns, categories, and themes emerged from the data as the researcher read and reread the interview transcripts many times. Notations were made in the researcher's journal to denote participants' feelings, thoughts and beliefs. Repeated patterns were identified and categorized into themes. After careful review and mining of the data, coded and major themes were identified. Identified themes are highlighted in the Table 2.

Table 2

Factors Influencing Effective Mentors

Factors Influencing Effective Mentors
Mentor Program Features • Release Time-Observation • Acknowledgement • Central Program • Mentor Professional Development • Accountability Effective Mentor Characteristics • Patience • Trustworthy • Supportive/Empathy • Listener • Knowledgeable of Subject Matter • Able to Relate Professional Development • Classroom Management • Collaboration • Mentor's Expectations • How to be a Mentor Mentor Training Program Duration: • 3 Times Per Year Time: • ½ Day Support Factors/Forces that Support Mentors • Principal and Assistant Principal • Central Office Personnel • Instructional Coach Feedback • Extra time to plan and collaborate • Observation of mentee

Results of Study

The data results were derived from semi-structured interviews conducted with mentors of beginning teachers. In addition, the researcher kept a journal that contained

field notes about participants' feelings and beliefs as well as researcher's reflective thoughts. I carefully reviewed my journal to find common themes among participants' responses, and expressions. All commonalities were coded and discussed in the data analysis. In addition, the themes identified from the interviews were aligned with the literature review in Section 1. The research findings were grouped according to the research questions that guided the study.

Research Question 1

The study interviews focused on exploration of the research questions. In considering research question 1: What type of professional development provides an effective training experience for mentors in a teacher induction program?, multiple consistent themes emerged from the interviews with the participants of the study.

Personal themes included reasons for becoming a mentor, as well as, characteristics of an effective mentor. Mentors agreed significantly on responses for why they decided to become a beginning teacher mentor. The greatest agreement was on the desire to assist and support the mentee. Participant 1 stated, "I think it is important that we take those teachers and guide them in the direction they need to go." There were several comments about how the lack of having a mentor had been a hardship. "I was thrown in a fifth grade class with 30 students and told to go on your own"…beginning teachers are expected to make an impact at the very beginning and that is almost impossible to do without help" (Participant 3).

All 10 of the mentors described the desire to assist and support mentees as a reason for becoming a mentor. Moreover, six out of 10 participants explained memories

of their feelings as a first year teacher. Participant 7 stated, “I remember the frustrations of beginning as a first year teacher and walking into the classroom and feeling lost.” Participant 9 explained “I don’t want to see someone lose their love of teaching because they don’t have help. I want to be there to help them because I remember frustration from that first year.”

The personal factors related to characteristics of effective mentors along with reasons for becoming mentors of beginning teachers. The personal factors were important to understand because these factors established the need for a mentor’s professional development. In reviewing interview protocol question 1, it was clear that the primary purpose for participants to act as beginning teacher mentors was due to personal experiences and wish to support others. See Table 3 for overview of responses.

Table 3

Mentors’ responses to reasons they decided to become a mentor.

Mentors’ Responses	Frequency
Assist and support mentee	10 out of 10
Remembers first year of teaching struggles	6 out of 10
Had a mentor/peer teacher	5 out of 10
Believe college prepares theoretically not practically	5 out of 10

When exploring characteristics that mentor participants believed were important to be effective, there were varied responses. In addition to expected comments such as the importance of collaboration and release time, surprising emphasis was placed on the factors that influenced them to become mentors in the first place and the need for that to be incorporated when planning professional development. In addition, the majority of respondents did not agree (2 out of 10) that experience of five years or greater was required to be an effective mentor. “It is more important to remember what it was like to be a beginning teacher and be able to communicate” (Participant 2). “I think it is important to have a couple of years of classroom experience so you know what you are talking about but five years’ worth is not necessary” (Participant 7).

All 10 mentors described personal characteristics of successful mentors as individuals who were honest, empathetic, trustworthy, and respectful. Participant 10 expressed that being empathetic was the most important characteristics for a mentor to possess. She stated, “alot of times universities paint a really pretty picture and sometimes it’s not that pretty when you are put in a classroom without resources so I think first and foremost a mentor must be sympathetic.” Participant 4 described the importance of listening as key to a mentor’s characteristic. She explained, “I don’t care how many years a person has been in a classroom she can always learn something new. A mentor can learn from a mentee but they have to be willing to listen to new ideas. It is important to be a lifelong learner and that requires a mentor to be open to new ideas as well as giving new ideas.” As I summarized the data from interview protocol question 2, it was clear

that there was a discrepancy between participants' opinions regarding characteristics of effective mentors. Mentors unanimously (10 out of 10) agreed that personal skills such as honesty, empathy and respect were vital for all mentors; however, only two out of 10 mentors believed teaching experience of more than five years was important for mentor effectiveness. See Table 4 for overview of responses.

Table 4

Mentor responses to characteristics of an effective mentor.

Mentors' Responses	Frequency
Personal Skills (honest, empathetic, trustworthy, respect)	10 out of 10
Knowledgeable of subject matter	9 out of 10
Relate (able to bond with mentee)	6 out of 10
Patient	5 out of 10
Encouraging	5 out of 10
Giving (time and resources)	4 out of 10
Listener	4 out of 10
Effective classroom manager	2 out of 10
Experience	2 out of 10

Responses to interview protocol question 3 revealed strong opinions regarding specific focus areas for effective training of mentors. Collaboration was seen as a priority by all participants with clear expectations on how to be a mentor following closely with eight out of 10 respondents agreeing that this was a priority.

All 10 of the participants agreed that training for mentors was essential for a mentor's success and that the training should be standardized and based on current educational expectations. One participant (Participant 10) stated, "The training should be planned and consistent in order to be respected and to avoid missing content." In addition, all participants agreed that it was important to learn how to collaborate with other adults (mentees) regarding how to give constructive criticism and feedback to colleagues. Participant 8 commented "I would like some guidance on how to say things. Sometimes it is hard to know exactly what to say to another teacher when you are giving feedback that isn't as positive as you wish it could be." Participant 3 stated, "Communication should be in a positive manner even if it's negative and mentors sometimes struggle with that."

The mentors in the study were eager to offer their ideas for mentor professional development. Eight out of 10 mentors agreed on the importance of professional development for mentors including mentor expectations, as it was difficult to measure success in work if there is no clear understanding of what was expected. Participant 6 expressed "a need for modeling the expectations for mentors so we know what is expected of us when we agree to be mentors."

Participants agreed that characteristics of an effective mentor were key components for planning professional development although they varied on what those characteristics were. For example, Participant 5 suggested compiling a list of expectations "that the principals and central office compile a list of requirements of mentors …so that the mentor actually has a checklist." Furthermore, participant 5 added that "professional development for mentors be created from the checklist." Participant 10 agreed somewhat with the idea; however, she suggested using a questionnaire instead of a checklist and allowing the mentors to rate the potential professional development. According to Participant 10, "Train the mentors on the results of that questionnaire."

The participants were outspoken in naming specific areas of professional development they wanted to be included in plans for effective training of mentors. Participant 10 mentioned professional development being geared around the needs of a first year teacher. Participant 2 agreed stating

> "A lot of mentors have forgotten their first year. They remember the main things but forget that mentees don't know the practical things like how to put grades in, or take attendance on the computer. They don't know how to print report cards or take up lunch reports. Mentees don't even know to ask their mentors these questions so I think that a good list of reminders would be helpful for mentors, you know."

Both Participants 10 and 2 suggested they needed refreshers on things like initial classroom management, organization, and technology. Participant 4 stated "I am not in a leadership role regarding another teacher so I would like to have some training in that

area. These are people that I will be working with in an equal role for some time to come." Participant 1 elaborated on this idea by stating "I would benefit on things like how to do observations and how to direct mentees and still support them in developing their own individual methods." The data from interview question 3 revealed a need for mentor professional development in the areas of collaboration (10 out of 10) and expectations of how to be an effective mentor (8 out of 10). See Table 5 for overview of responses.

Table 5

Mentors' response to types of professional development to effectively train mentors.

Mentors' Responses	Frequency
Collaboration between adults	10 out of 10
How to be a mentor	8 out of 10
Classroom and time management	7 out of 10
Expectations for mentors	7 out of 10
Staying current on curriculum and standards	3 out of 10

When asked about frequency and length of mentorship training (interview protocol question 6), the majority believed that the program should have provided a plan that included the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. The suggestion of receiving professional development and meeting mentee at beginning of the year, with collaboration scheduled with other mentors and support professional development in the middle of the experience, and debriefing, review and adjustment of program at the end in preparation of the next school year was most common response. Participant 6 stated "we need to have a plan for who is doing this, here is what we are doing, here is what you need to do at the beginning…at the middle have a halfway checkup, and at the end a time of reflection – how can we do things better next year."

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Nine of 10 participants believed that professional development should be scheduled for half day sessions during the school day. Participant 2 stated "all day would be too long and difficult to arrange with workloads, but only an hour would not be sufficient to address concerns or provide training." Research data gained from interview question 6 revealed some disagreement between mentors regarding the occurrence of mentor professional development training. Six out of 10 mentors agreed that the mentor professional development needed to take place three times per year (beginning, middle and end). The other 4 mentors gave individual ideas regarding the occurrence for mentor professional development. On the other hand, the mentors were overwhelmingly in favor of all professional development being scheduled in half-day intervals. Refer to Table 6.

Table 6

Mentors' responses to How Often and For What Duration Mentorship Training Should Occur Over the Course of a Year.

Mentor Response	Frequency
How Often:	
Beginning, middle and end of the school year	6 out of 10
Beginning and end	1 out of 10
Once a month	1 out of 10
Beginning, middle and afterschool	1 out of 10
Depends on experience of mentor	1 out of 10
Duration of meeting:	
Half-day	9 out of 10
Depends on expectations for meeting	1 out of 10

Research Question 1 focused on the thoughts and beliefs of participants regarding characteristics of effective beginning teacher mentors and the expectations of beginning teacher mentors in relation to success within the program. There was unanimous agreement on the characteristics of honesty, empathy, trustworthiness, and respect being fundamental characteristics of teacher mentors.

The importance of adult collaboration and communication as essential components of any successful beginning teacher mentorship program was also emphasized by all participants. The majority of responses emphasized the importance of

established criteria with a checklist to ensure consistent performance and the ability to ensure meeting expectations.

Opinions varied significantly on several other characteristics with the majority expressing opinions that teaching experience and good classroom management are not essential. All participants stated the importance of planning and training sessions although specific timing and scheduling so sessions differed.

Research Question 2

The factors and forces responsible for supporting effective training for mentors was addressed in Research Question 2. In interview Question 2, participants were asked to describe the factors and forces that support effective mentors in working with beginning teachers/mentees. Administrative support from the principal and assistant principal was described as the most important type of support for the induction program. Participant stated, "I would need my principal to be supportive in putting in a substitute teacher about once every two weeks so that the beginning teacher could come observe me and I could go observe her." Participant 9 added specific information about what the mentor should be looking for during the observation. She stated, "I should be watching her curriculum instruction and her time management as well as classroom management so that I can give her feedback."

Support from the central office was also recommended by 8 of the 10 participants. All 8 of these participants expressed a need for the central office to provide a central induction program so that all of the schools would operate under one plan. Participant 6 explained "The central office is over it. It starts there and then branches out to each

school." Participant 10 stated "I believe the professional development should definitely start at the central office and the principal should be an advocate for the program and supportive of what the mentors needs." Participant 3 explained "I think it is okay if you want the principal to be over it for each school but just have someone over the whole thing at the central office. That makes it easier so that we are all under the same plan."

All 10 mentors repeated the need for accountability from the central office as well as the principals. Participant 2 described the importance of the central office holding mentors accountable. She stated, "obviously, the central office personnel should check on the mentors while also providing the needed professional development."

Another form of support mentioned by the mentors was the Instructional Coach. Participant 4 explained "Instructional Coaches are more in tune because they help us out a lot. She may have different ideas and can be more available. She goes into classrooms and can see what the mentor cannot see." Participant 2 elaborated on this idea and stated "the mentor is kind of like a tool for the Instructional Coach. You know like the Instructional Coach sees something and asked the mentor to talk with the beginning teacher about it." Participant 8 agreed with the idea of the Instructional Coaches; however, gave a warning. She stated

> "Yes, I believe the Instructional Coach would be an asset and especially good with communication between the mentor and mentee but I think that needs to be handled delicately you know so that the beginning teacher doesn't feel like she is being talked about behind her back."

It was clear that mentors believed the strongest forces that support effective mentors are Administration, such as the Principal and Assistant Principal. In addition, many of the mentors saw required support from the central office personnel as well as the Instructional Coach. Review Table 7 for additional information.

Table 7

Mentors' Response to Describing Factors and Forces that Support Effective Mentors in Working with Beginning Teacher/Mentees

Mentors' Responses	Frequency
Administrative support (Principal/Assistant Principal)	10 out of 10
Central office support	8 out of 10
Instructional coach support	7 out of 10
Extra time to plan and collaborate	6 out of 10
Observation of mentee	5 out of 10
Trust	2 out of 10
Media specialist support	1 out of 10

When participants were asked to discuss the most significant components of a mentor training program (interview protocol question 5), all participants agreed that mentor professional development and clear expectation criteria were essential. “I want to know what is expected so that I know if I am doing the job well…it is not fair for the principal to simply say you are a mentor” (Participant 6).

Release time to allow for observation both by and of the mentee were considered critical by six of the 10 participants. Incentives such time allotted for meeting with mentee (no carpool duty, duty free lunch, no morning duty) were key factors of six of the 10 participants “We don’t expect a lot, just something to encourage you ... too often we are expected to just do and do and do” Participant 4. Responses to interview protocol question 5 indicated that training for mentors and expected criteria for mentors were vital for effective mentors. Release time and incentives were also seen as crucial components of a mentor training program. See Table 8 for overview of responses.

Table 8

Mentors Responses to the Strongest Components of a Mentor Training Program

Mentor Response	Frequency
Mentor professional development	10 out of 10
Expectation criteria	10 out of 10
Collaboration	8 out of 10
Release Time	6 out of 10
Incentives	6 out of 10
Experience	2 out of 10

Results of the data on Research Question 2: How do mentors in an induction program describe the factors/forces that support effective training for mentors?, revealed strong ideas from the teacher mentors in this study. Administrative support from the Principal and Assistant Principal was described as the most important type of support for teacher mentors (10 out of 10). In addition, the mentors in this study stressed the need for clear expectations and professional development. Release time was also considered vital to a successful mentor relationship.

Conclusion

This research focused on a qualitative case study to investigate the participants' perceptions of mentors of beginning teachers regarding factors that support success in a beginning teacher mentorship program. IRB approval was obtained after the research

design and research questions were discussed and outlined and the role of the researcher, criteria for participant selection, and ethical treatment of participants were summarized.

In order to thoroughly explore the thoughts and feeling of participants, the data collection process was through semi-formal interviews of the participant mentors of beginning teachers. In addition to the research survey protocol questions, participants were encouraged to expand upon answers and provide any additional thoughts regarding successful beginning teacher mentorship.

After the researcher transcribed data, member checking was used to ensure accuracy of the data. In order to triangulate the data collected, field notes, interview transcripts, and researcher journal was used. Data were systematically mined to ensure comprehensive findings.

The reason stated by all participants regarding motivation to act as a beginning teacher mentor was to assist and support beginning teachers, participants often cited positive or negative personal experiences related to whether they had felt supported by a mentor themselves. This personal desire was critical as well as the common characteristics that participants discussed including honesty, empathy, trustworthiness, and respect for mentees. Surprisingly, only two of 10 participants felt that good classroom management was a central component for a beginning teacher mentor. This emphasizes the belief by mentors that mentorship role is to motivate, encourage, and support the beginning teacher – not to focus on discipline of students.

Insightful thoughts and beliefs regarding the factors and forces accountable for mentor training evolved from the data. Although there was noted strong agreement in

some areas, there was also discussion and differing opinions in others. All participants agreed that beginning teachers need mentorship and that a well-planned and implemented program can decrease teacher attrition and support education as a whole through more experienced and prepared teachers.

In addition, all participants agreed that support from administration was crucial to the success of the program and that, more than financial reimbursement, respect for the beginning teacher mentors and the program was essential for motivation of mentors and achievement of the goals of the program. Some suggestions for this included release time for mentors to observe and counsel beginning teachers, release from committee and other routine obligations during the time of the program, and recognition and verbal support of the program demonstrated by administration.

Preparation of beginning teacher mentors was also emphasized by participants as an essential component of a successful program. Although ideas frequency of training sessions varied, all participants stated beliefs that adult collaboration for planning should be the foundation of the program. The majority of participants discussed the importance of consistent goals and expectations being clearly stated with criteria in writing.

As briefly demonstrated below, five consistent themes emerged from a comprehensive review of the data.

1. Effective mentors in an induction program assist and support beginning teachers with resulting positive effects on education as a whole (better prepared beginning teacher, decreased teacher attrition, increase in experienced teachers)

2. Communication and collaboration in planning and between mentors is crucial in beginning teacher mentor programs.
3. Desire/motivation to act as a beginning teacher mentor and specific mentor characteristics are essential for selecting effective mentors
4. Professional development is indispensable to the success of effective mentors.
5. Support for mentors by administration is vital to the effectiveness of the teacher mentor.

It is clear from this research that there are teachers willing and motivated in acting as beginning teacher mentors and there are consistent beliefs in the importance of these programs. Findings indicate that beginning teacher mentorship programs support improvements in beginning teacher morale and performance. Through this support, school systems and education as a whole benefits from increased preparation of beginning teachers, a decrease in beginning teacher attrition, and more experienced teachers. Additional research on a larger scale is needed to explore effectiveness of specific programs.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

As a result of this qualitative case study, a need for a beginning teacher mentor training program became clear. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors influencing effective mentors for beginning elementary school teachers. Mentors are very important in providing support to beginning teachers in building confidence and retention. Teacher retention leads to greater stability of teaching and content expertise.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of the mentor is the greatest factor that determines the degree and depth of support a beginning teacher receives in an induction program (Barlin, 2010). The selected project is based upon the study's findings and will prepare teacher mentors, through a series of required professional development sessions, about the expectations and requirements of being an effective beginning teacher mentor. School administration, teachers, students, parents and the community are other key stakeholders that benefit from a more supported beginning teacher population.

Section 3 provides a description of the goals, rationale and review of current literature. The following section will give a project description along with the project goals. In addition, a review of the current literature will be included to demonstrate the justification for selecting this critical project. This section also includes potential resources, existing supports, potential barriers, a proposal for implementation and a timeframe.

Description and Goals

Description of the Project

The study's problem and research findings were the driving force behind this project. A series of three professional development workshops were created as the project for this qualitative case study because professional research, along with the data collected during this study, strongly supported an essential need for a mentor training program. The three professional development sessions will take place at the beginning, middle and end of the school term.

The content of the mentor professional development workshops was created based on the data revealed during the participants' interviews. The professional development sessions will communicate mentor' expectations and support resources as well as provide mentor professional development, and facilitate communication and reflection between mentors.

The following table (Table 9) illustrates the yearly plan of the mentor training program in this study. Each section discloses the period during the school year and the topics that are going to be covered during that period. The left column outlines the time frame and the right column indicates the activities planned for that time.

The first meeting will introduce the mentor training plan including support, expectations, and a professional development about "how to be a mentor". The second meeting, taking place during the middle of the year, will target mentor professional development and mentor collaboration. The final assembly will provide mentors a time to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the mentor training program. In addition,

mentors will be given the opportunity to voice their suggestions on the needed changes to the program through an exit survey. See Table 9.

Table 9

Timeline for Mentor Professional Development

Professional Development	Purpose
Beginning of Year (August)	Explanation of Mentor Expectations Professional Development How to Mentor Questionnaire for professional development Questions Introduction of Mentor and Mentee
Middle of Year (January)	Professional Development Collaboration Questions
End of Year (May)	Review and Evaluate Effectiveness of Mentor Training Program • Support • Training • Professional Development
Evaluation and Plan Mentor Training Program (May)	Changes to Mentor Training Program Complete Exit Survey

Professional Development Plan for Mentors

The mentor training program will be tailored to the needs of the mentors in regards to their strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the training program will be a flexible one that allows mentors the necessary support to be effective. As mentors participate in this mentor training program, their needs will be re-evaluated throughout the program.

After agreeing to take part, mentor participants will be given a workshop packet (see Appendix A) at the beginning of the first professional development session. The workshop packet will be reviewed at each session and participants will use it as a guide for notetaking and reference. At the beginning of the workshop series, participants will be given an overview of the expectations of mentors, a plan for the implementation of the mentor training program and a questionnaire of possible professional development. Mentors will be given the opportunity to collaborate and provide suggestions on effective program support within established goals and framework.

Guest speakers will communicate with the mentors to demonstrate their supportive roles for the mentors and be available to answer any of the participants' questions. The guest speakers will consist of principals, elementary and secondary curriculum coordinators, instructional coaches and the superintendent.

Following, the overview of the mentor training program, mentors will participate in a professional development session on the topic of "how to be a mentor". Upon the completion of the professional development session, mentors will answer the professional development questionnaire by ranking the professional development possibilities in order of importance. The results of these questionnaires will be tallied and the top two choices for professional development will be covered during the next professional development session.

The first mentor professional development training session will conclude with the mentors being introduced to their mentees. A PowerPoint presentation will be utilized during this segment to facilitate effective collaboration between a mentor and mentee. In

addition, conflict resolution strategies will also be explored. The session will end with an opportunity for all participants to give feedback and ask questions.

The second professional development workshop will take place during the middle of the school term. During this workshop, teacher mentors will participate in two professional development sessions based on the two most popular selections during the first meeting. Each session will last for 1 hour and 30 minutes with a break of 10 minutes occurring between each session. As requested by the participants in this study, the professional development training session will take place for half a day. It will begin at 8:30 and end at 12:30. Participants will be given the opportunity to network and collaborate with other mentors for 30 minutes and a questioning/feedback component will be included for the final 15 minutes of the mentor training workshop.

The final professional development workshop will take place at the end of the school year. During this meeting, teacher mentors will participate in a review of the mandatory mentor training program. Also, discussion will take place with teacher mentors in a focus group regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Changes will be recorded by the program director. The session will conclude with all mentors completing an exit survey that will provide additional data for needed changes to the program for the following school term.

Rationale

One of the essential concerns for education today is the increasing problem of beginning teacher attrition and its negative effects on education as a whole. Despite having spent significant time and money in preparation, 30% of teachers leave the field

within the first five years (Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff, 2013). In addition, the same study noted that the attrition rate at higher poverty schools is 50% higher than at an affluent school (Ronfeldt, et al., 2013). This process results in a continuing shortage of experienced teachers, work overloads, and a decline in morale for those teachers remaining in the field. Of even greater concern is the resulting adverse consequences for students.

It has been repeatedly demonstrated that there is a decrease in beginning teacher attrition with greater initial support for beginning teachers. Teacher mentoring programs that had well-defined goals were believed by many experts to be necessary for retaining beginning teachers (Barreraa, Braley, & Slatec, 2009). Another study reported an increase in job satisfaction and self-efficacy for beginning teachers who receive support through a mentoring program (Brannon, Fiene, Burke, & Wehman, 2009). In short, mentorship programs that offered high quality mentoring in a supportive school atmosphere were more likely to keep beginning teachers in the profession (Grossman & Davis, 2011). Although much research has been conducted concerning the benefits of mentoring programs, few studies have addressed the perspective of the teacher mentors.

I chose to address this particular project in an effort to address the problem that 30 % of teachers leave the field within the first five years (Ronfeldt et al., 2013) and the resulting negative effect on students, schools, and the teachers themselves. The same study noted that the beginning teacher attrition rate at higher poverty schools is 50% higher than at an affluent school (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). This process results in a continuing shortage of experienced teachers, work overloads, and a decline in morale for

those teachers remaining in the field. Of even greater concern is the resulting adverse consequences for students. These statistics motivated me to search for a way to improve beginning teacher attrition.

During that search, I discovered research that underscored the importance of teacher mentoring programs. Teacher mentoring programs with well-defined goals were believed by many experts to be necessary for retaining beginning teachers (Barreraa, Braley, & Slatec, 2009). Another study reported an increase in job satisfaction and self-efficacy for beginning teachers who receive support through a mentoring program (Brannon, Fiene, Burke, & Wehman, 2009). In short, mentorship programs that offered high quality mentoring in a supportive school atmosphere were more likely to keep beginning teachers in the profession (Grossman & Davis, 2011). Although much research had been conducted concerning the benefits of mentoring programs, few studies had addressed the perspective of the teacher mentors.

In order to investigate the influences of an effective mentor training program from the perspective of experienced teacher mentors, this qualitative case study was conducted. Qualitative research, rather than quantitative, was chosen in order to fully explore the thoughts and feelings of the teacher mentors.

Project Genre

Based on the analysis of data in Section 2, I selected professional development as the project genre to address the problem in this study. The goal of this study was to identify those factors that effective mentors described as essential to a successful mentor training program.

When establishing the professional development as the genre for the study, careful consideration of the study outcomes was incorporated. Recognizing that professional development is crucial, planning also required understanding that it is important to individualize programs to the specific environment and needs of the participants. Duncan-Howell (2010) reported in that in order for professional development to be effective, participants must be engaged and the content must meet the needs of mentors.

The content of the proposed project includes the component of three professional development days distributed over the 2016-2017 school term. Based upon feedback from the mentor interviews, these professional development sessions include learning how to be an effective mentor. The first professional development meeting will conclude with selection by participating mentors of two additional training sessions chosen from the established topics of interest from the study.

An additional vital component during each professional development session is that mentor participants engage in collaboration. Pyrtula (2012) agreed that professional learning communities encourage participants to challenge their preconceived notions, enhance their understanding and reflect upon their practice. Through developing a mentor professional development program, goals of the study, as well as interests of the mentor participants were addressed.

Review of the Literature

The initial literature review for this research explored in detail the conceptual framework of the study and the theoretical foundation for the study. Included in the

research were varied topics related to the study areas of interest including teaching as a career choice, factors influencing teacher attrition, teacher induction programs, and teacher mentorship programs.

A comprehensive search in ProQuest, ERIC, SAGE and Thoreau databases at Walden University were performed. The search terms were listed using Boolean terms like teacher induction programs, mentorship, beginning teachers, attrition, and teacher induction programs. Additionally, professional websites such as National Education Association, Alabama State Department of Education and numerous other State Department of Education websites were reviewed.

The second literature review analyzed literature and explored the problem identified in the study in order to progress with development and future execution of the project. Primary sources, current research, and peer reviewed literature on topics of interest in the project were extensively reviewed.

Adult Learners

Adult learners have traits that are very different from their younger counterparts. When developing any program involving adults, it is imperative to consider these traits. Educators have long recognized this fundamental assumption. Chen (2014) explained that educators throughout the early 20th century did not have any unifying adult learning theory. As a result, adult educators utilized many different approaches that were ineffective helping adults learn and understand the content. Consequently, the 1950s marked the beginning of adult learning theories that were geared toward the characteristics of the adult learner (Chen, 2014). Merriam and Bierema (2014) discussed

that adult learning theory began with Liderman who suggested that adult learning should be based on the lives and interests of adults.

Malcolm Knowles, recognized as the father of Adult Learning Theory, acknowledged the enlightenment of Bierema's research as he expounded on it. Knowles (1984) stated Linderman's book "enlightened me about the unique characteristics of adults as learners and the need for methods and techniques for helping them learn" (p. 3). Through Knowles work on adult learning, he discovered the term andragogy which was widely used throughout Europe (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Furthermore, Merriam and Bierema acknowledged Knowles with the first "systematic formation" of the differences between adults and children learning.

Adult learners may vary due to generational, gender, and cultural factors but are consistent in expectation of influence and a goal-oriented focus (Coggshall, Ott, Behrstock, and Lasagna (2010). Understanding these concepts, the project was developed in order to explore beliefs of teacher mentors and incorporate their goals into an effective teacher induction program but are consistent in expectation of influence and a goal-oriented focus with careers. Coggshall, et al., (2010) and Gibson, Greenwood, and Murphy (2009) discussed the overriding attributes of each of the generational influences:

- *Baby Boomers:* have a serious and dedicated approach to work and value teamwork, success, and rule challenging.
- *Generation X:* Fun loving, independent, and less committed to the workplace. They change jobs more frequently and expect a balance between work and life.

- *Generation Y*: Less indulged, these individuals are more globally oriented, inclusive, and results oriented.
- *Millenials*: Entrepreneurial with dissatisfaction for entry level positions, these young adults expect frequent feedback and opportunities and tend to change jobs frequently if disappointed (Gibson, Greenwood, & Murphy, 2009, p.2).

When developing this project, all of these generational influences are represented in the participants of the study. Through the survey approach, each of these viewpoints contributed in planning for the project.

Culture refers to the attributes of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors shared by group (Lee, McCauley, & Draguns, 2013) and can have an influence on teaching and learning. Gender, likewise is an influence on learning. Chen, Huang, Shih and Chang (2016) found that female performance is significantly influenced by personalization/non-personalization. The personalized learning system is coordinated with the preferences of each individual. Alternatively, the non-personalized learning system provides all learners with a similar design and learners must adjust themselves to become accustomed to this design approach. This mentorship program integrates both personalization and non-personalization factors with individual collaboration between mentor and beginning teacher as well as an established program with consistent goals and expectations of all.

Although culture and gender can be an influences in adult interaction in the workplace and in learning environments, the overriding desire of adults to be competent in their workplace, and to be treated with respect, support the development of a mentor program that has established goals and room for individual interaction and collaboration.

Rogers (2013) explores the importance of ‘‘transition points’’ in people’s lives as well as changing interests for participation in adult learning activities. Mentorship programs provide learning support for beginning teachers at this significant transition point whether they are just beginning a career or changing to a new school. Several of the participants illustrated this point with comments that the support of their mentor was invaluable in helping them transition from college graduate to beginning teacher; this fact inspired them to want to be a mentor. In addition, participants that had not had the benefit of an effective mentor felt that they were left unsupported and that the entire experience was very challenging as a “sink or swim” effort. These participants wanted to act as mentors in order to help others to “never go through this awful time”.

Teacher mentors are colleagues of their mentees and are adult learners with a focus on learning information that they believe will be useful to them. A definition of an adult learner is a mature individual who develops a self-concept of being responsible for one’s own life (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005).

When one teaches adult learners, he is charged with selecting the appropriate teaching method. It is the facilitator’s responsibility to support, collaborate and give meaningful feedback to the adult learners which is somewhat different than teaching children (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Educators of adult learners must consider the different adult learning styles in order to be most effective.

Knowles is a leader in adult learning theory and originally identified four assumptions that applied to of adult learners. In later publications, Knowles expanded

these assumptions and discussed six primary characteristics of adult learners (Malone, 2014):

- Adults need to know the reason for learning something.
- Adults are autonomous and self-directed.
- Adults are goal-oriented.
- Adults are relevancy oriented
- Adults are practical.
- Adults expect to be respected (Malone, 2014, pp. 11-12).

Incorporating teaching with these characteristics as a foundational understanding is essential to success in a mentor-training program as beginning teachers are adults and colleagues of the teacher mentor. These traits were considered and integrated throughout the program:

- Autonomous- Although there are standards within the professional mentor training program, mentors are encouraged to use their individual skills and to assist beginning teachers in developing personalized teaching styles. The expectation is that goals will be met, but it is not a regimented one way only approach.
- Practical, Need to Know, Relevance – The mentor training program is a useful approach, based on the responses of survey participants, that provides a clear outline to ensure professional development training is applicable to the work that is expected of mentors in the program.

- Goal oriented – The mentor training program outlines clear expectations of all parties in order to not only state goals but also to measure effectiveness.
- Respect- In this program, the collaboration and input of participants, as well as the support of administrators provides demonstrable evidence of respect.

Lieb (1991) believed that it must also be recognized that adult learners may reject new information that contradicts their beliefs. Based on these concepts, this project for this study was created to incorporate participants' goals into an effective beginning teacher mentor training program that supports the needs of adult learners. If mentoring relationships are to be truly learner centered, the mentor must facilitate learning by applying what is known about how adults learn to enhance the mentoring experience (Zachary, 2013).

Andragogy

Andragogy is defined as the art and science of helping adults learn (Rodrigues, 2012). Chan (2010) explained andragogy contributes to the knowledge of the how adults learn, in what context, and the development of their learning. Two primary assumptions that were foundational for this study included the following beliefs:

- Orientation- Adults are problem centered and respond best by working on issues that directly relate to their lives.
- Foundation –Adults have life experience as well as recent educational experiences that is useful and should be integrated into a successful mentorship.

The two assumptions, orientation and foundation, were particularly applicable when considering the subjects of this study. Orientation is associated to mentors as they work to resolve the multiple obstacles in providing effective mentorship to beginning teachers. The assumption, foundation, relates to mentors as they provide guidance based on their own real life experiences.

As an educator of adult learners, it is important to consider that andragogy when teaching experienced teachers in order for them to be effective beginning teacher mentors. The characteristics of adult learners, as previously discussed, are especially significant in the development of a teacher mentor.

Knowles, Holt and Swason (2005) researched extensively the concepts of adult learning and adopted the term andragogy to explain Knowles' theory of adult learners. Knowles' andragogy can be stated with six assumptions related to motivation of adult learning (Rodrigues, 2012, p. 30):

1. Need to know: Adults need to know the reason for learning something.
2. Foundation: Experience (including error) provides the basis for learning activities.
3. Self-concept: Adults need to be responsible for their decisions on education; involvement in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
4. Readiness: Adults are most interested in learning subjects having immediate relevance to their work and/or personal lives.
5. Orientation: Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented.
6. Motivation: Adults respond better to internal versus external motivators.

These six assumptions serve as essential guidelines for the adult educator.

In any learning experience, participants must have a motivation to change. Sogunro (2014) discusses the eight top most motivating factors for adult learners. These include quality of instruction; quality of curriculum; relevance and pragmatism; interactive classrooms and effective management practices; progressive assessment and timely feedback; self-directedness; conducive learning environment; and effective academic advising practices (p. 26). The study concludes that these eight factors are critical to eliciting or enhancing the will power in students in higher education toward successful learning.

These concepts are useful in developing a teacher induction program as both mentors and the beginning teachers are adult learners, and will respond more effectively to programs that both demonstrate understanding of their needs and provide goals that are both attainable and based on overall success of the program and participants.

In relation to development of a mentor program, consideration of andragogy concepts are especially significant.

- Adults are autonomous and self-directed. They like to be actively involved in learning and work around their specific interests and personal goals which is useful in mentor selection as mentors are motivated to enhance their professional effectiveness and usually like to take on leadership roles.
- Adults are goal-oriented. The mentorship program provides support for mentor goals such as enhanced professional development and will guide development of the program.

- Adults are relevancy oriented. Mentors are inspired to participate as an effective way to support their profession as well as decrease beginning teacher attrition.
- Adults are practical. Mentors are able to apply their knowledge and share their experience both in development of the mentor program and in the interactions with beginning teachers.
- Adults expect to be respected, to voice their own opinions, and to have a role in directing their own learning.

In a mentorship program, this aspect is especially applicable as mentors and beginning teachers are perceived as colleagues and mentors acknowledge the importance of voice and input into the learning experience. Incorporating teaching strategies and with these aforementioned characteristics as a foundational understanding is an essential element to the effective development and implementation of a mentor-training program.

Teacher Induction Program

A Teacher Induction Program is defined as a structured process consisting of professional development, mentorship and formative assessment (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). As teaching becomes more complex and demanding of teachers, induction programs have become more accepted as a means of bridging the transition into the teaching field (Kane & Francis, 2013). Gajda, and Cravedi, (2006) explained that a traditional program (completing all coursework upfront followed by a few weeks of student teaching) and one year of mentoring is not sufficient. The mentor training program created for this program recognizes that graduates are not prepared to act as

independent teachers in many areas as skills required have not been developed. An effective mentor can bridge the gap between the college preparation and the real world expectations.

It is widely recognized that comprehensive, high-quality teacher induction can accelerate teacher effectiveness, reduce teacher turnover, and enhance student learning (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, Allen, 2013, Resta, Hurling, & Yeargain, 2013). Teacher induction includes much more than designating a teacher as an informal friend to help orient new teachers. Effective teacher induction provides systemic support to new teachers, including opportunities for collaboration with peers and formative and evaluative assessment based on state teaching standards (NASBE, 2012). "As a common understanding and language develop between master teacher and interns, the sense collegiality strengthens and collaborative learning is enriched" (Green and Ballard, 2011, p. 18). Recognizing this opportunity for collegiality, this mentor training program incorporates collaboration, both as a group and as individual mentor mentee experiences, provides this increase in connection and scholarship.

Administration plays an important role in the success of an induction program. Taranto (2011) stressed the importance of administration laying the foundation for an effective induction program based on best practices found in current literature. Lambeth (2013) described six elements that should emerge between the beginning teacher and administration (p. 4). These six elements resulting from contact between administration and beginning teachers are as followed:

1. Intervention to decrease beginning teacher isolation

2. Facilitation of beginning teacher collaboration and mentoring
3. Accessibility of administration
4. Assurance of alignment between teacher and job assignment
5. Access to professional development
6. Description of the process of evaluation

Through the support of administration, professional development is one of the primary forms of support for beginning teachers in an induction program.

Professional development for beginning teachers may be in the form of providing support through orientation, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, and developmental learning. Professional development provides a transition from student teaching into the full responsibility of teaching students (Allen, 2013). Ultimately, this professional development is geared to improve student learning and reduce beginning teacher attrition (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). This mentor training program provides essential professional development, geared at preparing mentors to utilize best practice strategies to assist beginning teachers that will increase job satisfaction and effectiveness in the classroom.

A teacher mentor program is an integral part of a teacher induction program that is a comprehensive teacher orientation program. In order for the teacher induction program to be successful, the teacher mentor program must be consistent with the goals of the induction program and the overall expectations of the school administrators and aligned to the theoretical guidelines of adult learning.

Teacher Mentorship

Historically, mentoring was a process of sharing technical advice and emotional support. Current research has influenced the design of the current process of mentoring. Currently, mentoring still incorporates technical advice and emotional support but extends beyond to these processes in order to increase the effectiveness of the beginning teacher. Mullen (2011) described the practice of teacher mentorship as a primary solution for decreasing beginning teacher attrition and addressing instructional deficits in student performance. Yendol-Hoppey, Jacobs and Dana (2009) explained that mentors and mentees should engage in activities such as co-planning, preparing lessons, assistance in preparation for evaluation and coaching on instruction. Vanderslice (2010) stated two proven practices in a mentoring program were regular meetings with a mentor and meaningful, instructional feedback from the mentor. The mentor training program developed for this study acknowledges the importance of these practices through common planning periods and open feedback from the mentor, as well as collaboration between the mentor and the mentee.

Takao (2013) described the process of mentoring as a dance. Each partner, mentor and mentee, has parts to play in the relationship. Ambrosetti (2014) added that mentoring concerns focused on the development of the relationship between the mentor and mentee, which in turn provided the underpinning for the growth of the mentee's skills. Thus in mentoring, the relationship becomes central to the interactions that occur (p. 31).

Yendol-Hoppey et al. (2009) explained that, "mentoring cannot be forced to take place. Instead, mentoring should occur in a trusting relationship between two accepting

participants referred to as mentor and mentee" (p. 27). Mentoring is most effective when a beginning teacher seeks out advice and assistance from a veteran teacher (Yendol-Hoppey et al., 2009). The collaboration component of this program encourages the development of a trusting and mutually beneficial relationship between the mentor and the mentee.

The voluntary nature of the mentoring relationship was highlighted in a study by Mullen (2011) which examined the required and voluntary aspects of mentoring. Mullen (2011) explained that voluntary mentoring and required mentoring are both beneficial. Voluntary mentoring is seen as informal and occurs through more casual conversations. The mentor training program in this study provides the opportunity for mentors to informally meet and support one another.

On the other hand, required mentoring occurs when a mentor and mentee are mandated to engage in a mentoring relationship. Mullen (2011) explained that required mentoring focuses on systematic school improvement and student achievement. The program goals are set by one of two authoritative groups: State Department of Education or the local LEA. The local LEA consists of the school board, superintendent and curriculum coordinators.

Mentorship program goals are aligned with educator preparation, educator evaluation and school-wide professional development (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2015, p. 10). The Alabama Department of Education refers to these educator standards as "Alabama Quality Teaching Standards" which are directly linked to the principal's observation instrument (2010-2014). McDowell, Carroll, Ewing and Alfred

(2012) explained program effectiveness is demonstrated through beginning teachers meeting the state standards and increasing student data as well as a reduction in beginning teacher attrition (p. 92).

Teacher Mentors

A mentor is a veteran teacher who provides training and ongoing support for a beginning teacher who has little classroom teaching experience. Lambeth (2012) explained that mentors should perform in the predominant role when mentoring beginning teachers. Mentors are experienced teachers who provide support for beginning teachers through listening, training, modeling, and ongoing support. Maxwell (2008) explained that mentors must have the commitment and ambition to focus on others and find their passions, successes, and joys to truly help them. Maxwell (2008) stated, "if you do the person will blossom before your eyes" (p. 6).

Mentors participating in a mentorship program usually personify the characteristics that make them successful in this position. Many times, mentors are selected by the principal; however, research suggests that becoming a mentor should be a voluntary choice (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). Bell and Treleaven (2011) pointed out the significance of mentors volunteering to participate in a mentorship program.

Johnson and Ridley (2008) stressed the importance of being considerate of a teacher's choice regarding the participation as a mentor. Mentoring is an individualized professional development to support beginning teachers in their role leading to increased learning for all students. Cooperative, interested, and motivated mentors are essential to achieve this goal (Dropkin, 2013, p. 72).

Teachers of all ages are often assigned to acting as mentors; however, some teachers are not interested in acting in this role for varying reasons. The decision to participate as a mentor should not be coerced and whether the teacher chooses to take part in the mentorship role must be respected by all involved. Krouse (2012) reported that some teachers will refuse to participate in the role of mentor, often for personal reasons, and it is essential that these decisions be honored. Krouse (2012) also stressed that administration should support these teachers' decisions. Whatever reason a teacher has for declining to act as a mentor, should that teacher be directly or indirectly forced into the role, this teacher is likely to perform at only a minimal level and will not have the same outcomes as a personally motivated participant. The mentor training program developed for this study allows for any veteran teacher who meets the requirement (see consent form, appendix D) to volunteer as a mentor for beginning teachers. The principal then selects and assigns designated teachers that meet the criteria and have volunteered to perform as mentors.

In addition, Feiman-Nemser (2012) explained that mentors are responsible for much more than just helping beginning teachers survive their beginning year of teaching. According to Feiman-Nemser (2012), "co-workers and co-planners are involved in helping new teachers reframe challenges, design and modify instruction and assessments, and analyze and promote student learning. Mentors will deliver difficult feedback and strive for a balance between supporting new teachers and challenging them to grow" (p. 13). Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen and Bergen (2010) explained that mentors have to focus on what the mentee knows and needs to be an effective mentor.

Clark (2011) explained that mentors can act in several different capacities which are advisor, teacher and supervisor. When acting in the role of advisor, the mentor recommends professional development and encourages networking. The teacher role requires the mentor to transmit important information for dealing with classroom situations as well as interacts with parents. Finally, the supervisor role is not to be confused with administrator's role. When the mentor is performing the monitoring role, she accesses the mentee's understanding by monitoring the mentee's ability to transfer suggested information into practice (Clark, 2011, p. 1779). The ability to perform in differing roles requires specific skills and traits of the mentor. Traits of effective mentors were explored by Takao (2013, p. 66) and included:

- Convince yourself of the importance of the role
- Be able to view the big picture
- Be knowledgeable
- Demonstrate a consistent work ethic
- Foster healthy independence

Johnson and Ridley (2008) further explore the act of mentoring and discuss benefits to mentors "internal satisfaction and fulfillment enhance creativity and professional synergy…recognition by organization for developing talent and generativity" (p. 46). They further discuss the importance of consistent contact to success of the mentorship program "Research shows that the frequency and quality of face to face interaction predict mentorship success" (Johnson & Ridley, 2008, p. 46).

This researcher considered all of these factors when planning the study mentor training program. The mentor initially acts as a supervisor by helping establish goals for the experience and plans meeting times. The mentor observes the mentee and provides feedback on performance as well as suggestions for improvement. Modeling of classroom management and teaching is provided through observation by the mentee of the mentor. Collaboration between mentor and mentee during common planning time supports the mentee developing more self-efficacy and independence.

Mentor Training

Despite the importance a mentor has on beginning teachers and attrition, most teacher mentors are not prepared to perform in the this role. Leshem (2014) explained that mentors themselves receive little if any professional development to prepare them to be teacher mentors. Instead, the focus is placed on the mentee and her growth by learning from the mentor.

The benefits of mentoring have been well documented (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Lambeth, 2012; Allen, 2013) but the mentor support has not be as clear. As a result, mentors are often left without clear expectations and lack the proper training to prepare for this important undertaking (Kane & Francis, 2013). Leshem (2014) further explained that mentors experience a great deal of stress due to the administrations clashing expectations of the role of mentor. Collaboration and clear expectations established for this program will help alleviate incongruence and stress between parties.

Athanases, Abrams, Jack, Johnson, Kwock, Mccurdy, Riley and Totaro (2008) described learning to mentor as a conscious effort rather than a natural emersion due to

being a good teacher. Research supports the importance of training for mentors (Leshem, 2014). Mentors must learn the best way to put their knowledge into practice and reflect critically on their own beliefs. Allowing mentors to share experiences builds their self-efficacy. Furthermore, mentors need to be allowed to articulate professional development needs (Leshem, 2014). The mentor training program encourages input from participants during establishment of professional development for mentors.

Sayeski and Paulsen (2012) explained "the identification of "highly-valued" practices can lead to the creation of professional development workshops or supporting materials that will assist all teacher mentors, regardless of background, setting, or personality, in improved mentoring of beginning teachers" (p. 119).

One critical issue, upon which experts agree that significantly influences the quality of a mentoring relationship and the ultimate success of the mentor program, is communication skills. Leshem (2014) explained the importance of a mentor understanding his communication style and being able to use it effectively in a variety of situations and personalities during the mentor relationship. Zachary, 2012, added that collaboration is a major component of communication that occurs between a mentor and a mentee. During planned collaboration times, goals and ideas of both the mentor and mentee are shared and a plan is developed to achieve the desired goals (Zachary, 2012).

Coombs, Goodwin, and Fink (2013) stressed the importance of an effective mentor/mentee relationship to experience communication through dialogue. Leshem (2014) explained the need for a mentor understanding a mentee's need or have the same experience or identify the same concerns. Purposeful and meaningful dialogue occurs

through the use of techniques such as observations, journaling, and debriefing (Coombs Goodwin & Fink, 2013). Although formal mentoring does have specific goals, the processes to accomplish those goals will vary by individual and a qualified mentor will be able to recognize and provide for this individuality.

In addition to communication skills, there are additional essential considerations when developing a mentor training program. In formal mentoring, theoretical frameworks are usually the foundation of the program. However, some studies have highlighted that some mentors lack the understanding of critical reflection and thus are reluctant to incorporate "theoretical" insights in their conversations with the mentee (Evans & Abbott, 1997). Gardiner (2009) supported this view and argued that some mentors might not have developed "a comprehensive theoretical framework" and they would need ongoing support to develop their own practical theories of mentoring (64). In the same vein, Gordon and Brobeck (2010) indicated that mentors might not have independently developed "mentoring platforms" of beliefs and attitudes to mentoring, or have not reflected deeply on dissonances between their beliefs and mentoring behaviors. These authors agreed that this high-level reflection required professional development and collaboration.

Mentees

According to Sayeski and Paulsen (2012) mentees wanted "frequent, direct feedback that includes specific suggestions, and they want high quality questions that prompt them to reflect on their own practice, decision-making and beliefs about teaching" (p. 126). Beginning teachers appreciated the opportunity to observe a mentor

demonstrate a lesson but also wanted the freedom to experiment in their own teaching and develop their individual style (Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012).

Beginning teachers bring a wealth of current knowledge into the field and are often more open and adaptable to change. Rickels, et al., (2013) reported that individuals "who desire to become teachers in any field share common characteristics and motivations" (p. 116).

Additionally, beginning teachers report that they have a positive perception of working with students (Konig & Rothland, 2012) and are committed to the profession. Most frequently stated reasons for entering the teaching profession include enjoying working with the students, personal fulfillment of making a difference, and dedication to the content area (Curtis, 2012).

With the focus of beginning teachers frequently discussed as the importance of supporting students and being an influence for good, there is motivation to be successful therefore it is perplexing that 30% or more choose to leave the profession within the first five years (Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff, 2013). A successful mentor program addresses these influences and provides support of beginning teachers, enabling them to be successful and maintain their focus.

Santoli and Martin (2012) reported on a poll of 14 research studies and explained that beginning teachers reported classroom management, and teaching methods as their major two concerns. Hockickova, and Zilova (2015) added that mentors identified two

leading weaknesses in mentees. Namely, lesson plans not carried out in real teaching and insufficient use of teaching materials.

Lambeth and Lashley (2012) stated, "beginning teachers evolve through particular stages throughout their teaching careers. Therefore, it is clear that new teachers need a specific support structure that aligns with their individual needs" (p. 36). In order for a mentor to provide this comprehensive support, the availability of peer collaboration, coaching and professional development, and support from administration are crucial as these diverse components of a successful mentor program are not fundamental to the veteran teacher role and responsibility.

Implementation

After analyzing the study's data, the researcher determined there was a need for a mentor training program. Based on the interview data, a mentor training program will be created and consist of a series of three professional development workshops designed to prepare, train and support teacher mentors. The professional development training will take place at the beginning, middle, and end of the school term. Content for the professional development training sessions will include mentor expectations, professional development, and experiences.

Created based on the interview data, these professional development sessions will take place in half-day segments and include an opportunity for mentors to meet and interact with their mentees. Administrators will articulate mentor expectations and offer support for the participants. The instructional coaches will create training sessions in the

mentor training program to train and prepare mentors to effectively guide beginning teachers.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

One of the main resources that already exists is the stakeholders. Since the state mentoring program was removed from the schools due to a lack of funding, the stakeholders are eager to participate in an induction program. Administrators are willing to support both mentors and mentees in the form of supervision, professional development and release time. Mentors are enthusiastic about obtaining much needed training to prepare for their task. Mentees are eager about receiving support and feedback aligned to their development as a teacher educator.

Another support for a mentor training program is the location of the school system. This school system is located in close proximity to three universities, which makes accessing presenters and resources for the professional development sessions easier to acquire.

As an instructional coach, I have a close working relationship of more than seven years with these three institutions with primary responsibility of assigning and observing intern and mentoring teacher interactions and progress. In addition, I have participated in workshops as a speaker and a participant on multiple occasions and topics. Because of this professional relationship, I have been instrumental in developing and arranging professional development for teachers. During this interaction, many teachers have expressed an interest in participating as mentors of beginning teachers.

Potential Barriers

Potential barriers to implementing this mentor training program include resistance to change, time, and money commitments. The challenge for all initial programs is the inherent resistance to change; however, with effective presentation and administrative support, this barrier can be overcome. Significant changes that result in a resistance to change can be resolved by developing initial interest and recognition of the need and contribution of the program, eliminating the hesitation of teachers to act as mentors due to the perceived lack of clear expectations of participating teacher mentors, and mandatory administration support of the program. The mentor program will change business as usual due to the additional requirements of both the teacher mentors and beginning teachers.

Additional, and more challenging aspects are the time and dedication required for program development, as well as the time commitment of the individual mentors and beginning teachers. Administrative support is again invaluable in this area, particularly with respect demonstration of the program and time release for mentors in order to participate.

Money could be a potential barrier if substitute teachers are needed to allow mentors to observe beginning teachers and attend professional development components of the program. Funding may also be required to purchase materials for the mentor professional development sessions. This arrangement may require superintendent and school board participation.

All of these potential barriers can be dealt with if the program is recognized as beneficial to the school system, the mentors and beginning teachers and most importantly, the students, clearly highlighted research overwhelmingly indicates the program is of added value. The support and commitment of administration will be especially influential in this area. Respect of the program by administration will lead to respect of the program by other stakeholders in the system.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The mentor training program will take place at the beginning, middle and end of the school term. The program will consist of 1 day for each professional development session. The main goal of the mentor training is to prepare mentors to effectively guide beginning teachers and thereby decrease beginning teacher attrition. Upon completion of the doctoral program at Walden University, the researcher plans to implement the mentor training program at the school system described in this study.

An estimated timeframe for implementing the mentor training program will be during the 2016-17 school term. The first day of training will take place during August, the week before school begins. The next day of training will take place during January, the week after Christmas vacation. The last day of the mentor training program will take place in May, the week after school dismisses. The creation of a proposed budget plan will be created to cover the cost of presenters and substitutes for mentors/mentees. Budget purchases will be made upon approval by the school systems board of education.

Although the mentor and mentee are active participants in the program, school administrators and district level staff must provide both support and accountability for the

mentors. The school administrator must verify that mentors are attending all of the professional development meetings at the district level. District level administrators are responsible for the mentor training professional development budget that covers the costs for the presenters and substitutes. Administrators must also be dedicated to the program in reviewing reports and attending scheduled meetings as well as incorporating findings in planning for future goals and outcomes.

The mentor program is outlined as follows (see Appendix A). Based on the investigation during this study, topics covered during the professional development sessions will consist of mentor expectations, professional development sessions, and collaboration. These professional development sessions will take place during three meetings.

During the first meeting, expectations of mentors and the implementation plan will be provided to participants in the workshop packet (see Appendix A). Designated speakers will include the school system Superintendent, and Principal. Also, the Elementary and Secondary Curriculum Coordinators who will act as Directors of the program will speak to mentor participants. Finally, the instructional coaches will speak to mentors regarding professional development activities. Specific roles of these individuals include:

- The Superintendent will express interest and support of the program and role in receiving ongoing reports from program directors and sharing with the school board.

- The Principal will discuss program goals, mentor program expectations, and declaration of support, as well as acting role in reviewing reports. The principal will also act as mediator should any conflict arise between participants.
- Program directors will discuss details of the program as well as specific expectations of both the teacher mentors and beginning teachers.
- Instructional coaches will coordinate professional development beginning with collaboration workshop on "How to be a Mentor."

Roles and Responsibilities of Mentors and Mentees

All stakeholders should be responsible for distinctive components of the program. For example, the mentors have the responsibility of training mentees to incorporate diversified teaching strategies and increase student learning. Mentors are also required to plan and collaborate with mentees as well as attend all mentor professional development training sessions at the district level. These sessions are designed to increase mentor effectiveness. Mentors will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the mentor training program at all sessions.

Mentee responsibilities include active participation in mentor collaboration and program meetings and being receptive to feedback of mentor as well as providing feedback at the end of the mentor year regarding outcomes of the program.

Project Evaluation

Several procedures are in place to evaluate the project (see Table 10). Mentors will be given a chance to provide feedback on the mentor training professional

development at the end of every session that will provide an informal, formative assessment. Changes will be made as needed during the school year based on these data.

During the last professional development session, mentors will participate in a focus group to share their opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of the program. This informal, summative data will be used to make changes to the program and to individualize the program to meet the needs of all of the mentors.

In addition, an exit survey (see Appendix A) will be provided at the end of the last mentor training professional development session, which will provide the researcher with a formal, summative evaluation of the program. All mentors will complete the exit survey and submit it to the program director. The results of these data will help the program director and administration to make needed changes for the following school year.

Another summative evaluation will take place using school data. The researcher will keep data on beginning teacher attrition for the school system. A comparison will be made to determine if the mentorship program is decreasing beginning teacher attrition. This comparison will be kept from year-to-year since reducing beginning teacher attrition is one of the major goals of a mentorship program.

Throughout the program, at each meeting formative evaluation findings will be presented to participants with the opportunity for improvement discussed. At the final meeting, summative outcomes will be reviewed and evaluation findings shared with participants. Findings will be reported to administration and utilized in developing goals, outcomes, and revision of program for the following year.

Table 10

Evaluation for Mentorship Training Program

Evaluation	Type	Reason for Evaluation
Mentor feedback during professional development sessions	Formative/Informal	This feedback helps to determines effectiveness of professional development and opportunity for improvement.
Exit survey at the end of the program	Summative/Formal	Mentors will provide feedback that will be used to improve the program for the following school term.
Focus Group	Summative/Informal	This feedback will allow mentors to share their ideas for improvement of the mentor training program. This data will also be analyzed and used to individualize the program to meet the needs of all mentors.
Comparison of beginning teacher attrition rates in the school system	Summative/Formal	This data will allow to determine the effectiveness of the mentor training through a reduction of beginning teacher attrition.

Implications Including Social Change

The beginning teacher attrition rate continues to rise in the United States (Ingersoll, Merrill & Stuckey, 2014). Riggs (2013) explained that teacher attrition is 4% higher in education than in any other profession. Teacher turnover is costing the schools systems approximately 2.2 billion dollars a year (Phillips, 2015). The New Teacher Center (2012) reported that high-quality induction programs make beginning teachers

more effective faster thereby reducing some of the stress and frustration. Unfortunately, the mentor, who is at the center of the mentoring relationship, is left untrained. Only 15 states require mentors to receive formal training (The New Teacher Center, 2012).

Local Community

There is a higher than national average attrition rate of beginning teachers in the local community (local school system data, 2014). This is often attributed to the challenges of teaching the lower socio-economic students and the feeling that schooling did not prepare beginning teachers to face the challenges of teaching in this environment (Hong, 2012). Hong (2012) explained, in his comparison of beginning teacher who leave and who stay, a distinctive difference in self-efficacy between the two groups.

Providing support of beginning teachers through a standardized teacher mentoring program will enable beginning teachers to develop individual teaching solutions to classroom management and teaching effectiveness. Strengthening the confidence and ability of beginning teachers will decrease financial costs of attrition as well as provide a more stable workforce leading to more stable school outcomes, and more experienced teachers leading to better educated students and greater satisfaction of parents and community stakeholders. The benefit of better educated students will improve the educational level of the community resulting in improved opportunities for graduates of the school system.

Far-Reaching

This research will be useful in future development of effective mentoring programs resulting in greater participation, effectiveness, and satisfaction of teacher

mentors. In turn, beginning teachers will experience greater support and self-efficacy, and the educational system as a whole will benefit from the decrease in teacher attrition. Ultimately, greater opportunities for employment result in a more stable workforce and population allowing graduates to remain in the community rather than having to leave and seek employment elsewhere.

Conclusion

Standardized teacher mentor programs provide for consistency of expectations of teacher mentors and support of beginning teachers. This research has centered on exploring the need and benefit of a standardized comprehensive teacher-mentoring program for beginning teachers and the positive outcomes to be obtained. This chapter has explored the findings of the research, section 4 will progress with discussion of strengths and limitations in the research as well as potential remediation of the program.

In addition, information learned during the project and analysis related to personal scholarship will be discussed. The projects potential impact on social change will be explored. Finally, the projects implication for future research and application to the educational field will be further analyzed.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors influencing effective mentors for beginning elementary school teachers. Section 4 covers the project strengths, and recommendations for remediation of project limitations. Moreover, this section contains a personal reflection of me as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. Finally, I conclude this section with a discussion of the possible social impact as well as implications, applications, and directions for future research.

Project Strengths

There are strengths associated with this project study that include professional development activities requested by interested participants that will support the overall effectiveness of the mentor program. Administrative support is another essential strength of this project study and will lend respect, financial support, and ongoing usefulness of the program. Another, and perhaps, the most important strength of the project study is the positive effect anticipated on decreasing beginning teacher attrition.

A common thread that emerged throughout the interview data was a need for mentor training. Russell and Russell (2011) stated "the most neglected characteristic of a mentoring relationship is the failure to adequately support the prospective mentor with the skills necessary to be an effective mentor" (p. 17). The mentor professional development is the greatest strength of this program. Hobbs and Stovall (2015) explained, "it is reasonable to suggest a strong need for training and ongoing support that fosters the development of effective mentor practices" (p. 94). Good teachers are not instinctively

good mentors. Accomplishing any professional task requires commitment and professional training.

This project study focuses on the professional development that will support teachers that are experienced, qualified, and committed to becoming effective mentors. The first professional development session begins with a session on how to be a mentor, how to collaborate and strategies for conflict resolution. A PowerPoint presentation will be presented to teach mentors "why and how" to be mentors. Varied speakers chosen for their position and expertise, will provide discussion regarding expectations and support of mentors and the mentorship program. Mentors will participate in various activities throughout the year long professional development sessions. These meetings are designed to train mentors to becoming more proficient.

Collaboration makes the whole stronger that the sum of individual components. Likewise, sharing of ideas makes a mentor training program stronger and more effective when varied viewpoints are incorporated. Through collaboration, mentors and administrators can each ensure that the most significant factors are included for the benefit of the whole. Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, and Grisson (2015) stressed the importance of collaboration as each of the parties increase in effectiveness when working in schools that engage in collaboration. Administrators are more confident that goals will be met, mentors are more committed and engaged in the program, mentees feel more supported, and ultimately, students demonstrate higher achievement when collaboration is evident. Therefore, professional development activities require mentors to engage in role play, collaboration, and effective feedback. Mentors will be given time to reflect on

videotaped lessons before collaborating with other mentors. Collaboration activities were selected for the first professional development session because 10 out of 10 study participants that responded in the study survey requested the collaboration training (See table 5).

Another strength of the program relates to administrative support in helping establish mentor expectations and ongoing participation. Since the state mentoring program was eliminated, mentors were left without standard mentor expectations, and little administrative support. This situation led to programs that were not as effective as desired; mentors felt unappreciated with beginning teachers that received little support. In addition, the state beginning teacher attrition rate increased significantly. In most circumstances, principals would select a veteran teacher to act as a mentor for a beginning teacher. As a result, the mentor acting without expectations offered the beginning teacher advice for surviving in the classroom. Unfortunately, this type of plan does not give the needed support to mentees.

Huskins, Silet, Main, Begg, Fowler, Hamilton and Fleming (2011) stressed the importance of identifying and aligning expectations in a mentorship relationship. With consistent agreement of expectations, all parties will work together to ensure the most beneficial outcome for mentees as well as the most effective support for mentors. The mentor training program developed for this study integrates these consistent standards throughout the planning and the program.

Clark and Byrnes (2012) agreed with the need for administrative support and suggested that principals provide release time and common planning periods. Based on

research and data from interviews, participants involved in this study agree that administrative support is a critical factor. In planning, this mentorship program provides clear expectations and ongoing administrator support and encouragement beginning with the first professional development session.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

While this project has multiple strengths for preparing mentors to be effective through professional development training sessions, there are also some limitations that must be considered. It is important to address these limitations in an effort to refine and improve the project study.

One limitation of this study is associated with the study's population, which was gathered using a purposeful sampling procedure in a limited environment. The resulting homogenic study population consists of all Caucasian female participants. This limitation could be addressed by conducting a similar study in a large high school that would provide a more varied population. It would be of particular interest to include more male participants. In 2014, approximately 41.9% of the high school teachers were male as opposed to 17% of male teachers in elementary school (Men Teach, 2014). Unfortunately this does not hold true in the rural area and population of interest for this study. Additionally, conducting this study in a suburban or city population could provide a more diverse population. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2011) presented a comparison between the population of school teachers in a rural, town, suburban/city school setting. (See Table 11).

Table 11

Teacher Population

School Type	Total # of Teachers	White	Black	Hispanic	Two or More Races
City/Suburban	1,772,000	83.6	5.7	7.6	1.2
Town	411,400	87.7	3.6	5.6	0.8
Rural	916,600	88.7	4.2	4.7	0.8

Another limitation of this study is the small sample size. While it is acceptable for a qualitative research study to be comprised of a smaller sample size (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010), a larger sample could add additional insight into the problem. Unfortunately, the study population was subject to the limitations of time and finance.

This research study provides valuable insight into answer the study's two research questions and the qualitative nature allows for more descriptive data obtained from participants. The research for this study was conducted using a qualitative research method which was beneficial in gaining a deeper understanding into the "how and why" teacher mentors think and feel about being an effective mentor. Due to the nature of qualitative research, the results of the study are not generalizable (Merriam, 2009).

Expanding the population size and diversity would allow these findings to be expanded using additional research approaches to address this problem and increase understanding. For example, an additional method for this study topic of interest would be a quantitative approach, which would allow for the study questions to be statistically analyzed and findings to be generalized.

Scholarship

Nicholls (2005) stated, "scholarship serves as the building block for knowledge growth in a field (p. 12). I have been involved in varied areas of education for 26 years and have expanded my knowledge and understanding throughout; therefore, I was confident when beginning this study that I was well prepared knowledgeable about the facts and components of interest. It was very surprising to me the amount of information learned and the challenges I dealt with as the study progressed. I have participated in team building, projects, mentoring, and documentation in the past as well as having to integrate change into curriculum, but this scholarship was on an entirely different level than my previous efforts.

The project study was a much more difficult path than I had originally envisioned. The dedication and organization required to complete a doctoral program are substantial on both a personal and professional level. Several times during this journey, other commitments and activities were neglected in order to comply with the demands of first plan and then perform my research and report findings appropriately, so that I could complete this project study and add to the current knowledge regarding effective mentors

and their need for training. It has been a very long and difficult path, but I have learned a great deal about my profession and myself.

During the time I was working on my project study, I became a reading coach which then progressed into additional demands as an Instructional coach. I was then named the Response to Instruction Chairperson at my school with even more expectations and requirements. The workload was substantial and hours extensive.

In addition, to work challenges, there were personal struggles as well. My two young children became teenagers and my supportive husband became content with third or fourth place, and remains my biggest fan. My mother had several health emergencies and her deteriorating health now requires us to stay with her at night. Although my personal life is my first priority, my professional expectations are important and this focus helped me to adjust through the demands of balancing work and family.

Through all of the trials, I remained resolute to complete my Project Study and earn this doctorate. My family fully supported this desire and helped to make it possible. I believe my determination remained intact throughout the endless hours of research, through the data collection, and data analysis because I was, and still am, very passionate about the topic I selected in the beginning. Scholarship requires one to being dedicated to assisting others through social change.

I believe that I was brought up to believe that it is important to commit to your work and to making it better, and I believe that this experience has helped me to do that.

Project Development and Evaluation

I learned a great deal about project development and evaluation. Initially, I had no awareness of the degree of dedication and attention to detail required. Although I had an idea for the area that I wished to study, it required reviewing other projects and serious self-reflection to develop a plan for research that would effectively study my research questions. The literature review was extensive and challenging for me in order to address the varied issues involved.

After developing my research questions of interest and committing to the qualitative type of study in order to effectively mine the perceptions of my participants, I then conducted my research and developed my study project based on findings. Throughout this entire process, I recognized the need to both remain committed to my research questions and to be open to findings from the research review and to the need for allowance of changes when necessary to strengthen the project study.

Leadership and Change

In researching this issue of teacher attrition, I was impressed with the repeating themes and issues discussed that had been occurring in many areas for quite some time. Recognizing a problem is the first step to resolving it, but a topic such as this has so many components that change can be quite challenging and people often give up before any improvements take place

The initial emphasis for me was to persuade others that long term improvement could occur. Change can be difficult and time consuming. As a part of leadership, I have

found that including others in a solution results in their participation and support of the change.

One area in research that was not explored in as much detail was that of the people most essential to the success of a mentor program, the mentors themselves. The research and development of this project required me to develop as a leader and increase confidence in my decisions as well as be open to change myself.

The evaluation of this project allows for input and change to the program as it evolves supporting long term implementation. Including this required convincing of study participants and administration, in particular, as their primary focus was on a short term, immediate solution.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

Throughout my doctoral journey, I have learned a great deal about myself as a person and a scholar. I have always known I was a lifelong learner. My desire for knowledge led me to complete my bachelor's degree, master's degree and educational specialist degree all in the field of Education. Throughout my life, I have learned to remain dedicated to completing my goals. With this commitment, I embarked on the mission to earn my Doctoral Degree in Education.

During my first two years at Walden, I gained a valuable foundation that ultimately prepared me for completing the project study. I became a more proficient writer with a stronger vocabulary which lead to greater self-confidence; however, I did not realize the challenging path that lay ahead of me. That part of the journey would add to the scholar that I am today and the comfort I have with my scholarly voice.

As I started, I discovered that I looked at the "big picture." To complete the project study meant that I had to take one step at a time and I realized that this approach was very difficult for me. I began by looking at completed dissertations to gain an understanding of what I was going to be expected to create; however, I quickly became frustrated. I could not visualize how I could ever create a project like the ones that I read. As a result, I became very anxious and for the first time in my life I began to doubt myself. I became overwhelmed and the thought of working on my project study resulted in writer's block. I did not produce very much that semester and ended with a failing score.

As a result of my lack of progress, I knew I had to make a plan. I realized looking at the big picture was not going to work for me. Therefore, I decided to break the project study into smaller more manageable parts. The plan worked and I began to move forward. The forward progress re-established my self-confidence and dedication to my project study.

As I moved deeper into the project study, my research skills became more effective. I began to comprehend scholarly, peer-reviewed articles which contained challenging concepts and demanding language. In addition, I learned to paraphrase research studies avoiding direct quotes in my writing. Moreover, I began to understand the connection between different research studies. I became proficient at analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating the quality of research. Before I realized it, I developed into a critical thinker and skillful researcher.

As I continue in my profession, I will use the knowledge and skills that I have learned during my career, college courses and research study to educate mentors of beginning teachers. I will begin by presenting my project study to the stakeholders in the local school system in an effort to educate and prepare mentors to be more effective. Moreover, I intend to apply to be a presenter at the Mega Conference in Mobile, AL which will contribution to my professional creditability within the educational community. Ultimately, I aspire to publish an article containing the important information and recommendations discovered through the research in this project study. The knowledge I gained throughout my journey benefits me as a person and as a scholar.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

I am an instructional coach and I work with administrators, mentors, and teachers. Too often, I have watched beginning teachers leave the profession feeling frustrated, and defeated. I am passionate about acting as an agent for change by helping to prepare mentors for the task that have been asked to perform supporting and sustaining mentors has become my life's passion.

As a teacher leader, I will continue to share my experience and knowledge in preparing mentors to be more effective. I will use my research skills to seek the best practices for issues that mentors face on a daily basis. I will continue to read articles and relevant commentaries aligned to mentoring and beginning teachers in order to remain current in the field. Finally, I will employ my organizational skills that I developed during the creation of my project study to produce professional development sessions for mentors.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

Developing this research and study project involved self-analysis, not only of the project, but also of the issues in which I was most interested. I was particularly challenged by the amount of work and attention to detail that was required to complete the research and develop the training project.

In addition, I did not initially recognize the degree of research required to thoroughly understand the issues involved in conducting this study. Developing the appropriate type of research study to explore my questions of interest required extensive consideration and constant refinement. During the research process, I continually had to pay attention to numerous and diverse details and the process of data collection and coding in order to ensure reliable data were generated in the study.

During the evaluation component, the process of using the data and applying findings to the project study required me to expand my understanding of both the data and its effective application to the project study. Finally, ensuring that the program developed would be sustained by providing for revision and change as required that I formulate formative and summative assessment strategies for the training.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

The impact of having effective training for mentors of beginning teachers will be a substantial one. Mentors who are valued and feel confident in the preparation will provide more consistent support, encouragement, and overall effectiveness leading to a decrease in beginning teacher attrition for beginning teachers and potentially lead to a decrease in beginning teacher attrition.

Decreasing the beginning teacher attrition rate will also support students academically by ensuring students have access and experience of a more prepared and experienced instructional faculty will support the academic development of students. Ultimately, a more educated student population will become a more educated adult population in and for community. Schools will be more successful and effective educating students, and the local communities will potentially benefit from a more educated workforce.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This research and project study explored a component of the issues surrounding the influences of beginning teacher attrition. The research has well established that this attrition has negative effects on students, parents, school systems, and communities as well as on the teachers themselves. One area that has not been studied as extensively as other areas is the perceptions of mentors expected to support these beginning teachers.

This study focused on the teacher mentors and how to effectively incorporate and capitalize on their strengths in developing an effective mentor program. An effective mentor program is especially important in rural areas because these schools are often hard to staff. The application pool is often shallow and there is a large population of high poverty and minority students. Simon and Johnson (2013) explained this constant loss of teachers as a "revolving door" effect. When qualified applicants are hard to acquire to fill vacancies, principals are forced to rely on poor hiring practices which results in more dissatisfaction and attrition. Overall, Simon and Johnson (2013) stated that a "pattern of

chronic turnover exacts instructional, financial, and organizational costs that destabilize learning communities and directly affect student learning" (p. 6).

One of the most significant findings of this study was the fact that mentors are most interested in earning respect and support from administrators and teacher colleagues for their mentoring efforts with new teachers. This particular finding should be considered when developing future mentor training programs.

Additional research with a larger and more diverse population would contribute to the body of mentoring knowledge by further exploring the findings of this particular research study. Likewise, a quantitative approach would mine the data in a different way and expand on the understanding and implication of the overarching questions. Research study repetition that further examines and evaluates available professional development opportunities that support the mentor training program would also be important to expand this study's findings.

Teaching, as a profession, strives for continuous improvement of its administrative procedures and instructional best practices. The induction of new teachers to the teaching ranks demands administrative support in the sponsoring of effective mentoring for these new teachers. Administrators embrace this responsibility by providing a comprehensive mentor training program for the experienced teachers who will serve in these mentoring roles. This administrator is key to ensuring that new teachers are retained and that students experience the consistency of qualified supportive teachers.

Conclusion

This section explored the planning, implementation, and conclusions of the processes involved in completing this project study. The research investigation and exploration of findings and their expansion into a project study was an extensive and demanding process that required ultimate dedication and the flexibility and willingness to be open to change.

Completing this project study was an accomplishment that has positively impacted and contributed to my professional work as well as influencing my personal scholarship, leadership, and understanding of the role of research and project development. This personal and professional understanding will continue to deepen as I integrate the knowledge acquired and continue in my role as a lifelong learner.

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Appendix A: Workshop Packet

MENTOR TRAINING WORKSHOP PACKET

This Mentor Training Workshop Packet contains information pertinent to the Houston County Mentor Training Program. Throughout the workshop, this packet will be used for reference and notetaking.

Mentors' Expectations

- **Meet with mentee on a regular basis**
- **Observe mentee**
- **Provide Feedback to mentee**
- **Complete and submit required documentation**
- **Attend all professional development sessions**

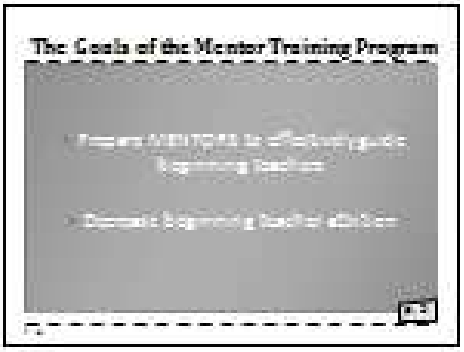
Plan for Implementation of Mentor Training

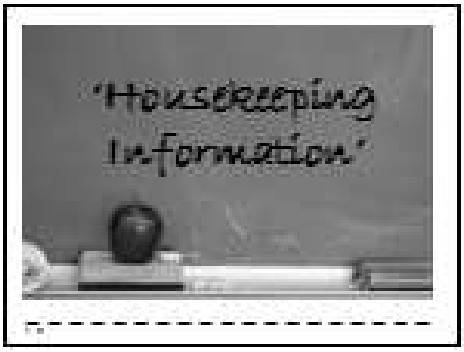
Professional Development	**Purpose**
Beginning of Year (August)	Explanation of Mentor Expectations Professional Development How to Mentor Questionnaire for professional development Questions Introduction of Mentor and Mentee
Middle of Year (January)	Professional Development Collaboration Questions
End of Year (May)	Review and Evaluate Effectiveness of Mentor Training Program • Support • Training • Professional Development
Evaluation and Plan Mentor Training Program (May)	Revisions to Mentor Training Program

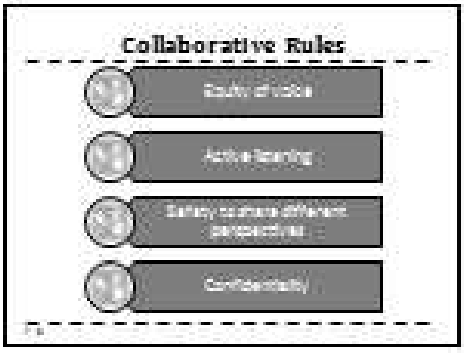
Mentor Program Presenters

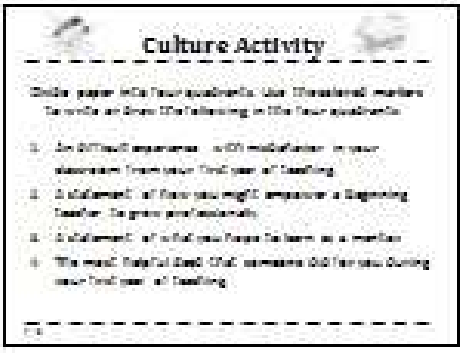
- The Superintendent will express interest and support of the program and role in receiving ongoing reports from program directors and sharing with the school board.
- The Principal will discuss program goals, mentor program expectations, and declaration of support, as well as acting role in reviewing reports. The principal will also act as mediator should any conflict arise between participants.
- Program directors will discuss details of the program as well as specific expectations of both the teacher mentors and beginning teachers.
- Instructional coaches will coordinate professional development beginning with collaboration workshop on “How to be a Mentor”.

How To Be A Mentor









Discuss at your table

- What types of mentoring, if any, did you receive as a Beginning Teacher? How did you feel about that?
- What are some of the ways of welcoming a First-Year Teacher into your school?

Why Mentoring?

Beginning Teacher Attrition

- 40% of teachers leave teaching within the first 5 years.
- The attrition rate is 50% greater at high poverty schools than at affluent schools.

Why is mentoring important?

Why Mentoring?

Cost Impact

- A conservative estimate for replacing teachers who leave the field of education is somewhere in the range of $7.2 billion a year.
- "Every $1.00 spent on high-quality induction provides a return on investment of $1.87 over a period of five years".

Why Mentoring?

Participation in a mentor/induction program has a positive effect on:

- Job satisfaction
- Commitment
- Retention
- Teacher Performance
- Student achievement

First Year Phases

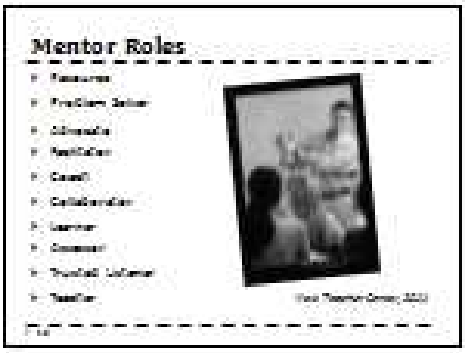

Phase 1
Anticipation
• When does it begin?
• Characteristics


Phase 4
Rejuvenation
• Reorganization
• Focus

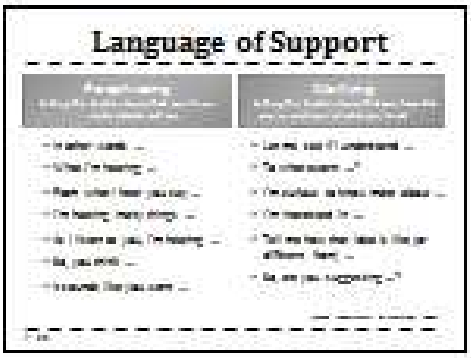

Phase 2
Survival
• Surprise!
• Time


Phase 5
Reflection
• Frustrations
• Celebrations
• Looking Ahead


Phase 3
Disillusionment
• Doubt
• Pressures


Mentor Roles

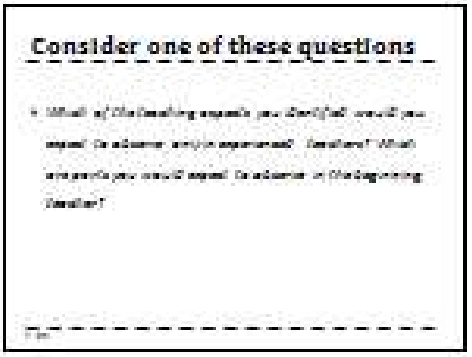
Language of Support



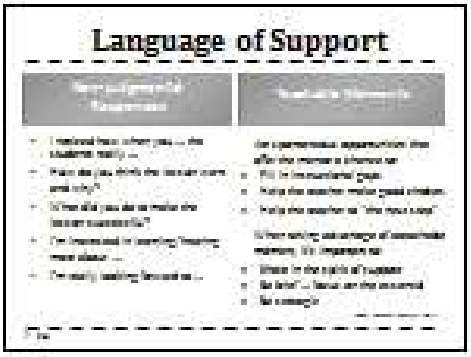
Write one idea on a Post-it Note

Language of Support

Consider one of these questions



Language of Support



Language of Support

Consider the following questions:

- Based on this evidence, how could the mentor support teacher growth?
- What questions could be asked?

Practice using Language of Support

Round 1:			
Round 2:			

More Observation Practice

Let's Practice!!

Conflict Resolution Strategies

- When angry, separate yourself from the situation and take time to cool out.
- Attack the problem, not the person. Start with a compliment.
- Communicate your feelings assertively, NOT aggressively. Express them without blaming.
- Focus on the issue, NOT your position about the issue.
- Accept and respect that individual opinions may differ, don't try to force compliance, work to develop common agreement.

Conflict Resolution Strategies Con't

- • Focus on areas of common interest and agreement, instead of areas of
- Disagreement and opposition.
- • DO/BE: Jump to conclusions or make assumptions about what another is feeling or thinking.
- • Listen without interrupting and /or feedback if needed to ensure a clear
- understanding of the issue.
- • Remember, when only one person's needs are satisfied in a conflict, it is NOT resolved and will continue.
- • Forget the past and stay in the present.
- • Build 'person with' NOT 'person over' others.
- • Thank the person for listening.

Thank You!

Ongoing Mentor Training

Questions

Questionnaire of Possible Professional Development for Mentor Training

Rate Professional Development using a 1-5 scale with 1 being the highest and 5 being the lowest.

_____Classroom Management

_____Collaboration

_____Conflict Resolution

_____Classroom and Time Management

_____Training on Common Core Standards

End of the Year Exit Survey for Mentor Training Program

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. **Another professional development that I would like to be included in the mentor training program would be**

   _____ .

2. **The professional development that I found most useful was**

   _____.

3. **Did you find the Mentor Training Program effective? Why or Why Not**

4. **What was the most effective component of the Mentor Training Program?**

5. **What was the least effective component of the Mentor Training Program?**

Appendix B: Email Invitation

Hello Teacher Mentor,

My name is Betsy Gross and I am a Doctoral student at Walden University. I am conducting a dissertation called An Investigation of the Factors Influencing Effective Mentors for Beginning Elementary School Teachers. It is the researcher's goal to gain a better understanding by investigating participants' responses to six questions that will be discussed during a semi-structured interview. Your principal selected you as a potential participant and I hope you will consider participating in this study. I am attaching the consent letter to this email for you to review.

Please respond to this email and let me know if you would like to participate or know more about in this study. If you agree to participate, I will ask for your signature on the consent form. At that time, I will schedule a time to conduct your interview.

Thanks for Your Consideration,

Betsy Gross

Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation from a Research Partner

Community Research Partner Name
Contact Information

Date

Dear Betsy Gross

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled An Investigation of the Factors Influencing Effective Mentors for Beginning Elementary School Teachers within the Oak Street County Schools. As part of this study, I authorize you to email potential participants inviting them to participate in an interview, and follow up with participants with regards to reviewing the data to ensure accuracy. A copy of the data findings will be sent to each principal at the participating elementary school and the superintendent of Oak Street County Schools. All participants' identities will be kept confidential. Each participant's participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: Provide a room to ensure privacy for the interviews to be conducted. Access to participants who are participating in the study. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Phone Number:

Appendix D: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study of mentors for beginning teachers. The researcher is inviting highly qualified teachers who teach in grades one through sixth and act as mentors for beginning teachers to be in this study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.
This study is being conducted by a researcher named Betsy Holley Gross, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as an Instructional Coach, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to explore mentors of beginning teachers in an effort to gain an understanding of the best practices in support and professional development for mentors.

Requirements:

Participants of the study are expected to meet the criteria for the mentor teachers participating in the study.

- Participants had to be employed as a certified (highly qualified) teacher in the designated school district
- Participants had to have a minimum of three years of teaching experience in the grade and school in which they were acting as mentors of beginning teachers
- Participants had to have acted as mentors of beginning teachers a minimum of two times prior to this study
- Participants had to be a classroom teacher in Grades 1-6
- Participants varied according to age, and years of experience

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Review the interview questions prior to the interview
- Reflect on the interview questions
- Participate in one individual interview that will last thirty to forty-five minutes
- Review the transcript to ensure accuracy

Here are some sample questions:

- What approach would you use to prepare mentors for assisting a beginning teacher?

- What types of professional development activities do you believe are the most beneficial for mentors of beginning teachers?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at Oak Street County Schools will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as stress and fatigue. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The benefits of this study will assist administrators in training and supporting mentors for beginning teachers. Additionally, the information will be used to create a mentor training program to prepare teachers to become effective mentors of beginning teachers.

Payment:
There will be no payment for participating in this study.

Privacy:
Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by keeping all transcripts and audio tapes in a locked file cabinet. Also, all digital data will be secured on a password protected computer. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via 334-695-3708 or betsy.gross@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here** and it expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.**

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.
Only include the signature section below if using paper consent forms.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Date of consent _____

Participant's Signature _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Appendix E: Participant Information

Purpose of Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore mentors of beginning teachers in an effort to gain an understanding of the best practices in support and professional development for mentors. The researcher is including the six questions that will be asked so participants will have time to think and reflect before participating in the interview.

Discussion Questions of the Study:

1. Why did you decide to become a mentor for beginning teachers?

2. What do you think are the characteristics of an effective mentor?

3. What type of professional development do you believe provides an effective training experience for mentors in a teacher induction program?

4. How do you describe the factors/forces that support effective mentors in working with beginning teachers/mentees?

5. What do you believe are the strongest components of a mentor training program and why?

6. How often and for what duration do you believe mentor' training should occur over one year?

Please remember that the interview will be audiotaped so that the information can be transcribed. Each participant will have an opportunity to review the transcript of her interview to ensure accuracy.

Promise of Confidentiality:

Maintaining confidentiality of information collected from research participants means that only the investigator(s) or individuals of the research team can identify the responses of individual subjects; however, the researcher will make every effort to prevent anyone outside of the project from connecting individual subjects with their responses.

Appendix F: Study Interview Protocol

Date:

Place:

Interviewer: Betsy Gross

Interviewee

Hello, my name is Betsy Gross and I conducting a case study on mentors of beginning teachers. I want to gain a deeper understanding about effective professional development and support for mentors of beginning teachers. You may refuse to answer and question you do not want to answer. Are you ready to begin?

1. Why did you decide to become a mentor for beginning teachers?
2. What do you think are the characteristics of an effective mentor?
3. What type of professional development do you believe provides an effective training experience for mentors in a teacher induction program?
4. How do you describe the factors/forces that support effective mentors in working with beginning teachers/mentees?
5. What do you believe are the strongest components of a mentor training program and why?
6. How often and for what duration do you believe mentor' training should occur over one year?

Thank you for meeting and discussing your ideas, and views about mentor' training and support.

Appendix G: Sample of Interview

Researcher: Why did you decide to become a mentor for beginning teachers?

Participant 7: Well first of all because my principal asked and second because I remember the frustrations of beginning as a first year teacher and walking into the classroom and feeling lost. Um going from kindergarten to fifth grade and luckily I was able to find a teacher that could mentor me from another school system and she helped me to create a pacing guide for the subject that I was teaching because it was a complete change for me.

Researcher: What can you think are the characteristics of an effective mentor and why?

Participant 7: I would think that an effective mentor would have to have extra time, be understanding that the teacher is probably going to be at your classroom door um often, be available to sit down and be understanding and listen to the frustrations of a beginning teacher. Um to be able to recall what was like to be in the classroom for the first time.

Researcher: Do you believe a mentor should have experience as a teacher in the classroom, say 5 years?

Participant 7: I think it is important to have a couple of years of classroom experience so you know what you are talking about but five years' worth is not necessary.

Researcher: What type of professional development do you believe provides an effective training experience for mentors in a teacher induction program?

Participant 7: Well personally organization is not my strong suit so I would need assistance with how to organize a new teacher. Um I can manage my own personal time but trying to explain it the importance of time management to a beginning teacher, I

would need some training because having mentored beginning teachers that is one of the first things that I see that they slipped up on. A thirty minute lesson they may drag out fifty minutes. How to help them in a constructive way with correcting that. Um and collaborations between adults trying to sit down and talk to them about ways to correct problems without making them feel you know insecure about their situation. I'm like you know just let me know if you need help but there needs to be a structured organization for that mentor and the beginning teacher. You know they need to meet like maybe once a week or every couple of weeks to make sure everything is going smoothly.

Researcher: How do you describe the factors/forces that support effective mentors in working with beginning teachers or mentees?

Participant 7: I would need for um to be able to have some support from first of all central office with making sure we had a pacing guide in place so I could help another teacher. I would need my principal to be supportive in putting in a sub about once every two weeks so that the teacher could come in and observe me and vice versa and I could go in and observe her. Um and maybe she would need to go see another teacher other than just me. Another teacher that would be willing to allow another teacher to come into their classroom. Um so I think it is important for them to see different kind of teaching not just my strategy.

In order to do that mentors have to have support from the principal to have time for mentors and beginning teachers to observe each other.

Researcher: Do you think the Instructional Coach has any place in that supporting the mentor?

Participant 7: I do. I would um I think that the reading coach could sit down with the mentee and myself to kind of collaborate together on how to strengthen things the mentee's reading instruction. Um the same with math, since we don't have a math coach, an Instructional Coach should be able to sit down with the two of us and give feedback that the mentor could use to help the mentee. Also, the mentor is going to have to be flexible with her time to talk to the first year teacher about you know where they might could improve or what their strengths are. The Instructional Coach will have more time to go into the mentee's classroom.

Researcher: Do you think that we need one central aaa mentor training program or do you think we need different ones in each school. In other words do you think we need one mentor program coming out of the central office for every mentor or do you think we need individual ones at the different schools?

Participant 7: I think either way would work really depending on I mean small groups are always better than a large group. Because in a small group mentors going to ask questions more about what your expectations are. Um may be able to get more of a direct answer and um but as far as going to central office and having a large group, that would also work. I guess I think we need a central office mentor training program but do the professional development part at each school or break into smaller groups so mentors would feel more comfortable and um participate in asking questions. Also, if they are going to require you paperwork then they need to make time available during a school day for mentors to be able to complete their paperwork you know instead of expecting people to take it home and work on it from there.

Researcher: But as far as the actual mentor training program, kind of like we have RTI, do you think it works better when you have one from the central office for the mentorship training program and you can train at the different schools or do you think each school needs to have its own mentor training program?

Participant 7: Um, hmm, that's a hard one. When I think about RTI, I would like it to come from central office so that we are all on the same page and and everyone's ideas are presented so that you are not just working with people trying to formulate you know, an idea that your school has. I think the mentor training program should be from the central office. A lot people collaborating together to come up with a plan is better. You know and it is used throughout the system. That way if a mentor transfers to another school in the system, she is in the same program.

Researcher: I think that would be good like you said if um a mentor transfers from one to school in the system to another school and there is a mentor. You are still in the same framework. So yea I see what you are saying. What do you believe are the strongest components of a mentor training program and why?

Participant 7: Um well I think I talked about that earlier about having time for the teacher to come observe you but you know for you to also for her to be able to go observe others. Um and dealing with teachers that has always been the biggest complaint that I've got is I want to come in and see you do it so that I can um adjust my instruction and personally I have not you know been able to go in and observe them to really reflect on the lesson. So I think that is the biggest component and again um professional development on adult collaboration would be very helpful.

Researcher: Do you think behavior management is important as a component in a mentor training program?

Participant 7: Absolutely, I mean I would like to have probably professional development in that area. I personally always like to learn new things about behavior management just to deal with the constant change in students because what works for me doesn't always work for everyone. Um and when they have issues you know it would be nice have some professional development on how to help them address their issues.

Researcher: Do you think we need time between mentors so they can talk to each other, like collaboration between mentors should be important included as a component of a mentor training program?

Participant 7: Yes, I do. We um actually established that on our own a couple years back when we were mentoring some beginning teachers and that was that was really effective in helping um we had two mentors sit down together with two mentees so that one it helped them feel more secure about what they were teaching or what they were doing and they could hear that they weren't alone in the situation. It also helped the mentors feel confident in their ability to help others. You know.

Researcher: Do you think pay is important or some form of compensation?

Participant 7: Yes I believe for the amount of time that it takes out of your day and after school, if the time wasn't built into the school, it would be even more time. This is above and beyond the job of teaching.

Researcher: Is it important for the mentor and beginning teacher to be in the same grade level or does that matter?

Participant 7: I believe that they need to be in the same grade level because we did have a second grade teacher that was assigned to a first grade teacher who had never taught first grade. It was difficult for um the first grade teacher. She didn't feel good about going to her mentor and um she didn't feel like the second grade mentor could relate to her. The second grade teacher was pushing standards for second grade. Then, the second grade teacher had to figure out and master the first grade standards. This is unnecessary. Mentors and mentees definitely need to be on the same grade level because the mentor needs to help the mentee teach their standards not another grade level standards.

Researcher: How often and for what duration do believe mentor training should occur over one year?

Participant 7: I think um maybe once a month, maybe once every couple of months. You know once a month just to collaborate together. You know it would be nice to have it during a school day.

Researcher: Do you think as a mentor trainee that you need to have a training before the school year starts? To go over expectations and that kind of thing. Do you think that's important?

Participant 7: Yes. I really like that idea.

Researcher: Do you think that needs to half day, all day or what time frame?

Participant 7: Maybe a half day training just to set expectations in place and maybe have the mentee there so you both could you know do an introduction and you know a professional development. Half a day training with the mentors and half a day training

with the mentee. Then, um you could also do some meetings with the mentors and mentees together.

Researcher: Um and then maybe thru out the year do the professional developments that you talked about like with the maybe management, aaa organization, those kinds of things. Once a month or every other month.

Participant 7: Um I would like to see it put in place before you establish that program. Like go ahead if you are going to establish it for the 2016-2017 school year. Then start filling that program at the end of 2015 so that teacher is going to get a call in the summer saying do you want to be a mentor? Then, have a meeting at the end of the summer and explain what the expectations are.

Researcher: Do you think that, and this is going back towards the other questions, um but do you think that mentors should volunteer or do you think the principal should choose them?

Participant 7: I think they should volunteer. If they are not volunteering to do it then they may not be as available as they need to be. It's got to be someone who wants to do it.

Researcher: Is there anything else you would like to add, is there anything else you would like to add regarding mentorship training or working with mentees that you didn't already say?

Participant 7: Yes, I would just say if I was going to be asked to be a mentor again and we were going to put a program in place I would like to know in advance what my expectations are. I don't want to start in August being a mentor and then meeting in

November to tell me about the training on the behavior management. You know for instance have a November professional development on how to collaborate with an adult when you have already been collaborating for four months. Does that make sense?

Researcher: Yes, it does make sense. You want to be prepared in advance with the training in advance. Is that right?

Participant 7: Yes, that is exactly right.