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A Study of New Teachers' Perceptions of Their Induction Programs

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A STUDY OF NEW TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR INDUCTION PROGRAMS

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Educational Leadership
Department of Education Leadership, Management, and Policy

Seton Hall University
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SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

Anne C. McGeehan has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the **Ed.D.** during this **Spring Semester 2019**.

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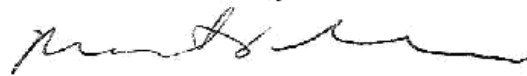
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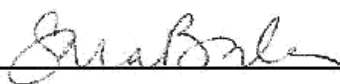
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ABSTRACT

Teaching is one of the few professions in which the novice is expected to perform the same responsibilities as their veteran counterparts from Day 1. Induction, the process of introducing a new teacher into the profession, can be categorized as a formal or informal process that encompasses all organizational aspects of the school district, both academic and socially. It is a time when new teachers are learning to teach and having to teach. This process can be a time of growth or a time of unease for new teachers, sometimes affecting their decisions to remain in the profession. The content and quality of induction programs vary from state to state, district to district, and sometimes from school to school.

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of similarly prepared new teacher's induction programs. This study was designed to identify new teachers who had been teaching for less than 5 years and participated in some facet of the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ) Act of 2012. This study was an exploration of the components of teacher induction programs and the perceptions of the teachers who participated in such programs. For this study, a survey was designed to explore what elements of induction were provided to the participants and what benefit, if any, was derived from such elements.

The results of this study showed new teachers regard elements of induction programs as important factors in their success as new teachers. Being assigned a mentor early in their teaching career, being able to collaborate with other teachers, and having relevant professional development all played a vital role in their decision making process to remain in the teaching profession.

DEDICATION

The completion of this endeavor was dependent upon the love and support from my family and friends. Therefore, I dedicate this project and this journey to them.

To my husband Robert, I thank you for supporting my decision to take on this challenge. You never wavered in your support, even when times were challenging. To my children, Michael, Macie, and Matthew, you gave me a love of learning and you continue to inspire me each and every day! To my parents, I thank you for your constant support and encouragement! To my friends, thank you for being flexible and understanding when I needed to work.

Without all of your support and continual encouragement, I would not have been able to reach this milestone. Thank you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

There is continuing research linking academic success of students to the experience and qualification of their teachers. In fact, studies show the experience and quality training of teachers improve their effectiveness and, in turn, can directly impact the success of students (DeMonte, 2015). Tucker and Stronge (2005) claimed there are “years of research on teacher quality supporting the fact that effective teachers not only make students feel good about school and learning, but also that their work actually results in increased student achievement” (p. 2). At the time of the 2007–2008 school year, Feistritz (2011) reported there were “3.2 million public school teachers educating the nation’s 49.4 million children attending public PK-12 schools” (p. viii). Of the 3.2 million, approximately 9.5% were first year teachers and roughly 23.6 % had less than 5 years’ experience (p. viii). With numbers at upwards of a million “newer” teachers educating our students, and with the New Teacher Center (NTC) claiming “that teachers in their initial years are, on average, less effective than more experienced ones” (Goldrick, 2009, p. iii), a comprehensive induction program being used to train these teachers is necessary. “‘Sink-or-swim’ and other lesser approaches to new teacher induction exact a high price on new teachers, their students, and their school communities by failing to strengthen, support, and sustain these initial educators” (Goldrick, 2009, p. v). The “sink-or-swim” approach is categorized as an approach in which new employees are left on their own without new teacher induction supports in place to ensure their success.

There is a need for high quality, comprehensive induction programs that school districts should provide to support new teachers. “Induction should not be looked upon as a remediative

reform, but as a customized approach to accelerating an individual educator's development at a formative professional stage" (NTC, 2013 p. iii). One key and important aspect of induction programs is the inclusion of a mentor. Brock and Grady (1997) suggested that "a mentor program can make the difference between a beginning teacher who leaves the profession after one year and a beginning teacher whose first year is the first stage of a satisfying career" (p. 80). Further, the experiences such a mentor provides "benefit all who participate in the school-the new teacher, the mentor, and most importantly, the students" (p. 80). Understanding what is needed and valued as important to novice teachers will only increase the chances of others integrating the successful components into their induction programs.

The NTC (2016b) reported, "Few states have comprehensive policies to require high-quality induction for beginning teachers" (p. 3). School districts have been left to design and implement induction programs themselves, with varying levels of support and funding from the state. Nationwide, only 16 states provide some type of funding for induction programs (NTC, 2016b, p. 4). In New Jersey, where this current study took place, the code is housed within the TEACHNJ Act of 2012: "Each public school district is required to implement a system of supports for new teachers" (New Jersey Administrative Code [N.J.A.C.] 6A9B-8). Under the current N.J.A.C for Professional Development for Teaching Staff Chapter 9C, districts are required to provide supports for new teachers which include creating a plan that is shared with the School Improvement Panel (ScIP) that oversees the implementation of the plan. The plan comprises a comprehensive orientation including district policies and procedures, and individualized supports listed in a teachers' professional development plan (PDP). The largest component of New Jersey's Educator Mentoring and Induction Support program is the partnering of a senior teacher with a new teacher, also known as mentoring. New Jersey

identifies a mentor as a teacher who has demonstrated at least 3 years of successful teaching evaluations, measured on district evaluation systems as effective or highly effective. Training is required of the mentor, at the expense and discretion of the district. Mentor training must include instruction on the district evaluation system, the NJ Professional Standards for Teachers, the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards, classroom observation skills, and reflective practice skills effective for adult learning. “District boards of education shall budget State funds appropriated for the novice teacher mentoring program” (N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-5.3). Mentors are required to keep accurate notes on mentoring sessions that are submitted to the district upon completion of the year. One full year of one-on-one mentoring in which the mentor and mentee must meet at least once a week for the first four weeks of school is required. Payment to the mentor is not provided by the state of New Jersey. The payment in the form of a stipend is provided by the mentee in the amount of \$1,000, which is paid to the district and then, in turn, paid to the mentor (N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-8).

Although New Jersey does not provide funding for mentoring, the New Jersey Department of Education does provide a “Mentoring for Quality Induction Toolkit.” This toolkit supplies districts with flexible templates to create programs that work for their specific district. However, the funds needed for such programs are nonexistent, leaving districts the task of determining which aspects of an induction program are financially conducive to their district as well as how they will implement the program.

Phillips (2015) says new teacher induction has become the focus of education policy and reform. The research shows participation in an induction program can reduce the rate of attrition among newer teachers. Phillips (2015) claimed there is a “link between beginning teachers’ participation in induction programs and their retention (p. 50). He further explained that through

his research and statistical analysis, the link depends on the supports that teachers received, such as having a mentor teacher and being able to collaborate with their mentor teacher (Phillips, 2015, p. 50).

However, the types of induction and induction supports vary, leaving an unclear picture of what is truly working. Understanding what makes new teachers remain in the profession past the 5-year time frame, allowing them to become experienced qualified teachers, only highlights the importance of understanding what influences their decisions to stay.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching is one of the few professions in which the novice teachers are expected to perform the same responsibilities, at the same levels, as their senior counterparts, from Day 1, with no true formal training. It is a time when many new teachers may feel isolated, distraught, and a time when the decision to leave the profession can often occur (DeCesare, Workman, & McClelland, 2016). DeMonte (2015) presented research indicating, “over the next decade, more than 1.5 million new teachers will be hired to work in our schools” (p. 1). The training of such teachers, or post-teacher preparation, is the responsibility of the school district. Understanding what school districts must do in order to prepare and retain such teachers leads to the heart of this current research.

This study was conducted to identify best practices that motivate and support the retention of new teachers throughout their induction, in order to ameliorate the problem of new teacher attrition which, in turn, could potentially save school districts money and ultimately boost the academic success of students. The study included exploration of the professional development components afforded to new teachers in their first few years of teaching that school districts provide to introduce and acclimate new teachers into the profession. Further, this study

served to explore and compare all components of induction—effective or ineffective—that aid in the decision-making process of individual new teachers and their choice to remain in the profession.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to explore components of new teacher induction programs and to investigate how new teachers perceive their induction programs. The study included examination of the impact of their perceptions of program supports on their decision to remain in the profession by exploring their induction experiences. In addition, the study encompassed comparison of their experiences, with regard to the support systems, between teachers in different school settings that may have led to their decisions to remain in the profession and to better understand best practices. As Ingersoll, a leading researcher in teacher attrition stated, “We actually don’t have a lot of research on the decision to stay or not” (Phillips, 2015, p. 50).

Further, by surveying newer teachers, I hoped to identify and understand the impact of received supports during induction programs that aided in the decision-making process of individual teachers to remain in the profession. By identifying and understanding induction supports and the impact they have on whether a teacher decides to remain in the profession or leave, state level changes could be enacted to further reduce teacher attrition. By reducing the attrition rate and allowing teachers to become more experienced and confident in their abilities, students’ academic performance will increase.

Research Questions

The following questions were used to gain a greater perspective and understanding of the perceptions new teachers had during their individual induction experiences and their intent to remain in the profession.

1. How do similarly prepared new teachers perceive their induction program?
2. What, if any, perceived components of new teacher induction programs aided in the decision-making process to remain in the teacher profession?

Research Design

“A phenomenological research study is a study that attempts to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation (or phenomenon)” (Pathak 2017, p. 1). Therefore, the current case study of similarly prepared new teachers was conducted to identify the facets of induction programs put in place by individual school districts in New Jersey meant to support new teachers that may or may not have had an impact on individual candidates. “By looking at multiple perspectives of the same situation, a researcher can start to make some generalizations of what something is like as an experience from the ‘insider’s’ perspective” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 317). In the current study, the experiences of each candidate were used to compile a list of support systems used to determine whether there was a significant relationship between mentors and induction support components and reasons for new teachers’ decisions to remain in or leave the profession.

The population sample used in this research study was derived from surveying former students of a state university in New Jersey who had completed their teacher preparation within the last 5 years, and who were employed in a New Jersey school district and had completed an induction program. By looking at similarly prepared, traditional, preservice program teachers, I

attempted to identify specific strategies used throughout induction that can be linked to retention. Those who had finished a traditional teacher preparation program at a state university in New Jersey completed a survey, answering specific questions regarding perceptions of their induction and mentoring experiences during their first one to five years. Common themes and patterns from the survey were analyzed. This study included examination of the specific elements of individual induction programs that were perceived to have aided in the teachers' intentions to remain in the profession.

Significance of the Study

According to Darling-Hammond,

It's really important for beginners to have systematic, intense mentoring in the first year. Having weekly support and in-classroom coaching in the first year for fine-tuning skills, for planning lessons, and for problem solving about things that come up in the classroom ensures that someone experienced is there during the critical moments of the beginning teacher's first year. (Scherer, 2012, p. 18)

Academic success of students is linked to the effectiveness of their teachers in relation to the teachers' induction program. The training of new teachers is a crucial aspect linked to their desire and willingness to remain in the profession. One can assume that as teachers are trained and become effective professionals, student success rates will improve. However, the majority of the literature researched for this current study indicated that induction programs provide supports for new teachers, yet the specifics are vague when reasons for retention are mentioned.

The NTC (2007) reported the cost of a highly effective comprehensive induction program at approximately \$6,500 per teacher (p. 2). Portner (2005) reported the estimated cost of recruiting, hiring, training, and then replacing a new teacher at \$50,000 per teacher. Therefore, the results of this present study could benefit educators who are vested in the process of mentoring new teachers as well as enable districts to save money. The results could be used to

emulate identified supports with the intention of including such supports in their specific induction programs. New Jersey state policy requires districts to create and provide all nontenured, first-year teachers “with an induction to the teaching profession and to the school district community through differentiated supports based on the teachers’ individual needs to help them to become effective professionals” (NJAC 6A:9C-5.1). Since all teachers are unique individuals, the supports will vary. However, the findings will give educational leaders a basis to formulate specific supports.

Assumptions and Limitations

When dealing with human subjects who have diverse and unique backgrounds, limitations are inevitable and are not a controllable aspect by the researcher. One limitation of this study may have been using subjects who all attended and finished the same teacher preparation preservice program. The similarly prepared teachers all experienced the same courses with a low student-to-faculty ratio and one-on-one advising throughout their entire teaching preparation. At the time of the study, all of the surveyed individuals were either currently teaching or had taught in a New Jersey school district within the past 5 years. Other limitations may include the type of schools they were teaching in, such as traditional public or charter schools. There may have been limitations based on the grade, subject, school setting, or school culture. The participants varied in experiences from Year 1 to Year 5 and may have completed different induction programs in different districts. Further, mentees are assigned to individual mentors, with no control over the mentor’s background, training, and/or quality of teaching. It was up to me to be aware of these differences; to identify and explain when necessary; and, at the same time, keep personal biases at bay.

Theoretical Framework

There are many factors that contribute to new teachers remaining in the profession and becoming successful in their teaching. A comprehensive induction and mentoring program designed to help new teachers navigate through their first few years leads to a greater percentage of new teachers remaining in the profession. Induction and mentoring programs facilitate the growth and success of new teachers, thus reducing attrition, saving districts money, and increasing student success. Yet, there is limited research behind the theories or framework that embodies teacher induction, and “induction programs are criticized for having limited content and a lack of a theoretical framework” (Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver, & Yusko 1999). Despite the limited framework, there are theories that could be considered and used to inform the process of induction and mentoring of new teachers. These theories are based in psychology and are linked to how humans develop socially and cognitively and what their beliefs are of their own abilities. Bandura (1971), for instance, posited in his social learning theory that “new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experiences or observing the behaviors of others” (p. 3) and discussed how new teachers use these experiences to develop their own sense of understanding of teaching and acquire the much needed self-efficacy to attain the level of confidence in one’s ability to teach.

To understand the link between Bandura’s (1971) theory and induction and mentoring programs, Chapman (1983) connected Bandura’s (1971) social learning and cognitive theory to the retention and attrition of new teachers, and developed a model that applies inquiry and training with support from school administration which, in turn, affects retention. Chapman used Bandura’s idea that new teacher’s ability to function can be explained in the through their personal characteristics and environmental situations.

Both Bandura (1971) and Chapman (1983) suggested that learning is a social process, and whether it is a positive or negative experience, social interactions can frame one's perception. The socialization aspect of induction refers to "the process by which the individual becomes a participating member of the community of teachers" (Alhija & Fresko, 2016, p. 15). How this process comes to fruition depends on the social interactions between the new teachers, the mentors, the administration, and other teachers during the induction period.

Whatever the reasons behind why the attrition rate of teachers is so high, educators continue to try and find ways to ameliorate the problem by developing models of induction to aid in the reduction of teacher attrition. One such program developed with the understanding that induction and mentoring are a "distinct phase of teacher development as well as a period of enculturation and socializations" (Goldrick, 2009) is the NTC's *Comprehensive Systems of Teacher Induction*. The NTC Program of Theory and Action served as the model used in this current study. There is no single definition of teacher induction; however, there are common structures used by agencies nationwide, including in New Jersey, where this current study took place. The NTC's *Comprehensive Systems of Teacher Induction* begins with orientation, followed by one-on-one mentoring, in-service professional development, and the creation of policies for assessing new teacher progression by administrators and sometimes peers. The framework used in New Jersey emulates the NTC's design, requiring new teachers to follow district-created mentoring programs and a comprehensive orientation.

There are published statistics reporting the percentage of newer teachers leaving the field before they reach a successful level and there is research showing newer teachers by far leave the profession at a greater number as compared to senior teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). Yet, it is difficult to pinpoint the reasons behind their departure, simply because each person who leaves

teaching has experienced his or her own unique experience and circumstance that led to the decision. There are assumptions as to why teacher leave, but in general, specific information regarding leavers has not been documented. There are so many possible reasons why teachers may leave the profession, yet there are just as many reasons why people stay.

While it is known that “teaching is a complex and idiosyncratic process, developed over time in the context of a school environment” (Brock & Grady, 1997) induction programs for new teachers continue to evolve. The empirical research on what types of programs, the extent of their effectiveness, the content and characteristics is still questioned and/or challenged. Smith and Ingersol (2004) reported, “Induction programs can vary from a single orientation meeting at the beginning of the school year to a highly structured program involving multiple activities and frequent meetings over a period of multiple years” (p. 683). Additionally, mentoring, the most common component of an induction program, varies greatly between programs. The diversity of programs, the individual unique activities, and the variety of mentoring practices was the overarching theme of this current study that encompassed identifying the variety of such components and linking their attributes to new teachers’ decisions for remaining in the profession.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research, the following terms are defined.

Attrition: The rate at which new teachers leave the profession within their first five years.

Comprehensive induction programs: An induction programs that includes collaboration in small learning communities, the opportunity to be observed by expert mentors, the opportunity for professional development regarding practice, and the opportunity to network with other novice teachers

District mentoring program: A district mentoring program is a “program of induction and support for non-tenured teachers, including novice provisional teachers and experienced teachers new to a school district, designed to develop them into effective professionals within the school district” (N.J.A.C. 6A:9).

Induction: Induction is commonly known as the process of introducing a new teacher into the profession. It can be categorized as a formal or informal process that encompasses all organizational aspects of the school district, both academic and socially.

Mentor-teacher: A mentor-teacher is “an experienced, certified New Jersey teacher who is assigned to provide support and guidance to a novice teacher” (N.J.A.C. 6A:9). This is a person who facilitates the induction process or the action by which it is done and, at times, the term *mentor* can be used synonymously with induction. This teacher is assigned by the administrator, has met the district and/or state tenure status requirements and has received a “high-effective” status on the state-mandated teacher evaluation tool. The assigned mentor-teacher is not in an evaluative position.

Novice teacher: A novice teacher is “any teacher serving full- or part-time under a provisional certificate who has not yet been issued a standard instructional certificate in any endorsement area” (N.J.A.C. 6A:9). A novice teacher is also referred to as a mentee or new teacher.

Retention: When teachers remain in the profession.

School leaders: A school leader is “an administrator whose position requires possession of a school administrator, principal, or supervisor endorsement (N.J.A.C. 6A:9).

School Improvement Panel (ScIP): A group of school leaders who provide supports in the area of teacher evaluations, mentoring, and professional development (N.J.A.C.18A:6-120).

Socialization: “Socialization is the process by which the individual becomes a participating member of the community of teachers” (Alhija & Fresko, 2016, p.27)

TEACH NJ Act 2012: Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey Act 2012.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A comprehensive induction program includes a “combination of mentoring, professional development, support, and formal assessments for new teachers during at least their first two years of teaching” (Krasnoff, 2014, p. 6). This chapter includes a review of the relevant literature on induction programs for new teachers as well as an exploration into the history of new teacher induction and its key aspects. In addition, the chapter covers facets of mentoring, socialization, leadership participation, and the recurring cost associated with a comprehensive induction program. The main focus is on the components of induction programs, specific roles of mentors, responsibilities of school principals, cost, and the impact of induction.

Search Procedures

The following online databases were accessed to research this literature: Seton Hall Library, Google Scholar, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) website, books, *Journal of Teacher Education*, Sage publications, Retain and Empower Teachers through Action, Innovation, and Networking (RETAIN), and National Staff Development Council (NSDC) website.

The History of Teacher Induction

“In recent decades a growing number of states, school districts, and schools have developed and implemented induction programs for beginning teachers” (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 202). However, this was not always the case. The early 1980s were a time when the media seemed to be reacting to the federal government’s inquiry into what appeared to be failing schools, leading many to question our education system and the quality of its teachers. Griffin (1985) noted there was a “generalized public dissatisfaction with the quality of public elementary and secondary

educational opportunities” (p. 42). Reacting to such inquiry, researchers began to take an in-depth look into teacher effectiveness. Looking further into the issues plaguing our education system one might assume the fault lies specifically with the newcomers to the field. “Research on the retention and training of new teachers, shows the early years of teaching are identified as the riskiest on the job, and the years in which teachers are most likely to leave the profession” (Bartell, 1995, p. 27). Further, researchers started delving into the reason for teachers leaving the profession and how it could impact student learning. What was found was an overwhelming abundance of information regarding the perils a new teacher faces and the consequences a school district and/or students face when they are plagued with high teacher turnover, known as *attrition*.

Despite the growing number of new teachers entering the workforce, by 1984 only eight states had reported having some organized type of induction program (Weiss & Weiss, 1999). Most, if not all, programs of those in existence, relied solely on district guidelines, not state policies. There were no policies in place; programs were unique, and implementation of programs and funding levels varied.

In a study of teacher development, Ward (1985) reviewed and reported on the recommendations of the 1983 reports from the National Commission on Excellence in Education and the Education Commission of the States, claiming that continued teacher development in both veteran and new teachers “serves as a vehicle for building opportunities for advancement into the teaching profession and for increasing the likelihood that educational research and development would contribute to short and long-term improvements in our schools” (p. 52). Further, Ward explained that teacher development is unique to each school and the culture of the school either leads to hinders continuing development of teachers’ skills and knowledge.

Further, Ward noted three specific aspects of teacher development which were in need of attention, including the isolation of teachers from sources of information about the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and from new information that might improve their teaching, the lack of work of future orientation in teachers' work and the feeling of inefficacy that teachers feel (para 53).

Ward pointed out that the policies and legislatures began to change and laws were enacted regarding the establishment of differential responsibilities and categories of effectiveness of teachers. These changes to policies and legislature brought forth new teacher evaluation systems, mandated continuing education, alternate route procedures, and the inclusion of an induction period in the credentialing process known today as a provisional license. The changes in the laws also brought a renewed interest of the topic of new teachers, specifically at the process the beginning teacher encountered, coining the phrase of this time period: "induction."

Induction became known as the period of transition between "students of teaching in a college or university to full time teacher in an elementary or secondary classroom" (Griffin, 1985, p. 42). The transitional period was named, yet little was known about what occurred during this time period.

We have little information about how teachers pass through this transition stage, other than to know that some apparently do so successful, some do not. We have no detailed information on how those people who master the transition period do so. Nor do we have the information on how different kinds of assistance or help directly or indirectly influence the teachers' successful mastery of the induction period. (p. 42)

The relatively little information that was available was found to be based on stories, post induction, from teachers who reported unhappy experiences. Since there was little research on this transitional time, Griffin (1985) looked at induction from the view of socialization and other socializing aspect of the organization and found that "linking new teachers with the best

professionals in the setting may result in recreating quality performance in the new teachers” (p. 43).

Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) saw this period of transition as a time when “new teachers have two jobs to do—they have to teach and they have to learn to teach” (p 11). According to Feiman-Nemser et al., “what happens to beginning teachers during their early years on the job determines not only whether they stay in teaching by also what kind of teacher they become” (p. 4). Looking at these two variables, one may assume that the success of the new teacher lies within the quality and quantity of the mentoring experience. Adding the growing demand for “standards-based reforms and calling for more challenging teaching and learning, projection of teacher shortages and data about teacher attrition have contributed to a growing consensus that support and assistance are essential to the retention and effectiveness of beginning teachers” (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999, p. 5). Further, it was described as the first real encounter of teaching, unlike being under the supervision of a cooperating teacher in student teaching. Feiman-Nemser et al. found it to be a “time of survival and discovery when the learning curve is steep and emotions run high” (p. 9). Further, Feiman-Nemser et al. described this initial stage in the teaching life cycle as a time when teachers were learning to teach, determining what to teach, navigating through the curriculum and school environment, learning to work with students, developing their self-efficacy and in essence, attaining a sense of survival. “New teachers are required to enter their first year of teaching with the same teaching load and responsibilities as those many years their senior” (Angelle, 2006, p. 318). Yet, with this being known as a time when new teachers are learning to teach at the same time they are required to teach, one can wonder how they can do both.

Schlechty (1985) stated,

The intent of all induction programs is to transform a student teacher graduate into a competent career teacher and if induction systems are to work, schools will have to embrace teacher education as a goal, just as they now embrace the education of children as a goal. (Components of good teacher induction, ERIC Digest 4, 1986 p.1)

Schlechty, who founded the Schlechty Center, that is focused on “student engagement, teacher and leader collaboration and intentional design of meaningful work that leads to profound learning” (Harper, 2016, p. 6), named eight characteristics of a good induction program.

According to Schlechty, administrators should clearly articulate and disseminate the expectations and norms of the induction program, thoroughly explaining the process, procedures, and outcomes, thus allowing the inductee to be a stakeholder in the process. He explained that by encouraging inductees to collaborate with veteran teachers and fellow inductees, where they were supervised, coached, and given constructive assessment, it would cultivate a mutually respected support system (Schlechty, 1985) Lastly, he stated, “the responsibility for supervision should be distributed throughout the faculty in a tightly organized, consistent, and continuous program” (Schlechty 1985, p. 1).

Almost 20 years later, Wong (2004) defined teacher induction as being a “system-wide, coherent, comprehensive training and support process that continues for two or three years and then seamlessly becomes part of the lifelong professional development program of the district” (p. 42). Further, he claimed that because induction programs vary from school to school and from district to district, they implement different procedures based on the individual culture and specific needs of such. “Induction is a process—a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development process—that is organized by a school district to train, support, and retain new teachers and seamlessly progresses them into a lifelong learning program” (Wong, 2004, p. 42).

New teachers enter their first teaching assignment armed with what they learned in their preservice program. While preservice programs might provide preservice teachers with experiences, the experiences which they encounter during their first years of teaching are completely different. The research continues to indicate that new teachers, unlike preservice teachers, are now on their own, “expected to perform the full complement of duties immediately, learning as they go along” (Breux & Wong, 2003, p. 8). There are numerous studies suggesting an increase in retention and job satisfaction if induction programs were made available, yet specific information on the quantity and quality was not evident.

In a research brief for the Northwest Comprehensive Center at Education Northwest, Krasnoff (2014) stated, “Among all school resources, well-prepared, expert and experienced teachers are among the most important determinants of student achievement” (Krasnoff, 2014, p. 1). How we get well-prepared, expert, and experienced teachers to stay in the profession is the point of induction. When “most beginners are given no professional support, feedback, or demonstration of what it takes to help their students succeed” (Krasnoff, 2014, p. 3), it leaves new teachers at risk for becoming part of the statistical reality of teachers exiting the profession before they are able to reach their full potential. Krasnoff quoted Ingersoll’s 2003 research statistics indicating that “14 percent of new teachers leave by the end of their first year; 33 percent leave within three years of beginning teaching; and almost 50 percent leave within five years” (Krasnoff, 2014, p. 3). In addition, Krasnoff stated that studies show “comprehensive induction programs cut attrition rates in half and . . . help to develop novice teachers into high-quality professionals who really impact student achievement” (Krasnoff, 2014, p. 7).

According to Barlin (2010),

For more than a decade, clear and consistent research has shown that the quality of teachers is the most powerful school-related determinant of student success. Capitalizing on this now-large body of evidence, many education leaders have begun to invest in new-teacher mentoring. (para. 1)

With this data suggesting that “student achievement boils down to the teacher and is the most important factor resulting in student achievement” (Wong, 2003, p. 41), it seems imperative that induction and mentoring programs should be consistent and the norm.

Theories That Inform Mentoring and Induction

Bandura (1989) posited a theory of self-efficacy, rooted in his social learning theory, which suggests that humans “exercise control over events that affect their lives” (p. 1175) and that efficacious beliefs influence behaviors in areas that one feels confident in his or her abilities. Mentoring has been linked to Bandura’s (1971) theories since there is a foundation of similar understanding between the mentor and mentee, in which “the observer acquires mainly symbolic representations of modeled activities” (p. 6). This means the mentee will observe the behaviors of the mentor, assign his or her own personal meaning to the behavior, and either emulate the behavior or formulate alternative behaviors. Further, Bandura (1971) called those who are being observed “models.” In induction, those who are modeling are called mentors. According to Bandura, the “models provide examples of behaviors to observe and imitate” (as cited in McLeod, 2016, p. 1). In induction, the behaviors being modeled are done so in a way for mentees to learn how to assimilate into the teaching profession. According to Bandura, “the motivation to identify with a particular model is that they have a quality which the individual would like to possess” (as cited in McLeod, 2016, p. 1).

Bandura's theories of social learning and self-efficacy were extended when Chapman (1983) looked closer at the variables that led teachers to make the decision to stay or to leave the profession. Chapman created a longitudinal model which

suggest[s] that to understand a teacher's decision to persist in or leave teaching, it is necessary to take into account the personal characteristics of the teachers, the nature of the teacher training and early teacher experiences, the degree which the teacher is socially and professionally integrated into the teacher profession, the satisfaction teachers derive from their career and the external environmental influences impinging on the teachers' career. (p. 47)

Chapman used these differences to present a general conceptual model which takes into account all of the elements that surround teachers in the beginning of their career that could affect their transition into the profession. The model is rooted in Bandura's (1971) social learning theory, whereas the individuals' psychological functioning can be linked to their personal characteristics, their current and previous learning behaviors, and their environment of their introduction into the teaching profession, all of which aid in the decision making process of whether to leave or stay in the profession.

The NTC Mentoring Model

In 1988, the Santa Cruz NTP was started at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC). It was one of the first publically funded New Teacher Project pilot programs in California. The program was later renamed the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program, and it addressed the challenge of researching specific issues directly related to new teachers and what happens during their first one to three years of teaching. The BTSA program was focused specifically on beginning teachers to see if they were attaining expertise in six professional teaching areas, whether they were becoming confident and comfortable in executing their teaching responsibilities, and whether they were developing a level of career

satisfaction and commitment likely to keep them teaching in the public schools. While piloting this program, it was noted that the researchers “recognized specific induction support needs, and the extent to which various mixtures of support lead beginning teachers to function more comfortably and effectively in their teaching assignments” (Mitchell, Scott, Hendrick, & Boyns, 1998, p. 6). Taking this information, the NTC created a model-like program to be implemented by teachers entering into the profession. The model included the introduction to professional responsibilities, assistance from experienced colleagues, and feedback, exposing new teachers to the expectations needed to be successful. As noted previously, the NTC has created programs and trains new teachers using a comprehensive and systematic approach to teacher induction. The NTC begins with orientation, then one-on-one mentoring, mentor training, teacher-mentor coaching, in-service professional development, and the creation of policies on assessing new teacher progression by administrators and sometimes peers.

New Jersey Teacher Induction and Mentoring Model

“One facet of the 1980s reform era was the infusion of beginning teacher programs developed by local school districts, colleges of education, and state agencies” (Furtwengler, 1995, p. 1). New Jersey was one of 18 states nationwide to have state-level policies in place that included testing before initial certification, the involvement of higher education personnel, a mentor, and a formative or summative evaluation. As of September 1, 1992, it was mandated that “all first year teachers must participate in the beginning teacher program” (Furtwengler, 1995, p. 3). Under this program, new teachers were considered “provisional” for at least 1 year before permanent certification was granted. The program required new teachers to be supervised by a professional support team including the school principal, a college faculty member, a mentor, and a curriculum supervisor (Furtwengler, 1995, p. 13).

In 2010, the topic of teacher preparation again became a focus in New Jersey, leading to policy reform and eventually the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ) Act of 2012. The goal of the legislation was “to raise student achievement by improving instruction through the adoption of evaluation” (N.J.A.C.18A:6-118). Additional changes were made in May 2014, to align the mentoring practices of new teachers with the TEACHNJ Act of 2012. Under these new regulations, all public school districts were “required to implement a system of supports for new teachers” (N.J.A.C. 6A9B-8). Supports included a comprehensive orientation of district policies, mentoring, support and training of mentors, documentation of mentoring activities, payment procedures for mentor stipends, district mentoring plan development by the district’s administrative officers, and evaluations with state-required observations.

Mentor and Mentoring

According to Schlechty (1985), mentoring is an important aspect of an induction program. Since there is not a unified or standardized format of induction among school districts and states, and there is no common definition of terms, there are times when the term *mentoring* is used interchangeably with induction. However, mentoring is actually the process or action of the mentor, not a program. Mentoring is usually done by a senior teacher and there are specific qualities that are desired. Some states have set specific guidelines for someone to be considered a mentor. For example, mentor-teachers need to be highly effective in their summative evaluations, have had to be teaching for at least 5 years, and have had rigorous mentor training. In the report, “State Induction Programs and Mentoring for New and Beginning Teachers,” Kauffman (2007) explained that mentors serve as advisors and guides for new and beginning teachers. Mentors have more experience in the profession and the system, and can provide

wisdom, trust, and one-on-one support as counselors and teachers to the novice teacher (Kauffman, 2007, para 1). Wong (2004) said that mentors are an important component, perhaps the most important component, of an induction program. However, he stated that for mentors to be effective, they must be part of an induction process aligned to the district's vision, mission, and structure (Wong, 2004, para 45).

According to DeCesare et al. (2016), "National studies indicate that mentoring may be an effective intervention for improving teacher retention and performance" (p. 1). Mentors are placed in such a critical role in the induction process. Yet, it has been reported by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2006) that some induction programs have been limited to solely assigning one-on-one mentoring to help teachers "survive" their first year (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2006, p. 1). As reported by Wong (2004), mentors are only a part of the induction process. However, there continues to be a lack of ongoing support for mentors, and mentors tend to be undertrained and overextended. Many of these issues plague programs because funding for the training of mentors is often inadequate and unstable (Wong, 2004, para 1).

In the 2013–2014 school year, the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) at Marzano Research, completed and presented findings to the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), a facility supported by the U.S. Department of Education (DeCesare et al., 2016). The study was an examination of the mentoring practices and district policies across five states: Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The study indicated several factors that contributed to the barriers that mentors face. According to DeCesare et al. (2016), there were 11 specific barriers, which were rated using a Likert scale of 1–5, with 5 indicating the highest deficiency. Three barriers were noted in more than one state, with scores ranging from 3 to 5,

including lack of funding for programs and training (scoring a 3), lack of adequate available time spent with mentee (scoring a 5), and lack of stipends for mentors (scoring a 5; DeCesare et al., 2016, para 7). The average stipend given to mentors in this five-state study was \$476 per mentor, per year. Again, as with other studies researched during this current review, it was noted that there was a lack of continuity between states, districts, and schools with regard to mentor responsibilities, mentor training, and stipends. DeCesare et al. also noted that the educational leaders across the five participating states “agree that they lack accurate data that describes current programs and policies in use across districts” (p. 2). DeCesare et al. also noted that a “systematic way of understanding current district mentoring policy” (p. 2) needs to be established for educational leaders to begin to address the issues facing mentors as well as mentees.

Socialization

The socialization of teachers refers to “the process by which the individual becomes a participating member of the community of teachers” (Alhija & Fresko, 2016, p.1592). There are many factors that can either hinder or boost the self-efficacy of new teachers, either aiding in their ability to become a part of the organization or a statistical figure in the national attrition rate. “Socialization for the beginning teacher can determine whether the first year as a professional is a success or a failure” (Angelle, 2006, p. 319). As with any new job, it is necessary for individuals to become acclimated to their surroundings. Socialization becomes a time of exploration when the new member aims to obtain the goals and norms within the school. For a newcomer it can be a time of great anxiety because new teachers are faced with so many new tasks. They are in an unfamiliar setting with unfamiliar working procedures and unfamiliar people. Adding all of the unknowns to a classroom full of new students can leave the most

prepared new teacher in state of anxiety. Taking away this added level of anxiety would allow for the new teacher to focus more on the arduous task of teaching. “If we think of induction as a process of professional socialization, we are more likely to see the need for shared standards, school university partnerships and graduated responsibilities for new teachers” (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999, p. 18).

Angelle (2006) conducted a case study to examine the socialization experiences of novice teachers. There is period of adjustment when the instructional leaders in the building need to make sure that the “security, affiliation, and self-esteem” (Angelle, 2006, p. 319) of the new teacher are met and supported. It is during this period of socialization that the mentor acts as a facilitator in the socialization process, guiding the mentee through the social and professional aspects of teaching. Angelle reported specific stages of socialization, noting that the need of each stage needs to be met as it is a “determining factor in the decision to leave the profession” (Angelle, 2006, p. 320). The first stage is categorized as *anticipatory socialization*, in which most, if not all, learning is attained before the new teachers enters the organization. The second stage, *accommodation* is when all of the organizational information is obtained by the new teacher in the first year. Lastly, the new teacher learns to resolve conflicts within the organization and learns to balance school and home life effectively, although many teachers do not make it to the third stage. Whether the socialization process is successful or not, “effective teacher socialization is the result of the organizational processes within the school rather than the result of the individual components of mentoring assistance” (Angelle, 2002, p. 26).

Alhija and Fresko (2016) completed a mixed-methods study about the national teacher induction program of Israeli teachers. They noted three components of the induction process, including “individual mentoring by a colleague in the same school, weekly or bi-weekly

workshops given by a teacher training department at one of the universities or colleges, and formal evaluation of teaching for licensing purposes” (p. 18). For their study, Alhija and Fresko focused primarily on mentoring and workshops. They categorized mentors as “veteran teachers who have experienced the same grade levels and subjects taught by inductee teachers” (p. 1). It is the mentor-teacher who is charged with guiding the mentee through a process of socialization, making them “familiar with school norms and procedures, assisting them with adapting to the school culture, aiding them in instructional planning and classroom management, and providing constructive feedback on their teaching through formative evaluations” (p. 18). Again, little research was found regarding the training process and guidelines for how mentors are supposed to effectively mentor their mentees. One specific area Alhija and Fresko focused on was workshops for the mentees. They categorized workshops as “reflective practice groups” of which the “purpose is to assist inductee teachers in analyzing and reflecting upon their experiences at school while conducting theory and practice, and to provide them with a supportive professional environment” (p. 18). According to Alhija and Fresko, there was a similarity in how the socialization process was embedded into both sections of the induction program.

Alhija and Fresko (2016) also noted there were some variations between schools across the country in the implementation of programs, including intensity, duration, and funding. They reported differences in “cultural, social, geopolitical, and economic context” yet all “shared a common goal of gradual acculturation into the teacher profession” (p. 16). However, there were more components that were similarly practiced. Many of the common elements resulted from a combination of program components, including “orientation, written materials, reduced workloads, classroom observation, workshops and seminars” (p. 16). Many, if not all, of the

components are found embedded in the literature based on programs found in the United States and in Australia. Based on commonality of components within the programs, across countries, it can be assumed that incorporating such components within existing and new programs could lead to better socialization statistics among teachers, thus reducing the attrition rate.

Even with substantial improvements and initiatives of programs offered by school districts, studies continue to suggest that “many new teachers leave the profession after only a few years, many of them because they failed to become sufficiently assimilated” (Alhija & Fresko, 2016, p. 16). With this failure to assimilate into the profession comes the task of hiring and training more new teachers.

Principals and Their Influences

The role of the school principal as a key figure in the induction process is not one that has been heavily studied, even though it is also “one of the most frequent reasons teachers give for leaving the profession” (Cherian & Daniel, 2008, p. 2). Other reasons for leaving the teaching profession have been attributed to not having a comprehensive enough induction program, failure to assimilate during the socialization process, and lack of adequate mentoring. It is during the socialization process when the new teacher has the chance to interact with veteran teachers and, more importantly, the principal.

Cherian and Daniel (2008) conducted a study focusing on principal’s participation during the induction process and found that while the focus was on the role of the principal, the timing of the study coincided with the introduction to the concept of induction and its implementation as well. Cherian and Daniel analyzed the roles and responsibilities of the principal by using the theoretical leadership frameworks (i.e., the structural frame, the political frame, the human resource frame and the symbolic frame) of Bolman and Deal. According to Cherian and Daniel,

in the structural frame, “principals must consider the ways in which the structures of schools mandate that changes happen-not in isolation, but within a complex and fragile web of relationships” (p. 4). The political frame encompasses “the manner in which the school, under the stewardship of the principal, creates the internal and external support to change current practices to support new teachers” (p. 4). Since dealing with people and individual needs is directly related to the human resource frame, the “principal has to employ strategies of shared decision making, provide opportunities for participation, and work towards enlisting commitment to new teacher induction” (p. 5). Lastly, since the culture of the school is so important to its success, “the principal plays an important role through direct contact and other means of creating a professional learning culture, supportive of teachers” (p. 5) that is woven in and around the symbolic frame.

Cherian and Daniel (2008) claimed, “The principal is the social architect whose leadership style is developed with a focus on structure, strategy, environment, implementation, experimentation and adaptation” (p. 6). Without these critical components, the structure and culture of the school can suffer, leading to differing responses toward how most participants in Cherian and Daniel’s study saw the role of the principal and how it may have affected their induction experiences. Most of the participating principals felt that induction should be the responsibility of the entire school community because their “roles had been reduced to management of people, budgets and behavior (teachers’ and students’)” (p. 8). One might argue it might be the responsibility of everyone in the community, but a leader is paramount. The roles of the principal in the induction process can be seen as “culture builder, instructional leader, facilitator of mentors, recruiter of new teachers and advocate for new teachers” (Cherian & Daniel, 2008, p. 3). When principals are seen as instructional leaders and they are responsible

for the culture in their building, it makes them responsible for the culture they promote during induction.

By studying the principal's role during this unique process, Cherian and Daniel (2008) were also able to gain insight into the novice and veteran teacher's perspectives on the principal's role. Cherian and Daniel found that the "induction experience is a process of well-planned events provided in a supportive environment as teachers learn to practice their craft. The principal, as the instructional leader and facilitator of these experiences, has a pivotal role in the process" (p. 3). Several new teachers interviewed for Cherian and Daniel's study indicated that the role of the principal during their induction was not what they had expected and one new teacher found the principal to be "remote and not someone he would necessarily approach for assistance" (p. 8). Other new teachers commented on getting "leftovers" of supplies and being stuck with the difficult assignments, attributing these issues to the principal not knowing the culture of the building and allowing things to be done "the way they have always been done" (p. 8). With the conclusion of this study, Cherian and Daniel mentioned that principals really do want the best for their new teachers, but they stated that principals "cannot do it alone; they need formal and ongoing quality support" (p. 9). Providing the support for the principal in this process only seems logical. Cherian and Daniel further noted, "In California, many induction programs include training for principals so that they can fully understand the process and support it" (p. 9).

According to the NTC (2016b), the principal plays a critical role in the induction and mentoring programs by understanding the needs of the new teacher and of the mentor. The NTC (2016b) provides distinct phases that new teachers experience. The NTC indicated the principal needs to be aware of all of the challenges a new teacher faces and to fully understand that the

new teacher is still learning (as cited in Watkins, 2016). Principals need to fully understand the components of the district's induction program, including the roles taken on by the mentor. Lastly, the principal needs to understand that the new teacher brings new perspectives and knowledge to the school and is an important asset to the team. Sharing this understanding with veteran teachers is crucial to the socialization and development of the new teacher's role and relationships within the building.

Financial Implication of Induction

In a previously mentioned study by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) at Marzano Research, it was reported that “teacher attrition in the United States overall (including new and veteran teachers) costs more than \$2 billion a year, at a rate of nearly \$10,000 per teacher who leaves” (DeCesare et al., 2016, p. 1).

Portner (2005) reviewed the literature on the cost of teacher attrition in the United States in which he analyzed what the average starting salary was for new teachers and then compared it to the cost of districts hiring and training new teachers. He reported it cost the district between 25% to 35% of the actual salary of the teacher in order to replace them. According to Portner, “It's been estimated that each teacher who is recruited, trained, and lost costs districts about \$50,000” (p. 1). Portner's report included the staggering numbers reported by the Texas Center for Educational research indicating that teacher turnover costs the state between \$329 million and \$1.2 billion annually, with an average attrition rate of 15.5%.

Villar and Strong (2007) completed a 5-year, benefit–cost study using “actual program cost information and data on student achievement, teacher retention, and mentor evaluations to determine whether comprehensive mentoring for beginning teachers makes financial sense” (p. 1), and found that most states are now requiring (and some are funding) a type of induction

program for their new teachers. “The type of support that school districts have most often chosen to provide is mentoring by a veteran teacher” (Villar & Strong, 2007, p. 1). However, even with the reported existing evidence, “school district administrators often balk at the apparent high cost of mentoring programs, especially the intensive versions where resources are required for recruitment, training, and hiring teachers replacements for veteran mentors” (Villar & Strong, 2007, p. 1). “The subjects used to complete this study came from the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program” (Villar & Strong, 2007, p. 3). The BTSA, in conjunction with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) and the California Department of Education, proposed to “provide an effective transition into teaching, improving students’ educational performances, increasing teacher retention rates, and ensuring teachers’ professional success” (Villar & Strong, 2007, p. 3). The purpose of the study was to specify costs as they relate to one example of a comprehensive programs, measure the effectiveness of the program’s intervention, allocate benefits to different constituencies, and weigh them against the costs in order to arrive at a measure of new benefit (Villar & Strong, 2007, p. 5). Villar and Strong investigated both one-time, cost-related expenses as well as ongoing cost over a 5-year period, specifically looking at the cost data from beginning teachers who were participants in the NTP. The NTP “operated as a consortium providing induction support for the Central Coast and Bay Area of California, representing five counties and over 25 independent school district” (p. 3). However, for the purpose of their study, Villar and Strong studied only one district, representing 12.3% of the NTP consortium. The studied school district was “comprised of 25 mainstream schools of which 18 are elementary schools, 5 middle schools, and 2 high schools” (Villar & Strong, 2007, p. 4). The evaluation design used was a mixed-methods model and Villar and Strong used “the two most important sources of data for valuing

benefits—new teacher attrition and student achievement data” (p. 6). With regard to the two sources of data, Villar and Strong compared how effective new teachers were as a group when participating in district-wide comprehensive induction programs and focused on how new teachers were placed in the buildings, with regard to prior effective or ineffective cohorts of students and if participation in an induction program could predict those cohorts. Lastly, when coupled with a comprehensive induction program, attrition rates for new teachers are affected (Villar & Strong 2007, para 6).

Villar and Strong (2007) used a “regression analysis of predictors of student achievement to analyze test scores” (p. 9) and to “establish four sets of pre- and post-test combinations . . . to employ a comparative change design to evaluate a battery of predictors, of which new teacher status was one” (p. 9). This allowed for Villar and Strong to “isolate the effects of each variable” (p. 9). To summarize the results of the study, Villar and Strong made a monetary comparison between the cost of increasing teacher effectiveness through the use of induction programs and the long term benefits to students to the cost of attrition. “The present study suggests that increasing teacher effectiveness provides far greater benefits (47%) than does reducing attrition costs (17%)” (p. 14).

Summary

This literature review contained an exploration of the components of a comprehensive inductions program. With all of the mentioned studies, the greater the human capital, financial support, and time invested into programs, the greater potential outcomes. As previously noted, the mentoring component of a comprehensive induction program seems to be most impactful and discussed aspect in this process. However, it was also noted that most information about

mentors and their roles in the process vary from school to school, district to district, and state to state. There is no uniformity and the role is rather ambiguous.

In the previously mentioned study by DeCesare et al. (2016), out of the 70% response rate, two thirds of the districts do not provide release time for mentors to work with their mentees. New teachers have a dual role in learning to teach as well teaching at the same time, as do mentors, who are required to teach their full class load and aid in the development of a new teacher. Further, only 32% of the surveyed districts require any formal training for mentors before mentoring new teachers (DeCesare et al., 2016).

Time and training of mentors seemed to be a recurring theme throughout the literature. Yet, what really stood out in the literature was the lack of connection between the mentor and the principal. Carver (2003) mentioned how this relationship is a critical aspect of induction and one that should be encouraged. He emphasized the critical role played by the principal and district leaders in the support, development, and assessment of new teachers. Carver further stipulated that to forge an effective relationship between new teachers and the principals, school districts need to support and train principals (para 40).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study was aimed to identify new teacher induction program elements that new teachers perceived as contributing factors in their decision to remain in the teaching profession. Teachers with less than 5 years of experience who completed a traditional teacher preparation at a state university in New Jersey were surveyed to better understand the unique elements that positively or negatively affected their decision making process. The results of this study could be used by school districts in their efforts to support and retain new teachers with the intent of reducing the attrition rate.

This chapter includes the methods used to answer the research questions listed below. The questions are followed by an explanation of the research design, where the study took place, and a brief profile of the participants.

Research Questions

1. How do similarly prepared new teachers perceive their induction program?
2. What, if any, perceived components of new teacher induction programs aided in the decision-making process to remain in the teacher profession?

Research Design

The goal of this study was to understand how new teachers perceive their induction programs and its relationship, if any, of that perception to their decision to remain in the teaching profession. A case study design was used to understand each subject's unique perspective of his or her induction program and how it aided in his or her decision to stay or leave the teaching profession.

Research Setting and Context

To complete this study, an email was sent to prospective participants introducing the purpose of the study. Prospective participants were all similarly prepared completers of a small state university teacher preparation program. All participants attended and earned their Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS) through the same teacher preparation preservice program. The similarly prepared teachers all experienced the same specific courses, where they encountered a low student-to-faculty ratio and one-on-one, personalized advising throughout their entire teaching preparation. A link to access the survey was included in the initial email.

Research Sample and Data Sources

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of individual participants. The target population sought for this study was teachers who (a) had completed a traditional teacher preparation program at the same state university in New Jersey, (b) were currently teaching in a New Jersey school district or who had taught between the years 2011–2016, and (c) teachers who participated in some facet of the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ) Act (2012) instructional guidelines. The TEACH NJ (2012) components consist of each new teacher being provided a plan comprising a comprehensive orientation, including introduction to district policies and procedures, individualized supports listed in a teachers' PDP and 1 full year of one-on-one mentoring during which the mentor and mentee must meet at least once a week for the first four weeks of school.

The participants' teaching experience ranged from Pre-K to 12th grade, consisting of general education, special education, and content-specific teachers. The study results were limited to teachers who were employed in New Jersey, regardless of type of school or level

taught. The survey was designed with questions to determine individual characteristics and experiences these teachers encountered during their induction programs.

Instrument and Procedures

To gain access to subjects, I met with the director of a state university teacher preparation department and was granted permission to design and distribute a survey to the 358 completers of their program between the years 2011 and 2016. The survey was designed and distributed using a survey link derived from the web-based Qualtrics Survey Software (Qualtrics, 2018). Participants received an introductory letter explaining the purpose of the survey and providing instructions for accurate completion. Participation was sought on a voluntary basis from any teacher who had completed her or his teacher preparation program between the years 2011–2016 and participants were assured anonymity. Questions relating to their participation in an organized induction program were asked to distinguish similarities and differences between programs.

The survey consisted of general demographic questions such as age, gender, length of time teaching, grade level, and content specifics. The remaining questions were split over six sections, including characteristics of induction programs, the quality of induction programs, the mentor experience, professional development embedded in induction, administrative supports and their future plans (see Appendix A). Based on the literature reviewed for this study, including prior studies' survey questions, I compiled a list of pertinent questions to use as a survey. The initial questions were used to determine the types of program elements each individual encountered. A *yes* or *no* question format was used to determine specific characteristic of the participant's individual induction program as well as short answer responses. For some questions, a 5-point Likert scale was used to determine the perceived satisfaction of

participants with regard to their specific induction programs, their mentors, the professional development they received, administrative supports and their overall satisfaction with their induction program whereas, 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, 4 = *Agree*, and 5 = *Strongly Agree*. The remaining questions were focused on the teachers' intent to remain in the profession using a similar Likert scale, whereas, 1 = *Extremely Unlikely*, 2 = *Unlikely*, 3 = *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, 4 = *Likely*, and 5 = *Extremely Likely*.

Data Analysis and Findings

The data collected from the survey were read thoroughly to search for recurring themes. After a thorough analysis of open-ended questions was complete, recurring themes were identified and categorized accordingly. All data from the survey and interviews will be kept on a flash drive and stored in a lock box in my home for 3 years and then destroyed.

Role of the Researcher

My experience with becoming a teacher differs greatly from that of those who become teachers today. The induction process was virtually nonexistent and not as developed as it is today. I was assigned a classroom, given a roster, and then left to figure it out on my own. I was informally assigned a mentor and it seemed as though it was merely a "buddy" type of relationship. There were no formal guidelines, no scheduled meetings, no classroom check-ins, no observations, no common planning time, and no supports. I felt isolated, alone, and, at times, I thought I was going to leave the profession. It was not until my second year of teaching, when I was moved to a different grade level and building that I realized what I had missed during my first year. It was there I met with a teacher who informally inducted me into the teaching profession, giving me the needed supports to remain a teacher.

It was not long after entering the profession and New Jersey's implementation of provisional teaching requirements that I was asked to mentor a new teacher, thus piquing my interest in the process of induction. Armed with materials I obtained on the topic and the limited guidelines from the state, I began a year of induction experiences with my first mentee. It became quite a learning experience for both us and led me to explore the topic further to fully understand the induction process.

My initial research of the topic indicated varying programs, in different states, with few concrete examples of exemplar programs. Research conducted at University of California in 1988 became the foundational work of the current NTC, from which induction models are being emulated throughout the county. New Jersey's structure of induction has slowly evolved from the NTC's format, yet there are still discretionary aspects of induction programs left up to the district.

Research continues to be published about the attrition rate of teachers, yet the understanding of such has rarely been discussed. My continued research and desire to become a proficient mentor led me to the crux of this study. Ingersoll, a leading researcher in teacher attrition stated, "We actually don't have a lot of research on the decision to stay or not" (Phillips, 2015). I continue to wonder what leads teachers to make that decision and if the induction they received has a direct impact on that decision.

Validity and Reliability

In order to achieve reliability in the methods of data collection, I gathered a focus group of experts in the area of teacher induction. Included in the group were two mentor-teachers, one from the elementary level and one from the high school level, both of whom have been teaching in New Jersey for over 15 years. One participant was a district administrator with a master's

degree in educational leadership and in charge of overseeing his district's ScIP. The remaining participants included a superintendent with a Ph.D. in educational leadership as well as two college professors, both with Ph.Ds. They were all asked to review my survey questions before the study began to eliminate any biases I may have had within the questions. I took into consideration the biases that each member of the group may have had based on their individual educational position.

CHAPTER 4

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this case study was to understand how similarly prepared new teachers perceived their induction experiences. Participants completed an anonymous online survey to explore their experiences and feelings regarding their induction programs. The findings include the overall results of the survey, collectively. To ensure the anonymity of the survey participants, data were collected without the use of tracking, and responses were grouped together and analyzed by question.

Research Questions

I addressed and answered the following research questions as a way to examine the perceptions of similarly prepared new teachers' experiences during their induction programs.

1. How do similarly prepared new teachers perceive their induction program?
2. What, if any, perceived components of new teacher induction programs aided in the decision making process to remain in the teacher profession?

Survey Creation and Research Tool

I gathered a focus group of experts with varied, yet similar, interests in teacher preparation and induction to collect information about new teacher training and induction, and to review and vet the survey questions. Mentor-teachers, administrators, and postsecondary teacher preparation professors were asked questions about the development of new teachers and the importance of induction programs. Next, I developed and shared survey questions with the focus group who then vetted the questions.

Once questions were created and selected to use in the survey, I sought out a web-based survey tool to conduct the research. I chose Qualtrics (2018), a free web-based survey tool, to

design and conduct the survey to collect the data needed for this study. The Qualtrics web-based software tool is a multifaceted, online software program that allows researchers to collect data through creating simple questionnaires to producing detailed reports. In addition, Qualtrics software provides researchers with the flexibility of inputting their questions into a chosen platform, then running reports and conducting analysis on their collected data. Once the survey was created, a link was generated and sent to the survey participants via email.

I obtained permission to distribute the survey to participants via email from the director of a small state university teacher preparation department (see Appendices B and C). A letter of consent was sent via email, explaining the survey and consent, with a link to complete the survey. The introduction included an explanation of the purpose of the study and informed participants that participation was voluntary and all results would be anonymous.

The survey was distributed to 358 completers of a small state university teacher preparation program between 2011–2016 beginning July 25, 2018, with one follow-up email sent on September 12, 2018. The survey link remained open for 68 days. A cumulative total of 72 (20.11%) responses were recorded and analyzed for this study.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of similarly prepared teachers perceived their induction programs and to identify if any components of the induction program aided in the teachers' decision-making process to remain in the profession. Survey data were collected from the Qualtrics (2018) site and downloaded to be analyzed. Data were analyzed collectively, not individually, to preserve the anonymity of the participants. Demographic, ratable, and open-ended questions were designed to answer the study's two research questions.

The survey consisted of 60 questions regarding general demographics, induction program elements and perceptions of induction programs. Induction program elements were separated into four subcategories: (a) new teacher training, (b) mentoring, (c) professional development, and (d) administrative roles. The conclusion of the survey included questions regarding participants' overall perceptions of their induction program and their future plans.

Demographics

Although not analyzed within this research, I felt it was important to include the general demographics of the participants. Therefore, demographic information was gathered through several initial questions of the survey. Tables were created with the data collected using the Qualtrics (2018) Table and Graph Generator. Table 1 shows that of the 72 survey completers, 80.56% or 58 were female, 18.06 % or 13 were male, and 1.59% or one person preferred not to answer.

Table 1

Gender of Survey Participants

Answer	%	Count
Female	80.56	58
Male	18.06	13
Prefer not to answer	1.39	1
TOTAL	100.00	72

The ages of the 72 participants were grouped in five categories, as shown in Table 2. The first age group, 21–30 year olds, made up the majority of the survey with 42 (58.33%) participants. There were 17 (23.61%) participants aged 31–40 years, 10 (13.89%) participants

aged 41–50 years, and three (4.17%) participants aged 51–60 years. There were no participants over the age of 61.

Table 2

Age of Survey Participants

Years of age	%	Count
21–30	8.33	42
31–40	23.61	17
41–50	13.89	10
51–60	4.17	3
61+	0.00	0
TOTAL	100	72

The majority of survey participants (48; 66.67%), categorized their current teaching placement as a suburban public school. There were 13 (18.06%) public-urban participants, four (5.56%) charter-suburban participants, and seven (9.72%) charter-urban participants (see Table 3).

Table 3

Type of School District Survey Participant was Employed

Type of school	%	Count
Public-suburban	66.67	48
Public-urban	18.06	13
Charter-suburban	5.56	4
Charter-urban	9.72	7
TOTAL	100	72

Current district location was supplied via zip code. There were 67 different district zip codes provided. Of the 67 districts recorded, 62 (90%) of the districts were in the Southern New Jersey counties of Camden, Burlington, Gloucester, and Atlantic. Of the remaining participants, six (9%) participants were currently teaching out of state and one (1%) participant was teaching in Essex County, New Jersey (see Figure 1).

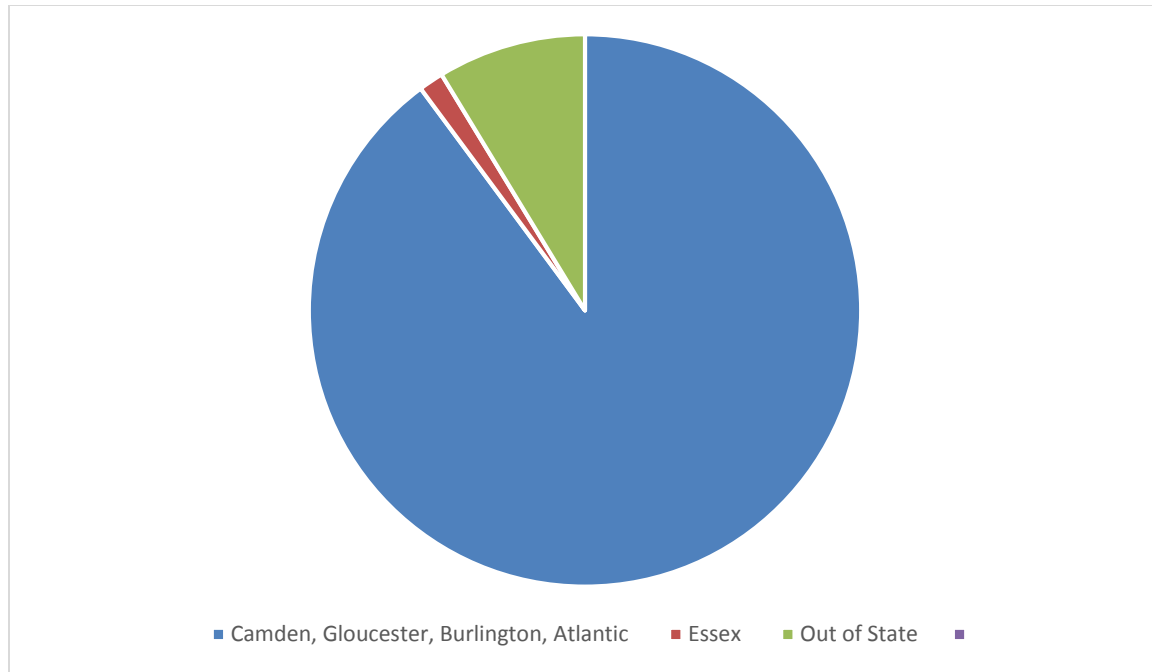


Figure 1. District locations for participants by zip code. (Anne McGeehan, 2018)

The participants provided their current teaching placements, including their content-specific areas, as shown in Table 4. Early childhood PK-3 included seven (9.72%) participants, elementary K-6 included 16 (22.22%) participants, and there was one (1.39%) participant who indicated a departmentalized elementary teaching position. Middle school subject area included 15 (20.83%) participants and high school subject area included 14 (19.44%) participants. The majority of participants (19; 26.39%), classified themselves as special education teachers.

Table 4

Type of Teaching Placement

Type of placement	%	Count
Early childhood grades PK-3	9.72	7
Elementary grades K-6	22.22	16
Departmentalized elementary school subject area	1.39	1
Middle school subject area	20.83	15
High school subject area	19.44	14
Special education subject area and grade level(s)	26.39	19
TOTAL	100	72

The participants were asked if they had received or participated in a formal induction program. Of the 72 participants, 66 (94.29%) stated they received a formal induction program and were prompted to continue with the survey. Of the remaining participants, four (5.71%) stated they did not received a formal induction and were asked to explain the introduction to teaching program they had experienced. Two participants did not indicate whether they had received or participated in an induction program.

Table 5

Participation in a Formal Induction Program

Answer	%	Count
Yes: Please continue with survey	94.29	66
No: Please explain what type of introduction to teaching program you experienced	5.71	4
TOTAL	100	70

At this point in the survey, the initial 72 participants dropped significantly to 53 participants. It is unknown why the participation dropped at this point, but one can make a generalization that the new teachers did not have pertinent information to share about their induction program, did not have an induction program, or the new teachers had limited time to participate in the survey.

Addressing the Research Questions

The study was framed by two research questions:

1. How do similarly prepared new teachers perceive their induction program?
2. What, if any, perceived components of new teacher induction programs aided in the decision-making process to remain in the teacher profession?

To answer the research questions, survey questions about induction elements were devised. Questions were asked on the four subcategories: (a) new teacher training, (b) mentoring, (c) professional development, and (d) administrative roles. The conclusion of the survey included questions regarding participants' future plans. The following tables, in subcategorical order, provide information regarding the perceptions of new teachers' induction programs.

New Teacher Training

Questions regarding specific program elements were asked at this point in the survey. Participants were asked if they had attended a separate in-service/training for new teachers prior to the beginning of the school year. Of the continuing 53 participants, 34 (64.15%) stated they had received new teacher training prior to the start of school and they were asked to explain what the training entailed. The remaining 19 (35.85%) participants did not receive a separate in-service or training for new teachers prior to the start of school (see Table 6).

Table 6

Attended a Separate New Teacher In-Service Training Prior to the Beginning of the School Year

Answer	%	Count
Yes: Please explain	64.15	34
No	35.85	19
TOTAL	100	53

Participants who had attended a new teacher in-service or training prior to the beginning of the year were asked to explain further what it entailed. The 25 responses varied in length of in-service and type of in-service.

The most common type of in-service reported by eight (32%) participants, was a 1-day workshop before school started that included only new teachers. This type of workshop encompassed dissemination of pertinent information on district systems, policies, and culture. One participant described the in-service as, “We spent the entire day being bused around the district giving us a tour.”

A 2-day workshop or in-service training was provided to five (20%) of the participants, while a 3-day workshop or in-service training was provided for four (16%) of the participants. These 2- and 3-day sessions included building and school tours, gradebook set-up, payroll and benefit training, and information on procedures. Two (8%) of the remaining participants reported being mid-year hires and received no formal new teacher training. They stated they received an on-the-job type of training. One (4%) person stated the only training received was at a staff meeting and the information pertained to the Marzano observation system.

Five (16%) participants had a week or more of new teacher in-service type training. One participant stated that her training included the presentation of a book on teaching and a schedule

to meet once per month with other new teachers to discuss the book and the strengths and weaknesses in their teaching thus far.

Participants were asked if they received a new teacher handbook prior to the start of the school year. Table 7 shows that 35 (66.04%) of the new teachers were given a new teacher handbook prior to the start of the school year, while 18 (33.96%) participants did not receive a handbook.

Table 7

Received a District New Teacher Handbook Prior to the Start of the School Year

Answer	%	Count
Yes	66.04	35
No	33.96	18
TOTAL	100	53

Mentoring

The most common component of an induction programs is the mentor. The mentor, a certified teacher assigned by district, is there to guide and support the new teacher throughout his or her induction period. When asked if the participants had received a mentor, one person did not reply, 45 (86.54%) said they were assigned a mentor, and seven (13.46%) had not been assigned a mentor (see Table 8).

Table 8

Assigned a Mentor

Answer	%	Count
Yes	86.54	45
No	13.46	7
TOTAL	100	52

When asked whether the mentor was assigned before the school year, when and by whom, many participants commented. Less than half of the participants were assigned a mentor before the start of the school year. Of those who were assigned mentors before school started, 28 (47.17%) participants explained that either their building principals or immediate supervisors introduced their mentors. One participant explained, “My mentor came into my room during the summer to introduce herself and to ask if I needed anything.” Another participant explained,

The principal assigned me a mentor prior to the school year beginning. Part of the New Teacher Orientation is for the mentor to attend with the new hire so that they can answer questions pertinent before the school year beginning.

Table 9 shows the responses to the question of whether a mentor was assigned before the school year began.

Table 9

Assigned a Mentor Prior to the Start of the School Year

Answer	%	Count
Yes-explain by who and when:	47.17	25
No	52.83	28
TOTAL	100	53

When asked if participants were able to meet with their mentors before the beginning of the school year, the majority of participants (36; 67.92%) reported not being able to make that work.

Table 10

Met with Mentor Prior to the Start of the School Year

Answer	%	Count
Yes: Explain what you discussed	32.08	17
No	67.92	36
TOTAL	100	53

The remaining 17 (32.08%) participants did have the opportunity to meet with their mentor prior to the school year. They were asked to comment on what was discussed at their meetings. Most participants stated that the meeting was informal and the topics were related to what resources were available, the curriculum, the school climate, and classroom management expectations. One participant explained,

We met the first day of orientation. She gave me materials, discussed the curriculum, and explained her classroom management style.

While it is important to discuss programs, curriculum, etc., the first meetings were often based around school routines and procedures and how to prepare for the first week of school.

When asked if participants were given time to observe their mentor-teacher in the classroom, the majority (30; 57.69%) of participants were either unable to observe their mentor or not given the opportunity (see Tables 11 and 12).

Table 11

Given Time to Observe Mentor

Answer	%	Count
Yes	42.31	22
No	57.69	30
TOTAL	100	52

Table 12

Given Time to Observe Other Teachers

Answer	%	Count
Yes: Please explain	48.08	25
No	51.92	27
TOTAL	100	52

The participants were asked if they were given time to observe teachers other than their mentor-teacher. Again, the majority of participants (18; 56.25%), did not have the opportunity to observe other teachers. The remaining 14 (43.75%) participants were able to observe other teachers and were asked to explain the circumstances. One participant explained, “During our new teacher program we were required to observe our mentor teacher three times and three different teachers. Each observation we were asked to focus on a different aspect of teaching or classroom management.” Another stated, “I’m about to enter my fourth full year with this school, and I’m still given opportunities to observe other teachers. They always provide coverage.” Several other participants stated they could observe other teachers, but it had to be done during their preparatory periods.

Although the majority of the participants did not have the opportunity to observe other teachers, of the teachers who did have the opportunity, 28 (57.14%) said that it was beneficial. They were asked to explain their reasoning.

Many thought that it gave them different or varying ways to interact with students. One explained, “I found them to be helpful, both for what to do and what not to do.” Another said, “It gave me a better idea how to manage time with mini lessons then centers.” Several

participants stated that it encouraged them to be reflective of their own teaching. Table 13 shows the results for this survey question.

Table 13

Did You Find the Observations and/or Meetings Helpful?

Answer	%	Count
Yes: Please explain	57.14	28
No	42.86	21
TOTAL	100	49

The participants were asked if they were provided time to collaborate with other teachers and, if so, they were asked to explain. Table 14 shows the majority of teachers (42; 79.25%), were able to collaborate with other teachers. The most typical response was one or two times per week. Others stated they met, “Once a month during department meetings and always during in-services.”

Table 14

Provided Time to Collaborate With Other Teachers

Answer	%	Count
Yes: How often?	79.25	42
No	20.75	11
TOTAL	100	53

Most participants (43; 82.69%) found this collaboration helpful. The participants felt the collaboration gave them different perspectives on how to deal with problematic students and answered many questions the new teachers had. One participant explained, “Sharing of resources and strategies is invaluable.” Table 15 shows the responses to this survey question.

Table 15

Collaboration With Other Teachers was Helpful

Answer	%	Count
Yes: Please explain	82.69	43
No	17.31	9
TOTAL	100	52

Participants were asked if they had the opportunity to be observed by their mentor in a nonevaluative environment. The majority of the participants (30; 56.60%) were not given this opportunity. The remaining 23 (43.40%) participants were observed by their mentors (see Table 16). One participant explained that her mentor observed her bi-weekly for the entire first year. Another participant explained, “I asked my mentor to observe a particularly difficult math class. She gave suggestions and advice.” Another explained, “We would coteach once in a while. He would then give me feedback to let me know where he felt I should have done something different.”

Table 16

The Mentor Observed Me Teaching in a Nonevaluative Environment

Answer	%	Count
Yes: Please explain	43.40	23
No	56.60	30
TOTAL	100	53

The participants who had been observed by a mentor were further asked if the mentor was given the opportunity to coach them through a lesson. Table 17 shows the majority of participants (37; 69.81%) who were observed did not have the mentor coach them through a

lesson. Of the participants who were coached through a lesson (16; 30.19%), several explained that the mentor was able to critique areas that needed improvement and provided feedback after taught lessons. One participant explained, “She taught with me. We sat down together and discussed materials and worked to formulate appropriate lesson plans for our students.”

Table 17

Mentor Observed and Coached Lesson(s)

Answer	%	Count
Yes: Please explain	30.19	16
No	69.81	37
TOTAL	100	53

Specific questions regarding the new teachers’ perception of their assigned mentor were asked at this point. Table 18 shows the results of the Likert scale survey questions that were asked specifically about how the new teachers perceived their relationship with their mentor.

When asked whether the mentor made the new teacher feel welcome, the majority of the participants (32; 80%) either agreed or strongly agreed to feeling welcome. Six (15%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and two (5%) strongly disagreed.

When asked if the mentor provided knowledge about the district, again the majority (34; 85%), agreed or strongly agreed. Five (12.5%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and one (2.5%) strongly disagreed.

When asked whether the mentor provided information about the school, the majority (31; 77.5%) agreed or strongly agreed. Six (12.5%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and one (2.5%) strongly disagreed.

When asked if the new teachers felt the support of the mentor helped them as new teachers, the majority (31; 77.5%) agreed or strongly agreed they felt supported. Seven (17.5%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and two (5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their mentor helped them as a new teacher.

When asked if their mentor explained the district philosophy in a way that was understandable, the majority (27; 67.5%) strongly agreed or agreed that the mentor explained the district philosophy. Of the remaining participants, 10 (25%) neither agreed nor disagreed and three (7.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their mentor explained the district philosophy in an understandable way.

When asked if their mentor modeled or demonstrated skills that were helpful to their teaching practice, the majority (28; 82.5%) strongly agreed or agreed that demonstrated skills were helpful to their teaching practice. Nine (25%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and three (7.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their mentor demonstrated skills that were helpful to their teaching practices.

When asked if their mentor provided feedback that was constructive to their practices, the majority (26; 66.67%) strongly agreed or agreed that their mentor provided feedback that was constructive to their practices. Of the remaining participants, 10 (25.64%) neither agreed nor disagreed and three (7.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their mentor provided feedback that was constructive to their practices.

When asked if their mentor helped with lesson preparation prior to formal observations, 21 (22.5%) strongly agreed or agreed that their mentor helped with lesson preparation prior to formal observations. Of the remaining participants, 13 (32.5%) neither agreed nor disagreed and

six (15%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their mentor helped with lesson preparation prior to formal observations.

When asked if the interactions new teachers had with the mentors enhanced their teaching, 27 (67.5%) strongly agreed or agreed that interactions with their mentor enhanced their teaching. Of the remaining participants, 10 (25%) neither agreed nor disagreed and three (7.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that interactions with their mentors enhanced their teaching.

When asked if their mentor was understanding of their needs as a beginning teacher, 29 (72.5%) strongly agreed or agreed that their mentor understood their beginning teacher needs. Seven (17.5%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and four (10%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their mentor understood their beginning teacher needs.

When asked if the new teachers felt their relationship with their mentor was trustworthy, 31 (77.5%) strongly agreed or agreed that their relationship with their mentor was trustworthy. Six (15%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and three (7.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their relationship with their mentor was trustworthy.

When asked if the new teachers felt their mentor was well-trained and prepared for the role as a mentor, 31 (70%) strongly agreed or agreed that their mentor was well trained and prepared for the role as a mentor. Six (15%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and six (15%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their mentor was well trained and prepared for the role as a mentor.

When asked if the new teachers felt that their mentor was easily accessible and available when needed, 28 (70%) strongly agreed or agreed that their mentor was easily accessible and available when needed. Seven (17.5%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and five

(12.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their mentor was easily accessible and available when needed.

Lastly, the new teachers were asked if they felt that the mentor was a valuable part of the induction experience. Most participants (25; 62.5%) strongly agreed or agreed that their mentor was a valuable part of the induction experience. Of the remaining participants, 11 (27.5%) neither agreed nor disagreed and four (10%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their mentor was a valuable part of the induction experience. It is important to note that participation in the study dropped to 40 participants for the majority of the Likert scale survey questions.

Table 18

New Teachers' Perceptions of Their Assigned Mentor

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My mentor made me feel welcome.	5.00%	0.00%	15.00%	25.00%	55.00%
My mentor provided knowledge about the district.	2.50%	0.00%	12.50%	37.50%	47.50%
My mentor provided information about my school.	5.00%	2.50%	15.00%	30.00%	47.50%
The support of my mentor provided helped me as a new teacher.	2.50%	2.50%	17.50%	27.50%	50.00%
My mentor explained the district's philosophy in a way I could understand.	2.50%	5.00%	25.00%	25.00%	42.50%
My mentor modeled or demonstrated skills that were helpful.	2.50%	5.00%	22.50%	27.50%	42.50%
The feedback my mentor gave me was constructive.	2.56%	5.13%	25.64%	23.08%	43.59%
My mentor helped with lesson preparation prior to formal observations.	7.50%	7.50%	32.50%	12.50%	40.00%
The interactions I had with my mentor enhanced my teaching.	2.50%	5.00%	25.00%	22.50%	45.00%
My mentor was understanding of my needs as a beginning teacher.	2.50%	7.50%	17.50%	27.50%	45.00%

(continued)

Table 18 (continued)

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My relationship with my mentor was trustworthy.	2.50%	5.00%	15.00%	25.00%	52.50%
My mentor was well-trained and prepared for their role as my mentor.	7.50%	7.50%	15.00%	30.00%	40.00%
My mentor was easily accessible and available when I needed them.	7.50%	5.00%	17.50%	22.50%	47.50%
My mentor was a valuable part of my induction experience.	2.50%	7.50%	27.50%	17.50%	45.00%

Note. 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, 4 = *Agree*, and 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

Professional Development

The participants were asked several questions regarding professional development and training practices they encountered. *Professional development* is a broad term that encompasses conferences, seminars, or workshops, formal or informal that are focused on improving the learning for educators and students.

When asked if they participated in on-going professional development throughout the year 49 (92.45%) participants answered yes and provided explanations. Four (7.55%) replied they did not participate in on-going professional development (see Table 19). Types of professional development and training varied. One participant explained, “We had professional development days every marking period. We have a required number of hours for professional development, and the school provides more than enough opportunities.” Another participant stated, “I attended a bullying, social media, suicide and psychological professional development.”

Table 19

Participated in On-Going Professional Development Throughout the School Year

Answer	%	Count
Yes: Please explain	92.45	49
No	7.55	4
TOTAL	100	53

When asked if the professional development the participants had received was geared towards new teachers specifically, 24 participants (44.44%) explained that it was geared toward new teachers. However, the majority (30; 55.56%) of participants said it was not (see Table 20). One of the participants who stated professional development was geared toward new teachers explained, “Our curriculum supervisor had year-long PD [professional development] for all new hires once a month.” Another stated, “There were a few committees and workshops geared towards challenges faced by novice teachers.”

Table 20

Professional Development was Geared Toward New Teachers

Answer	%	Count
Yes: Please explain	44.44	24
No	55.56	30
TOTAL	100	54

When asked if the professional development helped the new teachers network with other teachers, the majority (33; 62.26%) of participants explained that it did. Of the remaining participants, 20 (37.74%) stated professional development did not aid in the networking process (see Table 21). One participant explained, “I met with the same teachers monthly to learn new

things and we were given time to discuss what was working and what didn't work in our classrooms.” Another stated, “Professional development helped me extend my network with other teachers because I was forced to be in groups with those teachers I did not know.”

Table 21

Professional Development Helped the New Teachers Network With Other Teachers

Answer	%	Count
Yes: Please explain	62.26	33
No	37.74	20
TOTAL	100	53

Participants were asked if they found professional development valuable to their teaching. The majority of the participants (39; 73.58%) felt it did impact their teaching. Conversely, 14 (26.42) participants felt the professional development was not valuable to their teaching (see Table 22). One explained, “I am learning how to take what I learn in PD and apply it to my diverse students’ needs.” Another stated, “Professional development gave me strategies and caused me to reflect on my own practices.”

Table 22

Professional Development Valuable to Their Teaching

Answer	%	Count
Yes: Please explain	73.58	39
No	26.42	14
TOTAL	100	53

Administrative Supports

A Likert scale was used to elicit responses regarding specific interactions and experiences with building principals. When asked if they had communication with their building principal on a regular basis, 29 (70.74%) participants strongly agreed or agreed that they had communication on a regular basis with their building principal. Four (9.76%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and eight (19.51%), disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had communication on a regular basis with their building principal.

When asked if the building principal encouraged and set aside time for teacher collaboration, 25 (75%) participants strongly agreed or agreed that the building principal encouraged and set aside time for teacher collaboration. Three (7.5%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and seven (17.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the building principal encouraged and set aside time for teacher collaboration.

When asked if the new teachers felt supported by their principal, 30 (73.17%) participants strongly agreed or agreed they felt supported by their principal. Three (7.32%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and eight (19.15%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they felt supported by their principal.

When asked if the principal provided new teachers with resources needed for their classrooms, 24 (58.54%) participants strongly agreed or agreed that principal provided new teachers with resources need for their classrooms. Six (14.63%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and 11 (26.83%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the principal provided new teachers with resources needed for their classrooms (see Table 23).

Table 23

Administrative Supports

Question	Strongly disagree	<i>n</i>	Disagree	<i>n</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>n</i>	Agree	<i>n</i>	Strongly agree	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
I had communication with my principal on a regular basis.	4.88%	2	14.63%	6	9.76%	4	34.15%	14	36.59%	15	41
The principal encouraged and set time aside for teacher collaboration.	7.50%	3	10.00%	4	7.50%	3	45.00%	18	30.00%	12	40
I felt supported by my principal.	4.88%	2	14.63%	6	7.32%	3	34.15%	14	39.02%	16	41
My principal provided me with resources needed for my classroom.	9.76%	4	17.07%	7	14.63%	6	29.27%	12	29.27%	12	41

Overall Perception of Individual Induction Programs

Participants answered a series of questions regarding the new teachers' perceptions of the induction program in which they participated. When asked if their individual induction program helped make the transition into the classroom a smooth process, 26 (65%) strongly agreed or agreed. Seven (17.5%) participants neither agreed nor disagreed and seven (17.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the induction program did not help with the transition into the classroom.

When asked if the induction process was valuable to them as a new teacher, 26 (66.67%) strongly agreed or agreed. Eight (20.51%) participants neither agreed nor disagreed and five (12.82%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the induction program was not valuable to them as a new teacher.

When asked if their induction program provided them with support systems within the district, 27 (69.24%) strongly agreed or agreed. Nine (23.08%) participants neither agreed nor

disagreed and three (7.69%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the induction program provided support systems within the district.

When asked if the induction program was effective in helping them become a better teacher, 25 (64.1%) strongly agreed or agreed. Nine (23.08%) participants neither agreed nor disagreed and five (12.82%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the induction program did not help them become better teachers.

When asked if their induction program made them feel more competent as an educator, 28 (71.8%) strongly agreed or agreed. Seven (17.95%) participants neither agreed nor disagreed and four (10.26%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the induction program made them feel more competent as an educator.

Lastly, when asked if their induction program aided in the decision to remain a teacher, 21 (53.84%) strongly agreed or agreed. Of the remaining participants, 12 (30.77%) neither agreed nor disagreed and six (15.36%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the induction program aided in their decision to remain a teacher (see Table 24).

Participants were asked to provide information on what they perceived to be the most valuable parts of their induction program. Many stated the collaboration and support of the mentor was the most important aspect. One participant stated, “The collaboration with colleagues and administrators was a major part of this program. It helped me feel supported and prepare for my first year of teaching. I knew who to reach out to when I had any concerns.” Another explained, “Having a seasoned teacher as someone I could go to with questions was most valuable. I was also VERY lucky that my mentor’s classroom was across the hall so she was easily accessible.”

Table 24

Induction Program Perceptions

Question	Strongly disagree	<i>n</i>	Disagree	<i>n</i>	Neither agree nor disagree	<i>n</i>	Agree	<i>n</i>	Strongly agree	<i>n</i>	<i>N</i>
My induction program helped make my transition into the classroom a smooth process.	5.00%	2	12.50%	5	17.50%	7	32.50%	13	32.50%	13	40
The induction program was valuable to me as a new teacher.	5.13%	2	7.69%	3	20.51%	8	28.21%	11	38.46%	15	39
My induction program provided me with supports systems within the district.	2.56%	1	5.13%	2	23.08%	9	28.21%	11	41.03%	16	39
The induction program was effective in helping me become a better teacher.	5.13%	2	7.69%	3	23.08%	9	25.64%	10	38.46%	15	39
My induction program has made me feel more competent as an educator.	5.13%	2	5.13%	2	17.95%	7	43.59%	17	28.21%	11	39
The induction process aided in my decision to remain a teacher.	5.13%	2	10.26%	4	30.77%	12	20.51%	8	33.33%	13	39

Future Plans

The final set of questions pertained to the participants' thoughts on their future as educators. A Likert-type scale was used with *extremely likely* and *likely* combined, neither *likely* nor *unlikely* as a category, and *extremely unlikely* or *unlikely* combined.

When asked if they felt likely to remain teaching in their current school placement for the next school year, 33 (78.57%) indicated they were extremely likely or likely to remain in the same school. Eight (19.05%) participants indicated it was neither likely nor unlikely and eight

(18.23%) reported it was extremely unlikely or unlikely that they would remain in their current school for the next school year.

When asked how likely they were to transfer to a new school district the following school year, six (14.28%) answered they were extremely likely or likely to transfer to a new school district. Eight (19.05%) participants responded it was neither likely nor unlikely and 27 (66.67%) reported it was extremely unlikely or unlikely that they would transfer to a new school district the following school year.

When asked how likely it was that they would remain a teacher, 35 (85.36%) answered they were extremely likely or likely to remain a teacher. Two (4.88%) participants responded it was neither likely nor unlikely and four (9.76%) reported it was extremely unlikely or unlikely that they would remain a teacher.

When asked if they could choose their career again, would they choose teaching, 30 (85.71%) answered it was extremely likely or likely they would choose to become a teacher again. Six (14.29%) participants responded it was neither likely nor unlikely and six (14.28%) reported it was extremely unlikely or unlikely that they would choose to become a teacher if they had the chance to change their career choices (see Table 25).

Table 25

Responses to Reflective Questions

Question	Extremely unlikely	<i>n</i>	Unlikely	<i>n</i>	Neither likely nor unlikely	<i>n</i>	Likely	<i>n</i>	Extremely likely	<i>n</i>	<i>N</i>
How likely are you to remain teaching in this school next year?	11.90%	5	7.14%	3	2.38%	1	19.05%	8	59.52%	25	42
How likely are you to transfer to a new district next year?	45.24%	19	21.43%	9	19.05%	8	4.76%	2	9.52%	4	42
How likely is it that you will remain a teacher?	4.88%	2	4.88%	2	4.88%	2	19.51%	8	65.85%	27	41
How likely are you to pursue a career outside of teaching?	38.10%	16	33.33%	14	7.14%	3	14.29%	6	7.14%	3	42
If you could choose your career again, would you choose teaching?	4.76%	2	9.52%	4	14.29%	6	16.67%	7	54.76%	23	42

Summary

Chapter 4 was an exploration of the results of the overall collective data obtained through a survey sent to similarly prepared new teachers who provided information about their perceptions of their individual induction program. New teachers reported common aspects to their induction program, such as training length and mentor-teacher collaboration. New teachers also identified elements within their program that supported their “newness” as a teacher such as common planning time, the ability to watch other teachers, and the support of their administrator.

The perceived components of new teacher induction programs and the decision-making process to remain a teacher were addressed in questions throughout the survey. The majority of

the participants (21; 53.84%) indicated that their induction program aided in the decision to remain a teacher.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter is organized into several key areas. It begins with a summary of the study, followed by the purpose of the study, limitations, findings, recommendations for further research, and the implications.

Summary of the Study

Throughout the literature, participation in teacher induction programs is seen as a common factor in the success and retention of new teachers. Ingersoll (2012) claimed there is a “link between beginning teachers’ participation in induction programs and their retention” (p. 50). Yet, induction programs continue to vary from state to state, from district to district, and from school to school. According to the NTC (2016b) executive summary, states have made limited progress in creating programs that support beginning teachers (p. 1). There is not a standard script for schools to follow when training their new teachers. Some states have designed handbooks or have toolkits, suggesting supports to use during this sensitive period in a new teacher’s career, but there is still variety between experiences.

In New Jersey, where the teachers who participated in this study were prepared, districts are provided a mentoring resource toolkit that is aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers. This toolkit is a state-created resource provided for districts to use when developing and implementing their individual local mentoring program. Although there are standards that must be followed, interpretation of those standards and implementation of resources can be subjective to the developer. Local professional development committees (LPDCs) are challenged with the task of developing programs that work for their district. Again, this can lead to differing understandings and needs for individual schools and districts. The

uniqueness of individual programs and their components is evident in the perceptions of the survey participants.

A review of the literature shows mentoring to be a critical factor of induction programs. In some instances, the literature indicates that mentoring and induction are used synonymously. Yet, there are differing understandings of what the role of mentor is and limited support systems for these mentors. In New Jersey, districts are given the responsibility to select a mentor, based on a list of qualities provided in the mentoring resource toolkit. New Jersey policy regarding credentials for mentors include (a) certification in the subject area in which the beginning teacher is working; (b) three years of teaching experience and the teacher must have taught full-time for at least 2 years within the last 5 years; (c) a record of success in the classroom, including a rating of “effective or highly effective on the most recent summative evaluation”; (d) understanding of the social and workplace norms of the school district and the community it serves; and (5) understanding of the resources and opportunities available in the school district and the ability to act as a referral source to the novice provisional teacher (NJAC 6A:9C-5.1[d]).

It is suggested that new teachers are assigned a mentor at the beginning of the contracted teaching assignment. Since new teachers are not all hired on the same day, this again will vary. It is also suggested that continual professional development and supports be put in place so that the new teachers do not feel isolated and unsure of their task as educators. The variation of when mentors are assigned, collaborating with other teachers, and being able to observe other teachers were recurring themes within this study.

Purpose of the Study

This study was an examination of individual induction and mentoring experiences of new teachers conducted to identify how new teachers perceived their individual induction programs.

A primary aim of the study was to find out how new teachers perceived their beginning training and elements of such training that may or may not have had an influence on their decision to remain a teacher.

Discussion of Findings

The survey encompassed common elements of induction programs with questions used to identify new teachers' perceptions of their induction program and its elements. As a whole, it yielded responses that were grouped into common components such as new teacher training, mentoring and observing, professional development, and observations. The overall responses were analyzed with regard to the study's two research questions:

1. How do similarly prepared new teachers perceive their induction program?
2. What, if any, perceived components of new teacher induction programs aided in the decision-making process to remain in the teacher profession?

Research Question 1: How do Similarly Prepared New Teachers Perceive Their Induction Program?

The participants answered several questions regarding their opinions and perceptions about their individual induction programs. In reference to the participant responses regarding their induction program perceptions, the majority of the participants felt their induction program helped make the transition into the classroom a smooth process. The process of induction gave them the opportunity to connect with their mentors. The mentors provided an introduction to school culture, policies, and systems. The new teachers also believed it provided them with relevant information on the way their district viewed policies and important internal systems and programs within their districts. By having an understanding of what was expected of the new

teacher and some form of reference, the new teachers felt induction was helpful and an important part of their first year of teaching.

With regard to the induction program helping the new teachers become better teachers, the survey responses showed the professional development and peer collaborations helped new teachers by providing positive and critical feedback to improving their practice. New teachers were provided an opportunity to view veteran teachers in practice, allowing them to get a better understanding of how to actually teach.

The induction programs provided new teachers with valuable support systems within the district. Survey responses showed that the interaction with other teachers made the new teachers feel comfortable and supported within the district and it allowed them the opportunity to view alternate methods of teaching and garner input into teaching techniques. The survey showed support systems within the district as being a vital part of the induction process because it connected the teachers with teachers outside of their home school with whom they shared a common connection.

All aspects of the induction programs that the survey participants reported aided in the feelings of competency as an educator. The opportunity to participate in formal or informal induction programs provided new teachers with a support system to navigate their first year of teaching. Because each one of the survey participants are unique and individual, one cannot measure their actual success, yet the survey showed similarities in experiences. The survey responses also showed that the decision to remain a teacher was related to their induction program. Over 50% of the survey responses showed that the induction process aided in their decision to remain a teacher, as opposed to 15.39% stating it did not.

Research Question 2: What, if Any, Perceived Components of New Teacher Induction Programs Aided in the Decision-Making Process to Remain in the Teacher Profession?

The participants answered several questions regarding components of their individual induction program. New teacher training, interactions with their mentors and observing other teachers, collaboration among teachers, and relevant professional development were repetitive components reported. These components will be discussed in the aforementioned order.

New Teacher Training

Survey responses showed that the majority of new teachers participated in teacher training, either solely provided to new teachers or with the entire district. The 34 (64.15%) participants afforded a new teacher training session with only new teachers reported training in a variety of ways. The most common type of training these participants received was in a new teacher orientation style, lasting from 1 to 5 days. New teacher orientations were held before the start of the school year and the majority of the orientations included policy training, district benefit review, grade book review, and team building. Many new teachers found this type of training valuable. One teacher in particular stated the district provided all new teachers with a professional learning community (PLC) with other new teachers by setting up a “new teacher book club.” They met before school started and together, they chose a book on new teacher best practices. They then established a schedule to meet once per month throughout the school year to discuss topics from the book. This form of collegial collaboration is essential to the success of new teachers.

Although not all new teachers were afforded the opportunity to have a separate training only for new teachers, the remainder of the new teachers did participate in some form of in-service type of training. The majority of responses included a 2- to 3-day in-service type of

training with district staff that provided state-mandated trainings such as trauma training, Epi-pen training, harassment/intimidation/bullying (HIB) prevention training, and dyslexia training.

Mentors. As mentioned previously in this chapter, the assignment of mentors varies. Therefore, experiences with mentors are going to vary. One participant explained that “their relationship was formed in the summer, leading to great communication before officially starting the year.” Another participant stated, “She taught with me. We sat down together, discussed materials and worked together to formulate appropriate lesson plans for our students.”

Others stated that their mentors became invaluable to them and their teaching. Some mentors would coteach with their mentees and others would observe and coach their mentees through lessons. Many new teachers found the feedback from their mentors to be relevant to their practice and improvement. Other mentors were seen as support systems in the school, allowing the mentee to reach out to the mentor for information regarding school issues and district policies. The results of the survey demonstrated that the mentor was an integral part of the induction process that provided new teachers with a supportive individual to turn to when they were unsure of their teaching practice or school-related issues.

Observing. According to Bandura (1989), observational learning occurs simply by watching someone model something. Being able to watch how a teacher executes lessons and interacts with students is a crucial aspect of new teacher development. When teachers have the opportunity to observe other teachers, they are able to see different ways of teaching, how to manage time, how to manage classroom behaviors, and to be able to gain an objective view of their own teaching.

It is important to note that the majority of the survey participants (57.69%) were not provided the opportunity to observe their mentor. Similarly, the majority of participants (51.92%) were not given the opportunity to observe other teachers.

For those who had the opportunity to observe their mentors and other teachers, the experience was reported as valuable. One survey participant reported it was built into their induction program and guidelines were expected to be followed. Others were required to observe their mentor three times and then required to observe three different veteran teachers. They were scheduled by the building staff and coverage was provided for them. Each observation had a topic or area of focus regarding different aspects of teaching and classroom management. The new teachers were then afforded the opportunity to meet with these teachers after the observation to discuss what they observed.

Collaboration

Collaboration was another common aspect that the participants felt was a valuable part of their induction experiences. Being able to form relationships and connections with other people who are experiencing similar situations connects the responses of the participants to the aforementioned theoretical framework of Bandura (1989) to the socialization and collaboration of new teachers. The survey responses revealed new teachers felt comfortable collaborating with other teachers because it was done in a nonthreatening, observational type of meeting. Some participants met regularly with other teachers in their grade level and others met regularly with other new teachers. One participant stated, “It allowed for discussions about issues with particular students or whole class problems.” The ability to meet with other teachers to ask for advice is important for new teachers because it allows for varied and expert opinions on issues that are new to the new teacher. Meeting with other teachers also provides relevant input into

daily situations and problems that help to support the new teacher and, in turn, boost student success. “No matter how much teachers learn during preservice preparation, learning teaching inevitably occurs on the job” (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999, p. 4).

Professional Development

Professional development can be viewed as many things. For teachers, it is a time when teachers come together to learn something that improves their professional knowledge and aids in helping students perform at higher levels. For new teachers, professional development can be seen as a time where it is acceptable to ask questions. Professional development allows new teachers to interact and collaborate with other teachers, including veteran or new teachers. The literature clearly shows that new teachers feel isolated and overwhelmed with the tasks of learning to teach and actually teaching. Professional development can be crucial to new teachers who are still learning the nuances of the profession.

The majority of the participants (49; 92.45) reported that they had professional development throughout the school year. This professional development varied in many ways and, for the most part, was valuable. Some saw the professional development as a time structured by the school to bring teachers together when they participated in workshop-type activities. Others stated that their professional development was like a webinar and more of an online training.

One participant reported, “We had a required number of hours for professional development, and the school provided more than enough opportunities.” Another reported, in more detail, “I was part of the Literacy Collaborative initiative where we were learning the Fountas and Pinnell reading program and the Lucy Calkins writing program.” The topics of professional development varied, yet they mainly focused on literacy, student success, rigor,

gifted students, special education, and analyzing data for student growth. Despite the variety, most felt the professional development they were part of helped their teaching and the majority of the participants (45; 84.91%) found the time they spent was relevant to working with students.

However, not all new teachers felt that the professional development they had was effective. One participant stated, “During PD days, they often had the same person or people come in and build upon what they had done prior. This seems good in theory, but often it was repetitive.” Another participant explained, “Most of the professional development was geared towards the middle school teachers who were under pressure for testing.”

Recommendations

The following section includes discussion of the recommendations based upon the results of the data analysis. Two areas are highlighted: recommendations for further research and recommendations for practice.

Recommendations for Further Research

A first recommendation for further research would be to do an investigation of when mentors are assigned to new teachers and to see if it affects their relationship and teaching performance. Because of the varying time frames, it would be beneficial to see if time with mentors has an impact on practice.

Another recommendation for further research would be to examine the procedures for induction and mentor trainings. A study of these components would show how training takes place and how important elements of induction are perceived. A final recommendation for further research would be to explore the impact of new teachers who were not provided with a formal induction program.

Recommendations for Practice

Based upon the data derived from the study, the following are a few recommendations for New Jersey School districts to include in their induction programs. Districts should identify and use common language and training when introducing new teachers to their induction and/or mentoring program. Instructions for both mentor and mentee should be compiled and reviewed. This recommendation would allow the mentors and mentees to understand what is expected of them and what all elements of the induction program are meant to accomplish.

Districts should provide new teachers specific time periods to observe their mentors and other teachers. This should follow a district pre and post observation type of format. By providing new teachers the opportunities to observe veteran teachers, new teachers will gain a better understanding of the teaching process. By following district observational protocol, the new teacher will gain valuable experience in the observational process and have the opportunity to enhance their practice.

The New Jersey Department of Education should identify and create policy guidelines regarding all areas of induction. The guidelines should then be distributed to all school districts and districts should be trained on the implementation of such programs. These guidelines should include uniform training components for administrators and both mentors and mentees.

Materials should be uniform and not subject to interpretation.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include the sample population perceptions, the inconsistency of survey participant numbers, and potential misunderstanding of survey questions. First, all of the participants were former students in a small teacher preparation program, limiting the geographical scope of participants. Participants took the same courses, taught by same

professors, and one can assume they learned the same information. Therefore, they had the same base knowledge going into their first years of teaching. Also, 90% of teachers who participated in this study were employed in districts which are regionally similar. One can make a generalization that schools housed within the same geographical location have somewhat of the same types of induction programs. Although the reported school districts are somewhat geographically similar, socioeconomics and district diversity were not taken into consideration. It was also noted that 87.5% of the participants were first year teachers in New Jersey, where all new teachers were required to participate in the provisional teacher process (PTP) and all new school districts were afforded the same toolkit from the state to use as a resource. It is unknown if these limitations may have skewed the results of the study.

Second, inconsistency in participants arose when analyzing the survey data. Initial survey data were gathered from 72 new teachers of the possible 358 new teachers who were offered the opportunity to participate, yielding a 20% participation rate. Midway through the survey, the number of participants dropped from 72 initial participants to 52, yielding a 14.5% participation rate for survey completion. It is unknown why there was a discrepancy between the number of participants who started the survey and who completed.

Lastly, survey data showed misunderstandings regarding what specific questions meant and this may have skewed the data reported. The reported data produced several questions using the term *induction* and this may have caused some confusion. For example, for one survey question that asked if they had participated in a formal induction program, a participant responded, "I had an induction into Kappa Delta Pi," which is an honor society for which inductions are held during college. Misunderstanding the term *induction* might have arisen from the synonymous use of the terms *mentor* and *induction*. Participants might not have understood

the difference. Further research would benefit from a larger sample size with regard to geographical location and preparation of candidates or a more clear definition of terms used in the survey.

Conclusions

Research has linked students' success to the success of their teachers. Therefore, teacher induction and mentoring programs are essential to the success of new teachers. New teachers, regardless of their school, share common experiences during their first few years of teaching. Some are able to navigate through this relatively undocumented time period and continue on to a successful career in education. Others, roughly 50%, leave teaching before they complete their fifth year. By providing new teacher induction and mentoring programs that are structured and supportive, we are giving new teachers the tools they need for longevity.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY

The purpose of this study is to identify similarly prepared new teacher's perceptions of their induction programs and to understand what impact, if any, their induction had on their desire to remain in the teaching profession. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and there are no personal identifying questions, assuring the participants anonymity.

Consent to participate in this study is indicated by completing and submitting the online survey to the researcher.

Name of Study: Induction Program Survey for Teachers in their First Five Years

Please answer:

Demographics:

I am: ____male ____female

Years in teaching: 1 2 3 4 5 (circle one)

Age at completion of this survey:

21-30_____

31-40_____

41-50_____

51-60_____

61+_____

Other than student teaching, Practicum I and Practicum II while attending Rutgers University, how many other practicum/observational experiences did you have?

None_____

1-2_____

3-4_____

5 or more_____

What is your school's zip code? _____

What would you consider your district?

Public-Suburban_____

Public-Urban_____

Charter-Suburban_____

Charter-Urban_____

Current teaching placement:

____Early Childhood PK-3

____Elementary K-5

____Departmentalized elementary school

Subject area_____

Middle School

Subject area_____

High School

Subject area_____

Special Education

Level _____

Area_____

Inclusion_____

Self-contained_____

Did you receive a formal induction program?

Yes No

If yes, please continue.

Characteristics of your induction program: (Please circle yes or no)

1. I attended a separate in-service/training for new teachers-prior to the start of the school year. Yes No
 - a. If yes, what did this entail?

2. I attended an in-service/training with the all teachers-prior to the start of the school year.
Yes No
 - a. If yes, what did this entail?

3. I received a district New Teacher Handbook-prior to the start of the year.
Yes No
4. I was provided curriculum resources for the subjects I teach-prior to the start of the school year. Yes No
5. I was given explanation of such resources-prior to the start of the year.
Yes No
6. I was assigned a mentor.
Yes No
7. I was assigned my mentor-prior to the start of the school year.
Yes No
 - a. If yes, please explain by who and when?

8. I was able to meet with my mentor-prior to the start of the school year.
Yes No

- a. If yes, what did you discuss?

9. I was given time to observe my mentor.
Yes No
- a. How many times did you observe your mentor?

- b. Did you observe your mentor teaching a lesson? Please describe what you saw:

10. I was given time to observe other teachers.
Yes No
- a. If yes, what did this entail?

11. I was provided time to collaborate with other teachers.
Yes No
- a. If yes, how often and was it helpful?

12. My mentor explained the schools' observation system.
Yes No
- a. If yes, what did this entail?

13. My mentor observed me in a non-evaluative environment.
Yes No
- a. If yes, what did this entail?

14. My mentor observed and coached me through a lesson(s).
Yes No
- a. If yes, what did this entail?

15. My mentor was housed in the same building as me.
Yes No
- a. If no, where was your mentor housed?

Professional Development

11. I participated in on-going professional development throughout the school year.
Yes No
a. If yes, what did it entail? _____
12. The professional development I received was gear towards new teachers.
Yes No
a. If yes, what did it entail? _____
13. The professional development I received was relevant to working with students.
Yes No
a. If yes, what did it entail? _____
14. Professional development helped me network with other teachers.
Yes No
a. If yes, please explain. _____
15. I found professional development valuable to my teaching.
Yes No

Please rate your response to the following question using the following rating scale statements:

- 1-Strongly Disagree
- 2-Disagree
- 3-Neither Agree or Disagree
- 4-Agree
- 5-Strongly agree

Induction

16. My induction program helped make my transition into the classroom a smooth process.
1 2 3 4 5
a. Please explain how: _____

17. The induction program was effective in helping me become a better teacher.

1 2 3 4 5

a. Please explain how: _____

18. The induction process was valuable to me as a new teacher.

1 2 3 4 5

a. Please explain why: _____

19. The induction process aided in my decision to remain a teacher.

1 2 3 4 5

a. Please explain why: _____

20. What parts of the induction program do you feel were the most valuable?

Mentor

21. My mentor made me feel welcome.

1 2 3 4 5

22. My mentor provided knowledge about the district.

1 2 3 4 5

23. My mentor provided information about my school.

1 2 3 4 5

24. The support of my mentor provided helped me as a new teacher.

1 2 3 4 5

25. My mentor explained the district's philosophy in a way I could understand.

1 2 3 4 5

26. My mentor modeled or demonstrated skills that were helpful.

1 2 3 4 5

27. The feedback my mentor gave me was constructive.

1 2 3 4 5

28. My mentor helped with lesson preparation prior to formal observations.

1 2 3 4 5

29. The interactions I had with my mentor enhanced my teaching.

1 2 3 4 5

30. My mentor was understanding of my needs as a beginning teacher.

1 2 3 4 5

31. My relationship with my mentor was trustworthy.

1 2 3 4 5

32. My mentor was well-trained and prepared for their role as my mentor.

1 2 3 4 5

33. My mentor was easily accessible and available when I needed them.

1 2 3 4 5

34. My mentor was a valuable part of my induction experience.

1 2 3 4 5

Administrative

35. I had communication with my principal on a regular basis.

1 2 3 4 5

36. The principal encouraged and set time aside for teacher collaboration.

1 2 3 4 5

37. I felt supported by my principal.

1 2 3 4 5

38. My principal provided me with resources needed for my classroom.

1 2 3 4 5

Overall Satisfaction with my induction program

39. My induction program provided me with support systems within the district.

1 2 3 4 5

40. My induction program has made me feel more competent as an educator.

1 2 3 4 5

Future plans:

Please rate your response to the following question using the following rating scale

statements:

1-Extremely Unlikely

2-Unlikely

3-Neither Agree Nor Disagree

4-Likely

5-Extremely Likely

41. How likely are you to remain teaching in this school next year?

1 2 3 4 5

42. How likely are you to transfer to a new district next year?

1 2 3 4 5

43. How likely will you remain a teacher?

1 2 3 4 5

44. How likely are you to pursue a career outside of teaching?

1 2 3 4 5

45. If you could choose your career again, would you choose teaching?

1 2 3 4 5

46. Did you participate in the NJ Provisional Teacher Program (PTP) outside of your district? Yes No

Please explain:

47. Was this process helpful?

Yes No

Please explain:

Thank you for your participation in this survey. If you would like more information,
please feel free to contact anne.mcgeehan@rutgers.edu.

Survey questions were derived from multiple sources:

Self-generated

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<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dissertations/AAI3163994>

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Lawrason, Paula D [Teacher induction programs: An examination of how they influence teacher retention](#) (2008)

Capella University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2008. 3315217.

APPENDIX B: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

March 12, 2018

Dear Dr. Sara Becker,

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at Rutgers University, Camden Campus, Teacher Preparation Department. I am currently enrolled in the Seton Hall University Doctoral program in K-12 Administration in South Orange, NJ and I am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled *New Teacher's Perception of their Induction Program*.

As a teacher preparation educator, and an educator who teaches using the INTASC standards for effective educators, you are aware of the studies that link the academic success of students to the quality of teacher training. Once your students leave your program they are subject to the various induction programs offered by their hiring district under the TEACHNJ Act of 2012. It is my desire to understand the aspects of these induction programs to help understand teacher attrition.

In order to conduct this research, I need to be granted access to emails of student who completed your program between 2011 and 2016. These emails will be used to send a survey asking former students about their individual induction program. They will be able to respond to the survey via an anonymous link and requests for a face to face interview will be done voluntarily. If approval is granted, the data utilized in the study will remain confidential and anonymous. No costs will be incurred by school districts or participants to conduct this research. The completed dissertation will be reviewed and evaluated by the Seton Hall University mentor, Dr. Michael Kuchar. Upon completion of the project, I will provide a written report to you, the Director of Teacher Preparation.

The research study will provide preservice educators and school districts with valuable information about what individual teachers perceive as valuable induction protocol. Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I would be happy to meet with you to answer any questions or concerns that you may have regarding this study. If you agree, kindly submit a letter of permission on your letterhead acknowledging your consent for me to conduct this study in the district.

I would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Respectfully,

Anne McGeehan
Doctoral Candidate
Seton Hall University

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



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April 20, 2018

Dear Mrs. McGeehan:

Please accept this letter as permission to conduct part of your doctoral research study through the Rutgers Camden Teacher Preparation Program. Once you have obtained IRB approval at both Seton Hall University and through Rutgers University, you may have access to the contact information of our program completers. You may use this contact information to solicit their participation in your research study.

Good Luck in your study!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara M. Becker".

Sara M. Becker
Director, Teacher Preparation Program