2014

A Qualitative Study Of Stakeholders' Beliefs About The Elements Of Teacher Induction Programs Most Effective In Increasing Teacher Competence

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF STAKEHOLDERS' BELIEFS ABOUT THE ELEMENTS OF TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAMS MOST EFFECTIVE IN INCREASING TEACHER COMPETENCE

A Dissertation

Presented to

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies

Department of Educational Leadership

Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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August 2014

Keywords: Elements of teacher inductions programs, increasing teacher competence

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ABSTRACT

―The ultimate purpose of any school is the success and achievement of its students" (Wong, 2004a, p. 41). As studies confirm ―teacher and teaching quality [as one of] the most powerful predictors of student success" (Wong, 2004a, p. 41) in an educational setting, research about the experiences of beginning teachers and teacher induction programs continues to emerge. Consequently, as induction programs continue to grow and change to meet the various needs of beginning teachers across our nation, efforts to determine if desired results are being achieved must be considered. Therefore, the beliefs and perceptions of various stakeholders concerning the elements of induction programs and induction practices that are considered to be the most effective in increasing teacher competence are of great importance. This qualitative case study described beginning teachers', mentors', building-level administrators', and program coordinators' beliefs about the elements of induction programs and induction practices perceived to be the most effective for increasing teacher competence. More specifically, it examined their beliefs regarding the importance of a comprehensive induction program that embodies the key components of a ―lifelong professional development program to keep [all] teachers improving toward increasing their effectiveness" (Wong, 2004a, p. 42). Through the use of individual interviews, insight was gained about the views and opinions of stakeholders concerning teacher induction programs in two school districts located in Indiana. In the analysis of data, five distinct themes emerged from this case study. Not surprisingly, induction programs varied across school districts, but they also shared common characteristics, practices, and goals. The

role of the mentoring process is to provide support to new or beginning teachers. In addition, the mentoring process is perceived to be one of the most effective components of new teacher induction programs. Stakeholders believed professional development offered through induction programs builds skills that result in student achievement. Finally, teacher induction programs help districts prepare, support, and retain new teachers.

DEDICATION

To My Grandmother Madeline:

A courageous, beautiful, and gracious woman who never faltered in believing in me. She taught me to love deeply and truly, embrace life each day, hold tight to my beliefs, and always cherish family and loved ones. These pearls of wisdom are gifts that will remain with me forever.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"Time is a companion that goes with us on a journey. It reminds us to cherish each moment, because it will never come again. What we leave behind is not as important as how we have lived."

-Jean Luc Picard (Berman, 1994)

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to the many individuals who assisted me throughout this journey.

Thank you, Mom and Dad, for your never-ending love and support. Dad, you gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person: you believed in me. Although I am certain I inherited many of your admirable qualities, I am thankful to have received the trait of perseverance. You are the wisest man I have ever known, and I am proud to be your daughter. Mom, you are my hero. You are strong, wise, and gracious. You taught me to keep hope in my pocket, you showed me how to give freely from the heart, and you inspired me to be courageous and bold. I hope that someday I am a mere reflection of the amazing mother you have always been to me. I love you both dearly.

I would like to thank my husband for his continued love and encouragement. His support helped make the completion of this goal a reality.

Wishes of love go to my sweet daughter, Hadley. You are amazing, beautiful, and brilliant. You have sacrificed precious time that I can never replace but will not be forgotten. You fill every moment of my life with grace. I love you big as the sky . . . to the moon and back.

Deep gratitude is extended to Dr. Robert Boyd, doctoral committee chairman, who gave of his expertise, guidance, and time as he patiently walked me through this process step by step.

I would like to recognize and express my deepest appreciation to doctoral committee members, Dr. Lee Harman and Dr. Gregory Ulm, for their guidance and assistance throughout this process. The insights provided by each of you were invaluable.

A special thanks to Judith Barnes for her assistance in formatting and editing the final draft of my study. The times she expressed her belief in my endeavor will always be remembered.

One does not achieve alone; therefore, gratitude is extended to Dr. Deborah Howe, Dr. Sherry Grate, Dr. Steve Yager, Dr. Dave McGuire, Dr. Gloria Shamanoff, Dr. Diana Showalter, Dr. Bradley Balch, Mr. Wayne Barker, Ms. Rhonda Beecroft, and Mrs. Leslie Ballard. Each of you provided me with the encouragement, inspiration, and motivation to see this project to completion.

Fellow doctoral students will be remembered fondly. I am thankful for the many friendships that have been forged with colleagues as we worked cooperatively toward our common goals.

I wish to thank the educators who willingly assisted with this study, particularly the teachers, mentors, principals, program coordinators, and superintendents whose cooperation and assistance were essential to the completion of this project.

The better part of one‘s life consists of friendships. I am truly grateful for the many friends in my life who give of their love and laughter. Your continued faith in me lifted my spirits and gave me the courage to achieve a personal goal. A special thanks to Terry Pierce and

Carla Milliman for always bringing out the best in me. A true friend is a forever friend and I thank God for the blessing of your friendship each and every day.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The teachers hired today are the teachers for the next generation; accordingly, they represent the future of education. Their success will undoubtedly dictate the success or failure of decades of students. It is estimated that over two million new K-12 teachers will enter the employment ranks in the United States ~~–o~~ver the next decade due to increased student enrollments, reduction in class size initiatives, and accelerating retirements among an aging teacher population" (Weiss & Weiss, 1999, p. 1). Although others have argued the numbers are far smaller, similar estimates purport that schools in the United States should plan to hire anywhere from approximately 2 million to 3 million new educators over the next 10 years (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). In addition, over one-third of these new teachers will be employed to teach in low-wealth, urban- and rural-school districts with the majority of these in inner city public schools with large minority student enrollments of at least 20% (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). Clearly, millions of new teachers will be expected to educate a more diverse student population than previously found in the United States, meet the strongest accountability expectations at both the federal and state levels, and ensure *all* students succeed. As districts and schools across the United States look forward to a new generation of teachers, this situation presents not only challenges but opportunities for educators to begin their careers with new and emergent skills using the best practices and research about effective teaching.

Unfortunately, first-year teachers ~~a~~re frequently left to succeed or fail within the confines of their [own] classrooms [in a] _lost at sea‘ or _sink or swim‘ position” (Ingersoll, 2012, p. 47), feeling isolated, emotionally disconnected, and longing for professional development. Consequently, many beginning teachers have difficulties applying their pedagogical learning to real-life situations in the classroom during their first year of teaching (Weiss & Weiss, 1999). In fact, ~~m~~oving from teacher-in-training to teacher-in-charge represents so painful a period in the professional lives of new teachers that it has its own name: _reality shock‘” (Rogers & Babinski, 1999, p. 38). However, this term does not sufficiently describe the challenging and ~~p~~erplexing experiences new teachers face in school each day because it suggests that it is only a very short shock . . . like a swimmer who must acclimatize to cold water” (Veenmen as cited in Rogers & Babinski, 1999, p. 38). However, researchers contend the ~~r~~eality shock that new teachers endure is the assimilation of a complex reality that forces itself incessantly upon the beginning teacher day in and day out” (Rogers & Babinski, 1999, p. 38). In fact, the realities of novice teaching usually revolve around the themes of ~~r~~eality shock, the lonely struggle to survive, and a loss of idealism” (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, p. 28).

Loneliness, lack of support, as well as physical and social isolation further exacerbate the problems. It seems that ~~a~~lmost without exception, teachers work in settings where the actual structure of the school building precludes much interaction among adults” (Harris, 1995, p. 16). Britzman (1986) maintained that the ~~i~~nvisible walls‘ created by the _culture of teaching‘ promote privacy and autonomy within the teaching profession” (p. 39). Given the sociocultural context of most schools, it is easy to ~~u~~nderstand why beginning teachers feel isolated and are [apprehensive] to reveal uncertainties about their practice and [their reluctance] to ask for

assistance for fear of appearing inadequate or incompetent" (Rogers & Babinski, 1999, p. 39). Indeed, some researchers contend that beginning teachers routinely –end up in the most challenging and difficult assignments, akin to a _trial by fire'" (Ingersoll, 2012, p. 47).

Further confounding the educational landscape is the profession's ongoing –brain drain, the steady loss of teachers who, after a relatively short period of time in the classroom, abandon the profession [of teaching and opt] instead for jobs that offer more financial reward or, [from their perspective], simply less stress" (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000, p. 2). Some estimates purport that over 30% of new teachers leave the profession in their first five years of teaching, and in low-income schools the percentage can be as much as 50% or higher than affluent schools (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Other statistics reveal that teachers leave education at a rate of nearly 50% within the first five years and 80% after only 10 years (Boreen & Niday, 2000). Still others –econtend the attrition rates of first-year teachers have increased by about one-third in the last two decades" (Ingersoll, 2012, p. 49). Current estimates indicate –l57,000 teachers [leave] the field each year [with more than] 232,000 others changing schools in search of better working conditions in [wealthier], higher-performing schools" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008, p. 1).

Consequently, working conditions also play a large role in explaining teacher transfers among schools and districts or simply leaving the profession altogether. In one analysis of teacher turnover, job dissatisfaction or new-job pursuits were cited more frequently as a reason for leaving than retirement with 38.1% of public school teachers indicating a better teaching assignment was the deciding factor (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). Moreover, in a recent MetLife Survey of the American Teacher (2005), it was found that a clear correlation exists between quality school relationships and an increased rate of retention for teachers.

Teachers indicating ―they were likely to leave the profession were also more likely to express dissatisfaction with their relationships with parents, administrators and students" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008, p. 2).

It is not uncommon for beginning teachers to receive assignments in low-ability classes, to have multiple preparations for different subjects or classes, to be mobile during the day moving from classroom to classroom, or to have a heavy extracurricular load. There is no wonder, as Fideler and Haselkorn (1999) found, that current estimates are more than 40% of public school teachers leave the profession within the first three years and approximately 9% leave before completing their first year. Countless professions provide a supervised induction period. Beginning teachers, on the other hand, are often left on their own without assistance, moral support, or feedback and to solve their own entry-level quandaries. As a result, education has come to be known by some as ―the profession that eats its young" (Angelle, 2002, p. 15).

―Over the last three decades, researchers have become increasingly interested in the experiences of beginning teachers and structured induction programs as a means of transitioning them into the teaching profession" (Serpell, 2000, p. 1). Historically, induction programs have been envisioned and utilized as a way of eliminating the difficulties of first-year teachers by compensating for what has been seen as the failure of educator preparation programs in preparing teachers for rigors of actual practice (Serpell, 2000). Although conceptualizations of teacher induction programs have

> evolved and changed with increasing interest in the topic, induction continues to be understood in broad terms as a helping mechanism for beginning teachers. This mechanism has four primary goals: resolving beginning teachers' predictable concerns;

> socializing the teacher into the school culture; improving teaching skills; and insuring teachers‘ professional development. (Serpell, 2000, p. 2)

Moreover, the ―teaching profession regards induction as the first step in staff development, as a link between student teacher and professional, and as the cable of communication between state agencies and school districts, between public policy makers and teachers‘ organizations" (Hall, 1982, p. 53). Huling-Austin (1985) previously stated that the greatest outcome obtainable through the majority of induction programs is to provide beginning teachers the essential support and assistance required to begin their careers with the capacity, knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become capable teachers.

―Numerous studies document the value of teacher induction programs and describe multiple prototypes of implementation" (Weiss & Weiss, 1999, p. 1). The benefits of induction programs have clearly pointed toward reduced attrition among teachers and enhanced teaching capacity among beginning teachers as well as mentors (Weiss & Weiss, 1999).

> New teachers, in particular, are at risk of leaving the profession within their first year of teaching if they are unprepared and unsupported. In fact, it is estimated that within the span of five years – the average time it takes for teachers to maximize their students‘ learning – half of all new teachers will have exited the profession. (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008, p. 5)

For this reason alone, ensuring that beginning teachers have the supports necessary to succeed and achieve is critical (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). Given that preparing and retaining quality teachers is essential to improve the teaching force and the quality of education, as well as crucial in meeting the objectives of the 2001 Elementary and Secondary Education Act through the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers, many states have mandated teacher

induction programs to insure that beginning teachers are adequately prepared to meet the demands of the teaching profession (National Education Association Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

"The ultimate purpose of any school is the success and achievement of its students. Therefore, any efforts made must [focus on] student achievement and performance. Substantial research confirms teacher and quality are the most powerful predictors of student success" (Wong, 2004a, p. 41). In essence, what the teacher knows and can do in the classroom serves as the single greatest factor related to student achievement. Effective teachers expect and achieve improved achievement gains regardless of curriculum, pedagogy, or reading strategy. There is indubitably a need for a planned, organized orientation procedure for teachers to help them successfully complete their first year of teaching. Furthermore, Wong (2004a) contended the goal of keeping a good teacher relies exclusively on a structured, sustained, intensive professional development program where all teachers share together, grow together, and learn to respect each other's work.

New teachers typically demonstrate an idealism and excitement about teaching. The role of the teacher is often romanticized, and new teachers' entire focus revolves around wanting to make a difference in the lives of the students in their classrooms. When confronted with public criticism, little administrative or peer support, low morale, and the isolation inherent in the culture of teaching, many new teachers become disillusioned and begin to withdraw from others, which can result in them leaving the profession entirely (Mauer & Zimmerman, 2000). New teacher induction programs not only have the potential to increase the retention inexperienced teachers but also help promote personal and professional vitality (Darling-Hammond & Cobb,

1996). Therefore, "what is important in the life of a new teacher is the presence of a well-articulated, coherent, lifelong professional development program" (Wong, 2004a, p.48). Although much has been documented regarding the common characteristics or components of an effective induction program, successful induction practices, and the crucial role of mentoring as part of the induction process, the collection of data and analysis to determine a program's results are often overlooked. As induction programs continue to grow and change to meet the various needs of beginning teachers across the nation, efforts to determine if desired results are being achieved must also be considered. Therefore, the beliefs and perceptions of beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and coordinators concerning the elements of induction programs and induction practices that are considered to be the most effective in increasing teacher competence are of great importance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore and identify elements of induction programs and induction practices perceived by beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the persons responsible for the coordination and implementation of the induction program in two school districts as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence. More specifically, it examined the professional and personal beliefs of beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the program coordinators regarding the importance of a comprehensive induction program that embodies the key components of a "lifelong professional development program to keep [all] teachers improving toward increasing their effectiveness" (Wong, 2004a, p. 42). By focusing on the beliefs and values of beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the program coordinators, this study was conducted to

1. Determine the level of program satisfaction by stakeholders regarding each district‘s current induction practices;
2. Bring into view those beliefs of stakeholders, both professional and personal, that will provide each district with feedback in preparing new teachers for the challenges of their profession by responding to their concerns;
3. Shed light on what elements of each induction program are perceived as being the most effective in increasing teacher competence in the classroom;
4. Examine the components of teacher induction programs perceived as playing a role in the effectiveness of beginning teachers considering the different cultures and dynamics inherently found in elementary versus secondary buildings; and
5. Contribute to the growing body of literature regarding teacher induction programs and their role in increasing teacher quality.

Research Questions

The research question of significance for this study was, ―Are there elements of teacher induction programs and induction practices perceived by stakeholders as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence?” The following questions were used to guide the interview process:

1. Is there a well-articulated induction plan for newly hired teachers ―that includes professional development goals and the long-term plans of the district” (Wong, 2004a, p. 54)?
2. What are the beginning teachers‘, mentors‘, building- level administrators‘, and coordinators‘ beliefs about the purpose of a new teacher induction program (Wong, 2004b)?

3. What elements of induction programs or induction practices are currently included in the district‘s induction program (Wong, 2004b)?
4. What is the role of the mentor or the mentoring process in the district‘s induction program (Ganser, 2002b)?
5. What are the beginning teachers‘, mentors‘, building-level administrators‘, and coordinators‘ beliefs on the effectiveness of the district‘s induction plan in increasing teacher competence (Wong, 2004a)?
6. Does the induction program include ―professional development to build teacher skills that will result in student achievement‖ (Wong, 2004a, p. 55)?
7. What supports or services are made available to newly hired teachers to nurture them to become more effective teachers (Moir, 2003)?
8. Which components of the induction program or induction practices do the beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and program coordinators perceive to be the most effective for increasing teacher competence (Moir, 2003)?
9. What do the beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and program coordinators perceive to be the components or induction practices needed to improve the quality of induction programs (Moir, 2003)?

Significance of the Study

―The era of isolated teaching is over‖ (Wong, 2004a, p. 51). ―Good teaching thrives in a collaborative learning environment‖ (Wong, 2004a, p. 51), where the responsibility for improved student achievement is shared by all stakeholders in a high-performance culture. Induction must be considered a key phase of a teacher‘s development to ensure professional effectiveness. Therefore, a coherent, comprehensive induction process must provide beginning teachers the

—professional and instructional support [they] need in developing collaborative relationships with colleagues; handling the demands and expectations of [parents], students, and the school community; and providing assistance with teaching practices, instructional strategies, and [curriculum]" (Wong, 2004a). Although no one-size-fits-all effective induction program has been developed, school districts can benefit from existing successful models found across the nation (Wong, 2004a).

As school districts face the challenge of redesigning methods of curriculum and instruction to improve achievement for all students under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002), studies continue to confirm —that teacher and [teacher] quality are the most powerful predictors of student success" (Wong, 2004a, p. 41). —Improving student achievement boils down to the [classroom] teacher" (Wong, 2004a, p. 41). Consequently, the need for school districts to develop, implement, examine, and redesign quality induction programs that generate effective teachers becomes increasingly important. This study was conducted to bring to light the beliefs and perceptions of beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the program coordinators of two school corporations in Indiana concerning their induction programs. It not only explored the elements of teacher induction programs and induction practices perceived by stakeholders as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence but also provided the districts with feedback in preparing new teachers for the challenges of their profession by responding to their concerns.

Assumptions

A qualitative case study approach was used for this research. The selection of this framework for design was based upon three considerations: the research problem, my personal experiences, and the audience for whom this research was written. Numerous studies document

the common characteristics or components of an effective induction program and successful induction practices; however, the collection of data and analysis to determine a program‘s results is often overlooked. The research problem for this study was to explore and identify those elements of induction programs and practices that are perceived by various stakeholders as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence. Given that increasing teacher competence is a perceived result of a successful induction program and this type of data is often overlooked, a qualitative case study approach had merit. Case study research is exploratory in nature and beneficial when little research is able to identify the important factors to examine (Creswell, 2003). In considering my personal experience, a qualitative case study approach supported my strengths of a literary form of writing as well as my experiences in conducting interviews and making observations (Creswell, 2003). It allowed me to be innovative and creative. It also allowed me to pursue a topic of personal interest. Finally, researchers are sensitive to their audiences (Creswell, 2003). Potential audiences for this particular study may include doctoral committees, journal readers, participants of the study, or colleagues in the field. This study yielded results, findings, and conclusions significant to school district administrators, building-level principals, program coordinators, and mentoring teachers as they work to develop and implement successful teacher induction programs. A qualitative case study approach contributes to the growing body of literature regarding teacher induction programs and their role in increasing teacher quality as well as provides potential audiences documented research on the topic. In addition, a case study approach brought into view those beliefs of stakeholders, both professional and personal, that provided the participating districts feedback in preparing new teachers for the challenges of their profession by responding to their concerns. Taking into consideration the level of satisfaction by stakeholders regarding each district‘s current induction

practices is also beneficial data the participating districts might opt to utilize in making modifications to their programs.

Although educational researchers have only recently adopted qualitative methods of study, many qualitative research studies exist in the field of education (Creswell, 2003). Researchers increasingly support the concept that qualitative research can be distinguished from quantitative research through numerous characteristics. Qualitative research occurs in natural settings and the data are a form that is rich and descriptive. That is, the data are reported in words rather than numbers (Creswell, 2003). Participant perceptions and experiences are the focus of qualitative research as the researcher attempts to reconstruct the subjects' realities through meanings and interpretations of human data. Objectivity and truthfulness are sought through "believability based on coherence and insight through a process of verification rather than traditional validity and reliability measures" (Creswell, 2003, p. 199).

Qualitative research is based upon the following assumption: "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). Merriam (1998) shared the design of a case study is to elicit in-depth meaning and understanding of the participants involved. "The interest is in the process rather than the outcomes, the context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gained from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and further research" (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). Qualitative research is investigative in that the researcher gathers data and then analyzes, compares, and contrasts this information as themes and patterns emerge. Specifically, case studies permit the researcher to explore in depth a program bounded by time and activity using a variety of data collection procedures (Creswell, 2003). For this particular research, a case study approach permitted me to gather timely information from beginning teachers and their mentors in a single

school year. Furthermore, a case study approach gave me firsthand experience with participants; I recorded information as it was revealed, and it provided an opportunity for the participants to directly share their reality with me (Creswell, 2003).

Limitations

Given a qualitative case study was used for this research, the findings and analysis of the data gathered may be interpreted somewhat differently. The knowledge base this study sought to find is the patterns and themes of beliefs of the participants. I collected and interpreted open-ended predetermined questions and additional questions that emerged during scheduled interviews. In conducting qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data, and as he or she is limited by being human, mistakes can be made and personal bias may interfere (Merriam, 1998). Unlike quantitative research designs with set procedures and protocol, qualitative research is without structure to adapt to events and change direction. "Because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human, all observations and analyses are filtered through the human being's worldview, values, and perspective" (Merriam, 1998, p. 22).

Delimitations

This study was confined to two school corporations in Indiana. The time frame established during which data was collected was the 2007-2008 school year.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, significant terms are defined as follows:

Beginning or *new teacher* is anyone in his or her first full-time teaching position or anyone who is returning to the profession after several years' absence.

Beginning or *new teacher induction* is a systematic effort to initiate, shape, and sustain the first work experiences of prospective teachers.

"Induction is 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, 2004a, p. 42).

Mentoring is a ~~n~~urturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development" (Cuddapah, 2002, p. 3). Mentoring is considered an element of the induction process.

Mentoring relationships are ~~s~~haped by the activities that the beginning teacher and mentor participate in together, such as observation, co-teaching, and lesson planning" (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2014a, para. 3).

New teacher orientation is an orientation program that ~~b~~egins the comprehensive induction program. It provides an opportunity to learn key information about the district and school" (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2014b, p. 3).

Principal is a professional employee who serves as the school administrative head.

Staff are all school employees, including classified members, certified members, and school administrators.

Program coordinator is a professional employee who is responsible for the coordination and implementation of new teacher orientation and/or the teacher induction program.

Support teams connect the beginning teacher with a network of experienced teachers, as well as their mentors assistance and guidance.

Teacher is a certified professional employee teaching in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten through 12th grade.

Summary and Organization of the Study

This study was designed to examine in depth the beliefs of beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and program coordinators regarding the elements of teacher induction programs and induction practices perceived to be the most effective in increasing teacher competence. A qualitative research method was used to best explore the beliefs and perceptions of stakeholders participating in the study. A case study design was used to examine beginning teachers', mentors', building-level administrators', and the program coordinators' beliefs in two school districts. Semi-structured questions were used to collect data and information, with open-ended questions and probes to allow the participants' views to emerge. The results were analyzed, compared, and contrasted for themes and patterns. This study was conducted to provide me and other educational professionals with data and insight on the development and implementation of effective, successful teacher induction programs and practices that become well-articulated lifelong professional development programs for beginning teachers.

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction for the study, a statement of the problem, the significance of the study, research questions, definition of terms, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and a summary and organization of the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of related literature. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and design, instruments used, and methods of analysis. Chapter 4 presents findings to questions posed in Chapter 1. Chapter 5 shares a summary of the findings, conclusions, and a discussion of the implications of those findings.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

New teachers will be entering schools in the United States in record numbers over the next 10 years due to increased, ~~–s~~ometimes quite dramatic, school enrollment in many parts of the United States, the large-scale retirement of teachers hired during the 1960s and 1970s, and the promulgation of educational policies that [dictate] class size restrictions" (Ganser, 2002a, p. 27). In fact, statistics regarding the education profession are most concerning. A number of studies indicate ~~–A~~merican school systems [will] need to hire an average of 200,000 K-12 teachers over the next 10 years; in the urban and rural areas with high rates of poverty, this figure jumps to a need to hire nearly 700,000 teachers" (Angelle, 2002, p. 15).

Unfortunately, the projections regarding new teachers are even more disturbing. Although many ~~–w~~ill enter the ranks with enthusiasm, statistics indicate that new teachers tend to leave the profession at a rate of almost 50% after five years and 80% after 10 years" (Boreen & Niday, 2000, p. 152). Additional studies affirm that ~~–3~~0% of new teachers—up to 50% in urban schools—leave their jobs within three years and nearly 9% quit before even [completing] their first year" (Black, 2001, p. 46). Moreover, some researchers purport the annual attrition rate for beginning teachers to be double of experienced teachers (Angelle, 2002). The National Center for Education Statistics has asserted that approximately 15% of all schools, both public and

private, will have difficulty filling teaching vacancies with qualified teachers and will have to address these critical vacancies with substitutes (as cited in Angelle, 2002).

—In addition, what we know about who is coming into the teaching profession shows [teachers] have changed [tremendously] from an early college graduate planning a lifetime career to those seeking temporary public service or older professionals shifting their careers" (Ganser, 2002b, p. 28). In the past, people generally entered teaching as a lifetime career, but today, many beginning teachers view teaching as a public service commitment limited to a few years; therefore, today's new teachers tend to be older and more educated. Consequently, a growing proportion of beginning teachers are being prepared through alternative routes rather than traditional four-year programs (Ganser, 2002c). In fact, Ganser (2002c) purported that in less than two decades, more than 50% of beginning teachers have moved into teaching from an occupation outside the field of education, compared to about 11% for their undergraduate counterparts. Such daunting facts make it imperative that the focus should be toward not only welcoming new teachers to the profession but also socializing and retaining them as well.

—Isolated and emotionally disconnected with no one to turn to" (Mauer & Zimmerman, 2000, p. 26)—this is the way many beginning teachers describe their first experiences in the classroom. No wonder so many leave the profession within the first few years (Mauer & Zimmerman, 2000). Moir (2003) described five different phases frequently experienced by beginning teachers. Understanding these phases may very well help administrators and experienced teachers recognize areas that need to be addressed to retain quality teachers in the profession.

The first phase, known as the anticipation phase, continues through the first few weeks of actual teaching. The role of the teacher is often romanticized and teachers are characterized as

being extremely idealistic and wanting to make a difference. The survival phase occurs next, whereby beginning teachers become inundated by situations and problems they did not anticipate. They also find it takes an enormous amount of time and energy to be adequately prepared on a daily basis for the teaching and learning process (Mauer & Zimmerman, 2000). Within the first two months of teaching, beginning teachers may experience disenchantment, referred to as the disillusionment phase. Stressful events such as parent conferences and evaluations can be overwhelming. Many begin to question themselves and wonder if they chose the best profession to pursue. If they survive until through the first semester, beginning teachers have the opportunity to rest, pursue personal interests, and organize and prepare themselves. Therefore, they are more comfortable dealing with problems as they begin the last half of the school year. This characterizes the rejuvenation phase (Mauer & Zimmerson, 2000). The last phase, called the reflection phase, takes place toward the end of the school year. Beginning teachers begin to reflect on which practices were or were not successful. They consider altering teaching strategies, classroom management, and curriculum for the following school year, which brings them back to the first phase—anticipation (Mauer & Zimmerman, 2000).

History of Mentor Programs

Unfortunately, rather than building a collegial network that was desired, beginning teachers describe feelings of isolation.

> The cellular nature of schools causes teachers to become compartmentalized, fostering independence and self-reliance rather than collaboration. According to best practices in research, a school staff should be viewed more as a community and less as a hierarchy of leaders. (Boreen & Niday, 2000, pp. 152-153)

Just as students need support in the classroom from fellow learners, teachers need a network of colleagues. ―One way [researchers propose] this need [be met] is by mentoring beginning teachers" (Boreen & Niday, 2000, p. 153).

Although mentor programs for new teachers began to emerge nearly 30 years ago, their importance in socializing and retaining teachers in education has increased significantly. Currently, most school leaders acknowledge the central role of high-quality mentor programs in supporting newly hired teachers. They recognize by providing mentoring they are much more likely to ensure the retention and effectiveness of novice teachers. Simply leaving them to sink or swim in isolation is an approach that serves neither the beginning teachers nor their students (Ganser, 2002c).

As a result, ―pairing new teachers with mentors is a practice catching on in schools across the country" (Black, 2001, p. 46). Black (2001) noted the ―scale of mentoring has increased rapidly over the past two decades" with more than 30 states mandating ―some form of mentored support for novice teachers" (p. 46). Policymakers and school leaders view mentoring as a way to retain teachers, thus also cutting ―costs associated with recruiting, hiring, and training new staff" (Black, 2001, p. 46). ―They also see mentoring as an important component in overall school improvement and reform" (Black, 2001, p. 46). For example, Virginia lawmakers created a mandatory mentor framework in 1999 for all beginning teachers and new teachers coming into the state. In New York, an initiative entitled the *State Mentor Teacher-Internship Program* had been enacted law in 1986 (Black, 2001); recent legislation by the Board of Regents in 2004 requires every new teacher to have a mentored internship (Black, 2001). New Jersey's 2001 state budget included $2 million to cover the costs associated with mentor training and stipends for mentor teachers in several pilot programs across the state (Black, 2001). In the state of

Indiana, all beginning teachers are required to participate in the Indiana Mentoring and Assessment Program (IMAP), which is a two-year period of mentorship that culminates with a specific assessment piece reflective of the beginning teacher's ability to meet the 10 Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) principles for beginning teachers (Indiana Department of Education, 2013).

"Mentor programs are on the national teachers unions' agendas as well" (Black, 2001, p. 47). Starting Out On The Right Track is a mentor program initiated by the American Federation of Teachers in Pittsburg in 1992 requiring "new teachers [to] attend professional development programs that occur before school starts and continue throughout the year" (Black, 2001, p. 47). The training, provided by the combined efforts of the school district and the union, is intended to help beginning teachers experience success with classroom management and instructional strategies (Black, 2001). The National Education Association (NEA) referred to mentoring programs as "professional lifelines" for beginning teachers. "In Clark County, Nevada, the local NEA affiliate offers an orientation program that covers everything from housing options to retirement plans and assigns veteran teachers to new teachers for ongoing support" (Black, 2001, p. 47). The Weymouth Teachers Association in Weymouth, Massachusetts, encourages new teachers to participate in their Share the Wealth Program (Black, 2001). The program provides orientation workshops, one-on-one mentors, and theme mentors for specific areas such as student assessment, classroom technology, and parent involvement (Black, 2001).

In other cases, "the school district's mentor program is negotiated into the teachers' union contract as a formal condition of employment" (Black, 2001, p. 47). "According to Adam Urbanski, president of the Rochester Teachers Association (RTA) in Rochester, New York, mentoring new teachers is far too important to leave to the whims of "soft money" (Black, 2001,

p. 47). Urbanski cited New York's mentor-internship program, which had experienced a funding decrease of nearly $11 million in the last decade, as "a example of why unions should bargain for substantial sums to support local mentor programs" (Black, 2001, p. 47). The RTA's contract specified $3 million for the mentor program during the 2000-2001 school year, equating to approximately $5,000 for each of the district's 600 new teachers. The RTA officials stated the expense was easily justified when considering that 93% of the new teachers chose to stay in the district that year. In fact, 86% of the 2,000 teachers participating in RTA's mentor program over the past 15 years remain teaching. The district's retention rate for new teachers hovered at only 60% prior to the implementation of the mentor program (Black, 2001).

Even with ample resources, Mary and Stephen Weiss (as cited in Black, 2001) asserted that well-articulated induction programs are the "exception rather than the rule" (p. 47). In fact, Weiss and Weiss (as cited in Black, 2001) contended that many mentor programs are "little more than a haphazard effort at pairing new teachers with veteran teachers and hoping some good will come from the match" (p. 47). "Unfortunately, a poor mentor program can do more harm than good" to a beginning teacher (Black, 2001, p. 47). A review conducted by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) demonstrates that "poorly designed induction programs contribute to higher rates of new teacher attrition, and for teachers who remain in the profession, lower levels of effectiveness" (as cited in Black, 2001, p. 47). Regrettably, many cases exist in which overall enthusiasm for induction and mentoring has been eroded because the clarity about the purposes of mentoring have not been well communicated. There is still much room for improvement in designing strong induction programs that will position beginning teachers to be successful and effective, as well as grow into educational leaders.

The words mentoring and induction are often confused and misused. Wong (2004b) contended these two terms are not synonymous. ―Induction is a process used by districts to train, support, and retain new teachers. It is a highly organized and comprehensive staff development process. . . . Albeit important, mentoring is but one component of the induction process" (Wong, 2004b, p. 107). ―Mentoring is an action" (Wong, 2004a, p. 42). It is what mentors, whose basic function is to help beginning teachers survive, do. Additionally, Wong (2004a) purported that mentoring is ―an isolated phase, [whereas comprehensive] induction [is] part of a lifelong professional development design" (p. 45). Mentoring ―reacts to whatever arises [and comprehensive induction] acculturates a vision and aligns content to academic standards" (Wong, 2004a, p. 45). Wong (2004b) further asserted that ―mentoring alone will do little to aid in the retention of highly qualified new teachers" (p. 107)

Unfortunately, many educators subscribe to the notion that all a beginning teacher needs is a mentor. School districts tend to support mentoring as an effective and singular approach, whereby ―a veteran teacher has been haphazardly selected by the principal and assigned to a new teacher" (Wong, 2004b, p. 108). Researcher Feiman-Nemser noted ―that after 20 years of experimenting with mentoring as a process for helping [novice] teachers, few comprehensive studies have validated its effectiveness" (as cited in Wong, 2004b, p. 108). Therefore, it is essential for policymakers and educational leaders to understand ―mentors cannot replace or be the only form of formal or informal induction assistance for beginning teachers" (Wong, 2000b, p. 108).

Alas, researchers Britton, Paine, Raizen, and Pimm (as cited in Wong, 2004b) shared that ―in more than 30 states, mentoring predominates as an induction method" (p. 108). They further reported ―many mentors are assigned to respond to a new teacher‘s day-to-day crises and provide

teaching tips for survival; mentors are simply a safety net for new teachers" (Wong, 2004b, p. 108). "Clearly, leadership does not develop from individuals who are in a survival mode; thus, mentoring alone does not [and cannot] produce [educational] leaders" (Wong, 2004b, p. 108). The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission asserted "giving a teacher a mentor 'only' is a convenient and unconsciously foolish way for an administrator to divorce himself or herself from the leadership required to bring a beginning teacher up to a professional maturity level" (Wong, 2004b, p. 108). In fact, the "commission found principals and [beginning] teachers rated mentoring the least-effective way to help new teachers" (Wong, 2004a, p. 44). Even more frightening regarding the conception of *mentoring only* "is that it has become institutionalized with professional journals prescribing it as the standard cure-all" (Wong, 2004b, p. 108) for the challenges faced by new teachers. Researchers have suggested it is high time to look past mentoring to an induction program that is a

> structured, sustained, intensive professional development program that allows new teachers to observe others, to be observed by others, and to be part of networks or study groups where all teachers share together, grow teacher, learn to respect one another's work, and collaboratively become leaders together. (Wong, 2004b, p. 108)

By doing so, leadership will evolve because the process is immersed in collaboration and convenes the cumulative expertise of educators within a culture of shared values inherent to a professional learning community.

Strategies Wong (2004a) contended successful induction programs used to promote leadership in beginning teachers include

- "supporting networks that create learning communities" (Wong, 2004a, p. 51);
- treating "every colleague as a potential valuable contributor" (Wong, 2004a, p. 51);

- producing leaders by turning ~~–o~~wnership of learning over to the learners in study groups" (Wong, 2004a, p. 51);
- creating ~~–l~~earning communities where everyone, new teachers as well as veteran teachers, gains knowledge" (Wong, 2004a, p. 51); and
- demonstrating ~~–t~~hat quality teaching becomes not just an individual, but [also] a group responsibility" (Wong, 2004a, p. 51).

When an organization has truly vested their efforts in these strategies and has created ~~–a~~ school culture that exemplifies these goals, [they will] have [developed] a family of teacher leaders" (Wong, 2004a).

Components of Effective Induction Programs

A true induction program can be recognized by its purpose, components, and structure. Its purpose is to ~~–r~~educe the intensity of transition into teaching, provide instruction in classroom and teacher effectiveness, and increase the retention of highly qualified teachers" (Wong, 2004b, p. 109). A veritable induction process should include three major components: training, support, and retention. Training is implemented ~~–t~~hrough a series of networks, workshops, demonstration classrooms, visitations, and debriefing sessions" (Wong, 2004b, p. 109). In doing so, novice teachers are deliberately introduced and shown effective strategies for the classroom. Support is provided through ~~–a~~ cadre of mentors, administrators, and staff developers [who] work personally and routinely to assist the new teacher" (Wong, 2004b, p. 109). When such programs are introduced and supported effectively, ~~–n~~ew teachers are trained, supported, and retained" (Wong, 2004b, p. 109)—which achieves the third component of retention. An effective induction program is typically structured to begin four or five days before school starts with workshops and classes followed by ~~–a~~ continuum of systematic training for professional

development over the next two or three years" (Wong, 2004b, p. 109). The structure should also allow ~~f~~or modeling [of] effective teaching during [in-services] and mentoring, [as well as] provide opportunities for inductees to visit demonstration classrooms" (Wong, 2004b, p. 109).

The New Teacher Center (NTC) at the University of California, Santa Cruz, has also been working with educational leaders and state policymakers ~~t~~o establish induction programs that work, that are sufficiently funded, and that emphasize tried and tested methodologies" (Moir, 2003, pp. 11-12) as core elements of quality induction programs. Research from the NTC (as cited in Moir, 2003) advocates and supports the inclusion of the following core elements in induction programs:

- Full-time program administrators – Programs should be staffed with innovative administrators with the training, time and resources to create and implement excellent programs.
- Quality mentoring – Mentoring should take place during the school day with sanctioned time for both mentors and beginning teachers.
- Mentor selection – Mentors should be selected for their ability to work with peers, their expertise in pedagogy and curriculum, their leadership qualities, and their commitment to collaborative work.
- Mentor development – Mentors need ongoing training and support to be the most effective *teacher of teachers*.
- Formative assessment for beginning teachers – New teachers, with support and guidance from their mentors and principals, should systematically identify areas for growth, set individual performance goals, and develop the skills needed to attain those goals.

- Training in data collection and analysis – Beginning teachers and mentors should be trained to collect classroom data, analyze data, and use the results to guide classroom instruction.
- Training for site administrators – Site administrators must understand the needs of beginning teachers, provide them with appropriate resources, and learn techniques for evaluation that enhance teacher practice.
- Teaching standards – Beginning teacher guidance and self-assessment must take into consideration the accepted state standards for what teachers need to know and be able to do.
- High expectations for beginning teachers, mentors, and students – Induction programs should be expected to help beginning teachers excel in the classroom.
- Training for work with diverse students and English language learners – Additional support is necessary for beginning teachers working with minority students and English learners, since beginning teachers are so often placed in schools serving these subpopulations of students.
- Networking and training opportunities for beginning teachers – Workshops and training sessions help novices overcome the traditional isolation of teachers and help them build additional skills to use in the classroom to increase teacher performance.
- Contractually bargained new teacher placement – Working with teacher unions, policy makers should ensure that beginning teachers are not routinely placed with the hardest-to-serve students in high-priority schools. (p. 13)

Researchers at the NTC contend this is not an unbounded system in which select items are picked from a list but rather a systemic plan for change. They believe all of these elements

are important in creating a robust system that is ~~–c~~apable of not only solving a crisis in teacher hiring and retention, but of transforming the culture of education in our country" (Moir, 2003, p. 13).

Although a variety of components or strategies—such as pre-school year workshops, welcome centers, bus tours, networks and study groups, portfolios and videos, demonstration classrooms, learning circles, administrative support, continuous education, formative assessment, and graduations—should be incorporated in an effective induction program, the crucial role of mentors and the mentoring process cannot be overlooked. Merely offering new teachers quick tips and fast fixes in the staff lounge is only the beginning. Mentoring must now focus on teacher effectiveness (Ganser, 2002b). In designing induction programs, ~~–s~~taff developers must aim at increasing the effectiveness of novice teachers by enhancing what they know about teaching and [what] they teach" (Gasner, 2002b, p. 28) to improve student learning. In addition, staff developers must also provide mentors with high-quality training and ongoing support (Ganser, 2002c). Planning, implementing, and sustaining a successful induction program requires staff developers to take into account trends that did not exist several years ago when mentor programs first appeared.

To develop a high-quality program, it is necessary for educational leaders to understand the historical context of mentoring programs and the emerging trends of mentors. By emphasizing the principles of effective mentoring, school districts can build successful induction programs that focus on best practices as well as provide the flexibility to ensure the unique needs of their school district are addressed. Mentoring should be integrated within the school community. ~~–K~~nowing it takes an entire learning community to induct new teachers, successful programs solicit the input of several stakeholders in effective mentoring" (Ganser, 2002b, p. 30).

—Good programs also make sure that all members of the school community understand the program‘s goals as well as their part in maximizing mentoring‘s benefits, not only for the new teachers but for the entire school community” (Ganser, 2002b, p. 30). For example, —by reducing the attrition rate of new teachers,” an induction program —supports school reform and innovation” by stabilizing a teaching force (Ganser, 2002b, p. 30). Therefore, —successful induction programs carefully avoid duplicating services already available within the school community” and intentionally work to align resources and responsibilities for induction support (Ganser, 2002b, pp. 29-30).

Mentoring expectations should be linked to external standards. Some of the most powerful induction programs today focus explicitly on learning and link mentoring activities and expectations to external standards of performance created either by the state department of education or other descriptors of what effective teachers must *know and be able to do*, such as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or Danielson‘s 1996 framework (Ganser, 2002b). By directly linking mentoring to teaching standards, mentors and beginning teachers can target their efforts. The increasing demands of accountability and demonstrated proficiency with teacher licensure requires this kind of concentrated focus.

High-quality induction programs are aimed at a variety of new teachers; therefore, the term *new teacher* is defined broadly. Although most beginning teachers are —young graduates embarking on a lifelong career in teaching, the number of beginning teachers coming from other careers is increasing” (Ganser, 2002b, p. 31). Model programs also aim to serve experienced teachers new to a school but not to teaching. Successful induction programs —balance the general principles of effective mentoring” with the learning readiness and —unique strategies appropriate to different types of new teachers” (Ganser, 2002b, p. 31). The —one size fits all” programs

cannot effectively address the needs of so many different types of new teachers to a school district (Ganser, 2002b).

Clearly, if successful programs define the term new teacher broadly, they must also define the term mentor broadly. Teachers throughout their career span are viewed as suitable mentors in strong induction programs. "Teachers at the beginning of their careers, as well as recently retired teachers are seen as prospective mentors for novice teachers" (Ganser, 2002b, p. 31). Furthermore, some programs are designed around "teams of mentors, where a beginning teacher is possibly mentored by both a teacher from a different grade level or content area and another mentor teaching in a similar grade level or content area" (Ganser, 2002b, p. 31).

Successful induction programs "put more effort into supporting high-quality mentoring activities than into finding the perfect match between mentor and new teacher" (Ganser, 2002b, p. 31). Although a level of compatibility is necessary, what is more important is making sure that mentors and novice teachers are supported with the time and resources needed to make the experience meaningful. The relationship is then permitted to develop on the mentoring activities rather than the similar perspectives of their teaching assignments (Ganser, 2002b). At Diamond Lake Elementary School in Illinois, mentor teachers are not officially assigned by the principal. Instead, new teachers are counseled as part of the induction process about the importance of choosing a mentor based upon their professional learning needs and asked to choose a mentor for themselves by the third week of school (Mauer & Zimmerman, 2000). In rare cases mentoring does not work. The new teacher may not be cut out to teach or may not be a good fit for a particular school community. Conversely, the mentor may not be adequately equipped with skills or strategies needed to assist the new teacher. In such cases, good programs also have a

procedure for dissolving the relationship while maintaining the dignity of both the mentor and new teacher (Ganser, 2002b).

Mentor training should be maximized with ongoing support. Although new teachers are likely to share some of the same needs such as understanding policies and the organization of curriculum, other needs tend to vary greatly based upon previous teaching experiences such as classroom management and instructional strategies. Mentor training should be adjusted accordingly (Ganser, 2002b). The most successful induction programs provide professional development early on and complement this training by other in-service or workshops needed to assist mentors as they work with new teachers on specific topics throughout the school year. Strong induction programs also "provide regular opportunities for mentors to meet together as a learning community to share their experiences and offer a forum for mentors to seek advice of colleagues in solving perplexing situations" (Ganser, 2002b, p. 31).

Cutting-edge induction programs continue mentoring beyond the first year. They know that one year of teaching experience does not provide novice teachers all the support they need as they continue to grow and learn as professional educators (Ganser, 2002b). Consequently, goals for mentoring, mentoring activities, and mentor training and support must be carefully adapted to meet the beginning teachers' evolving needs and stages of development in their second or third year of teaching. The value of mentoring at this stage tends to shift to more attention to curricular and instructional issues because familiarity and comfort with routines and procedures has been established (Ganser, 2002b).

From its conception, high-quality induction programs "collect, analyze, and present information essential to evaluating the program's effectiveness and to promote ongoing, incremental improvement" (Ganser, 2002b, p. 31). Additionally, "they continually seek

evidence to demonstrate how successful they are not only in retaining quality teachers but also in helping them become better teachers" (Ganser, 2002, pp. 31-32). The data collected should be both qualitative and quantitative in nature to paint an accurate picture of the program's strengths and needed areas of improvement. In addition, the data collected should focus on the program's impact on enhancing teacher effectiveness. —Good programs also scrutinize mentors' effectiveness in carrying out their roles and responsibilities" (Ganser, 2002b, p. 32).

Induction programs vary in scope; however, regardless of the program's goals or level of support, successful induction programs must provide funding commensurate with expectations. Resources should never be accepted to support goals unlikely to be reached or obtained, such as bringing a marginally prepared teacher up to speed in one year using a mentor who is a full-time teacher. Although the line between teacher preparation and teacher support can become distorted, the decision by a school district to hire a weak or poorly prepared teacher just because a mentoring program exists can soon backfire (Ganser, 2002b).

Successful induction programs always keep the *soul* in mentoring by providing mentors and new teachers with opportunities to spend time together in meaningful activities. Mentor programs are an example of contrived collegiality that can be replaced by a genuinely valuable relationship by nurturing a special connection between mentor and new teacher. Although mentoring must increasingly focus on improved teaching and student learning at its outcome, mentoring is still the best way for experienced professional teachers to share their collective wisdom and experience with the next generation of teachers (Ganser, 2002b).

Yet another trend that is informing and enhancing induction programs for new teachers is a shift in many school faculties to two distinct groups: older teachers and younger teachers. The challenge for mentors in these cultures may not be so much to counsel individual new teachers as

to bring together large groups of inexperienced teachers and veteran teachers as a cohesive learning community (Ganser, 2002c). Harvard's Project on the Next Generation of Teachers painted three types of professional cultures in schools: "the veteran-oriented culture, the novice-oriented culture, and the integrated professional culture" (Ganser, 2002c, p. 27). In the veteran-oriented culture, the concerns and habits of the veteran or experienced teachers determine professional interactions with minimal organized support for novices. There is also minimal support offered for new teachers in the novice-oriented culture; however, the new teachers either work together or in isolation without the help or expertise of veteran teachers (Ganser, 2002c). Novice-oriented cultures are typically found in charter schools or in struggling schools that have been reorganized and in which entire staffs are replaced at once. Conversely, in an integrated professional culture, regardless of their level of experience, all staff members share a belief in the importance of teacher interaction around issues of teaching and curriculum. "Frequent open and reciprocal exchange among all teachers" characterizes this culture (Ganser, 2002c, p. 27). Clearly, the function of a mentor differs according to the type of culture into which new teachers are inducted.

School Board Commitment to Induction Programs

"Good teachers are the heart of human capital of every school district and the single most important factor in predicting student success" (Ganser, 2002c, p. 27). Obviously, supporting induction programs that take into account the historical context of mentoring programs and the emerging trends of mentors is a convincing way for school boards to demonstrate a commitment to quality teaching that leads to student success. Furthermore, "it has been estimated that each teacher who is recruited, trained, and lost costs districts about $50,000" (Portner, 2005, p. 30). It

is easy to see how the costs add up quickly. ―One proven way to improve teacher retention is through induction and mentoring programs" (Portner, 2005, p. 30).

Moreover, research cites several other significant reasons that school boards should provide support and resources for the development of induction programs. A school board's primary mission is to support and provide appropriate conditions for student learning; ―the higher the quality of teaching, the higher the quality of learning" (Portner, 2005, p. 31). Consequently, as teaching quality improves, student learning improves as well (Portner, 2005). Considering the teaching-learning connection, Portner (2005) also noted that

> studies conducted by Recruiting New Teachers have found that induction programs can make a tremendous difference in a teacher's ability and in the learning experiences their students are afforded. More than 20 additional national, state, and local studies have produced similar findings. (p. 31)

Therefore, by supporting induction programs, school boards are also committing to improved student learning in the classroom.

> In 1997, President Clinton's ―Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century" informed the public that two million teachers would be needed over the next decade to replace retirements and accommodate rapidly growing student enrollment. The assumption was that there was a shortage of available teacher candidates. However, an analysis of national data by Richard Ingersoll showed that the widely-publicized school staffing problems were not the result of too few teachers being trained and recruited. Rather, the data indicated that school staffing concerns were the result of a revolving door phenomenon in which large numbers of teachers were leaving the profession prior to retirement. (Portner, 2005, p. 31)

The need to constantly

> replace teachers is disruptive and demoralizing. It places a burden on the system and destabilizes the instructional process. The staggering financial burden it places on school districts is also equally devastating as resources are consumed for staffing concerns instead of being devoted to books and other instructional resources. (Portner, 2005, pp. 31-32)
>
> Many school boards and districts have already spent the money on teacher attrition that it might have otherwise invested in teacher retention. A report by the Alliance for Excellent Education in June 2004 revealed that schools across the nation spent more than $2.6 billion annually to replace teachers who had left the profession (Portner, 2005, p. 32)

Clearly, ~~–it~~ is more cost effective for school boards to support the development of teacher induction programs that reduce attrition rates" (Portner, 2005, p. 32).

Portner (2005) clarified additional incentives for board consideration:

> Heightened morale and increased sense of community that comes from teachers sharing is a successful start. Veteran teachers and administrators who participate in the induction and mentoring process undoubtedly experience the sense of pride and accomplishment that comes from helping others grow. A 1997 National Center for Education Statistics report identified support and leadership, good student behavior, and a positive school atmosphere as working conditions associated with higher teacher satisfaction and improved student learning. Conversely, low levels of satisfaction and morale can lead to decreased productivity, teacher burnout, greater use of sick leave, and efforts to leave the profession. In short, teacher morale can have far-reaching implications on student learning. It takes a community to induct a new teacher. Collegial support for beginning

teachers is the hallmark of a healthy education community. In a healthy community, people help each other grow. (p. 32)

In most states, laws and ~~r~~regulations have given impetus to the widespread creation of induction programs. In 2004, 33 states required mentoring programs for new teachers" (Portner, 2005, p. 32). Ironically, only ~~2~~22 states provided funding. Nevertheless, the reason a growing number of school districts have embedded induction and mentoring into their cultures is not necessarily because of regulations" (Portner, 2005, p. 32). Simply put, ~~w~~words on paper do not define a culture—people and their actions do" (Portner, 2005, p. 32).

Portner (2005) suggested there are ~~t~~three decisive actions school boards can take to embed induction and mentoring into their schools" (p. 32). The first is public affirmation. ―A clear and public message of commitment from the school board saying in effect [We] value new teachers to their district and consider [induction] . . . to be fundamental to their professional growth'" (Portner, 2005, p. 32). Next is the development of policies in support of induction and accountability, followed by formal recognition of participants in the program. Everyone should know their ~~w~~work is appreciated and not taken for granted, and mentors are no exception" (Portner, 2005, p. 33). With a school board's commitment and support, induction and mentoring can be institutionalized into a district culture resulting in far-reaching dividends, if taken seriously and implemented effectively (Portner, 2005).

The Mentoring Process

Much literature has been added to the field of education about the value of mentoring beginning teachers as part of induction efforts. In fact, Yost (2002) purported that ~~p~~participation in a mentoring program is valuable not only for the novice [teacher] but also for the veteran teacher [or mentor] in that it positively affects teacher efficacy for both" (p. 195). Teacher

efficacy, defined as ~~in~~tellectual activity by which one forges one's beliefs about his or her ability to achieve a certain level of accomplishment, has a direct link to the way students perform in the classroom" (Yost, 2002, p. 195). In fact, research suggests ~~a~~ teacher with high efficacy tends to provide the most beneficial learning environment for his or her students" (Woolfolk & Hoy as cited in Yost, 2002, p. 195) and a strong sense of efficacy can also ~~p~~ay dividends of higher motivation, greater effort, persistence and resilience" (Tschannan-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy as cited in Yost, 2002, p. 195).

Activities that support teachers at each developmental level of their career to be reflective, confident decision makers, persistent problem solvers, and action-oriented researchers are critical to developing professionally. Bandura believed ~~th~~at four avenues contribute to self-efficacy: mastery experiences, physiological and emotional states, [vicarious] experiences, and social persuasions" (as cited in Yost, 2002, p. 197). First, successful

> performance as a mentor creates a mastery experience. Working as a mentor, excellent teachers can offer expertise and support that contributes to the learning of both teachers and students. Second, the physiological and emotional cues a mentor receives when sharing and validating their practice adds to their perceptions of competence and importance. Certainly observing a novice teacher follow the model provided by their mentor affords a vicarious experience. Finally, the honor of being selected to serve as a mentor and being recognized as a model teacher fulfills the need for acknowledgement. (Yost, 2002, 197)

Clearly, mentoring as an early-career investment in a teacher's professional development has a direct impact on teacher efficacy.

As the practice of inducting new teachers into the profession continues to gain popularity so does the "growing acceptance of the need to mentor novice teachers" (Trubowitz, 2004, p. 59). However, "the danger that schools [and districts] will attempt to implement [induction] programs without paying enough attention to the factors that create successful mentor/mentee relationships" (Trubowitz, 2004, p. 59) is a concern. If a mentor/mentee relationship is to be productive and mutually enriching, educational leaders must be prepared to address the issues of mentor selection, mentoring resources and staff development, programmatic aspects, general advice to mentors, as well as mentoring skills and parameters.

The manner in which a teacher becomes a mentor will undoubtedly influence how that person will work with a new teacher. If administrators pressured experienced teachers to mentor novice teachers, there is a high probability that acrimony would negatively influence these relationships. In addition, individuals becoming mentors because of the honor and prestige they perceive coming from this role may not serve the new teacher well (Trubowitz, 2004). If a mentor is identified on the basis of "fixing" a poorly prepared teacher or to ensure district-level goals are met, the path to professional development is likely to be fraught with detours. Applying stringent criteria to mentor selection such as requiring mentors to have "walked the walk" of the mentee also results in a limited approach to new teacher development by merely reinforcing existing practices rather than moving toward positive change (Trubowitz, 2004).

Research suggests the task of "mentor selection goes beyond simply taking inventory of desirable mentor characteristics—such as being professional, positive, collegial, responsive, supportive, empathetic, and non-judgmental" (Trubowitz, 2004, p. 60). These qualities must be thoughtfully considered as part of the relationship in a highly sensitive manner, or they will do nothing to improve the rapport between the mentor and beginning teacher. Therefore, "districts

need to identify teachers of maturity, insight, experience, and interest to guide new teachers on their path to professionalism" (Trubowitz, 2004, p. 60). Furthermore, ~~"~~mentors must have programs to prepare them so they do not get caught up in jargon; use mentoring to gratify personal needs; and do not view mentoring as a simplistic, mechanical process" (Trubowitz, 2004, p. 60).

Other programmatic aspects that educational leaders should consider as important for recruiting, developing, and retaining effective mentors are providing

> mentors release time for observing and meeting with new teachers; compensating mentors for their involvement through monetary or other compensations such as equipment, supplies, or payment of professional development fees; and reducing the workload of mentors by providing additional planning hours or excusing them from extracurricular duties so they will have adequate time to be effective in their roles as mentors. (Mason & White, 2001, p. 81)

Once mentors have been identified, their first steps are critical. It is suggested that the mentor's first priority is to understand the mentee. For many novice teachers, their focus is simply on survival. At this stage, ~~"~~the mentor needs to provide specific suggestions, focus on minimal norms of expected behavior and discuss how to handle the first day and the first week" (Trubowitz, 2004, p. 60) of school. Once beginning teachers get cursory control of their professional lives, the mentor's task is to

> allow the mentee to pour out feelings, to express worries, and to identify problems and questions that will become the foundation of ongoing discussions. It is only by encouraging a mentee to speak freely will a mentor allow a relationship of trust and understanding to develop. (Trubowitz, 2004, p. 60)

Lines of communication should also be established to foster dialogue such as the exchange of telephone numbers and email addresses and journal writing.

Other general advice for mentors taken from mentoring programs across the country is

- Be accessible. New teachers need to know their mentors are available and approachable.
- Realize that new teachers need emotional support and information on the practical logistical aspects of teaching.
- When making observations, be accepting of the new teacher and always find something positive to say. Take notes on the positive aspects as well as potential areas for improvement.
- In providing feedback, consider the instructional context and the interpersonal situation. Confidentiality is a must and vital to maintaining a trusting relationship.
- Arrange a time for the new teacher to observe you or another teacher. Joint observations and discussions regarding instructional strategies can be very effective.
- Focus on what is important and use a developmental process. Pick what seems to be most essential and start with improvements in that area.
- Openly share forms, useful resources, and lesson plans. (Mason & White, 2001, pp. 80-81)

The process of building trust is crucial to the development of a successful mentor/mentee relationship. The mentor must be a focused listener to whom the new teacher can share his or her thoughts and feelings without the fear of being judged. As conversations between the mentor and new teacher begin to include personal interests, the relationship becomes one of individuals who can stories beyond the immediate confines of the school (Trubowitz, 2004). ~~T~~There is no

magical moment establishing that mentor and mentee have grown to trust each other, rather it is the hours spent in the new teacher‘s classroom, joining in activities, listening, and observing” (Trubowitz, 2004, p. 61). It is the mentor being present to share in frustration, the excitement of students learning, and witnessing the new teacher‘s interactions with other colleagues (Trubowitz, 2004).

It is also important to note that mentor/mentee relationships evolve through stages of development as they progress. At first, it is the mentor who makes the suggestions, provides resources, and offers direct guidance based on his or her experience and knowledge. As the relationship becomes more of a partnership, the mentor and beginning teacher begin to work closely together to address issues facing teachers and schools. There are also frequent occasions where the mentor learns from the mentee. Although the mentor remains the partner with the robust and experience-laden background, as the relationship continues to grow and change, ―it becomes more a process of mutual appropriation than a simple one-way transmission of knowledge” (Trubowitz, 2004, p. 62).

Furthermore, as formal induction programs continue to grow, the need for recruiting, retaining, and developing high-quality mentors grows. Continued research on the importance of mentoring as part of the induction process has identified several essential qualities and competencies that effective mentors must possess for beginning teachers to have a successful transition into the teaching profession. Good mentors are committed to the role of mentoring. ―They understand the [mentoring] role and are committed to acquiring the appropriate knowledge and skills” (Denmark & Podsen, 2000, p. 20). Furthermore, ―committed mentors understand that persistence is as important in mentoring as it is in classroom teaching” (Rowley,

1999, p. 20). Rowley (1999) also noted that they ―believe they are capable of making a significant and positive impact on the life of another" (p. 20).

Good mentors take the first step in creating a collaborative, nurturing relationship. At the heart of any effective mentoring relationship is empathy. Consequently, successful mentors ―recognize the power of accepting the beginning teacher as a developing person and professional" (Rowley, 1999, p. 20), and are able to lay the groundwork for a healthy collegial relationship. As a result, skilled mentors are able to adjust their communication with beginning teachers in varied relational contexts. ―Just as good teachers adjust their teaching behavior and communication to meet the individual needs of students; good mentors adjust their communication to meet the individual needs of beginning teachers" (Rowley, 1999, p. 21).

High-quality mentors establish a climate of peer support. Beginning teachers need the freedom to take developmental risks by teaching new curriculum, implementing new lessons, and managing student behavior. Therefore, mentors must be capable of encouraging risk-taking and at the same time offer guidance, provide honest feedback, and serve as a sounding board for the beginning teacher's concerns and frustrations. Teachers strengthen their professional knowledge, skills and dispositions by interacting with one another. A successful mentor will maximize this type of collegial interaction (Denmark & Podsen, 2000).

Effective mentors also evidence a highly reflective approach to teaching, self-assessment, and the actualizing of new ideas. They are highly skilled at providing instructional support to colleagues (Rowley, 1999). Denmark and Podsen (2000) found that good mentors make use of the following framework for modeling reflective teaching practices:

- Effective mentors know contemporary views and teaching standards. They stay current in professional reading and encourage new teachers to do the same.

- Good mentors model and demonstrate effective instructional behaviors.
- Effective mentors provide opportunities for practice and reflection. They model and demonstrate self-assessment through a reflective evaluation of their own instructional strategies and behaviors.
- Skillful mentors share constructive feedback with beginning teachers. They openly discuss how reflective teaching practices can help teachers monitor their own professional growth. (p. 21)

Lastly, superior mentors utilize mentoring as an essential form of professional development. They are school leaders, high-quality educators in the classroom, and models of lifelong learning. Consequently, they ~~u~~understand that mentoring is an opportunity to develop leadership skills in themselves and those that they mentor" (Denmark & Podsen, 2000, p. 22).

Regrettably, the mentoring process is often conceived as a *buddy system*, in which beginning teachers and mentors are paired together informally. ~~I~~In the buddy system, mentors are neither trained for their new role nor given the [appropriate] time" (Moir, 2003, p. 5) needed to carry out their new responsibilities. Ironically, mentors are typically treated as beginning ~~te~~achers were, allowed to sink or swim, armed with only intuition and good intentions to keep themselves afloat" (Moir, 2003, p. 5). To have a real impact, induction must invest in the mentor as a *teacher of teachers*; provide training, guidance, and support for mentors; carve out time necessary for training and the reflection of teaching practices; and provide ongoing professional development as mentors continue to work with beginning teachers. In addition, effective induction programs take into consideration the needs of experienced mentors by persistently seeking feedback and utilizing the *lived* experiences of the mentors and mentees to modify and

adjust on a yearly basis. By doing so, these programs are more likely to sustain themselves and have a lasting impact on teacher performance and student learning (Moir, 2003).

The Principal's Role in Induction

The support provided by administrators for both beginning teachers and their mentors is another key component to the success of an induction program. Principals play a fundamental role in inducting beginning ~~t~~teachers into their schools, as well as into the teaching profession" (Brock & Grady, 1998, p. 179). To provide appropriate support and direction to beginning teachers, principals need to have a keen understanding of the challenges that new teachers face and the significance of their role in addressing these concerns.

Principals and beginning teachers have many expectations of each other. Principals expect beginning ~~t~~teachers to demonstrate proficiencies in a professional attitude, adequate knowledge of curriculum, good classroom management skills, excellent communication skills, a belief that every child can learn, and a desire to help students succeed" (Brock & Grady, 1998, p. 180). Conversely, beginning teachers have certain expectations of principals. Above all, beginning teachers want their principals to communicate to them the prevailing criteria for good teaching and how they are stacking up against those expectations (Andrews & Martin, 2003). Beginning teachers identify the principal as a key source of support and guidance. ~~A~~As the [instructional] leader of the school, the principal determines the expectations for teaching and learning" (Brock & Grady, 1998, p. 181). The need for personal involvement with the principal is rooted in the new teacher's hiring and potential nonrenewal. The principal determines the expectations of a teacher, and beginning teachers who wish to receive a positive evaluation have strong desires to understand what their evaluator is expecting. In the absence of clear

expectations from the principal, beginning teachers may feel isolated and frustrated (Andrews & Martin, 2003).

The role of the principal in the induction process involves much more than assigning a mentor to a beginning teacher and providing an orientation at the start of the school year. Through the induction process, school leaders have an incredible opportunity to build an supportive and aligned professional culture ~~in~~ which new and experienced teachers collaborate regularly and share the responsibility for the success of their students and colleagues" (Johnson & Kardos, 2005, p. 11). Principals ~~s~~hould treat the hiring process as the first steps of induction by hiring new teachers as early as possible and building in-depth information about the school into the hiring process" (Johnson & Kardos, 2005, p. 11). Principals must also allocate time for mentors to adequately support beginning teachers by deliberately coordinating teaching assignments that permit shared planning, observations, and feedback (Johnson & Kardos, 2005). In addition, principals must organize ongoing professional development for beginning teachers and mentors, as well as encourage teacher leadership that will augment the school's capacity for continual learning (Johnson & Kardos, 2005). Through the development of an effective induction program, principals have the opportunity to create and support ~~a~~ results-driven, team-focused, professional learning culture that is part of every teacher's work day" (Wong, 2004a, p. 53).

Successful Examples of Induction Programs

As the research and literature on the positive impacts of teacher induction programs continued to expand, examples and models of success stories across the country can be found and used by local school districts as they endeavor to create or evaluate their existing programs for inducting new teachers into the teaching profession. One such exemplary model is the

induction program found in Flowing Wells School District in Tucson, Arizona. More than 6,000 students attend schools in Flowing Wells School District and ~~d~~despite the community's lower-middle-income status, the district has produced 12 Arizona teachers of the year" (Wong, 2002, p. 52). Started in the 1980s, the district's five-year program takes teachers through five stages: novice, advanced beginner, competent teacher, proficient teacher, and expert. ~~T~~The induction program kicks off with several days of activities for beginning teachers prior to the start of the school year" (Wong, 2002, p. 53). These induction activities include

- A bus tour – The district superintendent acts as a tour guide on a bus trip throughout the district. A trivia contest introduces new teachers to the district's culture.
- Demonstration classrooms – Master teachers set up their rooms to model the first day of school in an effective classroom. Discussions between the master teacher and the observers identify strategies the new teachers found useful.
- A SPA (Special Professional Assistance) Day with a mentor – Beginning teachers and their mentors observe each other teach a lesson. After observations, mentors and their protégés have lunch together.
- A graduation luncheon – At the end of the several days of new teacher induction activities, Flowing Wells honors its new teachers with a formal graduation celebration. The superintendent presents graduates with a framed certificate. (Wong, 2002, p. 53)

The Flowing Wells induction program has proven to be so successful that educators from around the world make visitations to the district to ~~l~~learn how to implement such a program in their own districts" (Wong, 2002, p. 53).

Another example of a successful induction program can be found Lafourche Parish Public Schools in Thibodaux, Louisiana, which educates 15,200 students in 30 schools (Wong, 2002). Their demographics consist of 72% White and 28% non-White. "Trainers for Lafourche Parish's induction program strive to immerse new teachers in the district's lifelong learning culture and help them become part of cohesive instructional teams" (Wong, 2002, p. 53). In fact, "the program has become an important teacher recruitment tool for the district" (Wong, 2002, p. 53). The Lafourche Parish induction program ensures success by beginning with a well-structured multi-day training session before the beginning of school and includes three years of continuous training and support. The program includes demonstration classrooms and a graduation ceremony, as well as monthly support group meetings and curriculum facilitators. As a result, "new teachers use a variety of effective teaching techniques they learn in the district's induction program" (Wong, 2002, p. 53). A telling statistic Lafourche Parish has used to evaluate the success of their induction program is that "more than 99% of new teachers who have participated in the district's induction program have successfully completed the performance-based Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program, which is required for certification in the state" (Wong, 2002, pp. 53-54). Another outgrowth of the district's induction program is a decline in the teacher attrition rate. "Before implementing the program in 1996, Lafourche Parish had a 51% annual teacher attrition rate. Today, the district's attrition rate hovers around 7%, a decrease of approximately 80% since the inception of the program" (Wong, 2002, p. 54) nearly a decade ago. In fact, Lafourche Parish's "program is so successful that Louisiana has adopted it as [a] model for all school districts statewide" (Wong, 2002, p. 54).

The director of the Lafourche Parish new teacher induction program wrote the following:

> Every child – and every new teacher – should be treated with dignity and respect. Every child – and every new teacher – can learn and succeed. Every new teacher is a human resource, a person who has invested years in preparing for a life dedicated to helping young people; we have a responsibility to ensure that these new teachers will learn and succeed, just as we have a responsibility to ensure that every child will learn and succeed. New teachers must be trained if we want them to succeed; it is much better to train new teachers and risk losing them than not to train them and risk keeping them. An induction process is the best way to send a message to your teachers that you value them and want them to succeed and stay. (Breaux as cited in Wong, 2002, p. 54)

Consequently, the district's philosophy has become, ~~"~~if we want quality teachers in our classrooms, then we must make new teacher training, support, and retention top priorities" (Wong, 2002, p. 54) for Lafourche Parish.

Yet another model of success for teacher induction is located in Port Huron Area Schools in Port Huron, Michigan. The district serves 11,850 students in 13 elementary buildings, four middle schools, and two high schools. Port Huron's program was actually developed in conjunction with the area teachers' union. They believed ~~"~~the joint work of the education association and the school district administrators modeled teamwork as a way of achieving mutually desired goals" (Wong, 2002, p. 54)

> Port Huron's program begins with a four-day orientation before the beginning of school that includes workshops introducing new teachers to district programs, principles of effective classroom management, professional standards and expectations, and helpful preparation for the first day and first week of school. (Wong, 2002, p. 54)

The program continues with monthly seminars and the teacher's association appoints a mentor for every newly hired teacher to the district (Wong, 2002). The director of Port Huron's induction program for the past 10 years shared,

> One-shot staff development meetings do not work. We wanted a sustained training program, one where we could keep new teachers close to us for a year, nurture them, and take them step-by-step through the year – and beyond. Then they'd have a really solid foundation about the district, about teaching, and about our expectations. We're kind of a "no excuses" district; the job of the teacher is to help all students succeed. (Lozen as cited in Wong, 2002, p. 54)

Reflecting and describing the results of Port Huron's induction program, "after seven years, there were more induction-bred teachers than veteran teachers in our system, and you can see it today by the change in our culture" (Kimball as cited in Wong, 2002, p. 54).

The Kentucky Teacher Internship Program, enacted by legislation in 1995, "guides new teachers through a structured process of assistance and assessment with the active involvement of a committee of experienced educators including a mentor teacher, a university representative, and the school principal" (Brennan, Thames, & Roberts, 1999, p. 49). The internship program supports beginning "teachers as they form professional identities and allows mentors to sharpen their analytical skills as they examine specific curricular issues with their mentees" (Brennan et al., 1999, p. 49). The program's foundation utilizes reflective teaching immersed in assessing student learning through teachers focusing on their actions, reflecting on the impact of their actions, and refining their actions. In addition, beginning teachers are asked to keep a portfolio of documentation. Assessment remains formative during a beginning teacher's first two cycles and becomes summative at the end of the third cycle with certification eligibility being decided

by the committee upon presentation of the portfolio (Brennan et al., 1999). Furthermore, the program encourages the beginning teacher or intern to take charge of this process through a plan for professional growth. This plan then becomes the compass by which evidence of progress is compared. The committee considers how the intern analyzes the impact of teaching concepts on student learning over time and the growth that is made as a result of this reflection (Brennan et al., 1999).

Kentucky policymakers have attempted to quantify the program‘s benefits and results through various surveys. Results of a 1996 survey indicated that beginning teachers perceive the program as a useful induction tool. On a 5-point scale (with 5 being *extremely helpful* and 0 being *no help at all*), the program received an overall rating of 3.85 and the mentor teachers received a rating of 4.26 (Brennan et al., 1999). Another survey conducted in 1998 found that 97% of the respondents ―reported that committee members provided helpful suggestions to improve practice, and 91% shared that the process" (Brennan et al., 1999, p. 51) helped them grow professionally. In this same survey, 87% of the respondents indicated that time spent with their mentor teacher was beneficial (Brennan et al., 1999). Based upon these statistics, as well as comments from participants, Kentucky policymakers believe they have developed a program that emphasizes mentoring with a mission and will help shape the minds of generations to come.

Initiatives to retain beginning teachers led to impressive results in Philadelphia as well. New teacher retention was a huge concern when district CEO Paul Vallas arrived in Philadelphia in the summer of 2002. ―Fewer than half of new teachers were staying in the school district after three years and only one-third were staying in the school they were originally assigned" (Useem & Neild, 2005, p. 44). As a result, Vallas quickly established teacher recruitment and retention as priorities. In addition to recruitment efforts, in 2003, Philadelphia officials launched a set of

initiatives to support beginning teachers in the system. Teacher coaches were identified and trained in all school districts to provide mentoring and assistance to new teachers. In fact, 61 beginning teacher coaches were hired and trained that summer. The new teacher coaches were based outside the schools and did not have classroom teaching responsibilities. Coaches were trained to help the new professionals in a variety of ways: "finding classroom supplies, [suggesting] resources, setting up the classroom, modeling lessons, observing [lessons] and giving feedback, and providing emotional support and advice" (Useem & Neild, 2005, p. 46). Interviews, surveys, and focus groups overwhelmingly indicate these coaches played a key role in boosting teacher retention rates during the 2003-2004 school year. As one new middle school teacher shared,

> My new teacher coach was a godsend. She was there the day I started. I felt like I was going in cold, but I got instant support. She helped me set up my room and gave me suggestions. She came by once a week, and we talked on the phone and emailed. She also modeled lessons and observed in my room. She was a big help because she is familiar with special education. (Useem & Neild, 2005, p. 46)

The district has since intensified its induction activities for new teachers. Beginning teachers are now required to attend a paid two-week summer orientation, and they are expected to take part in an after-school New Teacher Academy run by staff from the Teachers College, Columbia University. In addition, six alternative certification programs are administered through local colleges and universities. The largest of these is the Literacy Intern program, which emphasizes a co-teaching model (Useem & Neild, 2005).

To ensure principals in Philadelphia have made supporting new teachers a priority, regional superintendents are now assessing principals' success in reducing attrition rates as part

of their performance evaluations. Principals are also required to participate in training to improve retention and are required to draw up plans addressing their support of new teachers in their schools (Useem & Neild, 2005). Although officials in Philadelphia recognize the ongoing challenges inherent in retaining beginning teachers, they believe by strengthening and sustaining the initiatives they have in place, they can successfully continue to direct energy and resources toward a solution.

Summary

"New teachers, who have a [high] rate of attrition and are [typically] assigned to the neediest students in schools with the least [available] resources, will comprise the [largest] majority of the teaching force within the next decade" (Weiss & Weiss, 1999, p. 4). Consequently, a growing number of school corporations are involved in work with local colleges and universities "to create learner-centered environments in which reflective practice and teacher decision-making are part of a school culture where new teachers are naturally expected to collaborate with colleagues" (Weiss & Weiss, 1999, p. 4). In a collaborative culture, beginning teachers and their mentors "can put their collective knowledge base into action and experience the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice" (Weiss & Weiss, 1999, p. 4). "Although shown to be valuable, induction programs that include sustained feedback in collaborative environments" and combine mentoring with other components of the induction process "remain a rare experience for most beginning teachers" (Weiss & Weiss, 1999, p. 4).

Because of the documented success of some districts in producing effective beginning teachers through the process of induction, educators know the following:

- ―The era of isolated teaching is over" (Wong, 2004a, p. 51). ―Good teaching thrives in a collaborative learning environment created [to] improve learning in strong professional learning communities" (Wong, 2004a, p. 51).
- ―Teachers thrive when they feel connected to their schools and colleagues" (Wong, 2004a, p. 52).
- ―Teachers want and need to belong" (Wong, 2004a, pg. 52).
- ―Effective schools have a high-performance culture, with a trademark of collaborative responsibility for the learning of students" (Wong, 2004a, p. 52).
- ―Teachers remain with a [school] when they feel supported by administrators [and] are collectively committed to pursuing a common vision for student learning in a performance-oriented culture as they build capacity and community" (Wong, 2004a, p. 52).

Therefore, ―what keeps good teachers teaching" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008, p. 1) ―is a structured, sustained professional development program that allows new teachers to observe others, to be observed by others, and to be part of networks or study groups where all teachers share together; grow together; and learn to respect each other's work" (Wong, 2004a, p. 41). In essence, they are learning and professionally growing together. Effective induction programs are comprehensive, collaborative, and consider the induction process as ―one phase or part of a total lifelong professional learning" (Wong, 2004a, p. 46) program. ―Educators must go beyond mentoring, if they hope to redesign the future of education for students" (Wong, 2004a, p. 46). ―The bottom line is good teachers make a difference. Trained teachers are effective teachers. Districts that provide structured, sustained training for their teachers achieve what every school district seeks to achieve—improving student learning" (Wong, 2004a, p. 55).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Schools across America face significant challenges as they work to ensure students receive the education they want, need and deserve in the wake of the nation‘s educational reform movements under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Researchers contend these challenges must be addressed in a variety of ways, however, ―one of the most critical elements in achieving success in this endeavor is the need to attract and retain in our classrooms highly qualified and effective teachers‖ (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2002 p. 8). While the numbers vary, research conducted by the Alliance for Excellent Education estimates approximately two million teaching vacancies will need to be filled in the coming decade (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2002). Unfortunately, as districts across the nation strive to meet accountability expectations put into place by NCLB, many are falling short of meeting the needs or providing the necessary support systems struggling beginning teachers need to be successful in the classroom. ―If the nation is truly committed to making sure that no child is left behind, school districts across the country need to develop successful strategies and approaches to support these new teachers‖ (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2002, p. 8).

The value of teacher induction programs have been well documented through numerous studies. Furthermore, this substantial body of research describes multiple models of successful program implementation. ―Early studies suggest that not only do good induction programs

improve teacher retention, but they also influence teaching practices, increase teacher satisfaction, and promote strong professional development and collegial relationships" (Curran & Goldwick, 2002, p. 7). Furthermore, research indicates that "what keeps good teachers teaching" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008, p. 1) are "structured, sustained, intensive professional development programs that allow new teachers to observe others, to be observed by others, and to be part of networks or study groups where all teachers share together, grow together, and learn to respect each other's work" (Wong, 2004b, p. 108). Given that preparing and retaining quality teachers is essential to the success and achievement of students, a "comprehensive professional development program is [needed] to prepare effective teachers" (Wong, 2004b, p. 109) during their first formative years of teaching.

Research Design: A Case Study Approach

The purpose of this study was to explore and identify elements of induction programs and induction practices that are perceived by beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the program coordinators as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence. It examined the professional and personal beliefs of beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the program coordinators regarding the importance of a comprehensive induction program that embodies the key components of a lifelong professional development program to keep all teachers improving toward increasing their effectiveness in the classroom. This study yielded results, findings, and conclusions that are significant for school district administrators, building-level principals, program coordinators, and mentoring teachers as they work to develop and implement successful teacher induction programs.

The question of significance for this study was, Are there elements of teacher induction programs and induction practices perceived by stakeholders as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence?

The following questions were used to guide the interview process:

1. Is there a well-articulated induction plan for newly-hired teachers ―that includes professional development goals and the long-term plans of the district" (Wong, 2004a, p. 54)?
2. What are the beginning teachers', mentors', building-level administrators', and coordinators' beliefs about the purpose of a new teacher induction program (Wong, 2004b)?
3. What elements of induction programs or induction practices are currently included in the district's induction program (Wong, 2004b)?
4. What is the role of the mentor or the mentoring process in the district's induction program (Ganser, 2002b)?
5. What are the beginning teachers', mentors', building-level administrators', and coordinators' beliefs on the effectiveness of the district's induction plan in increasing teacher competence (Wong, 2004a)?
6. Does the induction program include ―professional development to build teacher skills that will result in student achievement" (Wong, 2004a, p. 55)?
7. What supports or services are made available to newly hired teachers to nurture them to become more effective teachers (Moir, 2003)?

8. Which components of the induction program or induction practices do the beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators and program coordinators perceive to be the most effective for increasing teacher competence (Moir, 2003)?
9. What do the beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators and program coordinators perceive to be the components or induction practices needed to improve the quality of induction programs (Moir, 2003)?

In order to investigate these research questions, a qualitative method of research was selected to explore in depth the beliefs and perceptions of beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and program coordinators concerning their implementation of an effective induction program. As further evidence regarding the significance of using qualitative research,

> qualitative research is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting—what it means for participants in that setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting—and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting. . . . The analysis strives for depth of understanding. (Patton as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 6)

In addition, Creswell (2003) advocated the characteristics of qualitative research design advanced by Rossman and Rallis because they captured both the traditional perspectives and the newer advocacy of this type of research design. Building on these ideas, Creswell promoted the following tenets concerning qualitative research design:

1. Qualitative research takes place in the natural setting. The qualitative researcher often goes to the site (home, office) of the participant to conduct the research. This enables the researcher to develop a level of detail about the individual or places and to be highly involved in the actual experiences of the participants.
2. Qualitative research uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic. The methods of data collection are growing, and they increasingly involve active participation and sensitivity to the participants in the study. Qualitative researchers look for involvement of their participants in data collection and seek to build rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study.
3. Qualitative research is emergent rather than tightly prefigured. Several aspects emerge during a qualitative study. The research questions may change and be refined as the inquirer learns what to ask and to whom it should be asked.
4. Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive. This means that the researcher makes an interpretation of the data.
5. The qualitative researcher views social phenomena holistically. This explains why qualitative research studies appear as broad, panoramic views rather than micro-analyses.
6. The qualitative researcher systematically reflects on who he or she is in the inquiry and is sensitive to his or her personal biography and how it shapes the study.
7. The qualitative research uses complex reasoning that is multifaceted, iterative, and simultaneous. Although the reasoning is largely inductive, both inductive and deductive processes are at work. The qualitative research adopts and uses one or

more strategies of inquiry as a guide for the procedures in the qualitative study. (Creswell, 2003, pp. 182-183)

A case study design was utilized to research beginning teachers', mentors', building-level administrators', and the program coordinators' beliefs and perceptions in two school districts. This method of study is consistent with other qualitative case designs in that the investigation and exploration was for meaning and understanding, the researcher was the primary instrument of data collection, and the information gathered is richly descriptive (Merriam, 2002).

Personal Statement

I became interested in teacher induction programs as an elementary principal approximately six years ago when I was board appointed to my new position through the recommendation of the superintendent. During my tenure, I had the opportunity to hire over half of the teachers that comprised the certified staff of the building. Given the low socioeconomic status of the students and the other challenging demographics that defined the building's student body and the school's culture, I began to understand how powerful the hiring of effective teachers was to the success and achievement of the students. However, hiring the best and brightest of the candidate pool by focusing on each individual's talents—I defined talent broadly such as charisma, leadership qualities, love of children, enthusiasm towards the profession, as well as intelligence, academic preparation, and contributions to the school—was only the beginning. Out of necessity, I quickly began to recognize my crucial role in providing school-based professional development opportunities not only in helping these new teachers thrive in the classroom but also in creating a professional learning community that promoted a high-performance culture for all staff and students. It became simple and clear. Students will learn what they are taught and they will learn more if they have effective teachers their classrooms.

Therefore, a teacher‘s ability to be effective in the classroom determines student achievement and performance. As a result, I have continued to investigate and explore the elements of induction programs and the induction practices needed to develop educational leaders in our schools. Because I am an active learner and have continued to cultivate my own professional growth throughout my career, I have come to the belief that exceptional educational leaders perceive themselves to be the *lead learners* of their organization; they possess a keen understanding of the staff, teachers, and students they serve; they are role models who instill a passion for learning in others; they are collaborative individuals who believe that organizations reach excellence by relying on the talents of its staff members; and they are unwavering in their conviction that all teachers have the ability to become effective through intentional, systemic professional development opportunities and experiences. I also recognize and understand that through the implementation of quality induction programs, we have an outstanding opportunity to demonstrate to our teachers and students how important their success is to our future.

District Selection

Two school districts located in Indiana were purposefully selected for this case study in an effort to ascertain commonalities from the perspective of stakeholders regarding the elements of induction programs and induction practices perceived as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence, as well as generalize the findings of this study. ―The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites . . . that will help the researcher understand the problem and research question‖ (Creswell, 2003, p. 185). For the purpose of this study, the districts will be referred to as Cherry Creek Community Schools and Eagle Canyon School Corporation. Cherry Creek Community Schools is located in the northern half of Cherry Creek County with district boundaries next to the second largest city in the state of Indiana. The

homogeneous community of Cherry Creek can be described as predominantly rural, middle class, and economically stable with moderate growth. The district serves approximately 2,555 students in two elementary buildings, one middle school, and one high school. The middle- and high-school buildings are adjacent, allowing the independently operated schools flexible utilization of site facilities. The two elementary buildings are strategically located in the northern and southern sections of the district. The PK-12 student body in Cherry Creek Community Schools is 96% Caucasian with a 32% poverty ratio. Approximately 77% of the district's students passed Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) this school year with the school district achieving adequate yearly progress (AYP) for all subpopulations of students in 2005. All four buildings in Cherry Creek Community Schools are accredited by the Indiana Department of Education and the NCA Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. The organizational leadership structure of the district includes a superintendent, an assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, and a literacy coordinator.

Eagle Canyon School Corporation is a hometown school district with a focus on modern-day educational excellence located in northeast Indiana. Eagle Canyon thrived as an agricultural community; however, in recent years, industries and manufacturers have filled the industrial park. The district's current population hovers at approximately 3, 500 students. Forty-one percent of Eagle Canyon's families qualify for free and reduced lunch and 80% of the PK-12 student body is Caucasian. The student population is fairly homogeneous; however, there is a growing trend in the diversity of its students, especially in the number of Hispanic students enrolling each year. Eagle Canyon School Corporation is comprised of four elementary buildings, one intermediate school, a junior high, and a high school. Approximately 71% of the

district‘s students passed ISTEP+ this school year with the school corporation meeting AYP for all subpopulations of students in 2005. All seven buildings in Eagle Canyon School Corporation were accredited by the Indiana Department of Education and the NCA Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. The leadership structure of this organization included a superintendent and an assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. For the purpose of this study, the field sites, as well as the names of beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the program coordinators have been changed to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Participant Selection

Participants were asked to voluntarily contribute to this study. The participants included beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the persons responsible for the coordination and implementation of each district‘s induction program. Participants representative of the various stakeholders identified in this study were selected by the superintendent of each identified school district. Participants included one beginning teacher, one mentor, and one building-level administrator at the elementary, as well as the secondary level for each school district. In addition, the person responsible for the coordination and implementation of each district‘s teacher induction program was asked to participate in this study.

All participants were asked to contribute to this study through an introductory letter (Appendix A) detailing the study and assuring them of their anonymity. A follow-up telephone call was made by me to set up individual interviews with participants. All participants were given an Informed Consent (Appendix B) and an initial questionnaire identifying basic

characteristics of the participants involved (Appendices C, D, E, and F). At the participants‘ convenience and as their schedules allowed, the interviews were conducted.

Interview Protocol

The interview questions were semi-structured and open-ended to solicit in-depth thoughtful responses. The purpose of the interview questions was to obtain from beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the program coordinators their beliefs, values, perceptions, feelings, concerns, and thoughts regarding teacher induction programs and induction practices. The question of significance for this study was: Are there elements of teacher induction programs and induction practices perceived by stakeholders as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence?

Permission was requested to record the interview prior to the interview session of each participant. All participants were informed of the need and rationale to record the interviews for the reliable and valid collection and analysis of data in this study.

Data Collection

The interviews were informal and relatively conversational, as well as situational. Pseudonyms were used in the writing of the study to maintain confidentiality. Several pseudonyms were listed randomly then matched based on what looked and sounded appropriate (i.e., appropriate syllable and letter combinations).

Topics were outlined in advance; however, the sequence and wording of questions during interviews may have varied slightly. The interviews were conducted in the participants‘ natural settings, which consisted of classrooms and offices. A maximum of one hour was reserved for each interview, which included anecdotal records taken by me to note key points of the participants involved. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Given qualitative

research primarily utilizes an inductive research process, I used an inductive process to analyze the data collected. This implies the researcher will

> build abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than test existing theories. There are no hypotheses to be deducted from theory to guide the investigation. Qualitative researchers build toward theory from observations and intuitive understandings gained in the field. Typically, qualitative research findings are in the form of themes, categories, typologies, concepts, tentative hypotheses, even theory, which have been inductively derived from data. (Merriam, 1998, pp. 7-8)

To further validate the accuracy of findings in this qualitative case study, I utilized the following strategies to speak to the trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility of data gathered: rich, thick descriptions have been used to convey the findings; bias I may have brought to the study had been clarified; ~~–n~~egative or discrepant information that ran counter to the themes had been presented; prolonged time had been spent in the field to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study; and peer debriefing was used to enhance the accuracy of the account" (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). In addition, during the process of research, I collected documents regarding each district's teacher induction program to capture useful information the interviews may have inadvertently missed and to further validate the findings of this study (Creswell, 2003).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore and identify elements of induction programs and induction practices perceived by beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the persons responsible for the coordination and implementation of the induction program in school districts as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence. More specifically, it examined the professional and personal beliefs of beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the program coordinators regarding the importance of a comprehensive induction program that embodies the key components of a "lifelong professional development program to keep [all] teachers improving toward increasing their effectiveness" (Wong, 2004a, p. 42). Questions were semi-structured and open-ended to solicit in-depth thoughtful answers. The purpose of the interview questions was to obtain from teachers, mentors, building-level administrators and program coordinators their beliefs, values, perceptions, feelings, concerns, and thoughts regarding induction programs and induction practices.

Are there elements of teacher induction programs and induction practices perceived by stakeholders as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence? The following questions were used to guide the interview process:

1. Is there a well-articulated induction plan for newly hired teachers ―that includes professional development goals and the long-term plans of the district" (Wong, 2004a, p. 54)?
2. What are the beginning teachers', mentors', administrators', and coordinator's beliefs about the purpose of a new teacher induction program (Wong, 2004b)?
3. What elements of induction programs or induction practices are currently included in the district's induction program (Wong, 2004b)?
4. What is the role of the mentor or the mentoring process in the district's induction program (Gasner, 2002b)?
5. What are the beginning teachers', mentors', administrators', and coordinator's beliefs on the effectiveness of the district's induction plan in increasing teacher competence (Wong, 2004a)?
6. Does the induction program include ―professional development to build teacher skills that will result in student achievement" (Wong, 2004a, p. 55)?
7. What supports or services are made available to newly hired teachers to nurture them to become more effective teachers (Moir, 2003)?
8. Which components of the induction program or induction practices do the beginning teachers, mentors, administrators and program coordinator perceive to be the most effective for increasing teacher competence (Moir, 2003)?
9. What do the beginning teachers, mentors, administrators and program coordinator perceive to be the components or induction practices needed to improve the quality of induction programs (Moir, 2003)?

The participants—four teachers, three mentors, four building-level administrators, and two program coordinators—were employees of two school districts located in Indiana. These districts were purposefully selected because of the teacher induction programs that had been developed and induction practices that were being implemented in their schools. A qualitative case study approach was used in this study. Interviews were conducted onsite and took place in offices, classrooms, and conference rooms. All interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed. Pseudonyms were used in the writing of the study to maintain confidentiality. Several pseudonyms were listed randomly then matched based on what looked and sounded appropriate (i.e., appropriate syllable and letter combinations).

This chapter reports the findings of my activities. Data from the interviews were analyzed using a qualitative case study approach. Several themes and patterns emerged from the data. Statements from participants were sorted in relation to the questions posed during interviews and then further categorized by district. The data are presented using narrative descriptions relevant to the study. The narrative following the research question provides a brief introduction to each participant that this research addressed.

Presentation of Data

Existence of a Well-Articulated Induction Plan for Newly Hired Teachers That Includes Professional Development Goals and the Long-Term Plans of the District

Cherry Creek Community Schools. Mrs. Tipton had been serving as the district's program coordinator of teacher induction programs for the past 12 years. She spent 14 years as a classroom teacher prior to becoming a public school administrator. She had acquired her educational specialist degree (Ed.S.) and had been with Cherry Creek Community Schools for the past 12 years. Although she never participated in a teacher induction program as a beginning

teacher, Mrs. Tipton had served as a mentor teacher five times. She was a warm person, quick with a smile, and organized a stack of papers on her table as she began the interview. Mrs. Tipton vacillated in giving a definitive response as to whether the district had a well-articulated induction program for newly-hired teachers. However, she did share there was a plan or calendar that new teachers used to reflect upon their practices throughout the school year. These ―reflections" had a date by which they must be completed and then served as the foundation for conversation between newly-hired teachers and their assigned mentors. Professional development opportunities within the district were very site-based and determined by the needs of the improvement initiatives of individual schools. Examples of these types of professional development shared during the interview included literacy collaborative training, the integration of reading skills in content areas, and effective strategies for successful teaching based upon Wong's research. Mrs. Tipton went on to say if the reflective conversations between teachers and mentors identified additional support that was needed, the district would provide this training to the new hire. As she reflected upon whether this plan helped to create the stage for lifelong learning, Mrs. Tipton stated she believed this was up to the individual teacher: ―For some it might, for others it might not." She also commented she believes the induction plan they have in place connects to the district's current teacher evaluation plan, specifically in looking at the descriptors being used to evaluate a teacher's performance. From this perspective, Mrs. Tipton indicated they were able to differentiate and individualize professional development opportunities for teachers based upon evaluation results and support them in areas where additional training might be necessary for them to be successful.

Steve held a master's degree in educational leadership and had been an administrator in the district for eight years. Prior to his administrative tenure with the district, he was a classroom

teacher for 15 years. Steve had never participated in a teacher induction program nor had he ever served as a mentor teacher; however, he did have experience as an administrative mentor. He was neatly dressed in a suit and tie and his office was very organized. Steve was personable and very articulate. He indicated the district had developed a teacher induction plan and specifically referenced the district's New Teacher Academy. Although he described the strengths of the current framework they had in place, Steve shared he believed the district could improve upon its existing program. "I feel like we can do better though." He cited offering more resources and intentional professional development opportunities as options to consider in revising their induction program. Steve also thought gathering or soliciting feedback from beginning teachers participating in the program would be beneficial. "What worked well? What hasn't worked so well? What can I do to provide professional development or any resources to help you become an even more effective teacher in the classroom? What do you need?" These were all questions Steve believed would provide insightful information from a beginning teacher's perspective.

Mrs. Pierce was in her 27th year of teaching with the last 21 years spent in her current district. Although she had obtained her master's degree in administration, she had never actively pursued being a building principal. For the past four years, Mrs. Pierce's role within the district included being a part-time, fourth-grade teacher as well as serving in the capacity of a literacy coach. She had served as a mentor teacher on three separate occasions. Although students had just left for the day, the classroom was bright and orderly. Her teacher's desk was situated at the front of the room with student desks organized neatly in rows. She was enthusiastic, energetic, and excited to talk about education. Mrs. Pierce stated the district did have a plan in place and referenced her role as a literacy coach as part of the professional development provided to new staff members within the district. She shared she believed mentoring and coaching go "hand-in-

hand" considering the types of support she is able to offer teachers as both a mentor and a literacy coach. Mrs. Pierce also indicated the district had created a mentor guide that was used by mentors to direct activities and reflective conversations with new teachers assigned to them.

Matt held a master's degree in administration and had been serving as a building-level administrator for 15 years with the last nine years being in his current district. Although Matt did have four years of teaching experience, he never participated in a new teacher induction program nor did he have any experience as a mentor teacher. Matt was very matter-of-fact in giving detailed responses and sat comfortably at a small table in his office during the interview. He shared the district did implement an induction plan for new teachers, stating the New Teacher Academy provided time for new teachers to work collaboratively with central office personnel, building administrators, mentors, and colleagues within their grade level or department. Matt went on to share the New Teacher Academy provided structured activities for two days prior to the start of the school year and new teachers were expected to participate. Stipends were paid to new teachers for their participation in the New Teacher Academy.

Molly was a third-grade teacher with a bachelor's degree in education. This was her second year of teaching in the district. She was comfortably dressed in slacks and a sweater and appeared to be a little anxious about the interview process. Molly's classroom was neat and orderly with many displays of student work. Math posters and word walls for student reference were placed around the room. The students' desks were organized in groups of four and five. Although not quite certain what was meant by the term induction plan, Molly presumed it was similar to a mentoring plan and stated she believed she had received a lot of support from the district as a beginning teacher. She referenced the New Teacher Academy, professional leave days, classroom observations, and release time to work on her portfolio as examples of the

support she has received. She also shared her mentor had been a huge help to her over the past couple of years. Molly went on to share how she had used peer observations to work on a couple of areas highlighted by her building principal as a result of observations made to her classroom. ―He gave me a couple of pointers to work on and then had me observe other teachers who are stronger in those areas. So that was very helpful to me." Molly also indicated the district's curriculum director was great about keeping the lines of communication open with her mentor and her.

Sherry was a sixth-grade teacher at the district's middle school. She held a bachelor's degree in mathematics and was in her second year of teaching. Her room appeared dark, but it was late afternoon after the students had been dismissed. She had displays of student work and other motivational posters hanging around her classroom. Sherry stated the district did have an induction plan for new teachers in place and referred to the New Teacher Academy as a ―crash course" on everything that would be helpful to new hires. She recalled being introduced to her mentor, receiving some professional books, and signing lots of papers. Sherry went on to say that part of the New Teacher Academy took place with all new teachers across the district followed by building-specific activities in which the new hires were divided by their respective schools. The year that Sherry was hired there were actually four new mathematics teachers so she saw that as huge benefit for her personally.

Although Sherry believed the mentoring process could be very beneficial, the working relationship that had been established with her mentor was not proving to be as advantageous as she had hoped. She went on to say she thought their working relationship was complicated by the fact that her mentor was not only a licensed teacher in another curricular area but also teaching in another grade level. Therefore, given the teaming structure of the middle school,

Sherry felt like she had had more communication with her team members and the other sixth-grade math teacher as opposed to her mentor. She felt compelled to share it was not that their personalities clashed but that her mentor had also taken a more ―hands-off" approach to mentoring. ―If you need something, ask me, otherwise I'm just going to let you run with it your first year" was the message Sherry received from her mentor.

Eagle Canyon School Corporation. Mr. Riley had been serving as the district's program coordinator of teacher induction programs for the past four years. Prior to becoming a school administrator, he spent 20 years as a classroom teacher. He had acquired his Ed.S. degree and had been serving the district in an administrative capacity for the past nine years. Mr. Riley had not participated in an induction program as a beginning teacher nor had he ever served in the role of a mentor teacher. His office was open and inviting. Mr. Riley was soft-spoken, articulate, and extremely personable. He believed the district implemented a well-planned induction program. In fact, candidates for open teaching positions in the district received an induction folder during the interview process communicating up front what the expectations would be for them during their first three years of employment with the district. Mr. Riley also shared they used their induction program as a marketing tool to attract high-quality candidates to the district. He went on to say the program started with five days of professional development in the summer prior to the start of school with the first four days spent at the district level and the remaining day considered a building-based day. The district's plan also required participation in an instructional process class during the first year of employment that consisted of eight class sessions. The second and third years of the district's plan required completion of either Teacher Expectations Student Achievement (TESA) or differentiated instruction classes with both of these consisting of eight class sessions. New staff members were also encouraged to take choice

theory and/or other technology classes needed to enhance their technological proficiencies that were offered throughout the school year.

All beginning teachers were assigned a mentor and Mr. Riley shared that building-level administrators were highly involved in all induction activities. He also stated all new teachers to the district were included in the district's induction program. In addition, all participants received either their curriculum contract rate for summer induction activities or stipends for the successful completion of required classes. New teachers were also given the opportunity to take advantage of credit hours through local universities or continual renewal units (CRUs) upon successful completion of courses. Materials and resources needed for classes or induction activities were provided by the district.

Mary held a master's degree in administration and had been serving the district as a building-level principal for six years. Prior to becoming an administrator, Mary spent 10 years in the classroom as an elementary teacher. She had acquired 11 years of administrative experience and had served as a mentor teacher one time. As a beginning teacher, Mary did not have the opportunity to participate in an induction program. Her office was neat and organized with students' artwork hanging on the bulletin board behind her desk. Mary was warm, personable, and very energetic. Mary shared the district implemented a "pretty extensive" induction program. All new teachers to the district were required to participate in classes that encompassed lesson planning, differentiated instruction, classroom management, and assessment practices. Mary referenced the instructional process class as well as the differentiated instruction and TESA classes. She went on to say participation in these classes was mandatory and took place after school hours. The classes were taught by the district's superintendent, administrators,

and teachers. Portfolios and interviews were used to determine the successful completion of these classes.

Sandy had been teaching for 15 years with the last 10 years in this particular district. She had a master‘s degree in education and currently taught second grade. Although Sandy had never participated in a teacher induction program as a beginning teacher, she had served as a mentor teacher twice. Her room was decorated in bright colors with displays of numbers, the alphabet, and student work. The students‘ desks were situated in rows. Sandy indicated there was quite a bit of training available to new teachers in the district. She referenced the differentiated instruction and TESA classes as well as the technology classes that were offered throughout the school year. Sandy also shared that all new teachers to the district were assigned a mentor to help guide and provide support.

Danielle was a second-grade teacher with four years of teaching experience. She held a bachelor‘s degree in education and had not participated in any other types of induction programming outside of the district. Her room was bright and cheery with student artwork hanging from the ceiling. Displays of numbers and a words wall also decorated the room. Danielle‘s bubbly personality was infectious. She strongly believed the district implemented a well-developed induction plan. This was not the first district where Danielle had been employed so she was able to compare her experiences. She spoke at great length about the various activities she participated in prior to the start of school.

> One day they brought in someone that talked just about the community, the culture, and the dynamics. They put us on a school bus and gave us a tour of the community so that we could understand where the students were coming from. We had someone come in and talk about diversity. The next day was all about technology. They took us into the

> lab and taught us about the grade books and how to use the website. One day we talked about planning, differentiating instruction in our classroom, and other initiatives the district was working on as a school community. It was incredible and I was really impressed by it. This was the most prepared I have ever felt.

Danielle also spoke about the instructional process class and other courses she would be participating in as part of the district's induction plan over the next three years. She indicated these expectations had been clearly communicated during the interview process and believed the district was committed to helping teachers grow professionally.

Carla was a high school teacher in the district with 30 years of teaching experience. She had taught all of her 30 years at Eagle Canyon and held a master's degree in education. Although she had never participated in an induction program as a beginning teacher, she had served as a mentor teacher five times. Carla was short in stature with graying hair. She was very matter-of-fact and brief in her responses. She believed the district offered an induction program that was very intentional and provided a strong connection to the work new teachers were expected to do implement in their classrooms. She referenced the three instructional classes that new teachers complete and discussed how these strategies were extremely applicable to effective teaching.

Kyle held a bachelor's degree and was in his second year of teaching at the high school. Currently, he taught sophomores and seniors and this was his first induction experience within a school district. Kyle's appearance was very youthful; however, his poise and professionalism mirrored those of a much more veteran teacher. From Kyle's perspective, the district's plan was well articulated. He indicated the district had a process in place to even be considered for employment, and information regarding the expectations of professional development were

shared during the interview process. He went on to say this hiring ―test" measured whether or not a person believes that any student is capable of learning so it determines the mindset or disposition of the teacher immediately. Once hired, Kyle shared there are three courses that new teachers are required to complete. These included the instructional process class, the differentiated instruction class and the TESA class. Kyle felt the coursework he was completing was beneficial and correlated to the professional development goals he had established with the building principal.

Mr. Barker had been a teacher for nine years prior to becoming a building-level administrator. He held a master's degree in educational leadership and had 16 years of experience as a high school principal. His last two years of experience were with the current district. Mr. Barker had never served as a mentor teacher nor did he participate in an induction program as a beginning teacher. His desk contained scattered piles of paper and there were folders stacked on the floor. A stack of educational books and magazines littered the small table in his office. Mr. Barker was dressed neatly in business casual and appeared to be very good-humored. He indicated the district's induction program was ―a work in progress." Although he stated the district had induction activities in place, he did not believe the plan was clearly articulated. Mr. Barker went on to say ―like most things in education the plan was under constant revision and review." He stated that currently the district's plan included an in-depth week of professional development activities prior to the start of school. Topics covered during this week included instructional processes, assessment practices, and classroom management as well as district policy and expectations.

Stakeholders' Beliefs About the Purpose of a New Teacher Induction Program

Cherry Creek Community Schools. As a program coordinator, Mrs. Tipton believed the purpose of a new teacher induction program was twofold. First, the purpose was about supporting new teachers as they came in, full of anticipation and excitement, and then hit what researchers refer to as the "survival dip" in December. "We want that support there so that they understand they are not out there floundering. We want that strong mentor support to help them get through that survival piece and move to rejuvenation and back to anticipation. We know that our mentors do that; they provide that help." The second purpose Mrs. Tipton shared was to support the learning and professional growth of their mentors. She believed that educators grew when they helped someone else reflect because they were also doing their own reflecting. She believed serving in the role as a mentor had a huge impact upon the growth of many of their staff members. She went on to say she believed the mentoring piece helped create a professional learning community where all teachers are supported as true professionals.

Steve said, for him as a building administrator, the purpose of a new teacher induction program was simple. "It's to provide all the resources and tools necessary to become an effective classroom teacher for kids." He spoke passionately about the role a classroom teacher plays in the success of students. "That's where we're going to see the gains . . . in the trenches of the classroom." He was able to share research he had read on the benefits of the mentoring process and the correlation of strong mentoring programs to increased student achievement levels. He perceived the spending of district funds on resources and professional development as a wise investment. "They deserve to have everything available to them to get the job done effectively."

Mrs. Pierce believed the purpose of a new teacher induction program was to assist beginning teachers in creating a solid foundation for success in the classroom. She referenced

effective classroom management techniques, locating resources to be used during instruction, lesson planning, implementing best practices, and learning how to address the varied needs of students as topics that have dominated conversations in her role as a mentor. Mrs. Pierce went on to share she recognized teachers, like students, have varied needs and require different levels of support in different areas. Therefore, she relied on her knowledge of coaching skills and strategies to assist each individual teacher in needed areas of improvement or desired areas of growth.

As a building principal, Matt believed the purpose of a new teacher induction program was to "equip that teacher with the knowledge and skills of how to be successful in that building or in that district." He shared bringing new teachers up to speed with how the district operates, how the school functions, expectations of student achievement, and the specifics of the evaluation process were key topics to cover as part of the induction process. Although there were many commonalities between the four schools in the district, Matt believed the district's current induction plan permitted administrators the flexibility to differentiate based upon the programs, initiatives, and goals relative to their individual schools. In addition to the activities and professional development provided to new teachers as part of the New Teacher Academy, Matt also

> walked them through the expectations of lesson planning and gave them samples of successful lesson plans that teachers have used including the format and structure of lesson planning. We also talked about instruction, instructional models and what instruction should look like in the classroom. Those are the biggies.

Matt went on to share he believed the purpose of an induction program was to provide additional support to new teachers not being successful. He shared if there were deficiencies where a new

teacher needed to improve, then it was important to ensure support or an improvement plan was established to address these areas of concern.

As a beginning teacher, Molly's response to the purpose of a new teacher induction program was very fresh and unsophisticated. "I would think it would be to make sure we don't fall on our faces, I mean, to guide us." She spoke affectionately of her mentor and indicated she liked to bounce ideas off of her; she was always there to answer questions that Molly might have; and she was there to support her in any way that she could or needed.

Sherry, a beginning teacher, believed the purpose of a new teacher induction program was to provide the necessary support for beginning teachers to be successful. She referred to getting acquainted with the school system, being taught policies and procedures of the school, and becoming familiar with the goals of the school as important aspects of an induction plan. Sherry indicated she had been around school systems a long time due to her mother's role as a school board member; therefore, she felt her needs as a beginning teacher were more unique.

Eagle Canyon School Corporation. Mr. Riley, program coordinator, believed the purpose of an induction program was to "establish the unique qualities and expectations of the school district." He went on to say, "We all have relatively the same purpose. We all want the same end product. Our outputs are the same, but our inputs and throughputs are so different." Mr. Riley stressed the classes that new teachers complete are part of the expectations the district has for classroom planning and instruction. As administrators are conducting walk-throughs, they are looking for the implementation of strategies that new teachers have learned through this training and professional development. Although he indicated that new teachers failing to meet these expectations were addressed formally through the district's evaluation process, Mr. Riley

firmly believed the district did an excellent job of providing varied levels of support to all new teachers.

Mary, a principal, believed the purpose of a new teacher induction program was to "equip them to be successful in the classroom." From her perspective, this included classroom management, instructional practices, and curriculum development. She also indicated that mentors played a significant role in ensuring the success of new teachers.

Although Sandy, a mentor, never clearly addressed what she believed to be the purpose of a new teacher induction program, she did express how valuable she believed the experiences offered in the district were to new teachers. Sandy recalled being a first year teacher in another state where she felt she was pretty much on her own. "Go for it. It's all yours!" She remembered having to seek out assistance versus just knowing that there was a mentor she could have gone to for additional support. Sandy contrasted her own personal experience to the one she believes the district currently provides and again shared the value she saw in retaining young teachers in the profession as a result of this support.

For Danielle, the purpose of a new teacher induction program was all about providing support to her as a beginning teacher. As she reflected upon her previous experiences in another school district, Danielle shared she believed having an induction program keeps new teachers from "getting lost in the shuffle" or "feeling like they are drowning." Danielle went on to say she saw great value in having building-level administrators present during induction activities in the summer because new teachers were able to get to know them on a personal level. She commented that even the superintendent taught one of the classes, which gave new teachers the opportunity to build rapport with him as well.

As a mentor, Carla believed the purpose of an induction program was to ensure the success of new teachers. "It is important to have a whole community helping our new teachers and giving them exposure to what is taking place in the educational community in this day and age."

Kyle, a beginning teacher, indicated the success of new teachers was the primary goal of the district's induction program. "I feel like the induction program should set the tone for what is going on in the district and how to better assist the teacher in succeeding in that environment." He went on to say that he felt like every school had different priorities. "Schools aren't facing the same challenges and problems. In Eagle Canyon, differentiated instruction is important to us. Another school might need to focus on a different instructional strategy that works for their students."

Mr. Barker, a building principal, compared the purpose of a new teacher induction program to that of a student orientation program.

> I think the goal is to orient the person to his new surroundings. Allow the person to gain a feeling of belonging and be able to identify potential resources. I think the key is to convince the person that we are not casting them out to an island. We are here for them. In our view, they are an investment and we want our investment to grow and develop.

He went on to share how the process of induction had changed over the years.

> When I started teaching, it was not uncommon for a teacher to meet his principal on the first day of school; receive the lesson plan book, grade book and keys and be left to fend for himself. Here you go. I'll see you in May. It has changed tremendously over the years.

Elements of Induction Programs or Induction Practices Currently Included in the District's Induction Program

Cherry Creek Community Schools. Mrs. Tipton, program coordinator, indicated due to the types of licenses graduates receive as a result of changes in legislation, mentoring expectations, and renewal requirements, there were several things that needed to be considered in their plan. For teachers who had received an Indiana Rules 2002 license and were in their first year of teaching, the reflection piece of the district's plan was a priority. ~~"~~It's about planning your units based upon standards, talking about the assessments you are going to give, then doing the instruction and then analyzing the results." Again, she emphasized these reflective, sharing conversations took place between new teachers and their mentors. For those beginning teachers who held an Indiana Rules 2002 license and were in the second year of their teaching, the successful completion of their portfolio was the priority. The mentor's role in this process was to assist the beginning teacher in planning, organizing, and documenting their performance to successfully meet the portfolio requirements. Mrs. Tipton shared for new hires holding other types of licenses such as Indiana Rules 46-47, they were involved in the reflections piece of the district's plan and engaged in conversations with their mentors about individual professional development needs that might exist.

Mrs. Tipton also shared that normally only newly hired teachers with little or no experience were involved in the district's induction program. However, she indicated a new teacher's prior knowledge of the district's programs and initiatives or previous experiences with the literacy collaborative model did play a role in the types of support and/or professional development afforded to all new hires. Mentors were not typically assigned to those new hires

with experience; however, other staff members were made available to "show them the ropes" on a collegial level.

Steve, principal, spoke of the district's New Teacher Academy in sharing elements of induction programs or practices currently in place. He shared examples of training new teachers have participated in as a result of this program as well as professional development opportunities made available to them such as focusing on the effective strategies for successful teaching based upon Wong's research. In addition, Steve believed it was his role as a building-level administrator to provide professional growth experiences and resources to new teachers at the school level such as book studies. He spoke about "getting off on the right foot the first day" and making that good first impression. "Be ready, be detailed, be prepared." As he reflected upon his own priorities as a leader, Steve shared how important it was to remember the support and tools that beginning teachers need to be successful in this profession. He recalled how a principal's time is quickly consumed with the day-to-day management and operation of the building at the expense of remembering and investing time in things that should matter the most or have a greater impact on students. Consequently, Steve indicated he challenges himself to keep his priorities straight and works hard to provide intentional opportunities for professional development to new teachers within his own building. Steve shared,

> If we can get the ground work laid in the first year or two, the more successful they are going to be as a classroom teacher. That's where the action is anyway and that's where we're going to see the gains in student achievement. Our classroom teachers make the difference.

Mrs. Pierce, a mentor for the district, also spoke of the district's New Teacher Academy and shared how this time was used to provide professional development experiences specific to

district-wide initiatives and programs. She also indicated time was built into the schedule to allow new hires to complete necessary contractual paper work and insurance forms. She went on to share that release time was made available for beginning teachers to observe classrooms, collaborate with their mentors, attend workshops, and work on their portfolios. Mrs. Pierce perceived her role as a literacy coach as an important piece of the district's induction program. In this role, she was given the responsibility or task of training teachers in the district's literacy collaborative model, observing the implementation of this framework in classrooms, modeling the various components of this framework, as well as providing coaching and support to assist teachers in their professional growth specific to literacy instruction. Mrs. Pierce believed the district was able to differentiate or individualize professional development for new teachers through the types of support that was provided to them.

Matt, a building principal, referenced the New Teacher Academy, the mentoring process, and professional development opportunities, as well as release time for peer observations and portfolio work as induction practices currently included in the district's plan. Overall, Matt believed the district did a good job of supporting new teachers with a variety of experiences to meet their individual, specific needs.

In reflecting upon the types of induction practices that have been made available to her as a beginning teacher, Molly shared how the New Teacher Academy was helpful at the start of her teaching career. She also stated just having a mentor to go to was a huge support. Molly went on to say she had attended some writing workshops last year. "That was an excellent resource for me." She was also planning to attend workshops this year in other areas of interest. Molly believed the district was good about providing varied professional development opportunities and were willing to invest in their teachers. "They are very good about giving us the days to go

to different workshops." From her perspective, the district was able to individualize support for beginning teachers through the various types of support they were willing to provide.

Sherry discussed how there had been changes made to the New Teacher Academy as part of feedback the district had received from beginning teachers who had participated in the program a year ago. For example, the district gave professional books that had been purchased to new hires earlier in the summer instead of just two days prior to the start of the school year so that there was time for them to actually read and apply information learned. Other practices that Sherry mentioned the district had in place were the mentoring process, classroom observations, the reflections that are a part of the New Teacher Academy, professional development on reading and writing across the curriculum, as well as opportunities for collaboration and sharing through teaming.

Eagle Canyon School Corporation. Mr. Riley, program coordinator, shared there were three programs currently implemented as part of the district's induction plan. These instructional programs included the instructional process class, the TESA class, and the differentiated instruction class. He went on to say these were "three strong instructional programs that cover planning for classes, instruction, assessment and classroom management, which a lot of times early teachers struggle with." Mr. Riley indicated these classes were taught by either administrators or teachers within the district.

When asked about current induction practices in the district, Mary, a principal, indicated she had failed to mention another extensive part of the district's plan, which included five days of professional development prior to the start of the school year. She went on to say participation in this professional development was an expectation and that this information was communicated to new hires up front during the interview process. "This is what we expect.

There are no excuses." Mary also shared there are challenges that surface when new teachers are hired late and are unable to participate in this piece of the induction program. Currently, this challenge fell to the building principal who worked to create professional development opportunities that mirrored the training these late hires would have received.

Sandy, a mentor, spoke of the professional development prior to school, the classes that new teachers participate in, and the mentoring process as components of the district's induction program. Aside from these opportunities, Sandy indicated she was not aware of other practices that might be available to new or beginning teachers.

Danielle, a beginning teacher, referenced the week-long professional development provided to new teachers prior to the start of the school year as well as the three classes they are expected to complete (instructional process, differentiated instruction, and TESA classes) when asked about current induction practices in the district. She shared all the books and resources were provided by the district and new teachers received a stipend for participation. Although Danielle was a new teacher to the district, she had not been assigned a mentor. She speculated this might be because she had already completed the Indiana Department of Education's mentoring requirements.

Carla, a mentor, referred to the mentoring process and the three graduate courses or the three instructional classes (instructional process, TESA, and differentiated instruction) that new teachers complete as induction components that were currently included in the district's plan. Carla shared she taught both the instructional process and differentiated instruction classes so she was directly involved in professional development offered to new teachers throughout the school year.

Kyle shared he participated in a week of professional development activities during the summer before his first year of teaching. He recalled taking a tour of the community and seeing the different types of living the city had to offer. He remembered being exposed to a lot of data, theories on teaching students in poverty, and research by Harry Wong on the first days of school. Kyle went on to say this experience gave him the opportunity to build positive relationships with the other new teachers.

Kyle referenced the three instructional classes that all new teachers were expected to complete as part of the district's induction plan. He discussed the accountability that accompanied these courses such as homework, the creation of portfolios, developing instructional units, online dialogue, the sharing of results, modeling instructional strategies, and classroom observations. Kyle also stated he had been assigned a mentor as additional support.

Mr. Barker, a principal, never specifically identified elements of induction programs or practices that were currently being used by the district; however, he did discuss some challenges he believed existed. "There is never enough time. As I watch our young people go through the orientation process, we overwhelm them with information, and I sympathize with them every year." Even though he recognized the vital importance of the information being shared and presented, he indicated more time was needed with new teachers to the district. The lack of mentors was another challenge from his perspective.

> We simply don't have enough human resources to fill the needs of our new people. We often have to partner up or we might even investigate the need to allow someone to serve as a mentor who's never really been through the training of a mentor program. We try to work with them locally to develop their skills.

Overall, Mr. Barker believed this was the district's greatest need. "We simply need more mentors."

Role of the Mentor or the Mentoring Process in the District's Induction Program

Cherry Creek Community Schools. Mrs. Tipton, program coordinator, believed the role of the mentor was about being that support person. "It's that person who says you're not alone. It's about building a good, trusting relationship." She went on to share the district does not necessarily assign mentors from the same grade level or department because the district's philosophy is that if you are a "certified" mentor, you possess the skills to mentor anyone. She also added sometimes it is nice for new teachers to have another sounding board outside of their own grade-level team, department, or specialty area. Building principals are given the latitude to assign appropriate mentors to their new teachers, and it was shared "we put a lot of faith in their decisions."

Given the important role mentors played in the district's induction program, Mrs. Tipton indicated they had been building a core group of certified mentors for the past five years. In fact, the district funded the cost of certification for those interested in becoming mentors through the district's Educational Service Center. She went on to say they trained at least four or five teachers every year. Although the training and certification process was typically a voluntary self-selection made by those interested, Mrs. Tipton indicated principals and she did, at times, actively recruit staff members they believed would be excellent mentors and role models.

Steve, a building principal, recalled his first experience as a teacher and spoke fondly of those who served as mentors to him that year. "I really feel like we have all had someone mentor us along the way and we've all become better because of it." Simply put, Steve believed the role of the mentor was to share with new teachers effective practices they had gained through their

experiences such as how to build positive relationships with students, how to motivate and engage them in the learning process, as well as develop rigorous curriculum and assessment practices. From his perspective, the sharing of information between mentor and new teacher was vital to the mentoring process.

As a mentor, Mrs. Pierce believed her role was very similar to that of a literacy coach. She stressed building trusting working relationships with beginning teachers so that this knowledge could be used to intentionally plan and provide opportunities for them to reflect upon their classroom practices. Coaching new teachers to be independent problem-solvers was also important to her. Mrs. Pierce added she felt she was well prepared to serve in the role of a mentor due to the extensive training she received from the district's Educational Service Center as well as the work she completed as part of her National Board Certification.

Matt, a principal, described mentors as peer coaches. He emphasized the mentor role was not evaluative, but intended to foster collaboration, share ideas and strategies, and offer suggestions for improvement if necessary.

Molly stated, "Her role is to give me advice." She felt this was important to be able to have this person to go to for advice, to share experiences, ask questions, solicit feedback, and assist in guiding classroom management. Molly spoke about her level of preparedness for the classroom, specifically behavior management, and the experiences she believed she lacked in coming into her first year of teaching. She indicated her mentor had been a huge support for her in discussing and determining how best to set up her classroom learning environment, how to create a positive behavior management system, and how to effectively manage misbehavior. From Molly's perspective, her mentor was able to use her own experiences to share "what has worked and was hasn't" and guided Molly appropriately.

Sherry believed the role of the mentor was to provide assistance as needed, ~~–~~checking in to ensure that things are going well and taking time out of their busy schedule to make certain you are on the right foot." She went on to share that she really has not met with her mentor very much because ~~–~~the teacher who was right beside her is a great teacher and her mentor felt she was getting enough support that way." Although Sherry's body language seemed to imply she was bothered by this decision, she verbally indicated this arrangement was agreeable stating, ~~–~~It's not that I didn't want to meet with my mentor, but it was just one more meeting that I would have to go to." Sherry expressed that she believed her mentor teacher wanted her to be successful, but did not take a hands-on approach to the mentoring process.

Eagle Creek School Corporation. ~~–~~The role of the mentor is to meet the day-to-day emotional needs of that beginning teacher," stated Mr. Riley, the district's program coordinator of induction programming.

> Some safe harbor that they can go to, relax and say this is what happened today. Or have you ever had a situation like this? Or the principal came to my class today and I was not well prepared. I am going to see my principal tomorrow. What do you think he is going to say? It is somebody to help them get through.

He went on to share they encourage their mentors to use various methods of communication with their beginning teachers including email, phone calls, and face-to-face visits.

Mary, a principal, believed the role of the mentor was to provide support and guidance as well as answer any questions the new teacher might have or just simply be there in times of need. She also shared mentors were available to demonstrate and model effective instruction or cover classrooms so that new teachers could make peer observations. ~~–~~I think a mentor wears many hats. It's just not a prescribed role, and it depends upon the needs of the beginning teacher."

Although Sandy had never seen anything that specifically defined the role of a mentor, her perception is that her role was to provide support and advice as well as serve as a confidant to new teachers. She went on to share that she was currently participating in training emphasizing the framework of cognitive coaching. Sandy believed this experience would be very beneficial to her as a mentor and help her approach the mentoring of new teachers from a different perspective.

Danielle, a beginning teacher, believed the role of a mentor was to provide support and answer questions. She did not think it was the mentor's role to tell a new teacher how to do everything. "I feel like it is important that you establish that you are both teachers and professionals."

Carla believed her role as a mentor was to guide. Carla stated,

> We are not there to reform or mold. We are that anchoring person if the mentee needs us. We provide a lot of collaboration. We are not to be judgmental or have all the answers. We are there for assistance from the first day they arrive, and we are to provide them with any necessary things they need to become effective teachers.

From his perspective, Kyle shared the role of the mentor was to provide support and encouragement. "Empathy is one thing from my standpoint, especially that first year. I want someone to tell me that I have been there and done that." Conversely, Kyle believed an effective mentor is there to challenge the new teacher. "A good mentor has to throw challenges to the new teacher." He went on to say the collaboration and sharing that took place with his mentor was very valuable.

Mr. Barker, a principal, indicated the mentor serves as a coach. He believed mentors were a source of information for new teachers and wore many hats. He went on to share that

collaboration time is provided on a weekly basis for mentors and mentees to address upcoming common plans and assessments, talk about instructional activities focused on promoting high levels of engagement, and discuss any challenges the new teacher may be facing. Mr. Barker also indicated release time was made available for new teachers to make peer observations both within the building and/or outside the school, if there was a need or desire to do so. ~~It~~'s all about developing their skill sets because we do consider them an investment."

From Mr. Barker's perspective, a weakness that currently existed with the district's plan is that not all new teachers to the district are assigned a mentor. If a new teacher comes to the district with experience, he or she is not necessarily assigned a mentor. Mr. Barker stated,

> We probably assume that because a staff member may be joining us with experience that he or she is good to go. We assume they are a more finished product. As I have learned through my experience, this is not always the case.

Mr. Barker believed this was an area of further discussion and study for the district.

Stakeholders' Beliefs on the Effectiveness of the District's Induction Plan in Increasing Teacher Competence

Cherry Creek Community Schools. Program Coordinator, Mrs. Tipton, shared,

> I think if you are looking at a scale from 1 to 5, I would give it a 4. We have not lost any teacher because of the lack of a strong mentor. We have lost new teachers because of other reasons, but it hasn't been because we haven't had a mentor induction plan in place.

As she continued to reflect, Mrs. Tipton indicated she would not have responded the same way 10 years ago, but she nodded and added with confidence that she believed the district's induction program was pretty effective in increasing teacher competence.

Steve, a building principal, indicated a need for improvement and scored the district's induction plan on effectiveness in increasing teacher competence at a seven on a scale from 1 – 10. Reflecting critically, he shared he believed the district's program was more about providing "safety nets" versus implementing deliberate induction practices that would increase teacher competence. He advocated a need for the district to evaluate, analyze, and assess their current plan in an effort to make revisions and improvements that would positively impact teacher competence. "Let's take the mask off, let's do an honest autopsy of where we're at, and determine how we can be better."

"I think it is as effective as the mentor makes it," Mrs. Pierce, a teacher mentor, stated. She went on to share how important it was for the mentor to set the tone of the working relationship to be established as well as set the stage for collaborative work to be accomplished by the new teacher and mentor. She also added that she believed the district's plan was very effective and based her assessment on the professional and personal growth she observed in new teachers over the years as a mentor.

Matt, a principal, stated, "I think what we do is effective. It gives them time to learn from one another, which I think is important. I think it gives them time to develop and plan, at least initially, before the school year starts." He went on to share he believed the New Teacher Academy provided new teachers the opportunity to work with successful mentors, which he felt was effective in increasing teacher competence.

As a beginning teacher, Molly gave the district's induction plan a "7 or 8" on a scale of 1 to 10 in increasing teacher competence, indicating a need for more time to collaborate with her mentor. She went on to share what a precious commodity time is for all teachers; therefore, she relied on email for communication with her mentor more the she liked to at this point. On the

other hand, Molly greatly valued the professional development opportunities that had been afforded to her such as workshops and classroom observations. She recalled being ―able to go out and see good teaching.‖ She went on to say,

> It is a real eye-opener to listen to a principal say this is what you need to do; this is what you are doing well, but you need to work on this. It is so much better when you can see it and see what they are talking about.

From this perspective, ―I‘d say our district‘s plan is pretty good.‖

Sherry, a beginning teacher, was noncommittal in her response as to whether she believed the district‘s induction program was effective in increasing teacher competence. She spoke to what she believed where the strengths of the New Teacher Academy and indicated she thought the professional books were helpful resources. Although she saw value in the induction practices the district currently had in place, Sherry stated she believed she would be as strong of a teacher today without these supports because of her personality type. She referred to herself as being a *go-getter* and taking the initiative when needed to get things done.

Eagle Canyon School Corporation. Mr. Riley, program coordinator, stated they informally evaluate their induction program at the end of every year and changes to the district‘s plan were based on this feedback. Because of the practices currently included in the district‘s plan, Mr. Riley believed it was highly effective in increasing teacher competence. Indicators of this success were tied directly to measures of student performance, and Mr. Riley indicated there were future plans to devise an instrument that could be used to formally evaluate the district‘s induction plan across multiple competencies.

Mary, a building principal, believed the district‘s induction plan was doing a great job instilling the concept of lifelong learning. ―Change is inevitable. We can‘t just keep the same

old tricks and tools in our bags." Consequently, Mary believed the district's induction plan compliments the changing face of education and instills in their new teachers the idea of lifelong learning and keeping current professionally. Although she felt the district's plan was effective in increasing teacher competence, Mary indicated she had not specifically collected or analyzed student performance data that could confirm her thoughts.

Although Sandy, a mentor, certainly believed there was great value in the opportunities offered to new teachers as part of the district's induction plan, she was not comfortable linking those experiences to increased teacher competence. She again spoke of her role as a mentor in providing support, but indicated there was not release time permitted throughout the school day for her to observe the new teacher or for the new teacher to make peer observations. From her perspective, Sandy believed the constructive feedback and open dialogue that came from these types of coaching experiences are very beneficial to increasing a new teacher's skills.

Danielle, a beginning teacher, shared she believed the district's induction plan was "fairly effective" in increasing teacher competence. From her perspective, professional development topics were relevant, informative, and applicable to the classroom. The one limitation she saw with the district's current programming was the timing of the instructional process class during the first year. She believed new teachers might benefit more from this particular course if it were offered during the second semester versus the first semester. Danielle's thinking on this suggestion revolved around new teachers' priorities being more on the development of daily classroom procedures and routines, lesson planning, and learning the curriculum at the start of the school year. She speculated that new teachers would have more time to reflect and apply what they were learning in this course if it were offered during the second semester.

Carla, a mentor, believed the district's induction plan was about improving both teacher and student learning. She went on to share she felt the professional development provided by the district to all teachers was very purposeful, deliberate, and meaningful. "The classes have strategies and techniques that we all can use." Carla also indicated the district emphasized lifelong learning as a core belief.

Kyle's perspective was that "everything we have done from day one has been about increasing teacher competence." He believed the professional development offered prior to school, the instructional classes, the mentoring, the classroom observations, and the collaboration were all geared toward ensuring that new teachers are successful and effective in the classroom.

Mr. Barker, a building principal, believed the individual teacher involved in the induction plan was the deciding factor as to whether it was successful in increasing teacher competence. Mr. Barker stated,

> I am not sure I can give you a canned answer because it depends on the player involved. I think that if a young person demonstrates a passion and a willingness to be open-minded and accept suggestions for improvement as well as put suggestions given into play, I think it will greatly increase the success he or she will have in the classroom. On the other hand, if we have an individual that comes in a little bit more sheltered and close-minded, we are probably not going to reach success.

He went on to say that he believes it is very difficult to create good interpersonal skills in an individual.

> I often made the mistake when I was a young principal going through the employment process to hire people based on what was written on their resume. I looked for outstanding characteristics such as a strong grade point average (GPA) and those types of

> things that were printed in fancy black ink. I often overlooked the importance of dynamics and interpersonal skills. You can't teach those; they are innate.

Therefore, Mr. Barker surmised that "like so many other things, the success or effectiveness of an induction program is grossly dependent on the interpersonal skills of those involved."

Inclusion of Professional Development in Teacher Induction Program to Build Teacher Skills That Result in Student Achievement

Cherry Creek Community Schools. Nervously laughing a little, Mrs. Tipton's first response was, "I certainly hope it does." As she reflected upon the question, Mrs. Tipton, program coordinator, indicated there had been changes made in certain professional development experiences as part of the induction process in the past few years that did have her somewhat concerned. An example shared was the amount of time (40 hours) needed for literacy collaborative training; therefore, other professional development sessions focusing on effective classroom management or writing across the curriculum had been put aside. In addition, school improvement initiatives required training or professional development to move in other directions. Although Mrs. Tipton remained positive about the professional development being offered to new teachers, she stated again she was a little concerned that they were missing some critical components that had once been in place specific to student achievement.

As a building-level principal, Steve felt good about the professional development opportunities afforded to teachers. He spoke of the investment made by the district to bring in consultants and/or trainers for specific professional development initiatives such as the teaching of reading strategies in content areas or Payne's (2005) research in implementing a "Framework for Understanding Poverty." When pushed to respond as to whether these opportunities built teacher skills that resulted in student achievement, Steve was less confident in his response.

—I'm not sure." Although he continued to speak positively about professional development opportunities, Steve shared he honestly could not make the correlation between these experiences and the impact on student achievement.

Mrs. Pierce, a mentor, stated the professional development offered to beginning teachers definitely had an impact on student achievement. —I saw a definite impact on her teaching and in her students' achievement." She shared several examples of professional development experiences that had been afforded to teachers to improve instructional practices as well as individual teacher skills such as writer's workshop and literacy collaborative training. She went on to again express how vital her role as a literacy coach was in providing professional development experiences that were intended to build teacher skills that would result in high student achievement.

—I would say yes." Matt, a building administrator, believed the professional development opportunities provided to new teachers in the district resulted in student achievement. He discussed the science and art of teaching and emphasized how well-planned lessons help students achieve. He also focused on the importance of the instructional model used to implement effective lessons. Matt referred to Hunter's (2004) instructional model as

> . . . teacher gains attention of the learner, reviews past relevant learning, states verbally and posts on the board what the objectives of the lesson are, demonstrates the concepts of those objectives, teaches to those objectives, uses effective oral presentation skills leading group discussion, provides guided and independent practice, checks for understanding, summarizes, and closes the lesson.

If implemented well, Matt believed students were sure to achieve.

Molly's first response was, "I don't know." However, upon further reflection, she gave an affirmative "yes" and recalled how her implementation of writer's workshop had been greatly impacted by the professional workshops she had attended the previous school year as beginning teacher. She also shared how she was able to apply what she had learned, and as a result, positively impacted student learning in her classroom.

Sherry, a beginning teacher, indicated without hesitation that professional development provided by the district would result in student achievement. She referenced the school's goals of reading and writing across the curriculum and shared the professional learning experiences they were engaging in to address these goals. She indicated the school was working with an outside consultant who would also be visiting throughout the school year to make classroom observations regarding the implementation of strategies and skills (e.g., vocabulary development, graphic organizers, and giving non-examples to define words) demonstrated during training sessions. Given the goals were intended to result in student achievement, Sherry believed these experiences were directly in alignment.

Eagle Canyon School Corporation. Mr. Riley, program coordinator, stated the three instructional programs or classes that beginning teachers are expected to participate in were directly tied to student performance. In addition, as part of the district's teacher evaluation process, all teachers were expected to set student achievement goals for the school year. Mr. Riley also shared that student performance data were collected and shared as a piece of the instructional process class; therefore, student academic success was very much a priority of the district's plan. He also indicated the district's initial application process played a significant role in keeping student performance a focus. Although Mr. Riley perceived the district's induction plan and hiring process to be mutually exclusive, he believed both were critical processes to the

success of new teachers. The district currently used a tool developed by the Gallup Organization to measure an applicant‘s efficacy as part of the hiring process. Mr. Riley stated,

> We want somebody who believes that all kids can learn. Our induction program is then used to ensure these individuals who come to the table with certain unique skills, qualities and talents have the necessary tools and resources to be successful in the classroom.

As a building principal, Mary believed without a doubt the professional development offered by the district resulted in student achievement. ―Most definitely, yes!" She went on to explain how the differentiated instruction and TESA classes helped new teachers develop the skills needed to not only differentiate instruction to meet the individual needs of students, but to also provide learning opportunities that specific subpopulations of students need to be academically successful.

―I think the district does a really good job of providing courses that help all teachers increase student achievement," shared Sandy, a mentor for the district. Although Sandy referenced the instructional process class, the differentiated instruction class, the TESA class, and technology classes, it was her understanding that these opportunities were available to all teachers throughout the district and not just specifically designed for new teachers.

Danielle, a beginning teacher, stated professional development offered by the district definitely results in student achievement. Classes offered are based upon research in best practices and are designed to meet the various learning needs of students. Danielle went on to share she believed that all professional development was beneficial regardless of whether a teacher completely agreed with everything being shared. She commented that if a teacher did

not necessarily agree with the material being presented, he or she was still reflecting and evaluating their own beliefs, philosophies, and teaching practices as a result of the experience.

Without any hesitation or additional clarification, Carla, a mentor, stated the professional development provided built teacher skills that resulted in student achievement. —Yes, definitely!"

Kyle definitely believed the professional development he was participating in was having a positive impact on student achievement. He spoke candidly about student performance results he had collected and analyzed over the past couple of years and was able to clearly articulate how this data were being used to plan his instruction in the classroom. Kyle went on to give examples of lesson units and instructional strategies he had used in the classroom as a result of the instructional process and differentiated instruction classes he had completed.

—Absolutely, it does!" Mr. Barker, a principal, strongly believed the professional development offered to new teachers resulted in student achievement. He shared how the district offered new teachers the opportunity to participate in a three-year professional development plan that included courses on the instructional process, TESA, and differentiated instruction. Mr. Barker also indicated he did not believe other districts invested the amount of time or resources in their new hires as his district committed to each year.

Supports or Services Made Available to Newly Hired Teachers to Nurture Them to Become More Effective Teachers

Cherry Creek Community Schools. The district's program coordinator, Mrs. Tipton, shared all of their teachers were provided release time to make peer observations of other teachers' classrooms. These observations could take place in their mentor's classroom, other grade level teachers' classrooms, or a classroom that was suggested by their mentor or principal.

Conversely, the district also provided release time for mentors to observe their beginning teacher's classroom as well as provide time for reflective conferencing regarding the observation. She went on to share that teachers in their second year of teaching who are working on their portfolios received a minimum of two release days, along with their mentors, to collaborate and work on the successful completion of this project. Mrs. Tipton indicated other types of financial support given to newly hired teachers included professional development opportunities outside the district such as attendance at conferences, workshops, or training sessions intended to build teacher skills and talents.

Mrs. Tipton said, "I think our principals provide a pretty good support too for our beginning teachers. They are very cognizant of their needs so they put things in place to support them." Mrs. Tipton's overall feeling was the district did a good job of supporting newly hired teachers through a variety of professional development opportunities and experiences.

Steve, a principal, referenced the district's New Teacher Academy as support provided to new teachers as well as professional development opportunities that were made available based upon school improvement initiatives, or needs identified as part of classroom observations, and the evaluation process. As he digressed, Steve went on to share his disappointment with the lack of participation in professional development offered to secondary teachers in his district. "I am not seeing them take advantage of it." As Steve reflected upon the positive experiences that are gleaned from teachers learning from one another, he recalled numerous opportunities that his administrative team and he had offered to cover classrooms for peer observations and then sadly noted how these offers were not taken advantage of by the staff. Steve's perception of this reality was that trust and respect were not yet woven into the culture of the school to allow this exchange of collaboration to take place without fear of judgment or without appearing to be

evaluative in nature. He hoped through the implementation of different collaborative structures or protected time for teaming the following school year, the foundation for a shift in culture could be established. Steve also shared he believed new teachers entering the profession were much more open to the concept of peer observations and more willing to voice a desire to visit colleague‘s classrooms. He wondered if this was a result of experiences they had encountered in their undergraduate programs.

Steve indicated the mentoring process was also a support provided to new teachers but shared concern about the lack of certified members available within his own building. He believed the process of becoming a mentor was about giving back to the profession of teaching and being a lifelong learner. He went on to share that he felt like there were some dynamite teachers that would be amazing mentors and he planned to approach them about going through the certification process, which in his mind would help build a deeper pool of mentors from which to pair up new teachers.

From Mrs. Pierce‘s perspective, the literacy coaches were definitely a support provided to new teachers at the elementary level. All elementary teachers were required to participate in 40 hours of professional development focused on the implementation of the district‘s literacy framework. In addition, literacy coaches were available to model lessons, observe instructional practices, and offer coaching in areas of identified need, or goals that teachers wanted to work on in their classrooms. Mrs. Pierce also shared she believed the mentoring process, release time provided to new teachers and their mentors for collaboration, and professional development opportunities such as workshops or conferences were also supports provided to new teachers to the district.

Matt, a building principal, indicated the New Teacher Academy was a support made available to new teachers. He also spoke of the many opportunities new teachers have within the district to make peer observations. Matt believed these observations were powerful experiences provided to new teachers and critical to their development as professional educators.

Molly, a beginning teacher, believed the mentoring process was a great support provided to new teachers. She also indicated her building principal and the district's curriculum director were readily available for support. Molly saw the required extensive training in the literacy collaborative framework as beneficial. The literacy coach was also her mentor so she indicated she felt very fortunate to be able to take advantage of the expertise being provided to her. As part of the literacy training, her mentor was available to model lessons, observe Molly's classroom, and offer coaching in areas of needed improvement. She specifically referenced the coaching cycle of having a pre-conference to discuss "look fors" or what she wanted her mentor to watch for during the observation or perhaps even an area she was struggling with in the classroom, followed by the actual observation and post-conference where there was time for reflection and feedback. "I am learning so much." Other types of support that was made available to Molly included professional development opportunities outside the district such as workshops or conferences as well as release time to make peer observations. Molly went on to share the one area she felt the least prepared in as she entered the teaching profession was classroom management. She saw a direct link between creating a classroom environment conducive to learning and student achievement.

Sherry, a beginning teacher, referenced the New Teacher Academy, the mentoring process, and professional development opportunities as supports available to newly hired

teachers. She also indicated the teaming structure at the middle school lent itself to collaborative conversations and work that helped to build teacher competence.

Eagle Canyon School Corporation. Mr. Riley, program coordinator, indicated that in addition to the support provided as part of the district's induction plan, new teachers at Eagle Canyon School Corporation received an additional half pay as part of their salary. In other words, "teachers in the district typically receive a paycheck 24 times a year, but a new teacher receives another half pay or 24 ½ pays so we give them a paycheck right away." The district's philosophy is that this additional upfront salary, along with the stipends new teachers receive from participation in the district's induction program, helped "tide them over" or gave them the financial freedom to make a move to the community, put a down payment on housing, or make a car payment until they received their first paycheck. The district also provided an Employee Assistance Program. Mr. Riley went on to share he believed building-level administrators were a huge support to new teachers, particularly as they worked collaboratively through the district's evaluation process. He even indicated the local teachers' association was a good support to new hires. "They are conscious of what it is like to be a new teacher and really work with new teachers to help them be successful."

According to Mary, weekly collaboration within grade levels or content areas was a support provided to new teachers as well. Topics discussed during this time were determined by the teachers of that grade level or department such as writing prompts or lesson planning. Staff meetings were used to keep all teachers heading in the right direction and release time was made available for work associated with the development of curriculum. Mary also referenced the mentoring process and the district's extensive induction program as supports and services made available to nurture new teachers.

From Sandy‘s perspective, new teachers have a variety of supports and services available to them. She indicated new teachers have the support of their mentor, peers, grade level, or department team, administrators, and the local teachers‘ association. She also shared weekly collaboration time gave new teachers the opportunity to share ideas, ask questions, plan instruction, and ask for assistance if needed. ―We have a lot of good teachers who can provide good resources.” Sandy implied the evaluation process could be used to nurture beginning teachers to become more effective and also stated there were always opportunities to attend outside workshops and conferences in areas of interest or need.

Danielle, a beginning teacher, shared the district offers a variety of supports to new teachers including the week long professional development experience prior to the start of the school year, the instructional classes offered, mentoring for beginning teachers, and weekly collaboration time. She went on to say she felt extremely supported by her peers, the team she taught with and her building administrator. ―There isn‘t anybody that I would not ask for advice. I feel really supported.” Danielle also referenced meetings that occurred on a quarterly basis called ―horizontals” as another type of support provided to new teachers. She defined horizontal meetings as a time when teachers brought sample lesson plans to discuss and shared how specific topics such as differentiated instruction were being implemented across grade levels.

Carla, a mentor, indicated that peer observations were a support that she was able to provide as a mentor. She discussed how she had been given the opportunity to observe her new teacher‘s classroom and offer suggestions and feedback as a result. She made it clear her role was not to evaluate, but to coach, collaborate, and be a reflective sounding board. Carla also shared the mentoring process was a support available to new teachers. Although contrary to

other individuals interviewed within the district, Carla indicated that all new hires were assigned a mentor for support.

Kyle referenced participation in the instructional process and differentiated instruction classes as supports that made him more effective in the classroom during his first year of teaching. He also indicated having a mentor to share ideas and collaborate with had been extremely helpful. Kyle even indicated the district had partnered with an outside organization for counseling services if new teachers felt this was a service they needed.

Mr. Barker, a principal, believed the district was unique in a variety of ways including the various types of professional development that were afforded to new teachers. He again spoke of the week long professional development activities that occurred prior to the start of the school year as well as the three instructional classes that new teachers were expected to complete. In addition, he stated the district was highly supportive of teachers attending professional conferences. —We are highly supportive of our people having the opportunity to get out of their classrooms." He also referenced giving new teachers the opportunity to make peer observations. Mr. Barker reiterated the district was making an investment in the young people they hired by offering them various types of professional development that would help to ensure they become effective, successful teachers.

Stakeholders' Perceptions on the Most Effective Components of Induction Programs or Induction Practices for Increasing Teacher Competence

Cherry Creek Community Schools. Program coordinator, Mrs. Tipton, stated emphatically the mentoring process was the most effective component of their induction program. —I think it would have to be our mentors and the work that they do with their beginning teachers." She indicated she had just recently met with a group of mentors and had been thrilled

to hear about how many of them had gone above and beyond expectations in their work with beginning teachers. "I like the initiative that our mentors take to work with their beginning teachers. It is above and beyond what we have asked them to do and I appreciate that."

"I love the New Teacher Academy that we do. I think we can build on that," was Steve's immediate response. Reflecting upon improvements he would make to ensure this program was more effective, he indicated creating a "more intentional approach throughout the year" that would focus on data-driven instruction, planning with the end in mind, student engagement, classroom management, and assessment practices. Steve also stated the mentoring process was very effective and indicated the more time that new teachers and mentors invested in collaborative work, the more gains in student achievement would be attained.

Mrs. Pierce, a mentor, believed the mentoring process and/or literacy coaching were the most effective practices the district currently had in place. She spoke passionately about how the process of mentoring or coaching provided the framework for her to observe classroom instruction and facilitate reflective conversations with teachers about their own instructional practices. She went on to say she believed mentoring and coaching had the greatest impact because of the one-on-one conversations it provides to new teachers. She even compared these conversations to individual student writing conferences that are being implemented as part of the district's literacy framework. Mrs. Pierce also stressed the need for these conversations to be confidential, self-reflective, and nurturing, as the intent of these conversations is to help new teachers grow as professional educators.

Mrs. Pierce also believed providing new teachers opportunities for peer observation or observing another teacher's classroom was highly effective in increasing teacher competence. She went on to stress how important the selection of classrooms for these types of observations

would be as part of the induction process. She felt it would be important for the teacher being observed to know ―up front" why his or her classroom had been selected and what types of strategies or skills the new teacher hoped to gain as a result.

Although not firm in his response, Matt, a building principal, thought the mentoring process was most effective in increasing teacher competence. He went on to say he believed the connection that new teachers have with their mentors is vital and again emphasized the mentor role should not be evaluative in nature. Matt felt new teachers definitely benefited from connecting with a peer or someone that they could connect with, talk to, share with, and learn from throughout the school year.

Without hesitation, Molly, a beginning teacher, stated the mentoring process was the most effective support she had been provided as part of the district's induction program. ―Having a mentor, that's huge to me." She reiterated all of the amazing support she had received from her mentor as a new teacher in the district. Molly also indicated just having the opportunity to attend workshops and receive training throughout the past two years had helped her become more effective in the classroom.

Sherry, a beginning teacher, believed the district's implementation of the New Teacher Academy was most effective in increasing teacher competence; however, she did not elaborate nor did she specify which components she deemed to be the most effective overall.

Eagle Canyon School Corporation. Without hesitation, Mr. Riley, program coordinator, stated the instructional process and differentiated instruction classes were the most effective. Mr. Riley offered,

> I think the one thing colleges don't do a very good job of is teaching planning. The instructional process class really focuses on the planning of solid instructional units.

> Differentiated instruction is so important for teachers to implement. Kids learn at different rates. They learn in different ways and we have to make sure our teachers have the right tools in their toolboxes. Both of these classes are so important.

Mr. Riley also shared feedback on evaluations from beginning teachers indicated they really liked the involvement of building-level administrators in the induction activities. Although he did not necessarily perceive there was a direct link between teacher competence and the rapport established between new teachers and principals during induction practices, Mr. Riley believed the relationships that were developed as a result did have a positive impact on the success of new teachers in the classroom.

As a building principal, Mary believed the week-long professional development provided to new teachers prior to the start of the school year and participation in the instructional process and differentiated instruction classes were the most effective components of the district's induction plan. "Continuous professional development is the big key." She went on to share how she felt the district was able to provide continuous learning for teachers that focused on increasing their effectiveness in the classroom through the various opportunities provided to them.

Sandy, a mentor, believed the mentoring process and opportunities to collaborate with other teachers were most effective in increasing teacher competence. She discussed how collaboration could be used to learn new curriculum, plan together and discuss instructional strategies, as well as determine the appropriate pacing of instruction and assessment. Sandy went on to share how the mentoring process helped new teachers feel like they fit, belonged, and had support. "It's important that there is someone that they can connect with." Sandy indicated there were certainly advantages to having a mentor and new teacher assigned to the same grade

level; however, she still believed the mentoring process could be very beneficial if that was not the case.

From Danielle's perspective, the initial one-week professional development sessions were most beneficial in preparing her for the classroom. She also shared the instructional classes she was expected to participate in were very valuable to her growth as a teacher. As she continued to reflect, Danielle added having a mentor to collaborate and learn from was extremely advantageous.

Carla, a mentor, indicated the mentoring relationship was very effective in increasing teacher competence. She also believed the instructional courses were very beneficial. "They are fundamental courses for all teachers." Although not directly tied to increasing teacher competence, Carla shared giving new teachers the opportunity to tour the community during their first week of professional development was important. "I thought it was really neat that they took them out to see where our students live."

Kyle was very flattering in his response. He shared,

> I think all of it was effective. I don't think any of it was ineffective. I think the most important thing for a first-year teacher is that no amount of reassurance is ever enough. There has to be a genuine, significant relationship with your mentor so that words of encouragement are heartfelt. You have to know they are really working with you and letting you know you rock!

Mr. Barker, a principal, linked teacher competence to the development of effective lesson plans. "Assuming that you are coming to the job with good people skills, it's all about planning. Developing effective lesson plans are the first priority." He went on to share that effective lesson planning should include transitions that are seamless, a healthy blend of informal and

formal assessment and tiered lessons as well as strong instructional strategies, differentiated instruction and plans for high levels of student engagement.

Stakeholders' Perceptions Regarding Components or Induction Practices Needed to Improve the Quality of Induction Programs

Cherry Creek Community Schools. Without hesitation, Mrs. Tipton, the district's program coordinator, stated time was needed to improve the quality of induction programs. The district implemented a two-day New Teacher Academy prior to the start of school each year and she believed there just was not enough time to cover all the critical pieces of information necessary to ensure a successful start for new teachers. "I really want to have a more effective beginning of the year induction piece. I think it could be much more effective." Mrs. Tipton went on to say she really wanted to invest some time working on the New Teacher Academy, thinking through how best to restructure it to meet the various needs of new teachers as well as how best to support them throughout the entire school year versus just focusing on the beginning of the year activities. She recognized setting new teachers up for success at the beginning of the year was critical; however, she also stated that was certainly not the only time new teachers needed support to be successful.

Steve, a building principal, reiterated the need for intentional professional development opportunities throughout the year that focused on the key topics of classroom management, effective instructional strategies, assessment practices, student engagement, and data-driven decision-making as a means of improving the district's current induction program. He focused on the investment of time, varied opportunities, and deliberate experiences that were provided throughout the school year versus just the start of the school year.

Mrs. Pierce, a mentor, stated additional time for mentors and new teachers to collaborate was helpful. She even suggested providing a forum for all new teachers and mentors across the district to engage in a professional learning community. She felt it was extremely beneficial for new teachers to be able to share successes, discuss challenges, and brainstorm ideas from their various perspectives. Mrs. Pierce also believed giving mentors the opportunity to debrief and share what types of support seemed to be most beneficial to new teachers was also helpful. As she concluded her thoughts, Mrs. Pierce reemphasized the importance of formal teacher induction programs from her perspective and shared again how critical this type of support was to the success of new teachers to the teaching profession.

Matt, a principal, believed more time for peer observations and reflective dialogue would improve the quality of induction programs. He again emphasized how powerful peer observations could be to the growth and development of all educators. Matt even discussed how the use of videos could be used as professional development giving all teachers the opportunity to observe a successful lesson or effective instructional practices without having to physically be in the classroom. However, he also indicated there was still much discomfort from teachers with the concept of being videotaped or recorded.

Molly, a beginning teacher, suggested making improvements to the district‘s New Teacher Academy that included providing more time for specific professional development related to curriculum development, lesson planning, research-based instructional strategies, writer‘s workshop, math centers, and classroom management. Her perception of this experience was that it focused more on the contractual paper work and insurance components of taking a job versus the explicit training new teachers need to be successful in the classroom. Molly suggested a workshop model with breakout sessions for new teachers so that several topics could be

covered as they prepared for a classroom full of students. She went to say that several professional books were given to them as part of the New Teacher Academy; however, there lacked any follow through or deliberate conversation about material that may or may not have been read by the new teachers who received them. Her perception was that many of these books were ―left to collect dust on the edge of a desk." Molly believed that a more formalized ―book study" would have been beneficial as well as helped to ensure the district's investment in resources had a positive impact in the classroom.

Although Sherry believed the New Teacher Academy had great value, she recommended changing the time in which this program was implemented. She expressed she understood there was no way to control the hiring timeline, but wondered if the district could consider offering the New Teacher Academy earlier in the summer, thereby giving new hires the opportunity to digest and hopefully apply the training they had just received. The New Teacher Academy was typically offered two days prior to the start of the school year when all teachers were ―frantically getting ready for the first day with students." Sherry also indicated this would give new teachers time to read through the books they received as part of district's induction plan. Another suggestion that Sherry had was to consider the selection of mentors and how those decisions were made across the district. She went on to say she thought it would be beneficial for new teachers to have the opportunity to meet their mentors earlier in the summer versus at the New Teacher Academy just prior to the start of the school year and wondered if the district should consider a process by which a new teacher and/or mentor could be reassigned if the relationship was not a productive one. She also felt it was important to address or incorporate in some way each school's culture or ―the way things are done around here."

Eagle Canyon School Corporation. Mr. Riley, program coordinator, indicated it was important for leaders to listen to the feedback of teachers. He stated,

> I think we need to listen to what teachers say. Teachers are a lot like their students when they first come into the profession. They don't always know what they need. There are some things that we know from our own experiences they are going to need, but we don't know it all and needs change. That's why it's so important that we continue to evaluate our program. What is it that you need? What can we do better?

He went on to say the district would continue to look at their evaluations seriously and make changes accordingly. Mr. Riley also shared that he believed it was important for induction programs to be tailored to the unique characteristics of the district or school. "One size does not fit all."

Although Mary, a building principal, indicated she had not given much thought to how the district might improve the quality of their induction program, she suggested getting the new teachers and mentors connected earlier in the process. Currently, mentors were not part of the initial five days of training offered in the summer so new teachers did not have the opportunity to meet their mentors until after school started. She also suggested developing a greater pool of mentors so that new teachers were able to be connected to a mentor within their grade level, department, or content area.

Sandy, a mentor, recommended the development of guidelines that further defined the role of the mentor and new teacher as a means of improving the district's induction plan. "What is the role of the mentor? What does the district expect of a mentor? What is the role of the mentee? What should new teachers expect from their mentors?" She suggested prescribed timelines or a more definitive list of expectations as a result of the mentoring process. Sandy

also shared the training of mentors was very important as well as providing time for mentors and new teachers to collaborate during the school day. Lastly, she expressed the need for continued support and services for new teachers beyond their first year. "The first year you just survive. The second year you really get a chance to start thinking about how you could have done this better or how this could be done differently." Sandy believed the district had a better chance of retaining new teachers if supports were in place for multiple years.

Danielle shared she had been so pleased by all the opportunities afforded to her as a new teacher in this district; however, she did offer a couple of suggestions for consideration. First, she recommended additional training with specific subpopulations of students that were more challenging in the classroom such as special education students and English language learners. Secondly, she suggested an expansion of the district's mentoring program to include the assigning of mentors to all new hires versus just beginning teachers.

Carla, a mentor, indicated the need for more mentors in the district as well as additional training on the roles and responsibilities of being a mentor. She felt it was important for everyone to know up front what the expectations of the mentoring process entailed. In addition, Carla also believed the mentoring process could be improved if new teachers and mentors were given the opportunity to meet each other and collaborate prior to the first day of school. She stated mentors were not currently involved in the professional development that occurred prior to the start of the school year.

Other than having the opportunity to meet his mentor prior to the first day of school, Kyle did not have any other suggestions for improvement. He thought maybe new teachers and their mentors could go to dinner one evening. Kyle again shared how effective he believed the district's current induction plan had been in preparing him to be successful.

Mr. Barker reiterated that time was needed to improve the quality of the district's induction plan. He believed that more time could be spent on developing strong instructional plans. "We are disciples of Marzano and his practices of classroom instruction. I think it is overwhelming to present nine strategies to a person all at once." He suggested addressing one or two strategies up front and then creating a calendar of professional development that would continue to introduce and build upon these strategies throughout a new teacher's first or second year with the district. In addition, Mr. Barker referenced the lack of mentors currently available in the district. "I think there needs to be some clarification on the value of a mentor program. We need to ensure that mentor programs are meaningful to the participant." As a district, he believed there were critical challenges to address to ensure there was value to new teachers.

Summary

A picture of the elements of induction programs or induction practices that are deemed to be the most effective for increasing teacher competence emerged from the interviews conducted with beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the persons responsible for the coordination and implementation of such programs from two school districts located in Indiana. During the interviews and the following transcription of data, certain patterns and themes also emerged regarding the importance of a comprehensive induction program that embodies the key components of a "lifelong professional development program to keep [all] teachers improving toward increasing their effectiveness" (Wong, 2004a, p. 42). These patterns and themes are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to explore and identify elements of induction programs and induction practices perceived by beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the persons responsible for the coordination and implementation of the induction program in school districts as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence. More specifically, it examined the professional and personal beliefs of beginning teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and the program coordinators regarding the importance of a comprehensive induction program that embodies the key components of a "lifelong professional development program to keep [all] teachers improving toward increasing their effectiveness" (Wong, 2004a, p. 42). Questions were semi-structured and open-ended to solicit in-depth thoughtful answers. The purpose of the interview questions was to obtain from teachers, mentors, building-level administrators, and program coordinators their beliefs, values, perceptions, feelings, concerns, and thoughts regarding induction programs and induction practices.

Are there elements of teacher induction programs and induction practices perceived by stakeholders as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence? The following questions were used to guide the interview process:

1. Is there a well-articulated induction plan for newly hired teachers ―that includes professional development goals and the long-term plans of the district" (Wong, 2004a, p. 54)?
2. What are the beginning teachers', mentors', administrators', and coordinator's beliefs about the purpose of a new teacher induction program (Wong, 2004b)?
3. What elements of induction programs or induction practices are currently included in the district's induction program (Wong, 2004b)?
4. What is the role of the mentor or the mentoring process in the district's induction program (Gasner, 2002b)?
5. What are the beginning teachers', mentors', administrators', and coordinator's beliefs on the effectiveness of the district's induction plan in increasing teacher competence (Wong, 2004a)?
6. Does the induction program include ―professional development to build teacher skills that will result in student achievement" (Wong, 2004a, p. 55)?
7. What supports or services are made available to newly hired teachers to nurture them to become more effective teachers (Moir, 2003)?
8. Which components of the induction program or induction practices do the beginning teachers, mentors, administrators and program coordinator perceive to be the most effective for increasing teacher competence (Moir, 2003)?
9. What do the beginning teachers, mentors, administrators and program coordinator perceive to be the components or induction practices needed to improve the quality of induction programs (Moir, 2003)?

The participants, four teachers, three mentors, four building-level administrators and two program coordinators were employees of two school districts located in Indiana. These districts were purposefully selected because of the teacher induction programs that had been developed and induction practices that were being implemented in their respective schools.

In the analysis of data presented in Chapter 4, five distinct themes or patterns emerged from this case study:

1. Induction programs share common characteristics and practices.
2. The role of the mentoring process is to provide support to new or beginning teachers.
3. The mentoring process is perceived to be one of the most effective components of new teacher induction programs.
4. Professional development offered through induction programs builds skills that result in student achievement.
5. Teacher induction programs help districts prepare, support and retain new teachers.

Induction Programs Share Common Characteristics and Practices

It is understood that induction programs vary greatly among schools and districts, and yet they share common characteristics, practices, and goals. ―No two induction programs are exactly alike; each caters to the individual culture and specific needs of its unique school or district. However, there are several common components that underlie the most successful induction programs" (Breaux & Wong, 2003, p. 33).

For example, all successful induction programs help new teachers establish effective classroom management procedures, routines, and instructional practices. They help develop teachers' sensitivity to and understanding of the community, as well as their

> passion for lifelong learning and professional growth. Successful programs also promote unity and teamwork among the entire learning community. (Wong, 2002, p. 52)

Research indicates the following components are elements of successful induction programs:

- Start with an initial four or five days of induction prior to the start of school.
- Offer a continuum of professional development over a period of two or three years.
- Provide study groups where new teachers can network and build support, commitment and leadership to a learning community.
- Incorporate a strong sense of administrative support.
- Integrate the mentoring process.
- Present a structure for modeling effective instruction during in-services and mentoring.
- Provide opportunities for new or beginning teachers to visit demonstration classrooms. (Breaux & Wong, 2003, p. 33)

Although the induction plans of the districts participating in this study may not have incorporated all of the above-mentioned components of successful induction programs, they did include several of these effective practices. Furthermore, it was evident from stakeholder interviews that their induction programs shared common characteristics and goals. Stakeholders from both districts spoke of induction activities that took place before school began. Cherry Creek Community Schools implements a two-day New Teacher Academy prior to the beginning of school and Eagle Canyon School Corporation‘s induction program starts with five days of professional development in the summer. In addition, ongoing professional development opportunities, release time for peer observations, and the mentoring process were integral components referenced by stakeholders of both districts. Both districts also cited strong

administrative support of the induction process and a culture supportive of new or beginning teachers.

The Role of the Mentoring Process Is to Provide Support to New or Beginning Teachers

Although there is little research to support mentoring alone, mentors are a very important component of the induction process. Mentorship can be defined as "helping novices speed up the learning of a new job or skill and reduce the stress of transition, improving instructional performance of novices through modeling by a top performer, and socializing novices into the profession of teaching" (Podsen & Denmark as cited in Vierstraete, 2005, p. 383). The term mentoring also implies "a trusting, supportive relationship between a more-experienced member and a less-experienced member of an organization" (Breaux & Wong, 2003, p. 59). Regardless of how mentoring is defined, researchers clearly indicate induction and mentoring go hand-in-hand.

The purpose of mentoring programs "range from orientation and induction of new teachers to instructional improvement with an intent to change the culture of the school to more a collaborative learning environment" (Podsen & Denmark as cited in Vierstraete, 2005, p. 383). "Mentors are assigned to respond to a new teacher's day-to-day crises, provide teaching tips" (Wong, 2004b, p. 108) for survival as well as serve as a safety net. Experienced colleagues or mentors "play an important role by serving as a sounding board and assuring beginning teachers their experience is normal, offering sympathy and perspective" (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000, p. 4). Mentoring programs also provide excellent opportunities for assisting beginning teachers in effectively managing instructional time, planning and developing lesson plans, locating instructional resources, determining assessment practices, structuring parent-teacher conferences,

creating effective classroom management techniques, and building a repertoire of teaching strategies (Algozzine, Gretes, Queen, & Cowan-Hathcock, 2007).

Mentors provide a wide range of input, feedback, and support to beginning teachers and a strong mentoring component can enhance the overall success of the induction process. Stakeholders from both districts in this study clearly indicated the role of the mentoring process was to provide support to teachers. Mrs. Tipton, the program coordinator of Cherry Creek Community Schools, believed the role of the mentor was about being that support person. "It's that person who says you're not alone. It's about building a good, trusting relationship." Steve, a building administrator, indicated the role of a mentor was to share with new teachers effective practices they had gained through their experiences such as how to build positive relationships with students, how to motivate and engage them in the learning process as well as develop rigorous curriculum and assessment practices. As a mentor, Mrs. Pierce believed her role was very similar to that of a literacy coach and stressed intentionally planning and providing opportunities for new teachers to reflect upon their classroom practices. Matt, a building principal, also described mentors as peer coaches and emphasized the mentor role is not evaluative, but intended to foster collaboration and share ideas. Two beginning teachers in the district, Molly and Sherry, shared the role of a mentor was to provide assistance as needed. "Her role is to give me advice. Checking in to ensure that things are going well and taking time to make certain you are on the right foot."

These responses were mirrored by the stakeholders interviewed at Eagle Creek School Corporation. The program coordinator of the district, Mr. Riley, indicated "the role of the mentor is to meet the day-to-day emotional needs of that beginning teacher." Mary, a building-level administrator believed the role of the mentor was to provide support and guidance as well

as demonstrate and model effective instruction. She also indicated the needs of the beginning teacher determine the type of support that is provided. "I think a mentor wears many hats. It's just not a prescribed role and it depends upon the needs of the beginning teacher." As mentors in the district, Sandy and Carla stated their role was to guide, provide support and advice as well as serve as a confidant to new teachers. "We are there for assistance from the first day they arrive and we are to provide them with any necessary things they need to become effective teachers." As new teachers, Danielle and Kyle believed the role of a mentor was to provide support and encouragement. "Empathy is one thing from my standpoint, especially that first year. I want someone to tell me that I've been there and done that." On the other hand, neither Danielle nor Kyle believed it was the mentor's role to tell them how to do everything and believed that an effective mentor is there to challenge the new teacher. Mr. Barker, a building principal, indicated the mentor serves as a coach. He believed mentors were a source of information for new teachers and wore many hats. "It's all about developing their skills sets because we do consider them an investment."

The Mentoring Process Is Perceived to Be One of the Most Effective Components of New Teacher Induction Programs

Since the early 1980s, mentoring has received increased attention as part of reform agendas at the local, state and national level. However, actual research on the benefits of mentoring is scarce (Breaux & Wong, 2003). Currently,

> much of the research on mentoring has tended to focus on things such as how meaningful mentoring activities should be designed, what components mentoring programs should include, what criteria should be used in the selection of mentors and what types of

> training should be should be provided to prospective mentors. (Breaux & Wong, 2003, p. 55)

However, research suggests that ~~–c~~omprehensive induction programs paired with [effective mentoring] programs successfully integrate new teachers into the profession and position them more quickly for focus upon student success" (Vierstraete, 2005, p. 386).

The mentoring process was consistently perceived by stakeholders in this study as one of the most effective components of their district's new teacher induction program. Cherry Creek Community Schools' program coordinator, Mrs. Tipton, stated emphatically the mentoring process was the most effective component of their induction program. ~~–I~~t would have to be our mentors and the work they do with their beginning teachers." A building principal, Steve, commented the mentoring process was very effective and indicated the more time that new teachers and mentors invested in collaborative work, the more gains in student achievement the district would realize. Mrs. Pierce, a mentor, spoke passionately about how the process of mentoring or coaching provided the framework for her to observe classroom instruction and facilitate reflective conversations with teachers about their own reflective practices. As a building administrator, Matt felt new teachers definitely benefited from connecting with a peer or someone that they could connect with, talk to, share with, and learn from throughout the school year. Without hesitation, Molly, a new teacher in the district, stated the mentoring process was the most effective support she had been provided as part of the district's induction program. ~~–H~~aving a mentor, that's huge to me."

In Eagle Canyon School Corporation, the effects of mentoring on teacher competence were more skewed. Although the program coordinator and building administrators believed the relationships that were developed as a result of the mentoring process did have a positive impact

on the success of new teachers in the classroom, they did not perceive this component of their program to be a direct link to teacher competence. However, they were not willing to completely disregard the correlation they believe existed either. Conversely, as a mentor in the district, Sandy believed the mentoring process and opportunities to collaborate with one another were most effective in increasing teacher competence. She went on to share how the mentoring process helps new teachers feel like they fit, belong, and have support. Carla, another mentor in the district, also indicated the mentoring relationship was the most effective from her perspective. Danielle, a beginning teacher, added having a mentor to collaborate and learn from is extremely advantageous. Although as a new teacher Kyle was very appreciative and flattering of the district's entire induction process, he did believe the relationship that is established with a mentor is significant. "I think the most important thing for a first-year teacher is that no amount of reassurance is ever enough. There has to be a genuine, significant relationship with your mentor so that words of encouragement are heartfelt."

New teachers yearn for opportunities to learn from wisdom and experience of veteran colleagues; however, they want more than social or emotional support from their mentors.

> New teachers want to discuss curriculum implementation, get ideas about how to address specific students' needs, and gain insight from colleagues with experience in their subject areas. Providing emotional support is not as valuable as helping new teachers learn to create safe classroom environments, engage all students in worthwhile learning, work effectively with parents, and base instructional decisions on assessment data. (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, p. 28)

Therefore, intentional mentoring focused on new teacher learning is necessary to create powerful induction experiences for beginning teachers that will directly result in increased teacher competence.

Professional Development Offered Through Induction Programs Build Skills That Result in Student Achievement

> The ultimate purpose of any school is the success and achievement of its students. Improving student achievement boils down to the teacher. What the teacher knows and can do in the classroom is the most important factor resulting in student achievement. Studies that use value-added student achievement data have found that student achievement gains are much more influenced by a student's assigned teacher than other factors like class size and class composition. Effective teachers manage to produce better achievement regardless of which curriculum materials, pedagogical approach, or reading program is selected. (Wong, 2004a, p. 41)

Although few districts have begun to analyze the correlation between student achievement and teaching experience, early research findings suggest if school districts are truly ~~"s~~erious about student achievement, they must also be serious about induction support for beginning teachers" (Breaux & Wong, 2003, p. 21). Consequently, induction programs must emphasize components that keep new teachers improving and learning ~~"b~~y providing them with a comprehensive, coherent professional development program" (Wong, 2004a, p. 42).

Although induction programs vary and many factors contribute to the success of students in the classroom, the districts participating in this study appear to have embraced teacher quality as a powerful predictor of student success and believe the professional development offered through their induction programs results in student achievement. As a building-level principal of

Cherry Creek Community Schools, Mrs. Pierce stated the professional development offered to teachers definitely had an impact on student achievement. "I saw a definite impact on her teaching and in her students' achievement." Matt, also a building administrator, concurred emphasizing how well-planned lessons help students achieve. He discussed the art and science of teaching and focused on the importance of the instructional model used to implement effective lessons. Molly recalled how her implementation of a writer's workshop had been greatly impacted by the professional workshops she had attended as a beginning teacher. She also shared how she was able to apply what she had learned and as a result, positively impacted student learning in her classroom. Sherry, a new teacher to the district, indicated without hesitation that professional development provided by the district resulted in student achievement. She referenced her school's goals of reading and writing across the curriculum and shared the professional learning experiences they were engaging in to address these goals. Given the goals themselves were intended to result in student achievement, Sherry believed these experiences were directly in alignment. Mrs. Tipton, the program coordinator, was less emphatic in her response because of changes that had been made in certain professional development experiences as part of the induction process. "I certainly hope it does." However, she remained positive about the learning opportunities being offered to new teachers and clearly recognized the need to keep student achievement a priority.

Mr. Riley, the program coordinator of Eagle Canyon School Corporation, stated the three instructional programs or classes that beginning teachers are expected to participate in are directly tied to student performance. He went on to share that student performance data was collected and shared as a piece of the instructional process class; therefore, student academic success was very much a priority of the district's plan. As a building principal, Mary believed

without a doubt the professional development offered by the district resulted in student achievement. She referenced the differentiated instruction class and explained how this class helped new teachers develop the skills needed to not only differentiate instruction to meet the individual needs of students, but to also provide learning opportunities that specific subpopulations of students needed to be academically successful. "I think the district does a really good job of providing courses that help all teachers increase student achievement," shared Sandy, a mentor teacher. Beginning teachers, Danielle and Kyle, also strongly believed the professional development offered by the district resulted in student achievement. Classes offered are based upon research in best practices and are designed to meet the various learning needs of students. Kyle spoke candidly about student performance results he had collected and analyzed over the past couple of year and was able to clearly articulate how this data was being used to plan his instruction in the classroom. "Absolutely, it does!" Mr. Barker went on to share how the district offered new teachers the opportunity to participate in a three-year professional development plan. He also indicated he did not believe other districts invested the amount of time or resources in their new hires as his district committed to each year.

Teacher Induction Programs Help Districts Prepare, Support, and Retain New Teachers

Induction is a structured program that includes "the basic purposes of providing instruction in classroom management and effective teaching strategies; reducing the difficulty of transition into teaching; and [maximizing] the retention [rate] of highly qualified teachers" (Breaux & Wong, 2003, p. 5). "Induction includes all of the things that are done to support and train new teachers and acculturate them to teaching, including the responsibilities, missions, and philosophies of their districts and schools" (Breaux & Wong, 2003, p. 5). Research repeatedly affirms that induction is the key to helping new teachers succeed and the most successful

induction programs are effective in increasing teacher competence because they treat ―induction as part of a lifelong professional development design" (Wong, 2004a, p. 42).

Stakeholders participating in this study shared a strong understanding of the purpose of induction and were able to clearly articulate the importance of training and support needed to ensure the success of new teachers. As a program coordinator, Mrs. Tipton believed the purpose of a new teacher induction program was twofold. First, the purpose was about supporting new teachers as they come in full of anticipation and excitement and then hit what researchers refer to as the ―survival dip" in December. ―We want that support there so that they understand they are not out there floundering. We want that strong mentor support to help them get through that survival piece and move to rejuvenation and back to anticipation." The second purpose Mrs. Tipton shared was to support the learning and professional growth of their mentors. She believes that mentors grow as educators when they help someone else reflect because they are doing their own self-reflecting. Steve, a building principal, said for him the purpose of a new teacher induction program was simple. ―It's to provide all the resources and tools necessary to become an effective classroom teacher for kids." He spoke passionately about the role a classroom teacher plays in the success of students. As a mentor, Mrs. Pierce believed new teacher induction programs assist beginning teachers in creating a solid foundation for future success in the classroom. She referenced effective classroom management techniques, locating resources to be used during instruction, lesson planning, implementing best practices, and learning how to address the varied needs of students as areas where new teachers need support. As a building administrator, Matt believed the purpose of a new teacher induction program was to ―equip that teacher with the knowledge and skills of how to be successful in that building or in that district." He shared bringing new teachers up to speed with how the district operated, how the school

functioned, expectations of student achievement, and the specifics of the evaluation process were key topics to cover as part of the induction process. Matt went on to share he believed the purpose of an induction program was to provide additional support to new teachers not being successful. He shared if there were deficiencies where a new teacher needed to improve, then it was important to ensure supports or an improvement plan are established to address these areas of concern. Molly's response to the purpose of a new teacher induction program was very fresh and unsophisticated. "I would think it would be to make sure we don't fall on our faces, I mean, to guide us." Sherry believed the district's teacher induction program provided her the necessary support as a beginning teacher to be successful. She referred to getting acquainted with the school system, being taught policies and procedures of the school, and becoming familiar with the goals of the school as important aspects of the district's induction plan.

In Eagle Canyon School Corporation, the program coordinator, Mr. Riley, stated the purpose of an induction program was to "establish the unique qualities and expectations of the school district." He went on to say, "We all have relatively the same purpose. We all want the same end product. Our outputs are the same, but our inputs and throughputs are so different." He firmly believed the district did an excellent job of providing varied levels of support to all new teachers. As a building principal, Mary believed the purpose of their new teacher induction program was to "equip them to be successful in the classroom." From her perspective, this included classroom management, instructional practices, and curriculum development. She also indicated that mentors played a significant role in ensuring the success of new teachers. Sandy, a mentor, expressed how valuable she believed the experiences being offered to new teachers were, particularly in retaining them in the profession as a result of that support. As a mentor, Carla emphasized the importance of having "a whole community helping our new teachers and

giving them exposure to what is taking place in the educational community in this day and age." For Danielle, the purpose of a new teacher induction program was all about providing support. As she reflected upon her previous experiences in another school district, Danielle shared she believed having an induction program kept new teachers from "getting lost in the shuffle" or "feeling like they are drowning." As a new teacher, Kyle indicated the success of new teachers was the primary goal of the district's induction program. "I feel like the induction program should set the tone for what is going on in the district and how to better assist the teacher in succeeding in that environment." Mr. Barker, a building principal, compared the purpose of a new teacher induction program to that of a student orientation program. Mr. Barker shared,

> I think the goal is to orient the person to his new surroundings. Allow the person to gain a feeling of belonging and be able to identify potential resources. I think the key is to convince the person that we are not casting them out to an island. We are here for them. In our view, they are an investment and we want our investment to grow and develop.

Implications

Although one cannot generalize from this case study of two school districts in Indiana, there may be some insights that can be derived from this study that might be useful for other school districts in the development and implementation of an effective new teacher induction program.

- Induction programs differ among schools and districts; however, they do share common characteristics, practices, and goals. Although the induction plans of the districts participating in this study may not have incorporated all of the research-based components of successful induction programs, they did include several common effective practices. Some of these effective practices included starting with

an initial period of induction prior to the start of school, offering an array of professional development over a period of two or three years, incorporating a strong sense of administrative support, integrating the mentoring process, providing opportunities for new or beginning teachers to visit other classrooms, and including a structure for modeling effective instruction. Successful induction programs base their plans on significant research and provide a variety of structured, sustained professional development experiences that meet the various needs of new or beginning teachers.

- Based on this study, mentors play an important role in the induction process. Mentors provide a wide range of input, feedback, and support to beginning teachers and a strong mentoring component can enhance the overall success of the induction process. Stakeholders in this study clearly indicated the role of the mentoring process was to provide support, guidance and advice to new or beginning teachers. Although there is little research to support mentoring alone, researchers clearly indicate induction and mentoring go hand-in-hand. Therefore, educators seeking to enhance the success of new teachers must understand that mentoring is only one component of an effective induction program.
- The mentoring process was consistently perceived by stakeholders in this study as one of the most effective components of their district‘s new teacher induction program. Unfortunately, actual research on the benefits of mentoring is limited. Currently, most of the research on mentoring has tended to focus on the design of meaningful mentoring activities, mentor selection and mentor training. However, research suggests that comprehensive induction programs paired with effective

mentoring programs successfully integrate new teachers into the profession and position them more quickly for focus upon student success. Mentoring cannot do it all and educators must recognize new teachers cannot be prepared to be lifelong learners simply be giving them a mentor.

- All stakeholders were in agreement as to the purpose of a new teacher induction program. All responded that the purpose was to prepare, support, and retain new teachers. They perceived induction programs as a smart investment in their future and a way to help ensure effective teaching and student success in the classroom. When teachers excel, students achieve.
- Stakeholders in this study also referred to the teacher induction process as a way to acculturate new teachers into teaching, including the responsibilities, missions, expectations, and philosophies of their districts and schools. Although the ultimate goal of the induction process is improved teacher performance, the needs that beginning teachers face in approaching new tasks or solving specific problems that crop up in their teaching cannot be overlooked. The ways things are done around here or alerting new teachers to the customs or norms of the broader school community is equally important to the success of a new teacher.
- From stakeholder interviews, there are secondary positive outcomes that can result from the mentoring process. Although the primary focus of mentoring is the success of a beginning teacher, research does suggest mentors derive benefits from the mentoring process as well. Professional competency, reflective practice, renewal, collaboration and contributions to teacher leadership are all benefits that mentors can derive from the mentoring process. From this perspective, teacher mentoring can be

viewed as professional development that is part of the district's comprehensive design.

- Although beginning teachers yearn for opportunities to learn from their veteran colleagues through mentoring relationships, new teachers in this study want more than social or emotional support from their mentors. They want to be treated as professionals and challenged appropriately. Although providing emotional support is important in the mentoring process, the value of ~~h~~elping new teachers learn to create safe classroom environments, engage all students in worthwhile learning, work effectively with parents, and base instructional decisions on assessment data" (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, p. 6) should not be overlooked.
- Based upon this study, professional development opportunities offered through induction programs results in student achievement. Although many factors contribute to the success of students in the classroom, the districts participating in this study appeared to embrace teacher quality as a powerful predictor of student success and believed the professional development offered through their induction programs result in student achievement. As teacher expectations and accountability reach an all-time high, the correlation between student achievement and teacher effectiveness becomes increasingly important. It stands to reason that effective schools and districts must invest in the pedagogical practices of their teachers if they hope to positively impact student achievement.
- Although stakeholders in this study affirmed the professional development offered through induction programs resulted in student achievement, they were less confident that their districts' induction plans were effective in increasing teacher competence.

Stakeholder responses varied with some indicating they weren't sure if a direct correlation between induction experiences and teacher competence could be drawn while others believed a positive link between the two existed. If what the teachers know and can do is the determining factor in student achievement, the effects of induction practices on teacher competence is of paramount importance. If school districts are truly serious about student achievement, they must also be serious about induction support for beginning teachers.

Research Recommendations

Further research on the correlation between induction practices and teacher competence would be valuable for districts considering the implementation of a formal induction program or for districts looking to revise or strengthen their current programs. Being able to identify those induction components that have the greatest impact on teacher competence would be very beneficial to school districts. Also, research from districts that have comprehensive induction programs in place regarding the link between teacher competence and student achievement as a result of induction activities would be helpful. Are there are induction components that have a greater impact on student achievement? Which induction practices, if any, are linked to greater gains in student achievement? Examining the impact of mentoring on student achievement or the effects on teaching and teacher retention would give districts great information to consider as well. Continued research focused on the various outcomes of teacher induction programs would provide beneficial information to districts. Examples might include are there characteristics of mentors and/or beginning teachers that maximize results? Are there differences in outcomes related to how mentors are selected, trained, and compensated? As colleges and universities continue to

evaluate, assess, and revamp their teacher preparation programs, is there a relationship between this professional preparation and the effectiveness of new teacher induction programs? Since mentoring continues to be a very popular teacher induction tool, research that studies the effects of the various types of mentoring programs would provide valuable information. Is one type of mentoring program, such as *telementoring*, mentoring by a veteran/experienced teacher, novice teacher learning communities, or peer coaching, deemed to be more effective? Moreover, the correlation between induction practices and student achievement would be of great interest to school districts. Are there schools or districts that are experiencing significant gains in student achievement directly related to induction practices? Finally, as millennials, (i.e., those born from 1977 to 1986) enter the teaching ranks, research regarding the types of induction programs that will best meet their needs and skill sets should be considered. This next generation of teachers is output driven and achievement oriented, yet they need structure. Most of them are receptive to the wisdom of experienced teachers; however, they also want their contributions appreciated and ideas heard. The challenge for districts is to develop and implement new teacher induction programs that address the unique needs of the newest generation of teachers.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear

The ultimate purpose of any school is the success and achievement of its students. Substantial research confirms teacher and teaching quality are the most powerful predictors of student success. What the teacher knows and can do in the classroom is the most important factor resulting in student achievement. Research also states the goal of keeping a good beginning teacher relies exclusively on a well-articulated teacher induction program where beginning teachers and mentors share and grow together. Although there is much research regarding the common components of effective teacher induction programs and successful induction practices, there is little research on the collection of data to determine a program's effectiveness in increasing teacher competence. The exploration of the beliefs of beginning teachers, mentors, administrators and the program coordinator of one school district may be helpful to other districts who wish to design and implement effective teacher induction programs.

I propose to conduct a case study at _____ to provide a descriptive picture of the beliefs, opinions, perspectives, and values of beginning teachers, mentors, administrators, and the program coordinator relating to the teacher induction program currently in place. You have been randomly selected to participate in this study. Participation is voluntary. This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy from Indiana State University.

The study will be conducted in the following manner. I will call you in a couple of days to schedule a personal interview at a time and place convenient to you. The interview will be audiotaped and transcribed by me for clarity of information. The interviews should be completed and transcribed by December of the 2007-2008 school year. The final written document is scheduled to be completed by the end of the 2007-2008 school year.

The study will be confidential and information shared during the interviews will be used to contribute to the growing body of literature regarding teacher induction programs and their role in increasing teacher quality. The completed document will use pseudonyms for all participants and schools. For a copy of the completed document, please call me at 574-268-6361 or 260-637-3158.

Sincerely,

Lynn Simmers
Doctoral Student/Project Researcher

Dr. Robert Boyd
Doctoral Committee Chair/Project Director

ISU IRB Number: #7177
Date of Approval: August 15, 2007
Approval Expiration Date: March 24, 2014

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

You are being asked to participate in a study of the elements of teacher induction programs and induction practices. The purpose of this study is to explore beginning teachers', mentors', administrators', and program coordinators' beliefs regarding the elements of teacher induction programs and induction practices that are perceived as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence. The insights gained from this study may be beneficial to other school districts who wish to design and implement effective teacher induction programs for beginning teachers.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an initial questionnaire and participate in individual interviews preferably at school. If this is not convenient for you, then a phone interview can be arranged. The interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher, with the tapes being kept in a secure location at the home of the researcher and destroyed three years after completion of the study. Participants in the study will also be given an opportunity to validate and verify the transcripts of their interview for accuracy of information for the study. The research compiled by a personal interview will not exceed one hour. The time of the interview will be scheduled at your convenience.

There are no known physical risks inherent in this particular study. During the interview, you will be identified by your first name; however, a pseudonym will be used in the writing of the study to maintain confidentiality. No one other than this researcher will have access to the interview tapes and transcripts collected in this study.

If you have questions about this research, please feel free to contact the researcher, Lynn Simmers at 574-268-6361 or 260-637-3158 or the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Robert Boyd at 812-237-2900. For questions concerning the rights of a research subject and/or research-related injuries, contact Indiana State University, Chair of the School of Education-Review Committee at 812-237-8217.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or at any time discontinue participation in the study. You may do this without penalty or retribution.

By signing this document, I understand I am voluntarily participating in this study. I also understand that I may discontinue participation in this study without penalty or retribution at any time.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

The participant will receive a copy of this signed informed consent.

ISU IRB Number: #7177
Date of Approval: August 15, 2007
Approval Expiration Date: March 24, 2014

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FOR PROGRAM COORDINATORS

You are being asked to participate in a study of the elements of teacher induction programs and induction practices. The purpose of this study is to explore beginning teachers', mentors', administrators', and program coordinators' beliefs regarding the elements of teacher induction programs and induction practices that are perceived as being the most effective for increasing teacher competence. The insights gained from this study may be beneficial to other school districts who wish to design and implement effective teacher induction programs for beginning teachers.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an initial questionnaire and participate in individual interviews preferably at school. If this is not convenient for you, then a phone interview can be arranged. The interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher, with the tapes being kept in a secure location at the home of the researcher and destroyed three years after completion of the study. Participants in the study will also be given an opportunity to validate and verify the transcripts of their interview for accuracy of information for the study. The research compiled by a personal interview will not exceed one hour. The time of the interview will be scheduled at your convenience.

There are no known physical risks inherent in this particular study. However, as the sole program coordinator of your school district, you will be easily identifiable in the study. During the interview, you will be identified by your first name and a pseudonym will be used in the writing of the study to help maintain discretion. No one other than this researcher will have access to the interview tapes and transcripts collected in this study.

If you have questions about this research, please feel free to contact the researcher, Lynn Simmers at 574-268-6361 or 260-637-3158 or the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Robert Boyd at 812-237-2900. For questions concerning the rights of a research subject and/or research-related injuries, contact Indiana State University, Chair of the School of Education-Review Committee at 812-237-8217.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or at any time discontinue participation in the study. You may do this without penalty or retribution.

By signing this document, I understand I am voluntarily participating in this study. I also understand that I may discontinue participation in this study without penalty or retribution at any time.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

The participant will receive a copy of this signed informed consent.

ISU IRB Number: #7177
Date of Approval: August 15, 2007
Approval Expiration Date: March 24, 2014

APPENDIX D: INITIAL BEGINNING TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Participants are invited to not respond to any question they believe will make them identifiable in this study.

First Name: _____

Level of Education: B.S./B.A. M.S./M.A. M.S.+

Grade Level: _____

Total Number of Years Teaching: _____

I participated in a teacher induction program in another school district. Yes No

ISU IRB Number: #7177
Date of Approval: August 15, 2007
Approval Expiration Date: March 24, 2014

APPENDIX E: INITIAL MENTOR TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Participants are invited to not respond to any question they believe will make them identifiable in this study.

First Name: _____

Level of Education: B.S./B.A. M.S./M.A. M.S.+

Grade Level: _____

Total Number of Years Teaching: _____

Total Number of Years Taught in this School District: _____

Number of Times Serving as a Mentor Teacher: _____

I participated in a teacher induction program as a beginning teacher. Yes No

ISU IRB Number: #7177
Date of Approval: August 15, 2007
Approval Expiration Date: March 24, 2014

APPENDIX F: INITIAL ADMINISTRATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Participants are invited to not respond to any question they believe will make them identifiable in this study.

First Name: _____

Level of Education: M.S./M.A. Ed.S. Ph.D/Ed.D

Total Number of Years Teaching: _____

Total Number of Years as an Administrator: _____

Total Number of Years as an Administrator in this School District: _____

Number of Times Serving as a Mentor Teacher: _____

I participated in a teacher induction program as a beginning teacher. Yes No

ISU IRB Number: #7177
Date of Approval: August 15, 2007
Approval Expiration Date: March 24, 2014