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The Mentoring of Alternate Route Teachers in Low Socio-Economic Districts in Northeastern New Jersey

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THE MENTORING OF ALTERNATE ROUTE TEACHERS

IN LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISTRICTS IN

NORTHEASTERN NEW JERSEY

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Current research continues to report that novice teacher attrition rates are unacceptably

high but that induction and mentoring may have an effect on retention. The purpose of

this study was to examine a particular group of beginning teachers to determine how the

induction experience of alternate route teacher candidates who work in low socio-

economic, underperforming, urban areas in Northeastern New Jersey influenced their

retention decision-making. Specifically, this mixed methods research with a case study

approach explored whether the induction program structure mandated by New Jersey was

being adhered to, which elements of the program were effective and ineffective, if the

experience as structured had any effect on whether the subjects decided to remain in

teaching, and if these variables were affected by race and/or gender. The analysis of data

from 53 questionnaires and 6 in-depth interviews with novice alternate route candidates

indicated that the mandated components for the induction experience were not

consistently occurring.

        The researcher found that the decision to stay in teaching was not as affected by

the induction experience as by personal characteristics and contextual variables, such as

strong individual self-efficacy and the state of the economy. There was no difference

based on gender and race as to an individual's decision to remain teaching based on their

overall mentoring experience. Novice teachers found trust, confidentiality, mentor

teacher accessibility and responsiveness, and comfort level with their mentor to be important components to an effective mentoring experience. Ineffective factors associated with new teacher mentoring include having a "one size fits all" approach where each person is treated in the same way, and where the activities exist in name only and may not actually be occurring.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2004-2005, 257,192 new teachers left the profession after their first year of teaching (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007), and it has been estimated that between 9.3% and 17% of new teachers do not complete their first year of teaching (Hammer & Williams, 2005). Approximately one-quarter of new teachers leave the field within the first 3 years, while about 30% leave within the first 5 years (Curran & Goldrick, 2002). When describing urban areas, that number rises to about 50% within the first 5 years. Most states and school districts experience little difficulty attracting new candidates to the teaching profession but find retaining novice teachers challenging (Hammer & Williams, 2005). Furthermore, evidence shows that teachers with fewer than five years of teaching experience are leaving the profession at a much higher rate than new candidates are entering (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003; Gold, 1996). Schools may also be understaffed in particular academic areas, such as the sciences and mathematics, and may have difficulty or actually be unable to find qualified replacements when new teachers leave (National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century, Legislative Analyst's Office, 2000; National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, n.d.).

Even more problematic for specific areas of the country is the pattern of attrition rates of beginning teachers in urban schools, which seem to be affected by the size of the school, geographic location, and the school's poverty concentration (Ingersoll & Smith 2004; National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, n.d.). According to Tillman (2005), teachers who work in urban environments often face challenges, such as minimal parental involvement and a lack of basic resources that make teaching more difficult. There is often low morale, and the

methods of instruction able to be easily implemented may be somewhat different from those in a suburban setting. These challenges can contribute to the decision of urban novice urban teachers to abandon the profession. However, a study conducted by Donaldson (2008) found that minority individuals were more likely to continue teaching in urban schools. The percentage was 24.4% for African American teachers, and 32% for Hispanic teachers, and 37.5% for White and Asian teachers. The findings suggest that non-White teachers may have more of an understanding and ability to work effectively within the culture found in urban schools and further research needs to occur to determine ways to better prepare White teachers for their work in urban schools.

The issue of high attrition rates for beginning teachers has been well documented since the mid 1960s. Initially the blame for low novice teacher retention was placed on the 1,300 traditional university teacher preparation programs (Feistritzer, 2007). *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) identified several areas of concern with regard to the United States' system of higher education. The report stated that teacher preparation programs across the nation have serious deficits and need to make significant improvements in order for kindergarten through 12th grade schools to be able to reform. Further, the report stated that teacher preparation curricula placed a strong emphasis on "how to teach" at the expense of actual subject content area study. The report cited a survey of 1,350 higher educational institutions that found that 41% of elementary education majors spent almost half of their time in methods courses. The report also indicated there was not an adequate number of academically proficient students entering the teaching profession and that, generally, the typical professional life of a teacher was considered undesirable due to the inadequacy of the education experience and the lack of prestige (National Commission on Excellence in Education,

1983). Since then, state governments, municipalities, and districts in more than half of the states

have implemented a variety of innovations to attempt to alleviate this problem (National

Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 1999). One potential solution that emerged to

address these problems was the development of an alternative route for certification.

Alternate Route Certification Programs

Emily Feistritzer (2007), President of the National Center for Alternative Education,

testified to the Committee on Education and Labor of The United States House of

Representatives that "alternate routes to teacher certification are having a profound impact on the

who, what, when, where and how of K-12 teaching" (p. 1). Alternate routes to certification were

first implemented in the early 1980s and mid-1990s and since that time have continued to change

and evolve. Most of the state-endorsed alternative route teacher certification programs are field-

based and connect theoretical learning experiences with actual classroom teaching. In addition

to the state-developed programs that have proliferated throughout the nation, there have also

been other innovative alternative teacher certification programs, such as Teach for America,

supported by independent groups. Although the alternate route to certification has demonstrated

some improvement in increasing the quality of teacher candidates (Feistritzer, 2007), there

continues to be an issue with the retention of teachers. Recent studies of the attrition rate of

alternate route teachers have provided an uncertain picture as to whether alternate route

candidates are more likely to stay in the profession than traditionally prepared teachers (National

Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Retention of Alternate Route Teachers

Currently, approximately 40% of all new teachers across the nation are alternate route candidates (Feistritzer, 2005). Although they may be strong in their academic content field, they are typically unprepared for the challenges of teaching (Nagy & Wang, 2007; Quartz, Thomas, Anderson, Masyn, Lyons, & Olson, 2008), and are therefore at risk for leaving the profession. Nagy and Wang (2007) in a study of beginning alternate route high school teacher satisfaction and intent to stay in the profession found that 11.4% of the first year teachers had decided to leave. The researchers found that the support for these teachers varied dramatically among the schools. Over 50% of the beginning teachers reported not having a mentor formally assigned to them.

Easley (2006) investigated the attrition rate of 521 alternatively certified teachers working in the New York City Public Schools in 2005. The majority of the teaching positions were in low socio-economic areas with low student performance. One hundred ten surveys were completed and returned, representing 27% of the population pool. Based on their self-report, 62% of the alternate route graduates planned to remain teaching in k-12 schools. As with many urban environments, many of these schools were in low socio-economic environments that had high rates of poverty and crime (Easley, 2006).

As evidenced by these studies, the attrition rate of alternate route candidates varied but in all cases was similar or higher than the overall attrition rate of teachers. The problem of high attrition of alternate route teachers may be related to the difficult conditions of the schools where they are typically assigned, their lack of preparation for teaching, or poor support in the first years of employment (Donaldson, 2008). However, there may be other factors involved. As the number of alternatively certified teachers continues to grow, it is important that an in-depth study

of the components of alternate route certification and beginning teacher supports be conducted in order to develop a clearer picture of which elements make a positive difference in beginning teachers' decisions to remain in the profession. According to Jorissen (2003):

> preparing highly qualified teachers who feel competent and who have a
>
> commitment to remain in teaching is an imperative that teacher educators
>
> and policymakers must continue to address. The challenge will be to
>
> build effective models that respond to market needs, while not
>
> compromising quality. One step toward meeting the challenge is to listen
>
> to the voices of the alternate route teachers who have stayed. (p. 9)

Since the state of New Jersey was a pioneer for the alternate route to teacher certification, analyzing how it was implemented could be very beneficial.

History of the New Jersey Alternate Route Model

In 1983, the United States Department of Education released *A Nation at Risk*, a report of the condition of education in the United States that included a sharp critique of the quality of teacher preparation programs. The report served as a catalyst for the development of alternative routes for teacher certification that were designed to improve teaching and to have a positive impact on American education (Feistritzer & Chester, 1998). The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) was one of the initial states to respond to the report and in 1983 became the first state in the nation to institute an alternative route to teacher certification. Since certifying only teacher education majors narrowed the pool of candidates, policymakers believed that allowing students who held a bachelor degree in a field outside of education to be certified through an expedited program could potentially increase the pool of quality candidates. Klagholz (2001) pointed out that alternate route teachers should be more mature by virtue of

their age, have more experience in the workplace, have higher scores on state-mandated certification assessments, and hold more advanced degrees; therefore, the new expedited certification process could be a feasible vehicle to increase the number of qualified teachers.

The number of candidates choosing the alternate route to teacher certification in New Jersey increased from approximately 275 during the 1986-1987 school year to nearly 10,000 in 2001 (Feistritzer, 2007). Approximately 42% of the teacher workforce in New Jersey's public schools consists of alternate route candidates (Feistritzer, 2005). According to the New Jersey Department of Education (n.d.) in 2008, of the 7,169 teachers hired, 2,295 were alternate route teacher candidates.

Requirements to Participate in an

Alternative Route Certification Program

New Jersey (pursuant N.J.A.C. 6A:9-11) requires all alternate route teacher candidates to have an earned baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university with a minimum grade point average of a 2.5 for those candidates who graduated before 2004 and a 2.75 for those who graduated after January 1, 2004 (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.). To be approved for a subject area endorsement, applicants must have at least 30 credits in that subject area, and 12 of those credits must be earned in either junior or senior level courses. Individuals wishing to obtain an elementary school endorsement must have either a liberal arts background or an interdisciplinary major with at least 60 credits in the liberal arts or the sciences. Each candidate must pass a comprehensive assessment in a content area or the Praxis Core Content Knowledge test for the elementary school endorsement. Though the alternate route teacher candidates in New Jersey do not need formal college credits in education, they must earn passing scores on all state assessments required for initial certification before gaining a certificate of

eligibility (CE) (Klagholz, 2001). Each candidate must document thorough knowledge about substance abuse, hygienic, and physiological issues. Once an individual has accomplished these requirements, he/she is then eligible to receive a CE, which allows the individual to seek employment in the public schools of New Jersey (New Jersey of Department of Education, n.d.). Once an individual secures a position, it is the responsibility of the school district that is employing the applicant to enroll him/her in the Provisional Teacher Program. After that occurs, a Provisional teaching certificate is issued, which is valid for up to two years (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.). Table 1 provides a comparison of the requirements for traditional and alternate route certification.

The Formal Education Requirements for

New Jersey Alternatively Certified Teachers

Each alternate route teacher candidate is required to receive a minimum of 200 hours of formal instruction aligned to the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers. Topics included in the curriculum are pedagogy, classroom management, time management, learning styles, and student engagement. Currently, there are 18 program providers in over 39 locations. A second requirement states that while candidates are enrolled in formalized training which is the structure stipulated by New Jersey Department of Education, they must be supported at their schools by mentors who are assigned to them (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.). A supportive environment for the mentoring relationship is defined as one where the teacher feels comfortable and not threatened (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.).

Table 1

Requirements for Traditional and Alternate Route New Jersey Teacher Certification

Traditional Route	Alternate Route
A New Jersey college program, approved by the Department of Education.	Hold a bachelor or an advanced degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
College preparation program included in the interstate reciprocity program or an out-of-state teacher program approved by NCATE, TEAC, or any other national professional education accreditation body or a teacher education program approved for certification by a state on or after January 1, 1964, or an out-of-state teacher education program approved by the state's department of education.	Earn a 2.5 GPA if graduation occurred prior to September 1, 2004. After September 10, 2004 a 2.75 is required in a baccalaureate degree program or in a state-approved, post baccalaureate program with at least 13 credits.
Earn a 2.5 GPA if graduation occurred prior to September 1, 2004. After September 10, 2004 a 2.75 is required in a baccalaureate degree program or in a state approved post baccalaureate program with at least 13 credits. If a candidate has 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, but falls within 5%, there is flexibility.	Subject area endorsements require 30 credits in the area of study with at least 12 credits at an advanced level. Elementary school teachers must have a liberal arts or science or dual center major (interdisciplinary).
Participates in 30 weeks of mentoring.	Pass the appropriate mandated Praxis assessment.
	Pass an examination in physiology, hygiene and substance abuse (or have appropriate military training).
	Enroll in the provisional teacher program and have 40 weeks of mentoring where someone is there for support.

Mentoring as a Support Component for Beginning Teachers

Formal mentoring programs in education have existed for approximately 26 years (Barclay, Feistritzer, Grip, Haar, Seaton, Sherman, & Stone, 2007), and recent studies continue to show the importance of mentoring novice teachers (Andrews & Quinn, 2005; Glover & Mutchler, 2000; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Many alternative routes to teacher certification include some component of teacher mentoring (Feistritzer, 2007). Studies have provided a guide to certain elements that can improve the potential for mentoring to succeed and remain teaching. Overall factors, such as including mentor training and support and providing adequate time (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004), were uncovered as well as specific guidance, such as the benefit of the mentor being certified either in the same discipline or a closely related discipline, i.e., having a kindergarten teacher be mentored by a first grade teacher (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Several daunting obstacles challenge educators when developing and sustaining effective mentoring programs. One barrier to effective mentoring is the struggle to find adequate time for mentor/mentee to meet and work together (Barclay, et al., 2007). A second obstacle can be the extent and quality of the training and or support provided to mentor teachers. A third obstacle can be the costs associated with mentoring programs both for the organization and the mentee.

Although problems exist when developing a beginning teacher mentoring program, Andrew and Quinn (2005) stated: "The current teacher shortage and the imminent need for teachers to become effective practitioners make the immediate implementation of effective mentoring programs for beginning teachers imperative" (p. 113). Many believe that the shortage of a quality teaching force has to do with retaining new teachers, not attracting them (Hammer & Williams, 2005).

New Jersey's Model for Teacher Mentoring

New Jersey requires the successful completion of a comprehensive mentoring system for both traditional and alternate route novice teachers before advancement to permanent or professional certification (Education Commission of the States, 1999). It should be noted, that there are no specific guidelines for mentor selection, and each district/school handles it in their own way. Traditional route teacher candidates are mentored for 30 weeks by an experienced teacher, while the alternate route candidates receive 20 days of pre-service training and mentoring support in addition to the basic mentoring requirement. According to a memorandum from the Acting Assistant Commissioner at the time of the Division of Educational Programs and Assessment to Chief School Administrators concerning the 20-day requirement of the mentoring of alternate route teachers, "the intent of the 20-day requirement is to prepare novice alternate route teachers with the skills and knowledge to succeed in their initial phase of teaching experience by providing immediate assistance by a veteran teacher" (Doolan, 2006, p. 2). Since the issue of providing this period of training has been difficult for many districts for logistical reasons, in 2006 the 20-day requirement can be replaced by a compilation of at least 90 hours during which the "districts are permitted to incorporate orientation, induction, pre-service or summer clinical experiences with in class mentor support to achieve the 20-day requirement" (Doolan, 2006, p. 2). After the initial 20-day mentoring has concluded, the novice teachers would have a mentor assigned who would work with them on a daily basis for a total of 70 hours during the first 20 days (Doolan, 2006). Once the first 20 days are completed, the candidate begins the 30-week support mentorship. During this time there is support from both the mentor as well as building level administrators. Essentially, the 30-week, on-going support provided by the

mentor is the same for both the traditional and the alternate route teacher candidate (see Table 2).

Table 2

Description of New Jersey Novice Teacher Mentoring Requirements

Traditional Route	Alternate Route
None	Mentoring - 20 days of pre-service training/support; may be modified
Mentoring - 30 weeks of support by a school-based experienced teacher	Mentoring - 30 weeks of support by a school-based experienced teacher
Supervision and evaluation - three evaluations by school-based administrators, including final summative evaluation recommending the novice teacher for standard certification	Supervision and evaluation - three evaluations by school-based administrators, including final summative evaluation recommending the novice teacher for standard certification
Completed as part of undergraduate program	Formal Instruction - at least 200 hours of instruction aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers

Three reviews, two formative assessments, and one summative evaluation are required by the state. The formative assessments provide opportunities for the novice teacher to learn and implement suggested strategies and ideas, while the summative is evaluative and includes a report that either recommends an individual for: (1) permanent licensure (standard certificate); (2) as needing additional time before licensure; or, (3) denial of a standard certification (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.).

Since this study specifically looked at alternatively certified teachers, it was prudent to look at the training and mentoring of those candidates, and to ascertain if this had an effect on whether these individuals chose to remain teaching for a second year.

Purpose of the Study

Beginning teacher attrition continues to be a major concern in New Jersey as well as across the nation. A variety of solutions have been attempted by different states including implementing alternative routes to teacher certification. Alternate route teacher candidates now make up more than one-third of all teachers nationally (Feistritzer, 2007) and 42% of the teacher workforce in New Jersey's public schools (National Center for Alternative Certification, 2004). Once expected to help solve the problem of teacher attrition, research is now uncovering that alternative route teachers may be just as likely to leave the field in the first five years as traditionally prepared candidates.

One initiative widely implemented to address the problem of attrition has been the mentoring of beginning teachers. Research exists pertaining to teacher mentoring and the benefits and challenges associated with it. However, there has been limited research pertaining to the preparation, induction, and mentoring of alternate route teacher candidates and very few studies related to beginning teachers in districts that have been described as low socio-economic

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urban areas in New Jersey. Additionally, former Abbott districts (Note: The state of New Jersey no longer has Abbott Districts) in Northeastern New Jersey, located primarily in low-income, urban areas, are where both the employment of alternate route teachers and beginning teacher attrition rates are high (Marchetti, 2008). Therefore, examining the support programs developed by New Jersey to keep alternate route teachers in the profession is critical. Further, since mentoring programs can be a significant monetary and time expense to schools as well as individuals, it is important to ascertain if the program is making a difference in retention rates. Specifically, this study attempted to uncover if the first 20 day mentoring system and the remaining 30 week mentoring program designed for alternative route teachers in New Jersey was being implemented in the way in which it was designed, which elements, if any, of the mentoring system were effective, and if the mentoring experience had an effect on the attrition rate of novice teachers in low-socio-economic districts. The recommendations gleaned from the research can be used to inform policymakers who have the authority to modify current programs or create new ones which can have a positive impact on beginning teacher attrition.

Research Questions

This quantitative/qualitative study focused on answering the following three questions:

1. To what extent is the existing protocol for teacher mentoring of beginning alternate route teachers as established by the Department of Education in New Jersey being followed?

    a. In what way is the 20-day intensive, beginning alternative route teacher experience being structured?

    b. Does the way the 20-day experience is structured for the mentee have an effect on the decisions of the alternate route teachers to remain in teaching?

2. Which elements of the prescribed mentoring program do novice alternate route certification teachers perceive to be effective or ineffective and affect their decisions to return to teaching for a second year?

3. Do novice alternate route certification teachers perceive the mentoring programs in which they participated had any influence on their decision to stay in teaching for a second year?

   a. Do the perceptions of the influence of the mentoring program on the decision to remain teaching of the novice alternative route teachers differ based on gender?

   b. Do the perceptions of the influence of the mentoring program on the decision to remain teaching of the novice alternative route teachers differ based on race?

The researcher had intended to conduct a focus group with the mentors who were working with the novice teachers and had developed a set of questions that were never used due to a lack of volunteers.

Methodology

In order to determine the effectiveness of the mentoring program for beginning alternative route teachers, a qualitative/quantitative study was conducted. To gain a quantitative perspective, a questionnaire (Appendix A) was distributed to 53 alternative route teacher candidates at the end of their first year of teaching. The participants were selected from a pool of approximately 80 alternative route teachers working in low socio-economic urban districts in Northeastern New Jersey. The second phase of the study consisted of two parts: interviewing

six novice alternate route teacher candidates (Appendix B) who were enrolled in a state-approved preparation program; and, conducting a focus group of their participating mentors.

It should be noted that due to the lack of volunteers, the focus group was not conducted. This was due to the fact the novice teachers who participated in the study were very apprehensive about giving their mentors the letter of invitation to participate in the focus group.

Significance of the Study

Teacher retention is a major issue across the nation as well as in New Jersey. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) (2003) chaired by Governor James Hunt, Jr. reported in *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children*:

the fact remains that we are still not providing every child in America

with quality teaching. The shortfall is particularly severe in low-income

communities and rural areas, where inexperienced and underprepared

teachers are too often concentrated in schools that are structured for failure,

rather than success. The price paid by students is unacceptable. (p. 5)

In large urban districts across the nation, which are similar to low socio-economic districts in Northeastern New Jersey, it is estimated that between 9.3%-17% teachers leave the field during their first year of teaching (Breaux & Wong, 2003; Hammer & Williams, 2005). The impact of high attrition of beginning teachers includes the costs of retraining teachers as well as an effect on student learning (Education Commission of the States, 1999). The report from the NCTAF (1983) reported that student achievement was declining. Twenty-three million Americans were illiterate, 13% of 17 year olds were illiterate, the achievement gap for high school students was down from 26 years prior, and there was a general decline in the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) results. Since then, reform efforts have achieved inconsistent results and concerns about student

achievement and teacher quality spawned *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) in 2001. Although

some improvement has occurred since NCLB mandates were implemented, there are still an

unacceptable number of illiterate adults in the United States (Human Development Report,

2009). Recent reports demonstrate a continuing need to improve student achievement results

especially in urban areas with high minority populations (Education Trust, 2006). This trend of

unsatisfactory student performance makes the findings of Kukla-Acevedo's (2009) study of over

3,000 beginning teachers that high teacher turnover compromises student achievement even

more compelling.

However, the negative effect on schools is not only related to student achievement. It has

been estimated that teacher attrition costs the nation about 2.2 billion dollars a year and New

Jersey $150,562,359 (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). Because of the effect on student

achievement and the high financial cost of teacher turnover, policymakers are searching for

solutions that can improve performance and lower teacher attrition rates. Though there has been

research that examined programs that produced positive differences in teacher retention

(Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009) and studies conducted pertaining to teacher

mentoring (Andrew & Quinn 2005; Glover & Mutchler, 2000; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004), it is

important to build the body of research about specific contexts. Further, it has been established

that a problem does exist with the retention of alternate route candidates and teacher attrition, in

general, in large urban corridors (Donaldson, 2008; Easley, 2006); therefore, it is crucial to

ascertain if the established mentoring system in urban districts in Northeastern New Jersey is

effective in helping to reduce teacher attrition rates. In addition, it would be beneficial to enrich

the body of research on mentoring to include the perceptions of alternate route beginning

teachers in these settings. Learning what impacts mentees' decisions to stay in teaching is

critical. Knowing what novice teachers want and need from their mentors as well as identifying

the specific information, advice, and guidance and mentoring style that mentees perceive to

positively affect their decision to continue teaching would aid the development and refinement of

programs that address teacher retention rates.

In order to provide a complete understanding of the study a comprehensive list of terms

that are extensively used, along with their corresponding definitions is provided.

Definition of Terms

Abbott Districts – Low socio-economic districts in New Jersey that were identified by the

New Jersey Supreme Court based on litigation that originated in 1981 and the mandates were

implemented in 1988. The outcome provided additional funding based on the disparity between

low socio-economic and high socio-economic districts. There were originally 28 districts that

were identified, but the number has increased to 31 (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.).

For the purposes of this study, the term Abbott Districts will apply to those low socio-economic

districts in urban Northeastern New Jersey that were designated as Abbott Districts until 2009

and are now called former Abbott Districts by the New Jersey Department of Education

(Delacruz, 2009).

Beginning teacher – used synonymously with novice teacher for the purposes of this

study to indicate teachers who have taught no more than three years. This is considered to be

the critical time for attrition (Ingersoll, 2001; Inman & Marlow; 2004).

Certificate of Eligibility (CE) (Alternate Route) - A credential issued to individuals who

have completed a baccalaureate degree and have academic preparation applicable to their area of

teaching and who have successfully passed all required assessments. This credential allows an

individual to seek employment in the public schools of New Jersey (Plainfield Public Schools, 2004).

Mentoring - A term describing the "personal guidance provided, usually by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers in schools" (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004, p. 2).

Mentee - A term used to describe a new teacher who receives instructional support, advising about school and district resources, and information concerning expectations (Education Commission of the States, 1999).

Mentor - A term used to describe a veteran teacher who gives support to a new teacher. This person is usually another teacher, who is trusted by the protégé teacher and who provides support (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). A mentor can be a working teacher or an individual who has retired from the teaching profession.

New Jersey Alternate Route Teacher Program - "A program that is a non-traditional teacher preparation program designed for those individuals who have not completed a formal teacher preparation program at an accredited college or university but wish to obtain the necessary training to become a New Jersey certified teacher" (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d., p. 1).

Provisional Certificate – An instructional certificate used in New Jersey issued to candidates who have met the requirements for initial employment. It is valid for two years. Under this program the novice teacher must enroll in a state-approved training program and must participate in a mentoring program (Plainfield Public Schools, 2004).

Standard Certificate - A term used in New Jersey to describe individuals who have met all the requirements to becoming a teacher. A standard certificate is valid for a lifetime (Plainfield Public Schools, 2004).

Teacher Attrition - A term used to describe the "phenomenon of teachers who leave the profession entirely" (Ganser & Norman, 2004, p. 131).

Summary

The retention of novice teachers is a complex problem facing schools across the United States. Although various initiatives have been implemented to attempt to curtail the flood of teachers leaving the profession, there has been little change in overall rates of attrition. One possible solution has been the development of alternate route programs to certify candidates who have limited or no background in formal teacher preparation, but have strong academic area content knowledge. Alternate route teachers now compose more than 40% of the teaching population in New Jersey (Feistritzer, 2007). However, alternate route teachers are more likely to teach in challenging, urban low-socio-economic schools than traditionally prepared teachers. Alternate route teachers armed with little preparation for the realities of teaching generally need additional support in order to be effective and to manage the stress. Typically, teachers, regardless of preparation and background, who are working in low-socio-economic urban districts need more support when confronted with the challenges of that specific context. However, the induction and mentoring program for alternate route teachers in New Jersey was modified to give local school districts more latitude in defining how they would provide support for these novice candidates in their first 20 days. In addition, concerns about how the following 30-week induction program is conducted have also risen. Therefore, it is critical to determine what is currently occurring, which elements seem to be effective or ineffective, and what gaps exist in providing support for alternate route candidates in low-socio-economic urban school districts in New Jersey. Further, the mentoring of alternative route teacher candidates must be studied to ascertain if the program has any effect on the decision-making process of alternate

route teachers regarding remaining in the profession. If the data suggest that modifications might be beneficial, then the challenging process of reform can be initiated. Though research-based, meaningful mentoring programs are a significant expenditure and consume a significant amount of time, the benefits to be gained may be cost-effective. This study may help to answer that question for a specific population. Chapter 2 provides an extensive review of the literature on teacher attrition and mentoring, low socio-economic schools, as well as other related topics.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Every community should have a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom. [We

have] an enormous opportunity for ensuring teacher quality well into the 21st century, if

we recruit promising people into teaching and give them the highest quality preparation

and training (President, William Clinton, 1997).

Introduction

Teacher attrition has caused pockets of teacher shortages across the nation, and as a result

negatively impacts student achievement (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009) and places a significant

financial burden on districts for professional development costs (National Commission on

Teaching and America's Future, 2003). Approximately 1,000 newly employed teachers leave

the profession daily (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003), and they

report that the trend of high attrition rates is expected to continue long into this century (National

Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). To further add to this national crisis,

schools identified as low socio-economic districts, where the need to retain quality teachers may

be the greatest, are experiencing the highest teacher turnover rates (Easley 2006; Ingersoll &

Smith, 2004). Having a stable teaching force is beneficial to attrition and students (Ingersoll &

Smith, 2004). The attrition rates in these areas are about one-third higher than for all other

teachers in all other schools (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003).

State departments of education and individual districts as well as collaborative partnerships with

universities, funding agencies, and local education agencies have attempted to address this

problem by implementing a variety of solutions. Two frequently chosen options have been the

development of alternative certification routes and the mentoring of first year teachers. However, although in specific instances improvement in teacher retention has been documented, widespread and lasting change has not occurred.

To clarify alternate route teacher mentoring and their overall experiences, this chapter presents a comprehensive review of the complexities that surround teacher attrition and the impact it is having on America's schools. Further, the chapter describes the extent of the problem of beginning teacher retention in low-socio-economic, urban schools. The particular challenges that exist in this context may have an effect on the success and the solutions that are offered and implemented. Therefore, an in-depth review of alternate routes to teacher certification as well as a thorough analysis of studies that describe the characteristics of effective mentoring programs and how they affect teacher retention, were conducted. Finally, studies were outlined that support the use of the proposed methodologies for this type of quantitative/ qualitative investigation.

Alternate Route Teacher Training Requirements

New Jersey requires the successful completion of a comprehensive mentoring system for alternate route novice teachers before advancement to permanent or professional certification (Education Commission of the States, 1999). The alternate route candidates receive 20 days of pre-service training and mentoring support in addition to the basic mentoring requirement. Since the issue of providing this period of training has been difficult for many districts for logistical reasons, in 2006 the 20-day requirement could be replaced by a compilation of at least 90 hours during which the "districts are permitted to incorporate orientation, induction, pre-service or summer clinical experiences with in class mentor support to achieve the 20-day requirement," which is called the Phase I -20 (Doolan, 2006, p. 2). After the initial 20-day mentoring, or the

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completion of Phase I -20, the candidate begins the 30-week support mentorship. During this time there is support from both the mentor as well as building level administrators. Essentially, the 30-week, on-going support provided by the mentor, is building based, while formal classroom instruction is concurrently occurring at an approved site where there is a minimum of 200 hours of formal instruction aligned to the New Jersey Professional Standards. Three reviews, two formative assessments, and one summative evaluation are required by the state. The formative assessments provide opportunities for the novice teacher to learn and implement suggested strategies and ideas, while the summative is evaluative and includes a report that either recommends an individual for: (1) permanent licensure (standard certificate); (2) as needing additional time before licensure; or, (3) denial of a standard certification (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.).

Elements Affecting Teacher Attrition

In low socio-economic areas high turnover means that there are fewer experienced teachers in the classroom (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). This was evident in Ingersoll and Smith's study (2004) which indicated that individuals who work in large urban areas are usually new teachers who often leave in their early years. Easley (2006), in his study of novice teachers in New York City Public Schools, also found that many new teachers who work in low socio-economic areas are either tentative about or unwilling to remain in teaching. A school demographic that has a blend of experienced and novice teachers allows for a positive effect on both faculty and students. Experienced teachers who have the opportunity to work with new teachers enhance their own teaching practices (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). In fact, a positive synergy occurs whereby teachers truly work and plan together and a community of learning is created which strengthens the commitment to raising the student's

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overall school performance. As a byproduct, newer teachers become more effective in a more efficient manner and are willing to stay as opposed to leaving and costing districts more money for retraining (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). NCTAF (2003) also reported that high teacher turnover takes away from not only teaching quality and student achievement, but has a diminishing effect on continuity and community, which should be the underlying values in strong schools. By investing in strategies, such as using retired teachers and administrators as mentors, creating specific mentor positions (Hammer & Williams, 2005), or by allotting time for the mentor teachers to work as mentors (Sweeny, 2001), opportunities to develop strong learning communities are enhanced. The NCTAF (2003) report further noted that high turnover levels are much more prevalent in low socio-economic areas and this cycle of continuing teacher attrition can have dramatic effect on children's social development and overall emotional well-being.

Variables of Teacher Job Satisfaction

Kukla-Acevedo (2009) examined the variables associated with teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction and its relationship to whether the teacher left the profession altogether, changed schools, or remained where they were originally assigned to teach. The study focused on three variables: (1) the behavioral climate of the school, described as challenging urban schools with poor student behavior and overall school safety; (2) teacher autonomy, defined as teachers having the right to choose their own planning, discipline, and teaching methods; and, (3) administrator support which included an analysis of administrative-teacher dialogue, public recognition of teachers, and enforcement of school rules. The Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS) was administered to 3,505 teachers who had been teaching for more than three years (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). The survey included demographic variables, such as marital status, earnings, and experience. The subject pool consisted of teachers who, for the most part, were married, had

14.69 years of experience (SD=2.54), and a salary range of $30,000-$39,999 annually. Analysis of the data found that 5% of the teachers had left the teaching profession entirely, 8% had switched schools, and 87% had remained teaching at the same school. Results indicated that novice teachers in their first year of teaching were one and one-half times more likely to leave the teaching profession and two times more likely to change their school placements. In addition, younger teachers under the age of 30 were 3 times more likely to exit teaching and 4 times more likely to switch schools than teachers who were 50 years old or older. Furthermore, women were more likely to leave teaching altogether, perhaps due to childbirth and child-rearing demands (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). However, the most influential factor as to whether the teachers were going to leave the profession was the behavioral climate of the school. Administrative support had a positive effect on teacher mobility and was a protective factor when dealing with teacher turnover. Interestingly, lack of classroom autonomy had only weak significance on whether or not the teacher decided to leave the profession (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Kukla-Acevedo's findings provide support to the hypothesis that retention rates are situational and can be affected by variables that can be mitigated.

<div align="center">

High Beginning Teacher Attrition Rates and

Their Effect on Student Performance

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A study that addresses teacher attrition as it relates to student performance was a pilot study conducted by Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer (2009) which focused on five public school districts: Chicago; Milwaukee; Granville County Schools in North Carolina; Jemez Valley; and, Santa Fe in New Mexico. Each district was asked to submit data on specific variables such as student performance level, the geographic setting of the school, the school type, the enrollment, the percentage of students receiving free and reduced meals, race/ethnicity, limited English

proficiency, student stability rate, the percentage of special education students, and the overall attendance rate of the school. The study analyzed data from the 2002-2003 school years (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2009) and utilized the following three categories to define poverty. Low poverty was less than 50% of students enrolled in free and reduced lunch; medium poverty defined as between 50% and 75% of students enrolled in free and reduced lunch; and high poverty as more than 75% of students in free and reduced lunch. Low school performance was correlated with high teacher turnover rates in both the Chicago and Milwaukee Public Schools and study findings suggested that teacher turnover is greater in high poverty schools where it not only exacts a price from the district budget but also undermines the performance of at-risk students. According to Kukla-Acevedo (2009), this information can be used to help increase teacher retention which is critical because research has shown that high teacher turnover negatively affects student performance and undermines at-risk students (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009).

Additional findings indicated that the percentage of special education students did have a minor effect on increasing overall teacher turnover (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2009), but schools with high concentrations of limited English learners in urban areas had much less teacher turnover than schools with fewer numbers. In addition, in districts that had a high percentage of minority students, which were often the high poverty schools, there was a general increase in teacher turnover. There were also increased teacher turnover rates when lower student performance existed. Generally, low performing schools tended to be in low socio economic areas where students performed much more poorly, and in schools where students did not achieve well, teachers left the district at a higher rate (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2009). Finally, teacher experience had a strong impact on whether teachers left the profession. Teachers

with none to one year of experience left the profession at a much greater rate than those who had been teaching for more than one year (Barnes, et al., 2009).

Based on the Barnes, et al. (2009) study, it appears that inexperienced teachers and teachers who work in urban areas that are high poverty and have a high percentage of minority students are most likely to leave. Other factors, such as low student performance and the number of special education students may also have some effect on novice teacher retention. Barnes, et al. (2009) suggested: "Urban schools should focus retention efforts on new teachers in high minority and low performing schools" (p. 68). The authors further suggested that this emphasis could mitigate the financial impact of high teacher attrition, which is another negative outcome.

<center>Financial Impact of High Teacher Attrition Rates</center>

Loss of in-service teachers costs the United States approximately seven billion dollars a year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). This expense encompasses the search for new teaching staff, orientation-associated costs, and all training and professional development that is invested in the new teacher. In its policy brief, *The High Cost of Teacher Turnover*, the NCTAF (2007) reported on a small pilot study of five schools varying in size. The data from the study were utilized in generating a set of tools that would accurately estimate teacher turnover costs. Previously much of the data concerning statistics associated with teacher attrition did not emanate from an analysis of actual school data. After the pilot study was completed, NCTAF created the Teacher Turnover Cost Calculator. Utilizing the calculator, the researchers examined annual teacher turnover in the five districts which yielded staggering results ranging from over 115 million spent in New York City to 17 million dollars in Washington, D.C. for the specific data (Table 3).

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Table 3

Teacher Attrition Costs for Major Eastern United States' Cities

City	State	Cost
Baltimore	Maryland	$19,013,750
Boston	Massachusetts	$13,020,000
New York	New York	$115,221,250
Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	$29,662,500
Washington	District of Columbia	$16,598,750

Barnes, et al. (2009) examined the financial impact of teacher attrition in schools designated as high, medium, and low poverty. The results indicated that the cost of teacher turnover varied according to socio-economic status, ranging from a low of $4,366 per teacher leaving Jemez Valley, which had a low attrition rate and low poverty to a high of $17,872 per teacher in Chicago, a high poverty district where the total cost was compounded by a high attrition rate. These studies corroborate the relationship that may exist between high poverty schools and high teacher turnover. Furthermore, low socio-economic school districts often hire a large number of alternately trained teachers (Southwest Educational Development Lab, 2000), so it is important to find ways to retain these teachers.

Challenges of Teaching and

Attending Low Socio-Economic Schools

There are many challenges that face schools and teachers in low-income, urban areas, including not enough staff and resources, a lack of parental involvement, and low expectations for achievement (McKinney, Berry, Dickerson, & Whatley 2007). According to Breaux and Wong (2003), "The least qualified teachers-those with no credentials and little or no formal training-are ending up in schools with the neediest students, seriously undermining attempts to improve student achievement" (p. 19). Urban schools often struggle with failing schools and failing students (McFadden, 2009). For more than 50 years, researchers have been claiming that socio-economic status was the most important predictor of a student's success in their academic endeavors (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld, & York, 1966; Warren, 2002). Several recent studies have supported this premise. An analysis of data on the academic performance of students in low socio economic urban districts located in New Jersey found that students in low-income schools had lower overall achievement scores than their higher socio-

economic status (SES) counterparts. Low-income students scored significantly lower in academics, and schools did not necessarily have the number of or the appropriate staff to the address the needs of these students. These students also had higher rates of dropping-out and poorer attendance (Education Law Center, n.d.). Finally, teacher experience had a strong relationship to whether teachers left the profession. Teachers with none to one year of experience left the profession at a much greater rate than those who had been teaching for more than one year (Barnes, et al., 2009).

In their study looking at small urban schools Carter and Keiler (2009) found many challenges associated with new alternatively certified teachers. In this particular study, small schools referred not to the size of the student population, but to schools that have a cohesive philosophy and shared decision making. The study drew information from nine teachers who worked in nine different locations in small schools located throughout New York City. Some of the challenges that these teachers faced was substandard preparation prior to being placed in a classroom, and a lack of understanding of pedagogical skills, and how to deal with difficult behaviors. In addition, there were issues with the mentoring process and the fact that their mentors were often trained in a discipline different from theirs, and their mentors may have even been from different schools. There was also an issue with the fact that the mentors did not offer help and/or support, but just took up time. Finally, the study pointed to the fact that the working environments in these small urban schools were rigorous with and often different from anything that they experienced before (Carter & Keiler, 2009). This was also the case with a Teach for America candidate who left after one year because of the lack of training the agency provided in preparing new teachers to work in urban and difficult to staff schools (Allen, 2006).

Clark County, part of the Las Vegas, Nevada metropolitan area, began to train new teachers in an area of the district that was deemed at risk. Over time however, the need escalated, and the district was forced to work with personnel to keep track of the hiring so mentors could be assigned, which had been difficult (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). Such a scenario demonstrates the challenges inherent of servicing new teachers in large urban corridors.

Warren (2002) examined teachers' expectation rates of their students, comparing suburban middle class schools and urban low socio economic schools. Data were collected in the 1999-2000 academic year in Southern California from 29 public elementary (k-6) school teachers who had taught for more than 2 years. Eleven of the 29 teachers were teachers of color. The responses took into consideration the ethnicity of the teacher and the overall socio-economic status of the schools where the teachers worked. Eighteen of the teachers came from four schools that had low socio-economic populations. In order to be considered a low socio-economic school, 80% of the students had to be eligible for free or reduced lunches, and 80% of the population must be composed of students of color. The other 11 teachers were from 4 higher socio-economic neighborhoods. A higher socio-economic neighborhood was defined as having less than 20% of the student body eligible for free or reduced lunches, and less than 20% of the population composed of students of color (Warren, 2002).

Results indicated that 23 of the 29 teachers identified a major difference between their perceptions of the students they teach and their own biological children. Teachers noted that there was an underlying understanding in their own homes that their children would perform well in school. Twenty-one of the 29 teachers from both the low and high socio-economic areas had lower expectations for their students than their own children. For the purpose of the study the difference was portrayed to indicate expectations. Teachers in this group often did not expect

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that their students would graduate from high school or attend college (Warren, 2002). One White teacher commented:

> They [her students] will not have the abilities to go to college. They possibly may not even graduate from high school. And my child will graduate from high school [laugh] and go to college because that is expected of her, and I don't know if it is expected of the children in our district. I think they want them to just get by. (Warren, 2002, p. 112)

Eight of the 29 teachers (25%) had high expectations for all of their students and thought that they could have a dramatic effect on their students' performance whether they worked in low socio-economic neighborhoods or suburban neighborhoods (Warren, 2002).

A common theme of the teachers with low expectations was that the parents were not doing enough to foster learning at home. Other issues reported were a lack of basic skills and deficient academic preparation of the families of the students, social class, and general changes in society. Overall, teachers of color did not have higher expectations of low socio-economic students or a positive view of the potential of parents to be supportive. One example is the response of one teacher of color:

> I think it's just a lot of the parents. Either they don't have time . . . .
> They are just tired or they don't know how to help their kids . . . .
> I think that's the problem with these parents . . . . They never had
> anything . . . and a lot of them are young. They don't have the
> patience . . . . It's going to be a cycle. I think they [her students]
> are going to be like their parents. (Warren, 2002, 113)

Students who attend school in low socio-economic environments often are held to different standards (Warren, 2002). This problem is also made worse by the fact that teachers who work in urban environments often have high levels of attrition, which could also have an effect on students (Barnes, et al., 2009). In order to alleviate these issues, a look at teacher attrition is necessary to isolate the variables as to why the problem of attrition is occurring, so that viable possible solutions can be sought.

Teacher Attrition in Low Socio-Economic Schools

The effect of low SES on teacher attrition has been the focus of recent research and is important to this study, as the majority of alternatively trained teachers work in low socio-economic and impoverished areas, and wealthier suburban districts hire almost exclusively traditionally trained teachers (Morales, 2006). Ingersoll and Smith (2004), utilizing data from the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) administered by NCES, conducted a large-scale study with a sample size of 3,235 beginning teachers. The authors reported that there was a 50% increased risk of beginning teachers leaving the profession after the first year of teaching in a school where the percentage of students who received free or reduced price lunches rose from 25% to 75%.

A second study on teacher retention focused on uncovering the characteristics of a wide range of schools that had high teacher attrition. The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2000) conducted a comprehensive study of three districts: a mid-sized city, a county-wide, and an independent urban school in Texas. Each of the districts varied in size and scope and had differences in student diversity and achievement among the schools in each district. In the county-wide and the independent urban districts, the teachers who taught in highly diverse and underperforming schools tended to be younger, less experienced, more

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ethnically diverse and more often male (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000).

The mid-city schools, with racially and ethnically integrated populations, had the most stable

teaching force with the least attrition, while the county-wide district had the highest percentage

of teachers who left (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000). In the county-

wide and the urban independent schools, teacher attrition was significantly affected by the high

number of minority students at the schools, with more teachers leaving the schools with the

highest minority populations. Teacher attrition for the county-wide school district was high for

both low and high performing schools, while the data from the urban independent school district

indicated that lower performing schools had a higher percentage of teachers leave (Southwest

Educational Development Laboratory, 2000). While higher school achievement had a positive

relationship on teacher retention for all districts, it was strongest for the urban independent

district (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000). These teachers may need

additional support and/or training than their colleagues.

Overall, the findings indicated that new teachers tended to work in highly diverse and

low performing schools with large at-risk student populations. The evidence from this study also

suggests districts that are more balanced in terms of student economic status, racial diversity, and

numbers of at risk students are more likely to retain novice teachers. Finally, mentoring

programs may need to focus on providing new teachers with assistance in learning how to

effectively teach high-risk students who are poor, reside in urban areas, and are often of minority

backgrounds (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000), which alternate route

teachers often work in (Feistritzer, 2007).

A third study by McKinney, Berry, Dickerson, and Whatley (2007) focused on a different

perspective of teacher attrition in low socio-economic districts by examining which factors kept

outstanding teachers working in low socio-economic schools. The Southeastern United States urban district included 14 elementary schools where half of the students were receiving either free or reduced lunches. Thirty-two teachers between 32 and 49 years old with between 6 and 27 years of experience, who had been recommended as outstanding by their administrators and had scored well on assessments of knowledge of teaching were identified. Fifty-seven percent were African American, 34% were Caucasian, and 9% were Hispanic. The educators indicated they remained teaching for reasons such as wanting to give back to society or to the community and the fact that they enjoyed working with diverse populations. Salary and/or benefits were not a contributing factor for staying. The results of the study also indicated that these outstanding teachers who had remained were most often African-American women who expressed a strong desire and an intense need to work with an inner city, high poverty, student population (McKinney, et al., 2007).

A fourth study of attrition in low SES schools, the Multicultural Urban Secondary English (MUSE), was conducted by Freedman and Appleman (2008). The researchers followed a cohort of 26 members who received their credentials to teach in the spring of 2002 and were offered teaching positions in urban, low SES schools the following fall. During their first year of teaching, cohort members enrolled in graduate classes at the University of California at Berkley, which eventually led to a master's degree in the spring of 2003. The MUSE program was a five-year initiative and examined issues such as the development of teacher identities over time and whether support, education, and training gave teachers an increased efficacy in terms of their ability to teach. The focus of the study was to determine if the formal graduate curriculum along with the ongoing support had any effect on whether they decided to remain teaching in a low SES environment. MUSE researchers analyzed informal e-mail messages, observations during

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their student teaching experiences, ongoing oral and written reflections, personal meetings, and a formal questionnaire. In addition, 22 out of the 26 members were interviewed. The findings suggested that the teachers did develop teacher identities which improved teacher efficacy and their desire to remain working in low performing and low SES environments. After one year 96% of the MUSE candidates remained teaching in the same low SES environments with 92% of them remaining in the same schools and 4% moving to another school. Data also showed that after five years 73% of the MUSE students were still teaching or working in education in some capacity compared to 54% nationally, while working in an urban low socio-economic environment; 69% of those who remained in teaching were still employed in high poverty and high need school districts (Freedman & Appleman, 2008). Although specific school districts and some state-wide initiatives have made efforts to support urban school districts in hiring and retaining beginning teachers, significant challenges still exist across the country where new teachers leave the profession completely or move into other areas of education, thus increasing the teacher deficit (Quartz, et al, 2008). Since New Jersey employs a large number of novice teachers in low socio-economic schools, this turnover cycle can have dramatic ramifications on the financial stability of these districts due to the fact that large teacher turnover cost money (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). It would be economical and beneficial to students to not have this turn over. One could conclude that as a by-product of improving teacher attrition, money could be saved.

<div align="center">History of the Funding Disparity in New Jersey</div>

As in many states, a funding disparity exists among districts in New Jersey, and this was the beginning point to the ultimate creation of Abbott districts. As early as 1875, New Jersey began addressing equal opportunity issues when the state Constitution was amended so that a

"thorough and efficient education" (Education Law Center, n.d.) was guaranteed for all children

residing in the state. The next major development in equal opportunity practices occurred in

1970 with the resolution of Robinson v. Cahill, a case that was initiated on behalf of urban

school children where the plaintiffs declared that New Jersey's system for funding schools

created inequity and discriminated against poor, urban students. In 1973, the New Jersey

Supreme Court ruled that school funding based exclusively on property taxes in individual

districts discriminated against students who resided in low socio-economic communities. In

response, in 1976, the *Public School Education Act* was passed and a new formula was created

by the state to fund the state's public school systems. The next major development occurred in

1981 when the Educational Law Center (ELC) filed Abbott v. Burke, stating that the *Public

School Education Act* that created a new funding formula was inadequate and did not provide a

thorough and efficient education for all students. Then, in 1985, the New Jersey Supreme Court

remanded the case to the Office of Administrative Law stating that, in order to satisfy the State

Constitution, low socio-economic students must be given an education equal to that of their

wealthy, suburban peers. Between 1986 and 1988, the decision of the Abbott case was appealed.

Finally in 1988, the decision was upheld and the New Jersey Department of Education and

legislature was directed to overhaul the funding system for districts. Initially, the ruling was

rejected on a philosophical basis by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education when he

indicated that the existing funding system was adequate. However, the Department of Education

was compelled to comply when the *Quality Education Act* passed in May 1990. Taxes were

raised on a statewide basis to help pay for all costs associated with implementing the ruling. In

June 1990, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in Abbott II that the state must equalize funding

between suburban and urban districts. In addition, supplemental programs were also

implemented to provide educational program equalization. In 1995, the New Jersey Department

of Education released a preliminary plan to equalize funding by decreasing the spending in

suburban districts. Initially, the *Comprehensive Education Improvement Financing Act* (CEIFA)

was implemented and this assured that suburban districts were not spending more than $1,200

per pupil more than urban districts. After the Educational Law Center filed a complaint with the

courts stating that CEIFA was not in compliance, the New Jersey Supreme Court declared

CEIFA unconstitutional stating that urban and suburban districts must have equal funding. For

the 1997-1998 academic year, additional funding for urban districts was given by the state for the

1997-1998 school year making it the first year that funding was equalized throughout New

Jersey. In addition, in 1998, the state ordered the implementation of supplemental programs,

such as preschool for three and four year olds to improve academic achievement in low socio-

economic districts. For the ensuing years, building maintenance, upgrades, and new construction

remained at the forefront. Providing additional funding for the Abbott districts has been a

complex and contentious process, and even now there continues to be on-going discussions about

the value of and processes involved in the ruling's implementation (Educational Law Center,

n.d.). On May 28, 2009 a landmark change occurred concerning the Abbott District designation

in New Jersey. Under Governor Jon Corzine, who challenged the funding formula, the State

changed its 30-year funding formula. Specifically, the new funding formula now bases state

funding on the number of low socio-economic students in each district. This is a drastic change

from providing additional funding for only the 31 designated districts now formally labeled the

former Abbott Districts of New Jersey (Delacruz, 2009). Although the revised formula provides

more funds to more districts, it also lowers funding for the former Abbott Districts thereby

affecting their ability to provide desired programs, including professional development and

teacher support (Delacruz, 2009). Therefore, former Abbott districts are confronted with many characteristics of environments that produce high teacher attrition: high concentrations of poverty; high student mobility rates; consistently low student achievement; and, urban settings (Librera, 2003). These districts will have an even greater challenge in retaining new teachers if they need to curtail support programming and resources (Auerbach, 2003). Solutions, such as the alternate route to certification, which generates 40% of all new teacher candidates in New Jersey (Barclay, et al., 2007) and in large concentrations to these districts, will need to continue to be utilized.

History of Alternate Route Creation in New Jersey

The alternate route to teacher certification was created in 1983. As of 2007, all states and the District of Columbia have some form of an alternate certification program (Feistritzer, 2007). Approximately 485 alternate route programs are currently operating. The alternative route programs have been successful by having approximately one-third of their candidates employed as teachers across the nation. Positive outcomes of the alternative certification routes are that geographic areas**,** mainly urban areas**,** which are underserved and suffer from severe teacher shortages, have been able to gain more teachers who are content-area qualified. A second benefit is that the alternative route to teacher certification has shifted the need away from teachers qualifying for only temporary or emergency certificates that were once widely issued (National Center for Alternative Certification, 2004).

Approximately one-half of alternate route programs are conducted by institutions of higher education, while about one-quarter are administered by local school districts, and another quarter offered by a variety of collaborative efforts among states and private entities (Feistritzer, 2007). Recently, NCLB has served as a catalyst for increasing alternative certification programs

that are designed to create a larger pool of new teacher candidates that are deemed as highly qualified by its definition. A 2007 analysis of the *No Child Left Behind Title II* data indicated that 38 states intended to utilize alternate route teacher candidates to ensure that all of their teachers meet the highly qualified standard (Feistritzer, 2007).

<center>Retention Rates of Alternative Route Teachers</center>

Several studies (Easley, 2006; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Quaid, 2009) discussed in Chapter 1 revealed varying rates for retention of alternate route teachers in their beginning years. Additional research supports the findings and suggests that different elements can affect attrition rates for alternate route candidates. For example, a longitudinal 1992-1994 study of a retention program in Chicago determined that the program retained new teachers by offering them incentives, such as financial support and a master's degree (Gallegos, 1995). Deans of Education from local colleges, the Chicago Teachers Union, and the Golden Apple Foundation collaboratively designed the program, Teachers for Chicago. The program's goal was to develop a plan to increase the pool of strong and effective teachers for the Chicago public schools by implementing a comprehensive recruitment program and providing education and on-site training (Gallegos, 1995). The second goal was to have teachers remain and have successful, long-term careers in an urban public school setting. All candidates had to have a minimum of a 2.5 grade point average on a 4.0 scale, and have had a successful comprehensive interview. In 1992-1994, there were 80 interns, and a second group in 1997-1996 included 315 interns (Gallegos, 1995). The retention rate for the first two cohorts exceeded that of the national average (National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century, 2000).

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Another alternative certification program, Teach for America, supplies 4,100 teachers to the nation's urban corridors, as well as to rural school districts across the nation in 2009 (Quaid, 2009). Each member accepted by the Teach for America program has earned a baccalaureate degree in a field other than education and has demonstrated a strong undergraduate academic record (Teach for America, 2009). Individuals must agree to participate in the program for a minimum of two years and are required to participate in the alternative route to certification program of the states in which they are assigned. Donaldson (2008) found that Teach for America candidates often work in hard to staff regions, such as low socio-economic districts. Although Teach for America participants are only required to teach for two years, many candidates remain beyond that time period (Associated Press, 2009).

Quaid (2009) examined the retention rate of beginning Teach for America cohort members from 2000, 2001, and 2002. Three thousand two hundred eighty-three surveys were mailed, and 2,029 responses were returned representing a 62% response rate. Sixty percent of the teachers returned to teach for a 3rd year, 44% remained teaching in the 4th year, and 35% for the 5th year.

Easley (2006), in his study of alternate route teacher candidates in New York City public schools, reported that 62% of the response pool of one cohort indicated a desire to work with young people, and 77% indicated they planned on remaining in the teaching profession. Easley (2006) studied one cohort of individuals who participated in the New York City Teacher Fellows (NYCTF) program. The program was developed in 2000 to address the issue of the severe teacher shortage which was the worst it had been in decades. The goal was to fill teaching vacancies in New York's lowest performing schools. The cohort included novice alternative route teachers who were participating in a program that would not only lead to certification, but

to a master's degree as well. To reiterate, more than 75% of the cohort indicated a desire to remain teaching.

Easley (2008), in the fall of 2005, had 11 individuals to participate in his study who graduated from the NYCTF and volunteered to participate in a focus group. The purpose of the focus group was to look specifically at some of the reasons why these individuals decided to remain in the teaching profession. The focus group included novice alternate route teachers who were described as all being people of color. Of the 11 cohort members, 3 were male. All of the eleven participants in the cohort reported having a strong desire to remain in teaching. From the focus group, themes also emerged revealing that teachers wanted supportive relationships, to be respected as professionals, and for the school to have a foundation of strong moral leadership (Easley, 2008).

Feistritzer (2007), however, citing past studies by the NCEE (1983) and the NCES (2007), determined in states that produce a large number of alternative route teacher candidates, about 85% to 90% of these new teachers remained in the profession after 5 years. Her hypothesis stated that because alternate route teacher candidates are generally more mature and made an informed decision to teach after thorough reflection, they are more likely to stay in teaching (Feistritzer, 2007). In addition, the higher retention rates in states that employ many alternative route candidates may be due to the staffing patterns. They may be utilized more frequently in different types of settings and not be clustered solely in challenging, low socio-economic, urban districts (Quaid, 2009). A third reason for low attrition rates might be the utilization of retention incentives by some states, school districts, and independent organizations.

A study involving incentives conducted by Ilmer, Elliot, Snyder, Nahan, and Colombo (2005) analyzed an alternate route teacher preparation program in Detroit, Michigan. The

Detroit public schools, the Michigan Department of Education, the Detroit Federation of

Teachers, and Wayne State University collaboratively designed an alternative route to teacher

certification. Teachers who participated in this program typically worked in difficult to staff

schools that were classified as low socio-economic and urban. The program design was based on

lessons learned from prior alternate route models. One hundred seventy-eight of the 407 new

teachers hired participated in the study. African-Americans made up 91.4% of the first cohort of

the program of which, there were 96 males and 311 females (Ilmer, et al., 2005). All of the 178

Limited License to Instruct (LLI) teachers participated in 1 of 7 group interviews. Teachers were

surveyed about online coursework, engagement in the program, cohort meetings, support in the

schools, and the overall program. Teachers reported that group cohort meetings were beneficial

(88%) and indicated that they helped them feel connected. Thirty percent of the teachers

reported positive school support. They indicated that mentoring was extremely important and

some teachers even reported that they would not have stayed in education without the mentoring

support. Teachers attended Wayne State University while working under a limited teacher

license. The program offered the opportunity to receive full teacher certification along with the

opportunity to earn a master's degree with half of the tuition being paid for by the program. The

findings indicated that these incentives had an impact on the teachers' decisions to remain in the

field Ilmer, et al., (2005) reported that:

> for urban school districts ACP [Alternative Certification Program] partnerships with
>
> universities and state departments are providing a means to identify and address areas for
>
> which the shortage of qualified teachers is most acute and serious. Findings from the
>
> study with beginning Limited License to Instruct teachers provide strong support for the
>
> need to use data from new teachers' perceptions of their initial preparation experiences

to inform and support continuous program improvement efforts. (p. 10)

Since new teachers who are alternatively certified often work in low socio-economic districts and often need additional support (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000), effective mentoring programs are very important.

<center>Effective Teacher Mentoring Programs</center>

Mentoring can be a potential solution in retaining good quality teachers (Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Effective teacher mentoring models can be described as ones that lead to a higher retention rate and greater satisfaction regarding teaching. However, not all mentoring programs are successful and some can, in fact, be detrimental (Bullough, 2005; McCann, Johannessen, & Rica, 2005). McCann, et al. (2005) interviewed educational consultants and novice teachers and found that it may actually be better for a school district to have no mentoring program at all then to have a mentoring program that is poor in quality. This small qualitative study investigated beginning teachers' perceptions of their mentoring experiences. Teachers who participated in poorly constructed mentoring programs often had negative views and/or opinions of their mentoring experiences as evidenced by the following quote.

> The mentoring program is such a sham. It is the most ridiculous thing
> I've ever participated in. It would actually drive people out of teaching.
> There are meetings on Friday nights from 5 to 8, and we don't get paid for
> it. For example, they read to us out of the discipline code. My mentor did
> not want to be a mentor. She hates me; I hate her. I wanted to be with
> another teacher with whom I have more in common and who is a good
> teacher. (McCann, et al., 2005, p. 32)

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A review of recent studies has shown that mentoring programs are more likely to be

effective if certain elements are in place (see Table 4). Some of the successful elements of the

program include the opportunity to participate in their own learning, the opportunity for

communication, the opportunity to receive incentives such as a master's degree and training, and

support provided to the teacher mentors.

Table 4

Elements of Effective Mentoring Programs

Elements of Effective Mentoring Program	Research Studies
Adult learners	Batenhorst (2004); Lee (2001); Speck (1996)
Culture that Supports Collegiality and Professional Growth	Brown & Wynn (2007); Madsen & Hancock (2002); Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2000)
Comprehensive Induction Program	Ingersoll & Smith (2004)
Amount and Quality of Time for Mentoring	Barclay, Feistritzer, Grip, Haar, Seaton, Sherman, & Stone (2007); Hersh, Strout, & Snyder (1993); Sacks & Wilcox (1984); Hammer & Williams (2005)
Style of the Mentor and Attention to the Needs of the Mentee	Bullough (2005); Osgood (2001); Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez (2009)
Use of Incentives	Jambor, Jones, & Patterson (1997); Reed & Busby (1985); Ilmer, Elliot, Snyder, Nahan, & Colombo (2005); Milanowski, Longwell-Grice, Jones, Odden, & Schomisch (2007)
Preparing for Mentoring	Kulinna, McCaughtry, Cothran, & Faust (2005); Hammer & Williams (2005)

First, the structure of the activities of the mentoring program need to be based on adult

learning theory if beginning teachers are to be motivated to participate (Batenhorst, 2004).

Second, the school and its administrators must cultivate a culture that encourages and supports

self-reflection and continuous growth (Batenhorst, 2004). Third, the mentoring program needs

to be part of a comprehensive induction experience, where novice teachers are being given

support in a variety of sustained ways. Fourth, mentors need to have adequate time to work with

their mentees in order for quality interaction to exist. This includes observing and conferencing

with their mentees as well as opportunities for informal discussion and support. Fifth, mentors

must have the skill and affect to modify their styles and differentiate strategies to meet the needs

of individual mentees, and need to be able to utilize strategies and communication styles that

enhance the mentoring relationship. Sixth, the utilization of appropriate and related incentives

can serve as a catalyst for recruitment and retention of beginning teachers. Finally, the

mentoring relationship will be more successful if the mentors are initially trained and then

supported during the program.

Adult Learners

Adults (see Table 4) benefit from having their learning facilitated and scaffolded (Speck,

1996). Having a "coach" and ongoing support guides adults toward their goals. According to

Speck (1996), since adults have a vast array of prior knowledge, opinions, and interest they

benefit from experiences that are matched to their individual needs. The learning of adults

improves when they are informed of the progress they are making. Adult learners prefer to learn

through direct and "hands-on" experiences with the help and support of others, and their

experiences need to be relevant in order for them to be meaningful and useful (Speck, 1996).

Since adults will resist learning when they feel they are not supported or are being attacked,

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mature learners benefit from having some degree of control over the activities and/or expectations of their experiences. If the principles of Adult Learning Theory are applied to the induction process, it is more likely that the interactions will be successful (Speck, 1996).

A study conducted by Lee (2001) based on the learning theory, andragogy, developed by Malcolm Knowles, suggests that content be geared to the needs of the adult learner. The utilization of this practice leads to the learner being self-motivated and directed (Conlan, Grabowski, & Smith, 2009). Lee's research examined how adult learners acquire knowledge and studied 53 adult trainers who had 3 or fewer years of general training experience and who had also completed a course involving various models of training design and development. All 53 part-time, graduate-level participants enrolled in an instructional analysis course at a Northeastern United States state university. The voluntary participants had backgrounds in areas such as business and education, with 41 being female and 12 male, all between the ages of 23 to 50 years. Participants were asked to respond to a series of pre-assessment and post-test questionnaires to measure their prior knowledge, attitudinal responses, and generalized learning preferences. Without being provided with prior knowledge of what a needs analysis was, participants were told that they would be required to apply the content of the course to an individualized needs analysis project. The concepts being studied included four human performance theories and models, and five distinct data collection and analysis methods.

The results of the study showed that there was an improvement of the participants' performance regarding how to improve learning, as well as positive project analysis results. Exposing the trainers to a variety of strategies such as well-planned lectures, realistic case studies, informal group discussions, and the use of well-organized handouts appeared to have accounted for the trainers' success in their post-test score results. Additionally, students noted

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the development of increased positive attitudes toward incorporating the use of various learning preferences in their work. The use of realistic case study scenarios provided a practical opportunity for the participants to put theory into practice, thus resulting in enhanced levels of intrinsic motivation, enthusiasm, and connection to the task. Study results clearly demonstrated that the students' improved skill at applying, synthesizing, and evaluating the learning content stemmed from the increased self-initiation, self-direction, and self-confidence of the trainers. Although the trainers were not initially well versed in the targeted content area presented, intrinsic levels of motivation and enthusiasm about the topics clearly increased throughout the duration of the study. Participants demonstrated the desire to apply this newly acquired knowledge and skill to their current jobs and careers after having gained the requisite knowledge. Overall, the findings of the study demonstrated that the impact of addressing adult learning preferences and characteristics was linked to positive learning results, which could be integrated across disciplines and could lead to increased performance (Lee, 1999).

A second study was based on transformational learning theory, a comprehensive model where one examines his/her own beliefs and compares them to others. Depending on the individual culture and situation, there are different structures and processes that are utilized. The theory's assumptions are based on constructivism which essentially adheres to the belief that the way a learner interprets what an individual experience has a direct correlation to making sense of the situation and actual learning (Mezirow, 1995). A study conducted by Kroth (1997) examined how an individual's life mission affected self-learning. After a grounded theory was developed and questions formulated through use of a focus group, a group of five individuals was selected to participate in a study. The individuals selected were part of a senior citizen's hall of fame; each person had made significant contributions to society. The study found that the stronger a

person's life mission, the stronger one's self-direction. The strength of the goals that individuals established for their lives had a direct effect on how they would learn and develop the skills to achieve those goals. The findings also suggested that based on the behavior of the subjects in the study, educators should demonstrate the relevance of content being presented to learners and that teachers, themselves, need to model having a strong mission. In addition, teachers need to help the students develop clear missions with a sense of purpose that goes beyond the individual and impacts the community in a productive way. The finding also suggests that it is prudent to meet teachers' needs on an individual basis.

Culture that Supports Collegiality and Professional Growth

A second factor (see table 4) in the success of a mentoring program is whether the school culture supports collaboration and professional growth. School administrators play an integral role in the potential for success of mentoring relationships occurring in their schools (Monsour, 2000). School leaders need to be cognizant of any problems or issues teachers may encounter, must have realistic expectations, and set goals that are attainable for the faculty and staff. These are all critical steps in helping new teachers (Seyfarth, 2005) and are important for establishing a positive culture in the school.

In its comprehensive study concerning induction, the SEDL (2000) surveyed 1,049 districts through a questionnaire mailed to the district superintendents. The superintendents, themselves, were instructed to provide the answers to the questionnaire or, if they chose, they could appoint a designated individual to ascertain the information. There were 358 responding districts indicating a 34% response rate. The study found that it is beneficial to create a culture that encourages professional growth and development opportunities, including mentoring. Further, the study reported that, not only is it the aim of the districts in Texas to improve

attrition, but it is more important to improve instruction. Sixty-three percent of the respondents indicated that the mentoring experience improved the teaching skills of the new teachers, 47% reported improved job satisfaction, 33% indicated improved student achievement, and 32% reported an improved work environment as a result of teacher mentoring. The study provided further details recommending that districts provide an environment that allows both formal and informal mentoring, time given in the schedule for meetings between veteran and novice teachers, district instructional support through a specialist, and school-wide meetings that foster discussion of readings that help keep the teachers aware of the latest trends and best practices (SEDL, 2000).

A study was conducted in a school district in the Southeastern United States to isolate why there was such a high attrition rate there (Brown & Wynn, 2007). The district had 32,000 students in 45 schools, a very diverse population, and had high attrition rates for teachers. From 2000-2004, 42% of the teachers who had 1 to 3 years of experience in the district had left teaching. Principals were interviewed to uncover the way they led and administered their schools. Data were collected on their backgrounds, leadership styles, school climate, and school culture. In addition, there were interviews conducted with the teachers with one to three years of experience. The teachers were chosen from the 12 schools that had lower rates of attrition and a low rate of transfer to other schools. Four to six teachers from each school were interviewed about why they decided to continue teaching and working in that school. Out of the 12 schools that were chosen as part of the sample, there were 8 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 2 high schools. The schools that were studied had wide variances. The student population of each school ranged from 250-1,829. The range of minority students was 8%-96%, and for free and reduced lunch students, the range was 15%-69% (Brown & Wynn, 2007).

The findings of the study showed that, in schools where teachers decided to stay, there was a high rate of collaboration and mutual respect. As one teacher stated, "I like the collaboration with my colleagues and the communication. The Freshman Academy was a great support for me entering as a first-year teacher with all the collaboration. It's one of the reasons I remain at this school" (Brown & Wynn, 2007, p. 67). The data also indicated that there was a shared sense of purpose with shared values and norms in these schools and that the environments had a culture of collegiality. The teachers indicated that they wanted an instructional leader that provided consistent and structured visits. Though a strong leader was desired, teachers also wanted to have the opportunity to provide feedback with opportunities for shared decision-making. Respondents also described the importance of peer coaching and mentoring noting that there was a full-time mentor at each site. Each of these schools also had frequent informal activities that kept teachers informed, and each school had conditions that served as catalysts for learning and professional growth. Unofficial learning communities were described as functioning in the schools. The schools were reported as having common high expectations and, when the new teachers entered the school, all felt that they were welcomed and that they were an essential part of the school community. Finally, the teachers indicated that they perceived their principals as being responsive to the teachers and welcoming their input and support in order for the school to work effectively, thus affirming the collegiality (Brown & Wynn, 2007).

Another study conducted by Madsen and Hancock (2002) examined the culture of the school and how it affected attrition of novice music teachers who graduated with a bachelor degree in music from a large university located in the Southeastern United States. Questionnaires were sent to randomly selected alumni and 113 valid responses were returned. The content of the questionnaire focused on topics such as the amount of professional

development that the respondents had received, years of teaching experience, and their perceptions of the support they received from administration, the school as a whole, and the students' parents. Subjects had an open-response section to comment on the extent of the support they had received. The following descriptors were developed to show why teachers may have left:

- administrative support issues;

- parental support issues;

- financial support issues; and,

- personal issues.

Six years later there was a follow-up study utilizing the same sample. This study specifically focused on retention. Out of this population pool, 34.4 % were no longer teaching at the K-college level, which is lower than the retention level of other disciplines of teaching (i.e., math and science) and the general population of teachers (Madsen & Hancock, 2002). Overall it was found that the majority of the respondents left the field either for personal reasons (43%) or because a lack of administrative support (37%). Lack of financial support was 9%, followed by lack of parental support at 7% (Madsen & Hancock, 2002). There was evidence that there are some variables that could have an impact on teachers remaining in the profession. For example, respondents indicated that it was important for the administration to support music as a viable area and not just an extra-curricular activity. In addition, it was important that music teachers felt that their services were more than just a preparatory period for the classroom teachers (Madsen & Hancock, 2002). Though the study did not specifically indicate the role of professional development as it pertains to remaining in the teaching profession, some of the responses indicated that participation in professional development is an indication of wanting to

remain in the profession, and that further study is needed. As stated by Madsen and Hancock (2002), "educators who have a propensity to remain in the field actively pursue opportunities for personal and professional growth and thus tend to engage in projects and activities that represent a further investment in their involvement with music teaching" (p. 23).

Comprehensive Induction Program

The third factor (see Table 4) is the comprehensiveness of the induction program. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) in a study focused on the induction of new teachers found that, the more comprehensive the induction and mentoring experience, the more likely the new teachers would remain in the teaching profession. They studied 3, 235 novice elementary and secondary teachers in their first year. The research centered on beginning teachers' perceptions of their induction experiences. The national study utilized data from the School and Staffing Survey (SASS) to uncover what elements were effective in supporting the beginning teacher. Ninety percent of the teachers reported to have found their mentors helpful and shared specific factors as being important. In 70% of the cases, new teachers were matched with mentors in their same field. Sixty-eighty percent of the beginning teachers reported to have had common planning time with the mentors, and 68% of the teachers reported to have participated in seminars. Eighty percent described having regular, supportive communication with their principal, administrator, or department chair and described working closely with a mentor.

Fourteen percent of the first-time teachers in the study left the profession of teaching all together. However, the study also found that the comprehensiveness of the induction program that the teacher received affected the attrition rate. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) categorized the mentoring models by four descriptors: (1) no mentoring or induction supports; (2) a "basic induction" package; (3) a "basic induction plus collaboration" package; and, (4) a "basic

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induction plus collaboration plus teacher network plus extra resources" package. A "basic

induction" package was defined as beginning teachers having mentors either from their own field

or another field and supportive communication with their principals, administrators, or

department chairs. A "basic induction plus collaboration" package was defined as the beginning

teacher having mentors from their own field, regular or supportive communication with his/her

principal, administrator, or department chair, common planning time or regularly scheduled

collaboration with other teachers in their subject area, and a seminar for beginning teachers. The

"basic induction plus collaboration plus teacher network plus extra resources" package was

defined as all the components in the "basic induction plus collaboration" package plus

participation in an external network of teachers, being scheduled for a reduced number of

preparations, and being given a teacher's aide.

The study showed that 3% of all beginning teachers in 1999-2000 were placed in the first

category because they received no induction or mentoring supports. The study concluded that

there was an 18% probability of leaving the teaching profession from the 56% of beginning

teachers that received a "basic induction" package. There was a twelve percent probability of

leaving the teaching profession from the twenty-six percent of beginning teachers that received a

"basic induction plus collaboration" package. The "basic induction plus collaboration plus

teacher network plus extra resources" package reduced the probability of leaving the teaching

profession by more than 50% over teachers having received no induction activities. However,

less than 1% of the beginning teachers participated in this type of support program. Having a

teacher's aide was seen to have a small but not significant association with an increase in the

likelihood of leaving the profession, but it did have an affect on the likelihood of new teachers

changing schools. It appears from the study that although new teachers appreciate useful

resources, aides are not perceived as an initial support. Participation in an external network of

teachers, through the Internet, for example, reduced the likelihood of novice teachers leaving

teaching by 33%. Having common planning time with other teachers in their subject area or

participating in regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers on issues of instruction

reduced the risk of leaving by 43%. Having a mentor in one's field reduced the risk of leaving at

the end of the first year by 30%. While this study only researched the results of one academic

year, there was a correlation between the quality of induction and mentoring programs with

heightened service levels and lower teacher attrition rates. The findings of this study

demonstrate that the more comprehensive the support that is in effect for the first-time teacher,

the greater the likelihood that they will remain in the teaching profession.

Amount and Quality of Time for Mentoring

The fourth element (see Table 4) that has been found to have a positive effect is the

amount and quality of time mentors spend with the mentees. A collaborative study between the

New Jersey Department of Education and the College of New Jersey (Barclay, et al., 2007),

found that only 13% of new teachers had a program that was implemented the way that it was

designed. This issue may be due to the fact that the mentoring experience during their initial 20

day program was because some New Jersey mentors are in-service teachers with their own

classroom responsibilities (Barclay, et al., 2007). In-service mentors struggle with finding time

to juggle their own responsibilities with supporting beginning teachers. In addition, the mentees

may find themselves feeling challenged to just get through the day. Many new teachers are

merely a day ahead of the students in preparing for class and have an immediate need to plan

their lessons for the next day, hence not allowing them to work to their full potential (Darling-

Hammond & Sclan, 1996). Utilizing retired teachers and administrators as mentors, creating

specific mentor positions (Hammer & Williams, 2005), or providing reassigned time for in-service teachers (Sweeny, 2001) are all possible solutions being explored to mitigate this obstacle.

A study by Mills, Moore, and Keane (2001) examined the mentoring program in Oakland County, a suburb of Detroit, Michigan. District staff is assigned to work exclusively as teacher mentors, therefore mitigating issues regarding time conflicts. Responding to a mandated implementation of a mentoring system for a teacher's first three years, and the requirement to have a master teacher serve as a mentor, Mills, Moore, and Keane (2001) conducted a survey to determine how the program was being implemented and what elements were effective in retaining teachers. Fifteen districts responded to the survey, representing 42% of the sample pool. Districts indicated that they provided 15 full days for the mentor to work with the mentee, while one district found to be highly effective at retaining beginning teachers provided full-time mentors that were hired solely to support their novice teachers. The authors suggested that affluent districts might be more successful in retaining novice teachers because they have the resources to provide enough time for the mentors and mentees to work together effectively.

Another study that examined the effect of time available for the mentoring relationship conducted by Hersh, Strout, and Snyder (1993) examined a modified version of hiring full-time mentors for beginning teachers. Facing economic constraints, three schools with a population of 4,800 students located in Clinton County, Ohio, sought a way to create consistent and regular support for new teachers. The mentoring program included a formal application process for the hiring of the mentors and required mentors to have an overall willingness to be a mentor, effective communication skills, a documented record of implementing evidence-based practices in their work, involvement with the school and specifically leadership activities, the desire for

professional growth, and the knowledge of or the ability to access needed resources for new teachers. The program included one full-time county mentor and individual school-based buddy teachers who were secondary participants trained as well who also served in mentoring roles for the new teachers in their respective buildings (Hersh, Strout, & Snyder, 1993).

The full-time mentors (assigned and alternatives) received 50 hours of professional development on mentoring as well as how to facilitate the training of the school-based, mentor buddies. The training was conducted in collaboration with a local college and facilitators were available to assist both the mentors and the buddy teachers. Electronic correspondence was utilized to support communication among the mentors and the buddy teachers. A survey was given to the new teachers in mid-November and a second survey was administered to buddy teachers in early January. School administrators also completed a survey to determine their perceptions of the program and the impact on retention rates of the new teachers. Twelve surveys were returned by the new teachers, and 13 were completed by the buddy teachers (one new teacher had two buddy teachers) (Hersh, Strout, & Snyder, 1993).

Generally, all participants described the comprehensive Ohio program as useful, with 9 new teachers being observed 40 times and participating in conferences 75 times. Buddy teachers reported that they believed that the new teachers had more self-confidence and the new teachers reported that the information provided to them about instruction, discipline, and planning was most useful. In addition, all of the participant groups, including the mentor teachers, the buddy teachers, and the new teachers indicated that the program was beneficial and believed that they were more effective because of the program. Further, principals reported that teachers who participated in the mentoring program were much less stressed than the teachers who did not participate, and that those that were mentored were much more prepared for the challenges of

teaching. As one first year teacher reflected: "If I had not been involved in this program, I would not have had anyone to talk to. This program has saved my sanity. Please continue to offer this service to first year teachers" (Hersh, Strout, & Snyder, 1993, p. 6). Furthermore, principals reported that, in addition to helping the new teachers and giving buddy teachers a sense of renewal and professionalism, the program gave the new teachers the support that the principals, themselves, would like to provide but could not due to competing priorities and time constraints. Almost all of the teachers returned for a second year (Hersh, Strout, & Snyder, 1993).

Sacks and Wilcox (1988) examined the utilization of retired teachers as teacher mentors from the perspective of the mentors themselves. The study's population consisted of 16 retired teacher mentors, and 43 new teachers who worked in 15 different elementary and junior high schools in New York City. All mentors and all teachers remained in the project and were still teaching at the end of the school year. The program continued the following year with 63 retired teacher mentors serving 181 novice teachers, 74% of whom in schools with high drop-out rates. Each mentee was allowed 66 hours of mentoring for the year. The findings indicated that, although the mentors experienced some challenging phases and often felt frustrated, at the conclusion of the academic year most of the mentors expressed satisfaction with their experiences. Specifically, the mentors reported satisfaction with their own performance, the progress of their mentees, and the professional and personal relationships that emanated from the experience (Sacks & Wilcox, 1988).

Another study that examined the impact of the extent and quality of the time on the effectiveness of the mentoring experience was conducted during the 2003-2004 school year in Texas. Retired teachers were hired as mentors and received stipends of $20,000 annually to

work with the new teachers. Each mentor served 10 teachers and met weekly with them but was also available at additional times to meet, discuss, and provide emotional and/or professional support to his/her mentees. Sometimes, mentors served as a sounding board when the new teacher was having difficulty. More than 95.5% of new teachers remained in the profession and 86.7% in the same district (Hammer & Williams, 2005).

The Santa Cruz New Teacher Project (SCNTP), a collaborative effort between the Teacher Education Program of the University of California, Santa Cruz, and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education assigns full-time, veteran teachers as mentors for all new teachers to help ease the first year experience in 15 school districts in the area surrounding Santa Cruz. The mentors, volunteers from the surrounding districts are paired with mentees using factors, such as grade level and subject matter. A key element is that mentors are able to spend more time with the mentees. When surveyed, the new teachers who participated in SCNTP, along with the building administrators where these teachers are employed, indicated that the program contributed significantly to the quality of teaching and the overall success of a new teacher. Job satisfaction of the teachers remained high after several years, and after seven years, 94% of the SCNTP participants were still in the profession. It should be noted that the SCNTP model makes sure that there is an emphasis on all students represented from various socio-economic backgrounds (National Conference on Teacher Quality, n.d.; Strong, 2005).

Style of the Mentor and Attention to the Needs of the Mentee

The fifth element (see Table 4) that was found in effective mentoring relationships was the style of the mentor. Mentors are often chosen by the school administration with little or no input or regard for the individual needs of the mentee (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.). Personality and style differences may cause significant communication barriers. A study

of mentor/mentee relationships conducted by Bullough (2005) revealed that, if a productive relationship is to exist, then interpersonal issues such as personality type, conflict resolution style, and communication skills need to be addressed. Training for the mentor before the experience begins and on-going support, including resources and opportunities for problem-solving discussions, can mitigate this challenge to effective mentoring.

Bullough (2005) examined the factor of style when studying Brigham Young University's large teacher intern program. The program assigned two interns to teach full-time at a school for half of a typical salary, to provide funds so that two experienced teachers could have adequate reassigned time to mentor the two teachers. Thirty-six interns and their mentors from 18 elementary schools (2 from each school) were surveyed electronically with the data analyzed for central themes. Almost 67% percent (approximately 24) of the interns responding wanted their mentors to be supportive of their professional and emotional needs and to be responsive to both. The interns also indicated that they needed help in developing their teaching skills, but they did not need or want their mentors to be too authoritative with them. Mentors reported wanting to give their teachers autonomy to develop their own individual teaching skills while providing much interactive feedback and support initially. Some of the mentors withdrew mid-year from providing detailed feedback and granted their mentees more autonomy. The belief behind this is that the teachers needed to try to function independently (Bullough, 2005). This perspective was further supported by Seryfath (2005), who suggested that all teachers need to work through the initial obstacles and challenges of teaching. However, the results of Bullough's (2005) study indicated that a "one size fits all" approach was not effective. Only 22% of the interns indicated that they wanted direct support at the beginning of the year when there are extensive demands and chaos but a lessening of direct involvement as the year went on.

While some interns prospered with the initially intense approach, others did very poorly with that strategy. In the qualitative phase of the study, the researcher reported the case of one mentor with two interns, with one intern doing very well with the identified strategy while the other mentee noted, "I'm not glad about anything [having to do with] my mentor. She picks me apart. She sits in the back of my classroom and finds anything negative about me and my lessons, and then tells me. I don't feel like she's on my side . . . . I think she is out to get me" (Bullough, 2005, p. 30). Findings of this study suggest that although having adequate time is critical, the mentees also react positively or negatively to the style of the mentor, suggesting that an important element of effective mentoring is adjusting strategies to the needs of the individual.

More research on the needs of the beginning teacher is important in order to address the high attrition rates in the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). When specifically viewed from the perspective of the novice teacher as mentee, there are several studies that uncover a variety of specific needs. Many of the findings focus on communication strategies, such as mentees being reluctant to confide in their mentors because they do not want to disappoint them (McCann, et al., 2005) while others examine particular contexts, such as the urban school. Teachers working in large urban districts who serve students who come from families that have low socio-economic backgrounds may be particularly in need of effective mentoring programs (Freedman & Appleman, 2008).

Two mentees participating in a case study conducted by Osgood (2001) of beginning trade and industrial teachers in Oklahoma described their need for effective communication about both professional and personal needs.

A mentor has to be a good teacher with a lot of varied experiences. The mentor should be a friend because you've got to confide in them, not only professionally, but

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personally. Personally, if it's just related to professionalism, you are defeating your own

purpose because you have to confide in this person. You've got to. I figure if it is my

mentor, then I should be able to talk to him about my department and my personal life.

(p. 16).

Another mentee stated:

I think the mentor has to be available for the instructor to be mentor to the mentee.

There needs to be a relationship between the two so they can talk and feel comfortable in

asking questions. Both of them need to be able to communicate back and forth in asking

questions, and both of them need to be able to communicate back and forth according to

the directive's needs. (p. 19).

A study conducted by Conderman and Johnston-Rodriguez (2009) focused on the needs

of special education and regular education beginning teachers. The study made the assumption

that all teachers needed to have basic skills, positive dispositions about inclusion, and knowledge

of the field. The researchers wanted to ascertain the teachers' training needs and they also

sought to find out if teachers were planning to remain in the teaching field. Twenty-five surveys

asking for demographic data and forced response and open-ended questions were mailed to a

selected random sample of elementary and secondary school general and special education

teachers in Illinois who had six or fewer years of teaching. Teachers were asked to assess

themselves on their level of preparedness and the importance of specific skills associated with

collaboration. Skills were rated on a four-point Likert scale with ranges from 1 or "not

prepared" to 4 or "very prepared" (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009). Part two of the

survey focused on the participant's demographic data, including but not limited to, highest level

of education, gender, race, the number of years the participants had been teaching, and the

number of credits the participant had in special education. Finally, in part three, the participants

were asked open-ended questions. These questions focused on the most useful aspects of their

teacher preparation experiences and included items such as: the preparation they received in

regards to special education and working with students with disabilities; their current

development needs; and, whether or not they are planning to stay teaching for more than three

years (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009). Such data is an important consideration in the

state of New Jersey, as there is now a modified form of an alternate route program (New Jersey

Department of Education, n.d.)

Forty-six teachers responded; 14 were elementary special education teachers, 9 were

elementary general education teachers, 9 were secondary general education teachers, and 14

were general secondary education teachers. Thirty reported themselves as having a bachelor's

degree, and 16 reported having earned a master's degree. The final study pool consisted of 39

respondents having zero to two years experience, four respondents having three to five years

experience, and three respondents having more than five to six years of experience (Conderman

& Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009).

Ninety-six percent of the new teachers wanted to continue to stay in teaching for more

than three years, and more teachers who entered into the profession as second career candidates

wanted to remain in teaching more than three years than those who were certified through

traditional routes. All categories of teachers indicated a need for preparation pertaining to

differentiated instruction, how to integrate the curriculum, and understanding and implementing

Individual Education Plans. Almost 22% expressed a need for new strategies and innovative

ideas and additional professional development about teaching strategies and information about

accommodations for classified students. Contrary to common perceptions that the most

significant need for beginning teachers is discipline (Southwest Educational Development

Laboratory, 2000), less than 5% stated a need for more work with behavior strategies

(Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009).

Use of Incentives

The sixth element (see Table 4) that may increase the effectiveness of a mentoring

program is the use of incentives, which may be particularly important in New Jersey where costs

for alternate route certification and mentoring are high. The formal education classes for

alternate route teacher candidates delivered by the regional training centers currently cost $1,450

per teacher. If an individual enrolls in a Master of Arts in Teaching alternate route program,

tuition is charged at the established rate of that college or university. Once formal mentoring

begins, the alternate route teacher must pay a fee of $450 for his/her initial 20-day mentor (New

Jersey Department of Education, n.d.). In addition, all new teachers must pay the $550 fee

associated with the 30-week basic mentoring experience (New Jeresey Department of Education,

n.d.). The teacher candidates pay the application fees and the mentoring fees are either paid by

the school district in which the candidate is employed or by the provisional teachers themselves

(New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.). Beginning teachers and especially alternative route

candidates are responsible for a significant number of financial obligations before they even

begin to teach and receive compensation, potentially adding to their debt and stress level (New

Jersey Department of Education, n.d.) and contributing to attrition rates.

The Jefferson County Schools in Alabama developed a teacher induction program, The

Excellence Actually Can Happen (TEACH), which reduced teacher attrition. The district's

attrition rate for beginning teachers is much lower than the national average. After seven years,

only 10% of the teachers left, which was well below the 40% reported nationally (Jambor, Jones

& Patterson, 1997). The program consists of full-time mentoring by experienced teachers, technology training for the new teachers, the gift of a laptop, and the tuition and fees for a two-year master's degree (Jambor, Jones & Patterson, 1997).

Reed and Busby (1985) examined the types of incentives that might lower teacher attrition in rural school districts in Virginia. A questionnaire was mailed to 95 superintendents of school districts of varied size and demographics. Sixty-seven superintendents responded with their perceptions on incentives as a retention tool based on their own experiences and contexts. Reed and Busby (1985) found that rural areas often utilized fringe benefits, such as released time for special events and activities, assistance with the acquisition of housing, tuition reimbursement for graduate study, and financial assistance for additional instructional materials and conferences and professional development to help retain their teachers. The study consisted of 67 districts and out of those districts 77.6% of the new teachers were hired in districts that offered a large number of incentives, while 22.4% were hired in districts that offered little in the way of incentives. Of the districts that reported their attrition rates, 71.6% of the attrition occurred in the districts that offered fewer incentives and 28.4% of attrition occurred in districts offering more incentives. The results indicated that incentives played a role in not only recruitment, but teacher retention as well (Reed & Busby, 1985).

In order to motivate individuals to work in low socio-economic and impoverished schools, Wayne State University (WSU), Detroit Public Schools (DPS), The Michigan Department of Education (MDE), and The Detroit Federation of Teachers collaborated and conducted a structured induction program for new teachers called Limited License to Instruct (LLI). Of the 178 respondents, 91.4% of the pool identified themselves as African-Americans with 96 of them male, and 311 of them female. All of the LLI teachers were hired by DPS to

work in Detroit which is a large, low socio-economic urban school system. Through focus

groups the 178 LLI candidates responded to questions concerning the experience and the support

they received in their schools from mentoring and online instruction. Many of the respondents

indicated that they were motivated by the incentives that they could receive certification and a

master's degree (71%). Eighty-eight percent responded positively to cohort group meetings. Of

the 102 subjects who responded, 30% of them indicated that the support and mentoring was an

important component of the overall experience (Ilmer, et al., 2005).

A related study by Milanowski, Longwell-Grice, Jones, Odden, and Schomisch (2007)

utilized a mixed methodological study to ascertain what incentives if any would help recruit new

teachers to urban centers. Though the study was based on recruitment, the elements that teachers

sought were synonymous with those that keep new teachers. The study attempted to ascertain

the importance of starting pay, student characteristics, and working conditions. According to

Milanowski, et al., (2007):

> The basic assumption behind the use of financial incentives to attract teachers to high-
>
> need districts and schools is that the incentives provide a compensating differential for
>
> potentially unattractive job characteristics associated with poverty, low student
>
> achievement, and racial or ethnic differences. (p. 6)

The purpose of the study was to examine the needs of those individuals working in an urban

environment. The researchers defined urban environments by looking specifically at the number

of African-American and Hispanic students who attended the school. Therefore, if a district was

majority minority with high concentrations of Black and Hispanic students, the district was

considered urban (Milanowski, et al., 2007).

The study of Milanowski, et al. (2007) included 40 students who were completing their teacher preparation at three Southern Wisconsin campuses, a large public university in a college town, one large urban university, and a small private college. The students were 78% female and 25% were individuals of color. The study utilized a survey and focus groups. The findings of the study showed while there was some consideration of the teacher to work in an urban area based on pay incentives, there was an equal amount of importance based on a principal with a good reputation who is supportive. In addition, new teachers were concerned with whether there was an established and successful induction program. Working conditions were found to have as much of an impact as financial incentives (Milanowski, et al., 2007). There was, also an indication that new teachers did perceive positively the financial incentives including college loan forgiveness, but a supportive environment with good induction and a strong and capable principal with a good reputation was also an important factor in accepting a position in an urban environment (Milanowski, et al., 2007).

Preparation for Mentoring

The seventh element (see Table 4) recognizes that the mentor teacher may need extensive professional development experiences and on-going support in order to be effective. It is important that the mentors are qualified by having at least several years of classroom teaching experience and also be trained in how to provide the best support for their protégés (Carter, 2004). The Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum (EPEC) included a comprehensive induction system for novice physical education teachers with a structured mentoring program. Besides providing extensive support for the new teacher, the EPEC program also provided specific professional development and on-going support for the mentor teacher as well. The mentor teachers received specific preparation as to needs of the novice teachers and how to work

effectively with them. This training was conducted in stages throughout the year. Topics at the

first meeting consisted of information about the struggles of the new teachers and addressed

effective communication strategies and curriculum concerns. In addition, useful tools and

resources were also given to the mentor teachers during the first meeting. After the initial

meeting, a mentor was paired with a protégé teacher. Pairing reflected the strengths,

backgrounds, and personality characteristics that the mentors shared with their protégé teachers.

The program was structured so that opportunities to share and to get to know one another were

easily available. In addition, mentors had a chat room that was specifically designed for them to

have correspondence with other mentors, and also a chat room where mentors could have a

dialogue with their protégés. Follow-up meetings allowed mentor teachers to discuss problems

and concerns as well as learn new content and strategies related to being effective mentors

(Kulinna, McCaughtry, Cothran, & Faust, 2005.)

In order to determine the effectiveness of the program, two different instruments were

utilized several times throughout the year. Mentors completed the *Mentor's Aptitude Inventory,*

and the protégé teachers completed the *Mentoring Functions Scale.* Results established that

overall the program was a success. The program helped the mentor teachers in their perceived

abilities and their efficacy in helping their protégé teachers with the challenges of a beginning

teacher. In addition, the protégé teachers felt that the program increased their self- efficacy and

their perceptions of their educational competence as well (Kulinna, et al., 2005.)

A second study that addressed the preparation and support needs of the mentor examined

The Texas State University System (TSUS) and Houston Endowment, Inc.'s program in fall

2002 in 37 participating districts (Hammer & Williams, 2005). Several on-going activities

provided support as well as motivation for the mentors. Retired educators were hired as mentors

and received $20,000 annually. These individuals were required to work 20 hours per week and live within a close distance to the school. In addition to the salary paid to the mentors, the novice teacher was granted tuition to pay for six graduate credits, which could later be applied to a master's degree program. The program required weekly visits from the mentor, and the mentees were required to attend bi-monthly seminars focusing on teaching strategies taught collaboratively by Texas State University personnel and the mentors. The program also taught the mentors how to use an on-line, social networking tool which could be utilized for correspondence, scheduling, information sharing, and included an e-mail system offering confidentiality between the mentors themselves and between mentors and their novice teachers. Every five years data is collected and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the program. In 2004, 95.5% of teachers were still in the profession with 86.7% of them still teaching in the original districts where they began (Hammer & Williams, 2005).

Since alternate route teachers comprise a large percentage of teachers in the state of New Jersey (Feistritzer, 2005) and since a large number of teachers leave the profession within the first year (Breaux & Wong, 2003; Hammer & Williams, 2005), it is important to identify whether the alternate route program as structured in New Jersey is being adhered to. Specifically, it is advantageous to isolate if the mentoring experience has any effect on whether these individuals plan to return to a second year of teaching. Through interviews, where the researcher spoke to new alternate route teachers and a survey administered to a larger pool of individuals, it is the intention of the researcher to isolate the answer to this question.

Summary

Teacher attrition has been identified as a national crisis (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003) and has a negative effect on both student achievement

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and school budgets (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). The Department of Labor reports that high attrition negatively impacts local districts economically and can cost a district approximately 30% of the salaries of the employees who leave in order to replace them (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). Academically, there are even more challenges. An excessively high rate of teacher attrition translates to inadequate student instruction (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). Beginning teachers face a period of adjustment before they gain the knowledge and skill level to be strong teachers (Hammer & Williams, 2005). A continual cycle of teachers being hired and then leaving before they gain the expertise to become truly effective provides an unstable, unproductive environment for schools and students. Even more dramatic is the crisis in low socio-economic urban schools, which tend to be staffed by teachers who are less experienced and sometimes less qualified. This causes considerable hardship in low income and high poverty schools where it is estimated that one out of two African-American students do not earn a high school diploma. In some of the poorest communities, the estimate is even higher (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).

Since 1983, when New Jersey initiated an alternate route for teacher certification, state governments, municipalities, and districts in 48 states have implemented a variety of innovations to alleviate the problem of high beginning teacher attrition and to increase the quantity of qualified teachers. Adults who have varied experiences are now bringing different talents to the classroom (Fesistritzer, 2005). Since 1985, 250,000 teachers have joined the teaching force through alternate routes to certification, and in 2005-2006 alone, more than 500 programs credentialed approximately 59,000 new teachers (Feistritzer, 2007).

Approximately 42% of the teacher workforce in New Jersey's public schools currently consists of alternate route candidates (Feistritzer, 2005). Half of all the alternate route teachers who are hired in New Jersey are employed in poor urban communities (Barclay, et al., 2007) setting the stage for low retention rates in the profession. Alternate route teachers need more support than that of their traditional route colleagues (Barclay, et al., 2007) however, these candidates rated less than half of their mentors as effective in terms of the amount of support needed (Barclay, et al., 2007).

Low socio-economic schools in urban districts that have large numbers of high-risk students face significant challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers. Alternate route candidates have provided a means to staff these difficult schools. Some states, including California, Colorado, New Jersey, and Texas, have reached the point where alternate route teachers are now the primary means for staffing low socio-economic urban schools (Berry & Hirsch, 2005). Providing support for these novice teachers may need to be a major component of alternate route programs (New Jersey Department of Education,n.d.). Effective mentoring and comprehensive induction programs have proven successful in improving teacher attrition and especially helpful with alternate route candidates (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). This might be particularly important in large urban districts that have high concentrations of poverty and are difficult to staff (Freedman & Appleman, 2008).

In order to have a successful mentoring program, the program must operate for its intended purposes, the mentor and mentee should have a mutual understanding and respect for one another, and there should be adequate quality time allotted for the parties to consistently interact. According to Mills, Moore, and Keane (2001):

the keys to a successful mentor programs are to select effective mentors and to

find the "best fit" between the needs, talents, and personalities of mentors and

protégés. In addition, for a successful program to exist, training and support

should be provided to the mentor. (p. 124)

In order to ascertain the effectiveness of initiatives to support beginning alternate route

teacher candidates, there needs to be both quantitative and qualitative research conducted to

determine whether existing programs have a relationship to whether novice teachers decide to

remain in the teaching profession for a second year. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology that

will be utilized to determine:

- if and how the existing protocol for teacher mentoring of beginning alternate route

   teachers established by the New Jersey Department of Education is being

   adhered to;

- which elements of the existing mentoring program are perceived to be most

   beneficial to alternate route teacher candidates;

- if the alternate route teacher candidates perceive their mentoring programs as

   having any influence on their decisions to remain in the teaching profession; and

- what do the mentors perceive to be the preparation needed for effective

   mentoring, the challenges they face, and the most effective strategies and

   behaviors for a successful mentoring relationship. In addition, a critical analysis

   of what the literature has described as effective and what the alternate route

   teacher candidates and the mentors view as effective will also occur.

The aforementioned data analysis may serve as a catalyst for change in creating more effective

teacher mentoring programs.

New teachers are leaving the profession at an alarming rate. The NCTAF (2003) report that as many as 1,000 new teachers leave the profession daily and about 9.3% to 17% of new teachers do not complete their first year of teaching (Breaux & Wong, 2003). Schools that are located in low socio-economic areas have the highest turnover rate (Easley, 2006; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Nationally, approximately 40% of all new teachers are alternate route teacher candidates, and that rate is slightly higher in New Jersey where the rate is 42%.

Studies support the fact that when there are comprehensive induction programs where good quality mentoring is part of the process, there is an increase in teacher attrition (Barclay, et. al, 2007; Hammer& Williams, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Alternate routes to teacher certification are having a profound

impact on the who, what, when, where, and how of K-12 teaching.

(Feistritzer, 2007)

Introduction

Current research continues to report that novice teacher attrition rates are unacceptably

high (Barclay, et al., 2007; Hammer & Williams, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004), but that

induction and mentoring may have an effect on retention (Andrews & Quinn, 2005; Ingersoll &

Smith, 2004, Nagy &Wang, 2007). The purpose of this research is to explore the effect of

mentoring on new teachers in a specific context, low socio-economic, urban districts that have

been labeled by NJDOE as underperforming.

A mixed methods approach with exploratory and descriptive methods of data collection

was utilized. Data were collected through a survey and interviews of novice teachers

participating in one alternative teacher certification program in New Jersey. This case study

approach created an in-depth look, allowing for a rich picture of a single entity at one point in

time. The single-bounded system is Alternative College and the cohort that attended in 2009-

2010. The data were collected to answer the following research questions.

1.   To what extent is the existing protocol for teacher mentoring of beginning alternate

route teachers as established by the Department of Education in New Jersey being

followed?

a.   In what way is the 20-day intensive, beginning alternative route teacher

training being structured?

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b.   Does the way the 20-day experience was structured for the mentee have an effect on the decisions of the alternate route teachers to remain in teaching?

2. Which elements of the prescribed mentoring program do novice alternate route certification teachers perceive to be effective or ineffective and affect their decisions to return to teaching for a second year?

3. Do novice alternate route certification teachers perceive the mentoring programs they participated in had any influence on their decision to stay in teaching for a second year?

      a. Do the perceptions of the influence of the mentoring program on the decision to remain teaching of the novice alternative route teachers differ based on gender?

      b. Do the perceptions of the influence of the mentoring program on the decision to remain teaching of the novice alternative route teachers differ based on race?

This chapter includes a description of the setting, population, and subjects, instrumentation, data collection procedures, the plan for analysis, limitations, and the timeframe.

<div align="center">Research Design</div>

This descriptive study of the effects of mentoring on novice teachers utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods within a case study approach. According to Yin, (2003), case study research is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon with its real–life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context, are not clearly evident" (p.13). Eisenhardt (1989) supports that description by stating that a case study

examines the dynamics present in particular settings and is considered an effective research strategy for both quantitative and qualitative studies. Theories are constructed from case studies, and they generally combine various data-gathering methods, including questionnaires, observations, interviews, and observation. The population that is being examined is critical because it defines the pool from which the data are gathered. Data obtained will overlap and intertwine (Eisenhardt, 1989).

A key component to case study research is that the researcher's impressions are recorded so that if his/her initial reaction inadvertently becomes part of the data, the immediate notation of a reaction is made. Therefore, the potential problem of not remembering that reaction will not be an issue at a later date. With the quantity of data that is inherent to case study research, it is imperative for the researcher to systematically sift through to discover similarities in the data and see if patterns arise (Eisenhardt, 1989). After concepts, themes, impressions, and possible relationships surface, a comparison of the emergent frames is necessary. The process of building theory from the case study continues to evolve and the researcher must return to the data in order to compare and redefine. Case study is empirical in nature and well suited for new research (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Questionnaires

"Surveys involve collection of data by means of tests, questionnaires, observations, interviews, or examination of documents. These data are collated and presented in tables, often with explanatory comments" (Ebel, 1980, p. 127). Questionnaires, the format that this researcher chose to use, are an important and fundamental method of research when dealing with education where studies focusing on human behavior are critical (Gay & Airasian, 2000) and when a need for understanding current conditions is important (Ebel, 1980). The purpose of this instrument

was to examine attitudes and/or behaviors and to measure them as part of a population or sample (Davis, 2009). Questionnaires allow researchers to collect an extensive amount of data from a large number of participants. Survey research focuses on events that naturally occur, and, rather than utilizing manipulation, the research makes a strong attempt not to influence the attitudes and behaviors it is measuring.

However, there are potential weaknesses related to the use of survey methodology. Mailed responses sometimes elicit low response rates because they are viewed with a sense of trepidation, meaning people are sometimes apprehensive knowing that they have already been identified and because there may be limited or no direct contact with the researcher so there may be low motivation to complete and return the survey (Sudman, Greeley, & Pinto, 1965).

Young (1940) suggested that there are a number of factors that are significant when considering a questionnaire as the main instrument of study or when used to initiate a study. First and foremost, people were more inclined to respond when they were informed in an adequate manner, when they were assured of anonymity, when they felt that the investigators were reputable and the content encouraged engagement. Second, the questions should be worded in a simple and easy-to-understand manner without any persuasive language that evokes an opinion, be grouped by categories, and attractively formatted. The findings, which point that people want to be notified of the parameters of the study, also suggested that before developing and administering the questionnaire the researcher needs to understand the particular contextual variables of the situation and group. Furthermore, it should be understood that terms have different connotations and nuances for individuals and that there is always the possibility that some people will answer questions in a way they believe the investigator would like it answered. Finally, a questionnaire should not be the sole method of investigation.

The candor of the interviewee on a self-administered questionnaire is comparable or better to the candor of the interviewee of a personal interview. Sudman, Greely, and Pinto (1965), in their study, concluded that it is generally possible to combine answers from personal interviews and self-administered forms; where there are large differences, self-administered forms seem to give a better measure of the true feelings of respondents than do personal interviews because the respondent in a self-administered form does not have to worry about hearing the reaction of disapproval from the interviewer of a less, socially unacceptable, yet candid response. This scenario portrays how a self administered questionnaire has some of the characteristics inherent in an interview.

Interviews

An interview is defined as an in-person, face-to-face meeting where questions from an interviewer are answered by a respondent (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Interview questions are utilized to elicit information about opinions, perspectives, attitudes, and meaning can provide rich information and in-depth insights (Hannan, 2007). As opposed to survey research, interviews allow the researcher to gain as rich a response from the questions as possible, since the interviewees had the opportunity to elaborate on their answers (Creswell, 1994; Gay & Airasian, 2000; Hannan, 2007). According to Creswell (1994), themes can be anticipated to emerge through the interview process. Interviews help the reader understand the story better as qualitative data tells a story (Patton, 2002). Hannan (2007) reported that social scientists utilize controlled interviews where the questions are pre-set and which have been piloted with a sample group. This sampling is to ensure efficiency, validity, and reliability (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Structured interviews have predetermined questions that are developed and asked orally by the researcher (Hannan, 2007).

It is important to develop empathy with the interviewees and to gain a rapport with them so their confidence can be gained. In addition, it is imperative for the researcher to be cognizant of potential bias and/or influence when asking the questions of the interviewees (Hannan, 2007). Since the interview process can generate a substantial amount of data, a recording device can be used so that transcription can occur at a later date. Finally, with interviews, the researcher needs to make optimum use of the opportunities that are available in terms of accessibility of sites (Hannan, 2007).

Setting, Population, and Subjects Setting

This mixed methods study was conducted at a small, private college located in a large urban area in Northeastern New Jersey near New York City. In addition to providing undergraduate and graduate degree programs, Alternative College, as an agent for New Jersey, offers a program to prepare new alternate route candidates. Since 1986, Alternative College has prepared many new teachers for their first positions frequently found in low socio-economic, urban, underperforming districts in Northeastern New Jersey. Alternative College's agreement to be an agent for the state in preparing new alternate route teachers has been renewed since 1986 and has become one of the largest instructional facilities for alternate route teachers in the state (T. Gentile, personal communication, September 17, 1998). The novice teachers enrolled at this site participate in three phases of instruction during their first year of teaching while working under a provisional teacher's license. The beginning teachers are required to attend classes one night per week, in addition to at least one Saturday per month throughout the year. The instructors for the program are all either current or former teachers and some have had experience in educational leadership as well. Each cohort of teachers remains together for the duration of the training.

This setting was chosen because of its longevity as an approved program and its emphasis on preparing teachers for low socio-economic, urban districts. The researcher was familiar with the program because he had successfully completed the program 12 years prior.

Population of the Study

The pool of potential participants for the study consisted of 80 first-year teachers who were being certified through an alternate route process and their mentors, who are experienced educators. Initially, the pool needed to be screened to determine if the novice teacher worked in a low socio-economic, urban, underperforming school system. All candidates were all volunteers who were to take part in the study, and all were willing to sign a letter of consent (Appendix C). Four candidates were ineligible based on the fact they had not been teaching for enough time. The pool represented males and females, a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, and different ages and levels of education and experience. All had earned a baccalaureate degree outside the field of education. Each novice teacher had an experienced educator assigned to him/her whose responsibility was to mentor the novice teacher. One mentor might have several mentees so there was not a one-to-one correspondence in terms of numbers of mentors and mentees. Based on the literature review (Donaldson, 2008; McKinney, et al., 2007), which uncovered varied retention rates of novice teachers with different racial and gender demographics, the researcher attempted to have representation from both male and female subjects and varied racial groups.

Subjects

From the pool of 80 candidates, 53 were deemed eligible and agreed to participate in the study. Of the 80 candidates, not all chose to participate, and some did not meet the criteria of working in a low socio-economic, urban environment. All of the mentee participants were alternate route candidates completing their first year of teaching while participating in a state-approved induction program. As previously explained, identifying mentors that would be willing to participate was dependent on the mentees' participation in their recruitment (Appendix C). The New Jersey Department of Education was unwilling to release the names and contact information of the mentors and along with the administrators of the Alternate Route Program at Alternative College, recommended that the researcher ask the mentees to transport a letter to their mentees. As the data collection process evolved, this became problematic, as mentees expressed reluctance in involving their mentors. Only two mentees actually took the letter for the mentors, but no contact to the researcher was made. This process will be discussed in-depth later in the chapter.

The subjects who completed the questionnaire represented both genders and diverse racial, ethnic, and age groups. Although the researcher attempted to have varied demographics for the interview subjects, only females volunteered to participate and signed a consent form (Appendix D). From the original pool one male did volunteer to be interviewed, but he did not work in a district that was considered urban low socio-economic and was, therefore, deemed ineligible. Of the six interview volunteers, only one appeared to belong to a minority group. They did represent varied ages from mid-20s to mid-50s.

Human Subjects

As with any study involving human subjects, an application was presented to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of East Stroudsburg University. The researcher met with officials from Alternative College and received verbal permission to utilize the site to collect data from its graduate students. Since Alternative College is an agent for the state of New Jersey in administering an alternate route program, the individual who presently serves as the coordinator of higher education programs for the New Jersey Department of Education attended the meeting between the researcher and administration of Alternative College. The purpose of the meeting was to gain approval for the study. A formal Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects application was completed and was submitted in January 2010. After the IRB application had been submitted, the researcher was granted permission to conduct a pilot study to ensure content validity of the instruments that were developed by the researcher. After the pilot study was conducted, the researcher submitted the updated application to the IRB for final approval. Final approval was granted, and the researcher commenced the study on May 1, 2010. Each of the participants worked with the researcher on a voluntary basis and signed a consent form on site to substantiate their participation. No participant names were recorded on the questionnaire, but the letter of consent provided a place where subjects had the opportunity to indicate a willingness to be interviewed and provided contact information. A small incentive of a coffee gift card was provided to all individuals who agreed to be interviewed, and snacks were offered to both the interview volunteers and to those who agreed to complete the questionnaire. In order to ensure the protection of human subjects, the researcher provided a list of resources including articles and websites that addressed issues of the new teacher feeling uncomfortable. Since some of the new teachers were apprehensive to participate in either the questionnaire or

the interview because of potential repercussions from their data not being confidential, they were

assured orally and in writing that all of the data obtained would be coded and kept in a locked

storage facility only accessible to the primary researcher. After receiving approval from the East

Stroudsburg University IRB, the researcher began the process of piloting the instruments.

Instrumentation

Piloting

The researcher initially researched a number of potential quantitative and qualitative

instruments that were to be used to gather the data needed to answer the research questions, but

was unable to find an appropriate one that was congruent with the desired content and

comprehensive enough to cover the scope of the questions. The researcher then developed a

series of questions based on the literature surrounding effective mentoring and developed a pilot

study including an expert review for the questionnaire (Appendix A). Gay and Airasian (2000),

stated, "Quantitative research approaches are applied in order to describe current conditions,

investigate relationships, and study cause-effect phenomena" (p.10).

In order to ascertain content validity of the study, a pilot study in which the questions are

essentially field-tested (Gay & Airasian, 2000), was conducted. Validity measures if the

question is measuring what it is intended to measure (Gay & Airasian, 2000). The first step

involved convening an expert panel of four experienced educators who are experts in low socio-

economic, urban districts and have extensive knowledge of state-approved induction programs.

These individuals, referred to as the expert panel, reviewed all the questions for clarity,

purposefulness, and congruence to the research questions. The second step involved assembling

a group of five alternate route teachers, referred to as the experienced group. This experienced

group signed a letter of consent (Appendix D), and consisted of individuals with five or more

years of experience that have worked and/or currently work in low socio economic, urban areas. The group answered the survey questions to determine the feasibility of the experience, clarity and comprehensiveness of the questions, and congruence to the research questions. All of the participants of the pilot study participated on a voluntary basis without compensation.

Pilot study experienced group analysis. As a result of the experienced group's review of the proposed mentee questionnaire, the researcher decided to change and/or eliminate 3 of the 30 questions. Specifically, they recommended that question 11, originally one question inquiring into grade level and subject matter differences/similarities between mentor and mentee, be separated into two different questions: "1. Does your mentor teach the same grade level as you?" and "2. Does your mentor teach the same subject matter as you?" Second, question 12, originally inquiring into whether the mentor and mentee teach "related subject matters/grade levels, if not the same grade level/subject matter" applies, was eliminated as a result of a concern for the understandability of the question. Third, question 21, originally inquiring into the mentee's description of his relationship with the mentor as, "excellent, very good, good, or poor" was amended to add the descriptor, "fair," so that the mentee had the choice to categorize his relationship with his mentor as "excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor."

Pilot study expert panel analysis. The researcher had four experts who signed a letter of consent (Appendix D) in the field independently review the interview questions, mentee questionnaire, and focus group questions. The 17 mentee interview questions (Appendix B) were to be orally asked of the mentees in a one-to-one private interview. The Mentee Questionnaire included 30 questions for each mentee to answer independently while sitting in a large group; the completed questionnaire was then submitted to the researcher. Finally, it was

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the intention of the researcher to conduct a focus group with the mentor teachers who were

working with the mentees. The 14 focus group questions were to be asked of mentors in a focus

group setting. It should be noted that there were no volunteers elicited to participate in a focus

group for the actual study.

As a result of the expert panel's review of the proposed interview questions, the

researcher decided to change 2 of the 17 questions. Concern was expressed that question 5

assumed trust had developed between mentee and mentor; therefore, the question was rephrased

to: "Do you trust your mentor, as a result of the mentoring experience? Why or Why Not?"

Lastly, there was a concern with the understandability of question 16. Question 16 asked the

mentee "How has your mentor's background in education affected your mentoring relationship?"

The question was re-phrased to read: "Has your mentor's expertise in education, as compared

with your experience, to date, in the field of education, positively impacted your working

relationship together?"

As a result of the expert panel's review of the proposed focus group questions, the

researcher decided to change 2 of the 14 questions. Specifically, question 5, "What additional

preparation would have been beneficial in becoming a mentor," was seen as a leading question

by the experts; therefore, this question was revised to ask, "Did you feel adequately prepared

before becoming a mentor? Why or Why not?" In addition, question 11 was difficult to

understand according to the experts. The question originally phrased as, "What type of

questions/topics did your mentee ask? Did they ever share personal issues? Stress-reduction

needs?" was revised to read, "In what capacity did your mentee need you? (For example, to

discuss personal issues/problems? To discuss professional issues/problems? To discuss teaching

techniques? To discuss certification issues?).” All changes based on the pilot study were formalized in the final protocols and instruments.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher was granted permission to conduct research at Alternative College, and then collaborated with the Alternate Route Program administrators and facilitators. The researcher met with the participant pool on two separate class days, May 1 and 8, 2010 at Alternative College. The first session was to share the purpose of the study and the process of informed consent and then to administer the survey to eligible participants, those who worked in low socio-economic, urban, underperforming school districts in Northeastern New Jersey. The researcher provided time for the participants to clarify issues concerning the questionnaire and attempted to answer their questions accurately and thoroughly. The participants also had a myriad of questions associated with the alternate route process and what was should be occurring according to the structure put in place by the state of New Jersey. In addition, they were told that there were resources available if they became anxious about the experience, and those resources were placed in a corner of the room. Following the questionnaire administration, one interview was scheduled. The second session included the other five interviews. Participants were all asked to provide permission to be recorded during the interview process both verbally and in writing. The participants were informed that the information obtained would all be anonymous and that they did not have to participate and were free to withdraw at any time without penalty. During the interview sessions, the researcher made eye contact and took copious notes. In addition to the note taking, the researcher made notations as to voice inflection and/or body language, which was extremely beneficial in helping to clarify any ambiguity. The researcher also allowed sufficient time to answer the questions and provided opportunities to elaborate. The

researcher attempted not to lead the participant but did try to offer reactions or probes to some of the responses to help aid in acquiring the human aspect of the story.

When attempting to develop a pool of subjects for the focus group of mentors, the researcher spoke to the eligible interview subjects about the purpose of the study and explained that it would be beneficial to the study to speak to some of the mentors. He stated that if any participant was willing to take a letter of invitation to their mentor, that it would be appreciated. The letter to the mentors explained the purpose of the study and requested mentor volunteers to participate in a focus group. At that time, there were no volunteers to take this letter. The researcher immediately indicated that it was fine not to take the letter and thanked them for their participation. During the interview sessions when the researcher was given the opportunity to develop a more personal relationship with the participants, they were asked to consider taking a letter to their mentors. Four of the interview participants were not comfortable, while two reluctantly took the letter of invitation with the contact information of the researcher. The interview participants were reminded that this was voluntary, and if they were not comfortable, then they did not have to deliver the letter. None of the six interview participants felt comfortable with having me contact them at a later date to ascertain if their mentor teachers were interested. The researcher waited until the last week of June to make the determination that there was going to be no mentor volunteers who were willing to participate in the focus group.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to complete a comprehensive examination and description of the novice teachers' perceptions of the mentoring process for alternate route candidates working in low socio-economic, urban underperforming school districts that were enrolled as

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part of a cohort in one preparation program. Fifty-three respondents, provided data in written format, anonymously, and individually, and six participants participated in in-depth interviews with open-ended questions, which complemented, enhanced, and clarified data gathered through the questionnaire. According to Merriam (1998), open-ended questions will allow for the participants to portray how they see events and contexts and to gain an extensive and "emotional" understanding, which will be beneficial when attempting to uncover and broaden the perceptions of the new teacher candidates. The researcher did not utilize any data from interviews that were stopped before completion and reviewed the interview and transcriptions with the notes that were taken to check for accuracy.

The results from the questionnaires were organized using Microsoft Access and then exported to SPSS where frequency and distribution charts were created. According to Gay and Airasian (2000), it is important to include the response rate for each item in addition to the sample size and the return rate. Data were examined for accuracy and readability upon collection. Data were checked to determine that it was complete. The researcher ensured that only questionnaires that were filled out completely were analyzed.

The researcher analyzed the data from the questionnaire in order to gain a broader understanding from the interview participant protocol, as well as to examine all the data where findings and recommendations were determined (Appendix E). Since the researcher had identified themes from recurring patterns, the data from the questionnaires helped complement those themes elicited from the interviews. Each interview was transcribed and then narratives for each participant were created that told the story of her experience. The content of the questions in both instruments had been aligned to aid in analyzing the responses. Collectively, the questionnaire and the interview protocol answered the first three research questions.

Analyzing the data allowed for the development of recommendations, as well as opportunities for divergent perspectives to surface and interesting questions to arise. At times the data from the questionnaires and interviews were conflicting. This will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Timeline

The research that was done for the current study was multi-faceted and had many steps. Table 5 presents a description of the process and the corresponding timeline that was part of the study protocol.

Limitations

Limitations in this study reflect several factors. All the teachers included in this study work in low socio-economic, underperforming urban districts in the same geographic location, Northeastern New Jersey. In addition, the alternate route teacher candidates all participated in one particular state-approved training program. Since each state has individual specific guidelines for the induction experience alternate route teacher candidates participate in, their experiences will vary from district to district and from state to state. In addition, each state interprets what a mentoring program should be and how it is constructed, and this may also serve as a limitation for generalization of the findings.

Second, the qualitative portion of this mixed methodological study was specific in that it focused on a small sample of six alternative route teacher candidates that work exclusively in low socio-economic districts located in Northeastern New Jersey. There is also a limitation pertaining to the questionnaire that was given to participants as there were only 53 valid responses. Though there were approximately 80 individuals who were present at the training

Table 5

Timeline of Data Gathering and Analysis

Phase	Timeline
Phase One	Completed in Fall 2008
Approval to conduct research at Alternate College	
Phase Two	Completed in February 2010
The development of the quantitative instrument and pilot study	
Phase Three	Completed in March 2010
Protocols will be developed. The tools will be pilot tested using an expert group	
Phase Four	Completed in March 2010
Questionnaire and interview questions reviewed by a panel of experienced educators. If the need arises the instruments will be modified.	
Phase Five	Completed in May 2010
Data gathering at Alternative College	
Phase Six	Completed by March 2011
Data Analysis/Reporting	

site, some did not qualify because they did not work in a low socio-economic area, some were not comfortable participating, and some returned incomplete or blank forms, resulting in a significantly lower return.

A third limitation is that the amount and type of preparation and knowledge and/or prior experience an alternate route teacher candidate receives prior to entering the classroom will not be considered. These factors, collectively, have an impact on the perceptions of the beginning teacher mentoring experience.

Fourth, as in any study there exists the possibility of researcher bias. Since interviews were conducted by the researcher to obtain data, and the researcher is in fact a former alternate route teacher candidate, there is the possibility that the interviewer may inadvertently express his own opinion about the topic. In addition, the researcher may have through body language or expressions indicated a positive or negative reaction to the subject's response, or may have used language that lead the participant to respond in a way that they may not have done on their own. Collectively, these actions may have caused the participants to react by modifying their own responses. The researcher, however, may mitigate this limitation because of his participation in an alternative route training program. One such advantage is being acutely aware of the process, and another, is a clearer understanding of exactly what it is the participants are going through.

A fifth limitation is that the researcher only had females participate in the interview process, and only one of the individuals could be identified as a possible racial minority. Though the researcher tried to ascertain both male and female, and minority representation to be interviewed, the researcher only received female volunteers who were eligible to be interviewed (there was one male who volunteered, but did not work in a low socio-economic environment). In addition, only one of the participants could have possibly belonged to a minority group. This

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narrow diversity of population did not allow the researcher to draw conclusions concerning gender and from a qualitative perspective, but this information is ascertained through the questionnaire with the quantitative data. Though the question of teachers returning for a second year based on gender or race was able to be answered through a good cross section from the questionnaire that was administered, this unfortunately did not hold true for the qualitative part of the study.

Finally, as in any study using human subjects, the researcher hopes that the alternate route teacher candidates were candid and honest with their questionnaire and interview responses, but there is the possibility that the answers received could be either altered or embellished. This, unfortunately, can affect the outcomes of the study, and it needs to be considered as a possible limitation in gathering valid and reliable data.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed methods study with a case study approach was to explore and describe the reasons why teachers are leaving the teaching profession at such an alarming rate in low socio-economic, urban underperforming districts located in Northeastern New Jersey and potential solutions to the problem. A specific goal was to determine the effect of mentoring on the decisions of novice teachers to remain in education. To uncover the causes as well as the elements that encourage novice teachers to remain in the profession, a questionnaire, interview questions, and a focus group question protocol were created and piloted by the researcher. After making adjustments to the questions based on the feedback from the expert panel, and the like group, the researcher administered the questionnaire to 53 alternate route candidates working in low socio-economic, urban districts that are part of a cohort attending classes at Alternative College. After the data were collected and analyzed, six alternate route teacher cohort members

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were interviewed to provide detailed descriptions of the elements that they perceive to have made a difference in their effectiveness as beginning teachers, as well as the reflection process that went into their decision to continue teaching or to leave the profession. Though the researcher thought it would be meaningful to include the mentor perspective, the researcher was unable to recruit experienced mentors in the program to participate in a focus group discussion of what makes mentoring effective. The qualitative portion of the study provided an emerging body of information, while the quantitative portion of the study provided concrete data that were analyzed using SPSS providing descriptive statistics. Comparing the different forms of research has yielded results that can be referenced when making future programmatic decisions concerning the mentoring of alternate route, teacher candidates that work in low socio-economic, urban underperforming areas.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methods research with a case study approach was to explore

and describe the perceptions of the state-mandated mentoring experience by novice teachers

employed in low socio-economic, underperforming, urban schools. Specifically, the study

attempted to uncover whether the alternate route teacher induction program structure mandated

by New Jersey was: (1) being adhered to; (2) which elements of the program were effective and

ineffective; (3) if the experience as structured had any effect on whether the subjects decided to

remain in teaching; and, (4) if these variables were affected by race and/or gender. Chapter 4

includes an analysis of the data derived from a questionnaire that was administered to 53 novice

teachers, who were members of a cohort of alternate route educators participating in a

preparation program at the same site in northeastern New Jersey along with the results from 6 in-

depth interviews with participants from the survey pool. The data presented refer to the

questionnaire and the interview question protocol (Appendix A). Finally, the quantitative and

the qualitative data from this study shows how some elements that have already been

recommended in the literature corroborate.

Quantitative Data

In order to develop a broader picture of the perceptions of the induction experience by

alternate route teachers who work in low socio-economic, underperforming urban districts, a

questionnaire based on the current body of literature concerning teacher mentoring was

developed by the researcher and administered to 53 respondents (see Appendix A). The data was

entered into SPSS 16 and analyzed to provide a description of the perceptions of the novice teachers. The quantitative data is presented utilizing distribution and frequency tables, minor cross tabulations, and descriptive statistics. The quantitative data helped to answer the following three research questions:

Question 1: To what extent is the existing protocol for teacher mentoring of beginning alternate route teachers as established by the Department of Education in New Jersey being followed?

a.   In what way is the 20-day intensive, beginning alternative route teacher experience being structured?

b.   Does the way the 20-day experience was structured for the mentee have an effect on the decisions of the alternate route teachers to remain in teaching?

Question 2: Which elements of the prescribed mentoring program do novice alternate route certification teachers perceive to be effective or ineffective and affect their decisions to return to teaching for a second year?

Question 3: Do novice alternate route certification teachers perceive the mentoring programs they participated in had any influence on their decision to stay in teaching for a second year?

a. Do the perceptions of the influence of the mentoring program on the decision to remain teaching of the novice alternative route teachers differ based on gender?

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b. Do the perceptions of the influence of the mentoring program on the decision to remain teaching of the novice alternative route teachers differ based on race?

To differentiate for the reader the referencing of the individuals who took the questionnaire and those who were interviewed, the researcher has identified them by a consistent use of specific terminology. Those who completed the questionnaire are referred to as respondents and those who were interviewed as participants. To gain an understanding of the individuals who responded to the questionnaire, the researcher created frequency distribution tables to indicate the number of respondents, their genders, and whether these individuals identified themselves as being part of a minority group.

Demographic Data of the Participants

The researcher wanted to ascertain if there was a difference in frequency of response from teachers returning to teach for the foreseeable future and returning to their current position the next school year based on gender and minority status. In order to determine this, it was important to identify the number of males and females, as well as minority and non-minority identification. The data showed that, of the 52 who responded, approximately two-fifths of the respondents were males and almost three-fifths were females. One respondent chose not to self-identify gender. Table 6 outlines the breakdown for gender and Table 7 for minority status.

Table 6

Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	22	42.31
Female	30	57.69

Note. N - 52.

Table 7

Percentage of Respondents Who Identified Themselves as a Minority

Race	Frequency	Percent
Minority	24	46.15
Non-Minority	28	53.85

Note. N - 52.

Table 7 portrays the racial breakdown showing almost evenly distributed population based on minority status with 46% identifying themselves as a minority and approximately 54% as non-minority. One respondent chose not to self-identify minority status.

Initial Induction Experience

Items 3, 4, 5, and 6 (see Appendix A) of the questionnaire specifically had to do with the structure of the initial induction experience and the responses to these helped to answer the first research question. The New Jersey guidelines state that during the initial 20 days of teaching mentees are to have an intense, 90 hour mentoring experience that includes observations of teaching with feedback from their mentors and a shadowing of their mentors throughout their day, which is inclusive of all their activities (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.). In 2006, the state provided an option for districts that could not adhere to the guidelines of having a full-time mentor who provided intensive clinical support for the first 20 days of teaching for each mentee. The modification of the guidelines stated that new teachers could participate in an alternative option, Phase I- 20, which included formalized training that must occur prior to the first day of teaching and have a mentor assigned who would work with them on a daily basis for a total of 70 hours during the first 20 days (Doolan, 2006).

The data showed that 20 of the respondents participated in a Phase I-20 experience of formal training prior to the first day of teaching, while 26 novice teachers indicated they received a mentor during the initial induction period. Nineteen respondents specified they had participated in the Phase I-20 preparatory program as well as being assigned a mentor. However, 26 subjects responded that they had not participated in either option of the induction program. Therefore, there appears to be a lack of compliance regarding the intent of the initial induction program, since almost 50% responded they had not participated in either option.

Frequency of Mentor-Mentee Contact

Although all the respondents reported having mentor/mentee interaction, the frequency

and type of activities differed dramatically from daily interactions to never meeting. Table 8

reports the frequency of meetings during the initial induction period.

Table 8

The Frequency of Mentor/Mentee Interaction during the Initial Induction Period

Frequency of Interaction	Frequency	Percent
Everyday	6	11.32
2 x week	8	15.09
1x week	13	24.53
1 x 2 weeks	4	7.55
Never	13	24.53
Other	9	16.98

Thirty-one respondents (58.49%) reported that they had some contact with a mentor.

Only 11.32% had what they described as "everyday" contact, a requirement of the initial

induction program without the Phase I-20 preparation component. Another eight new teachers

were engaged with their mentors twice a week. The most frequent responses were "once a

week" (13) and "never" (13). Nine respondents indicated that they met in an "other" context.

Explanatory comments for those that chose the "other" option included, "when needed or when

they wanted to," "rarely," "monthly," or about "once a month." The data showing over 40% of

the respondents had infrequent or no contact with their mentors would seem to indicate the

districts represented in the study report that the requirements of the initial induction program are not being adhered to in the low socio-economic, underperforming, urban areas located in Northeastern New Jersey.

Initial Induction Activities

Item 6 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) asked which activities the respondents participated in after the initial induction experience. A little more than one-third (39.6%) of the respondents indicated that they observed another teacher teach. Only 10% indicated that they co-taught with another teacher, and approximately one-third of the respondents indicated that they had collaborated with other teachers.

Compliance with State Mandates

Questions 3, 4, 5, and 6 (see Appendix A) provide data to answer Research Question 1. It is evident from the reported perceptions of the respondents that there is a lack of compliance with the state-mandated requirements of an initial induction experience through either an observation by and shadowing of an experienced teacher for 90 hours or a pre-teaching induction program with 70 hours of mentoring. Almost 50% indicated they had not participated in either option for support. Additionally, 26 respondents (49%) described a mentoring relationship that involved infrequent or irregular meetings with their mentors, which is not congruent with state recommendations. The quantitative data, therefore, suggest that the implementation of the initial induction program outlined for novice alternate route teachers in low socio-economic, underperforming, urban school districts is not consistently occurring.

Relationship of Initial Induction Experiences of Indication to Remaining in Teaching

In order to examine how the initial induction program affected the decisions of alternate route novice teachers employed in low socio-economic, underperforming, urban districts the focus of Research Question 1b, which asked if the way the 20-day experience was structured for the mentee have an effect on their decision to remain teaching. Cross-tabulation tables were created for items 3, 4, and 28 and for items 3, 4, and 29. Item 28 of the questionnaire asked the question, "Do you plan to return to your school next year?" There were three possible response categories including "yes," "no," and "unsure." In order to help answer the above referenced question, the researcher examined the pathways charts for the responses of items 3 and 4 of the questionnaire with item 28. Item 3 asked if the mentee participated in a Phase I-20 initial induction experience as part of the alternate route experience, and a "yes" or "no" response option was offered. Item 4 asked if the mentee was assigned a 20-day mentor during the initial induction experience, and a "yes" or "no" response option was provided. Item 28 asked if the mentees were planning to return to their schools the following year; item 29 asked the mentees if they were planning to remain teaching for the foreseeable future, which is a short term foreshadowing.

Item 3 → item 4 → item 28 pathway. There were 12 different pathways to Items 3, 4, and 28 in this sample 3 way cross tabulation could take. These pathways are reported in Table 9 along with the observed number of respondents to each pathway. For the pathway YYY, which represents a yes to items 3, 4, and 28, there were 15 respondents. Thus, 28% of the respondents participated in I-20, were provided with a 20-day mentor, and planned to return to school the following year. Alternatively, only one respondent (2% of the total) replied "yes" to items 3 and 4 and did not plan to return to school the following year (answered "no" to item 28).

Table 9

Probability Pathway for Items 3 and 4 with Item 28

	YYY	YYN	YYU	YNY	YNN	YNU	NYY	NYN	NYU	NNY	NNN	NNU
Observed	15	1	3	1	0	0	6	0	1	19	1	6	53

Note. Y = Yes; N = No; U = Unsure.

The results for the remaining four pathways in which the respondents answered "yes" to item 3 were 3 for path YYU, 1 for path YNY, and 0 for paths YNN and YNU.

Based on the data, it appears that if a respondent received both programs, he or she was much more likely to respond that they would return to teaching, but receiving the Phase I-20 program without the intensive 20-day mentor resulted in a negligible number of respondents electing to return to teaching.

Six respondents who did not participate in Phase I-20 but were assigned a 20-day mentor reported an 11% chance that they planned to return to their school the following year. If the mentee did not participate in Phase I-20 and was not assigned a 20-day mentor, 36% stated that they planned to return to their school the following year.

The data from item 28, which looked at the respondents plan to return the next school year, compared with item 3 which asked if the respondent participated in the Phase I-20 program and 4 which asked if the respondent was assigned 20 day mentor, indicate that participating in Phase I-20 and receiving a 20-day mentor during the induction period had a positive effect on a mentee's decision to return the following year. However, receiving no Phase I-20 program or a 20-day mentor showed the highest probability that the novice teacher would return to teaching the following year. It is not possible to determine if this is a result of personal resilience or the quality of the mentoring experience or some other explanation. However, it appears that it may be preferable to have no training than to having a poorly developed or administered one.

Item 3 → item 4 → item 29 pathway. There were 12 different pathways that respondents could make to Item 3, which asked if the respondent participated in the Phase I-20 program, and 4 which asked if the respondent was provided with a 20 day mentor, and 29, which asked if the respondent planned to remain teaching for the foreseeable future, in this sample 3 way cross

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tabulation could take. These pathways are given in Table 10, along with the observed number of

respondents to each pathway. For the pathway YYY, which represents a "yes" to items 3, 4, and

29, there were 19 respondents. Thus, 36% of the respondents participated in I-20, were provided

with a 20-day mentor, and planned to remain teaching for the foreseeable future. Alternatively,

there were no respondents who replied "yes" to items 3 and 4 and did not plan to remain teaching

for the foreseeable future. The observed results for the remaining four pathways in which the

respondents answered "yes" to item 3 were 0 for path YYU, 0 for path YNY, and 0 for paths

YNN and 1 for path YNU. Based on the data, it appears that if a respondent participated in the

Phase I-20 protocol and had a 20-day intensive mentor, they strongly indicated their plan to

remain in teaching for the foreseeable future.

Table 10

Probable Pathways 3 and 4 with Item 29

	YYY	YYU	YNY	YNU	NYY	NYU	NNY	NNU
Observed	19	0	0	1	7	0	21	5	53

Note. Y = Yes; N = No; U = Unsure.

If a mentee did not participate in Phase I-20 and was assigned a 20-day mentor, there was

a 13% chance (7 respondents) the mentee planned to remain in teaching for the foreseeable

future. If a mentee did not participate in Phase I-20 and was not assigned a 20-day mentor, there

was a 39% chance (21 respondents) that they planned to remain teaching for the foreseeable

future, and a 10% chance (5 respondents) of being unsure of whether she would remain in

teaching for the foreseeable future. The observed result for the remaining path(NYU) was 0.

Based on the data, it appears that if a respondent received did not participate in Phase I-20 or have a 20-day intensive mentor, there was a high probability (39%) that they planned to remain in teaching for the foreseeable future. Similarly, if the respondent had both Phase I-20 training, and the 20-day intensive mentor, it was likely they would remain teaching. However, when the respondents were unsure whether they would return to teaching, the missing component was mentoring. It would appear that having a program not adhered to is worse than having no treatment at all.

Based on the data, it appears that having both elements of the induction program or not having any formal induction elements is more helpful in guiding the novice teacher than having only one program. Finally, having sustained support throughout the year correlates with the novice teacher in their decision to stay teaching for the foreseeable future.

Novice Teacher Participation in Elements of Effective Induction

The second question this research was attempting to answer focused on the elements of the second phase of the induction program. In order to ascertain whether or not the elements deemed important in the literature regarding induction programs were experienced by the novice teachers in this study, the researcher included several relevant items within the questionnaire.

Mentoring Structure and Practices

Items 7 through 14 on the questionnaire (see Appendix A) focused on effective mentoring practices. Less than 10% of the 53 respondents indicated that they received a formal mentor before the first day of school. Another 7.5% were assigned a mentor on the first day of school while 10% were assigned a mentor during the first week of school. Many of the respondents (68%) indicated that they were assigned a mentor after they began teaching, and

three of those respondents reported that their mentor was assigned after approximately three months of teaching. Of the 53 respondents, only 13% indicated that they had any input in choosing their mentors. Eighty-five percent reported that their mentors were currently classroom teachers involved with planning, instructing, and managing their own classrooms. No retired teachers were utilized, which is often recommended in the literature, since the pension system has ruled against this option (New Jersey Education Association, 2006). A majority of the novice teachers (79%) had a mentor who had three or more years of teaching experience, a requirement of NJDOE. Fifty-one percent of the respondents reported having a mentor who taught the same grade or content level as they did.

Another important element of effective mentoring is having adequate time with the mentor (Hersh, Strout, & Snyder, 1993). The responses from Question 14, which asked about the frequency of mentor-mentee meetings throughout the year, indicated that over a third of the respondents never met with their mentor, while less than one-third reported seeing their mentor at least once a week. This describes a beginning teacher experience where an overwhelming number of teachers had infrequent contact with their mentors.

Question 15 delineates possible activities to engage in during the mentoring process. The alternate route teacher preparation program in the state of New Jersey was developed to be comprehensive and include an entire year of training and support (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.). Respondents indicated all the types of activities that they had participated in throughout the year. Of the 53 respondents about one-third of them observed their mentor teachers, and almost half of them observed other teachers. Very few of the respondents co-taught with their mentors (10%), but about 18% did in fact co-teach with someone other than their mentor. About one-third of the respondents collaborated with other teachers. Almost all of

the respondents indicated that they attended professional development opportunities, which is consistent with a good overall teacher induction program (Mezirow, 1995).

Relational Elements

Questions 16-21 (see Appendix A) examined the affective realm. In terms of feeling comfortable speaking about professional issues, 55% always felt comfortable speaking about professional issues, while 25% usually felt comfortable speaking about professional issues, 13% of them felt comfortable some of the time speaking to their mentor about professional issues, and 8% never felt comfortable speaking to their mentor about professional issues. Inferring from the responses, more than two-thirds of the respondents had a good professional rapport with their mentor, and they felt comfortable speaking to them. Item 17 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) tried to measure the comfort level of the mentee when speaking with their mentor concerning personal issues. Of the 53 respondents, almost 25% of them always felt comfortable speaking about personal issues while almost 20% usually felt comfortable. Another 25% felt comfortable speaking on a personal level with their mentor some of the time. Almost 25% never felt comfortable speaking to their mentor on a personal level. Overall, more than half of the respondents felt comfortable speaking to their mentor on a personal level. The data indicated that respondents, for the most part, felt comfortable speaking to their mentors about some personal issues

Item 18 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) assisted the researcher in finding out the mentee's perception of the flexibility of the mentor based on the particular needs of the mentee. Of the 53 respondents, 42% indicated that their mentor was always flexible, while 23% indicated that their mentor was usually flexible. Still, another 21% indicated that their mentor was flexible some of the time, and a 15% indicated that their mentor was never flexible. Inferring from the

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responses, the data indicated that 65% of the respondents had mentors who were flexible

pertaining to meeting times and agendas, but collectively, 35% of them either reported that their

mentor was either never flexible regarding their needs or only flexible to their needs some of the

time.

Item 19 (See Appendix A) attempted to ascertain the perceived level of trust that existed

by asking whether the respondent was able to share comments with their mentors and believing

that they will remain confidential. Of the 53, respondents 75% indicated that they felt that what

they told their mentor would be confidential. The majority of the participants reported a certain

level of trust exists; however, for almost 25% of the respondents, there was indication that they

did not trust their mentors' adherence to confidentiality.

Item 20 (see Appendix A) questioned whether the mentee perceived their mentor as being

supportive in helping them become a successful teacher. Seventy percent reported that their

mentors are supportive of them and want them to be successful, while 30% indicated that this did

not hold true for them.

Overall, the data from questions 6 through 20, which describe the elements of effective

induction and mentoring, suggest that the induction and mentoring experience of the novice

teachers in this study was not always consistent with the elements of an effective induction and

mentoring programs as described in the literature (Hammer & Williams, 2005; Hersh, Strout, &

Snyder, 1993; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Quality of Mentoring Relationship

Item 21 (see Appendix A) of the questionnaire asked the respondents to describe their

relationship with their mentors. More than 75% of the respondents rated their relationships with

their mentors as excellent, very good, or good, while about 25% of the respondents indicated that

their relationship was either fair or poor. The data show that a majority of the respondents had a positive relationship with their mentors. Specifically, mentees reported liking their mentors as people on a personal level, but felt differently about them on a professional level.

<center>Mentor Skills</center>

The next section the questionnaire, the researcher focused on perceptions of the mentors' skills. Question 22 asked if the mentor provided answers to pertinent information. Of the 53 respondents, 42% of them always felt that their mentors gave good information, while 21% indicated that they usually felt comfortable with receiving answers to pertinent information. Of the 53 respondents, 32% reported that they only felt like they received pertinent information some of the time, and three respondents indicated that they never received pertinent information from their mentor. The data indicated that 63% of the respondents felt as though they either always or usually received all the information that they needed from their mentors.

Questionnaire item 23 (see Appendix A) asked how the mentee perceived their mentor's performance. Thirty-four percent of respondents described their mentors as excellent, while 26% indicated that they were good. Still, another 17% described their mentors as adequate, and 21% described their mentors as ineffective. One respondent reported that his/her mentor was unresponsive. The data indicate that 60% of the respondents described their mentors as effective.

<center>Relationship of Mentoring Activities to</center>

<center>Perception of Mentor Performance</center>

The researcher wanted to ascertain if the activities and experiences, such as comfort level of communication, activities, flexibility, and positive perceptions the respondents had with their

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mentor had a correlation with their overall perception of the quality of their mentor. In order to answer this question, a correlation analysis was completed in SPSS 16 between items 5, 7, 14, 16-20 and item 23 which asked the respondent to describe their mentor through the choices, "excellent," "good," "adequate," "ineffective," and "unresponsive." Five elements of the mentoring experience showed significance. Questions 16 and 17 asked about the comfort level of the respondents in speaking to their mentors about both professional and personal issues respectively. There was a positive correlation between comfort in speaking to their mentors and their perception of their mentors being effective. Question 18 showed a positive correlation between flexibility to meet individual needs and their perception that the mentor performed well. Question 19 had a positive correlation between the mentee's belief the mentor maintained confidentiality and their perception of the quality of their mentor's performance. Finally, question 20 asked the respondent to identify whether they felt their mentors were supporting them in being successful teachers, and again, a positive correlation existed between perceived support in wanting them to become successful teachers and perception of the mentor's effectiveness. One could conclude from the data that comfort level speaking to one's mentor both professionally and personally, flexibility of one's mentor, trusting the mentor with keeping comments confidential, and feeling as though their mentor wanted them to be successful are elements associated with good mentoring.

Relationship of the Elements of the Mentoring

Relationship and Intent to Return to Teaching

To help answer research question 2, which asked which elements were effective and ineffective in the respondents decision to remain teaching, it was important to isolate the variables associated with which mentoring behaviors had an affect on whether the mentee

planned to return to teaching the following year in order to answer Research Question 2. To determine that, correlations were completed in SPSS 16 between questionnaire items 5, 7, 14, 16-23 that asked about elements that have been identified in the literature about effective mentoring, and item 30 that asked the novice teachers if the mentoring experience had any impact on the respondent's decision as to whether to return to teaching the following year. Six elements showed significance. Questionnaire item 5, which asked about the frequency of interaction during the initial induction experience, showed a positive correlation between a higher frequency of contact and a novice teacher's decision to return to teaching the following year. Questions 16 and 17 which asked about the comfort level of the respondents in speaking to their mentors about professionally and personally issues respectively showed a positive correlation between more comfort and returning to school for a second year. Item 21 asked how the novice teacher would characterize the mentee/mentor relationship; there was a positive correlation between the strength of the relationship and the decision to return to teaching the following year. Item 22 asked the mentees if their mentors were able to provide pertinent answers to their questions; the more likely the mentor was able to do this, the more likely the novice teacher was to make the decision to return to school the following year. Finally, question 23 asked about the respondent's perception of the mentor's performance. The more highly the mentor deemed the mentor's performance the more likely the first year teacher would indicate that he/she would return to teaching the following year. All six elements, frequency of mentor interaction, comfort level in speaking to one's mentor both professionally and personally, how the mentees feel about their relationship with and performance of their mentors, and whether a mentor can provide useful information showed significance. With this particular population, it would appear that the relational characteristics were a more important influence on their

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decision-making about returning to teach the following year than were elements that dealt with

content issues such as teaching the same content area (see Table 11).

Table 11

Intercorrelations Between Items 5, 7, 14, 16-20, and Items 23, and Between Items 5, 7,

14, 16-23, and Item 30

	Item 23	Item 30
Item 5	.37	.47*
Item 7	.23	.31
Item 14	.37	.39
Item 16	.72*	.41*
Item 17	.64*	.44*
Item 18	.74*	.40
Item 19	.45*	.27
Item 20	.77*	.30
Item 21		.61*
Item 22		.54*
Item 23		.50*

Note. *$p < .01$. For Item 5 correlation n = 44; for Item 7 correlation n = 42; for Item 14 correlation n = 51; for Item 21 correlation n = 48; for all other correlations n = 53. Correlations between Items 19 and 20 and Items 23 and 30 are point-biserial correlation coefficients. All other correlations are Pearson correlation coefficients. Bonferronni corection was applied to the *α-level* for testing significance of correlations.

Professional Development

The researcher examined whether certain types of supporting programs developed by

districts and schools that have been identified in the literature as helpful to novice teachers were

in place. The first was to ask if there were professional development opportunities offered by the

district that had any effect on the teacher's view of teaching and ultimately their decision to

remain teaching. The researcher addressed this issue in questionnaire item 25 (see Appendix A),

which asked if the novice teacher's district offered a program of professional development opportunities or a chance for further educational opportunities. Fifteen percent indicated that their district professional development program was well planned, of consistently high quality, congruent with school goals, and 52.8% perceived it to be planned, generally good, and may or may not be congruent with school goals. Twenty-five percent of the respondents indicated that the district was not organized, infrequent, and inconsistent in quality and purpose, and 5.7 % of respondents indicated that the program was not well-planned, infrequent, poor or fair quality, with no relationship to goals. The data suggest that the quality of the professional development is varied with some having consistently high quality programming and almost a third of the respondents describing inconsistencies in planning, quality, purpose, and congruence to goals.

The researcher wanted to isolate whether the districts employing the novice teachers offered further educational opportunities such as graduate study, and did so through questionnaire item 26 (see Appendix A). Fifty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that their districts did offer further educational opportunities, while only 3% indicated that they did not. In addition, 38% of the respondents were unsure if their districts offered further educational opportunities. The data indicate that though more than half of the respondents were offered professional development opportunities, 38% of those were not even aware if their districts offered further educational opportunities. It should be noted that professional development refers to the offering of skill training provided by the district, and educational opportunities deal specifically with the chance to pursue graduate work.

Finally, item 27 (see Appendix A) asked how the novice teacher would describe their school's culture of professional growth. Sixty-six percent of the respondents indicated that their school's culture was either very supportive or supportive of their professional growth, while 26%

reported that they were neutral on this subject. Seven and half percent of the respondents indicated that their schools were not supportive at all of their professional growth. The data indicate that a majority of the novice teachers work in schools that promote a culture of professional growth.

Mentoring and the Intent on the Decision to Stay in Teaching

Research Question 3 asked if the novice teachers perceived that their mentoring experience had any effect on their decision to stay in teaching. The researcher wanted to ascertain the answer; questionnaire items 28, 29, and 30 were designed. The analysis of the responses from question 28 showed that 77% of the respondents planned to return to their schools the following year, while 19% were unsure. Question 29 asked respondents to indicate their plans to remain in teaching for the foreseeable future. Eighty-nine percent indicated that they plan to remain teaching for the foreseeable future, and 11% were unsure. None of the teachers reported that they would definitely not remain in teaching for the foreseeable future.

Item 30, of the questionnaire asked whether their mentoring experience influenced their decision-making regarding continuing teaching next year. Twenty-five percent indicated that their decision to teach next year was definitely influenced by their mentoring experience, while 8% were most likely affected, and 23% possibly affected. Forty-five percent indicated that their mentoring experience had no impact on their decision to continue teaching the following school year. It would appear that the mentoring experience had some impact on the mentee's decision to return to school next year for only a third of the respondents. However, the nature of the questionnaire did not allow for the respondent to indicate if the decision was positively or adversely affected.

Attitude Toward Teaching

Item 24, of the questionnaire, which aligned with research question 2, asked the mentee if they enjoyed teaching. Of the respondents, 43% of them indicated that they always enjoyed teaching, and 55% of them indicated that they enjoyed teaching most days. Only one respondent indicated that he/she only occasionally enjoyed teaching, and there were no respondents reporting that they rarely or ever enjoy teaching.

Effect of Mentoring on the Decision to Remain in

Teaching in Regard to Gender and Minority Status

In order to answer Research Question 3a and 3b, the researcher isolated Items 2 and 3 of the questionnaire where respondents self-identified gender and minority identification and cross-tabulated them with questions 29 and 30 which asks about the mentee's perception of the influence of the mentoring experience on the mentee's decision to teach the following year and the decision to return for a second year. Table 12 shows the breakdown of the decision to continue teaching by gender.

The data from Table 13 indicate that and there is no significant difference in decision-making to remain in teaching based on gender. Though there are more females than males who are planning to return, females outnumbered males by a 15% margin. The same holds true for those teachers who plan to remain in teaching for the foreseeable future based on their mentoring experience. Though there are more females in the sample pool (15% margin), no participants indicated that they would not be returning, and there was no significance.

Table 12

Gender and the Novice Teacher's Decision to Continue Teaching

Plan to Return to Same School Next Year	Male	Female
Yes	16	24
No	2	0
Unsure	4	6

Plan to Remain Teaching (foreseeable future)	Male	Female
Yes	19	27
No	0	0
Unsure	3	3

Note. p>.05. N=52. Fisher's exact test was conducted for both contingency tables because at least 50% of the cells had expected counts less than five.

Table 13

The Perceptions that the Novice Alternate Route Teacher Had of the Mentoring Program and the Decision of the Mentee to Continue Teaching New Year Based on Gender

Item 30	Frequency (M)	Percent	Frequency (F)	Percent
Definitely	7	13.46	5	9.62
Most Likely	1	1.92	3	5.77
Possibly	3	5.77	9	17.31
No	11	21.15	13	25.00

Note. n = 52.

The findings displayed in Table 14 specifically address Question 3a. The data indicate that there were 22 males who participated which represent 42.31% of the respondents and 30 females, representing 57.69% of the respondents. The researcher was able to look at the counts of those who identified themselves by gender, and calculate a percentage on that number, and make the determination that there was no major difference based on gender. One novice teacher chose not to self-identify.

It appears that minority identification was not associated with the decision to return to teaching based on the mentoring experience.

Question 3b of this study asked whether the minority identification of the respondents had any effect on the mentee's decision to return to teaching and whether minority identification had any effect on whether the mentee perceived the mentoring experience affected the mentee's decision to continue teaching which was a Fisher's test with item 1 and item 30. The data from Table 15 indicate that almost 80% of the respondents said that they were planning to return to their school the following year, and almost 90% of the respondents were planning to remain teaching for the foreseeable future. Since more than 50% of the cells had expected counts less than five, a Fisher's exact test was conducted for both the decision to remain in the same school the following year and to remain teaching for the foreseeable future. There was no significant association between whether an individual identified him/herself as a minority and plans to return to their school the following year or their plan to remain teaching for the foreseeable future.

Table 14

The Respondents' Decision to Return to Their School the Following Year Based on Whether

They Identified Themselves as a Minority and Minority Identification/Plan to Remain in

Teaching for the Foreseeable Future

	Identify as a Minority			
Plan to Return to Same School Next Year	Yes	Present	No	Present
Return	19	36.54	22	42.31
Not Return	0	0.0	2	3.85
Unsure	5	9.62	4	7.69

	Minority Identification			
Plan to Remain in Teaching For the Foreseeable Future	Yes	Present	No	Present
Remain	22	42.31	24	46.15
Not Remaining	0	0.0	0	0.0
Unsure	2	3.85	4	7.69

Note. Fisher's exact test was conducted for both contingency tables because at least 50% of the cells had expected counts less than five.

Table 15

Minority Identification and Decision to Return to Teaching Next Year Based on the Mentoring

Experience

	Minority Identification			
Decision to Return to Teaching Next Year Based on Mentoring Experience	Yes	Present	No	Present
Definitely	6	11.54	7	13.46
Most Likely	2	3.85	2	3.85
Possible	7	13.46	5	9.62
No	9	17.31	14	26.92

To answer the study Question 3b, the researcher needed to determine whether minority identification affected the perception of the mentee regarding whether the mentoring experience influenced the decision to return to teaching. The data from Table 15 show that almost half of the respondents reported that their mentoring experience had no affect on whether they decided to return to teaching the following year. The researcher was able to look at the counts of those who identified themselves a minority and non-minority, and calculate a percentage on that number, and make the determination that there was no major difference based on minority identification.

It appears that minority identification was not associated with the decision to return to teaching based on the mentoring experience.

Quantitative Data Summary

The quantitative data provides answers to each of the three research questions. Question 1 asks whether low socio-economic, underperforming, urban schools were adhering to the state mandates regarding induction. The data showed that 20 of the respondents participated in a Phase I-20 experience of formal training prior to the first day of teaching, while 26 novice teachers indicated that they received a mentor during the initial induction period. Nineteen respondents specified that they had participated in the Phase I-20 preparatory program as well as being assigned a mentor. However, 26 subjects responded that they had not participated in either option of the induction program. The data shows a lack of compliance regarding the intent of the initial induction program, since almost 50% responded that they had not participated in either option.

Question 1a asked what structures were being utilized to deliver induction experiences. The data showed that districts were participating in Phase I-20 as defined in the 2006

modification of the regulations. All the schools represented by the respondents were using some form of mentoring. Most novice teachers had limited experience with varied activities and spent almost all their time assuming the responsibilities of a full-time teacher.

Question 1b asked whether the way the mentee's initial induction experience was structured had an effect on the decision to remain in teaching. Having both the Phase I-20 induction program and mentoring during the initial induction period had a high probability of the novice teacher returning. In addition, having no training or support in the beginning of the teaching experience had the highest probability that the novice teacher would return. Finally, having on-going support from a mentor appeared to lessen the probability that they would be unsure about returning to teaching.

Question 2 asked which elements of the prescribed mentoring program were perceived by the novice teachers to be effective. Positive correlations to the novice teachers making the decision to return the following year that were significant included feeling comfortable discussing personal and professional issues with the mentor, flexibility in meeting individual needs, the mentor can provide pertinent answers, the mentee perceiving that the mentor was able to maintain confidentiality, and that the mentee believed that the mentor wanted them to be successful. Not all elements recognized in the literature as being important for a successful mentoring experience appeared to be meaningful for this population, and most of the elements identified were relational.

Research Question 3 asked how the mentoring experienced influenced the novice teacher's decision to return to teaching for a second year. Almost half of the respondents reported that their mentoring experience had no impact on whether or not they decided to return to teaching the following year. In addition, one-third of the mentees indicated that the mentoring

experience did effect the decision to return to teaching; however, it is unknown whether this is a positive or negative affect. Question 3a isolated gender as a variable and Question 3b minority identification. The data showed no significant association between the influence of the mentoring program on the novice teacher's decision regarding returning for a second year and minority identification.

The researcher as part of the research protocol conducted a mixed methods study, with a case study approach. Therefore, six interviews were conducted with the respondent pool to achieve this goal.

Qualitative Data

Following the administration of the questionnaire to 53 respondents, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 6 alternate route, novice teachers who worked in low-socio-economic, underperforming, urban districts. Since the 6 participants, were part of the same pool of 53 respondents, they were aware of the intent of the interviews. The 6 interview participants responded to 17 open-ended questions that were congruent with the questionnaire, and would provide in-depth answers to further the study. The researcher utilized some probing questions when needed, but for the most part, participants provided the necessary information. The interviews gave the novice teachers the opportunity to express themselves in a comprehensive way by allowing them the chance to elaborate on their responses. This detail combined with the body language and/or facial expressions of the participant, allowed the researcher to gain more insight into the nuances and affect. The transcribed interviews along with the notes from the observations made by the researcher became the data set. All of the information obtained was compared with the body of literature and the findings from the quantitative research from this study.

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Reporting of Qualitative Data

This section is organized to provide a summary of each of the interview questions, including a brief description of what each participant said with direct quotes when appropriate to emphasize the intent and emotion of the content. A pseudonym was given to all participants to protect their anonymity, thereby, hopefully, increasing their willingness to share. The summaries weave the factual responses within the personal stories of each participant, who all work in different schools, including a brief synopsis of their feelings and views about their overall mentoring experience.

Description of Participants

Participant one, a female referred to as "Sue," was a teacher in her first year with no prior teaching experience. Sue seemed to be in her 20s or 30s and did not appear to belong to a minority group. She was very eager to be interviewed and indicated that she was happy to have someone who would listen to her story. Sue was assigned a 20-day mentor and assumed full time teaching responsibilities her first day of school. She was disenchanted with both her first year of teaching and her mentoring experience. However, although Sue reported having a poor mentoring experience, she acknowledged that her mentor was a good person. Sue recounted that she will be forced to return to teaching for financial reasons but would not do so if she felt she had a choice.

Participant two, "Madison," was also a new teacher with no prior teaching experience. She seemed to be in her 20s and not a member of a minority group. Madison was assigned a 20-day mentor and assumed full-time teaching responsibilities her first day of school. Madison was a very self-assured person and described not needing her mentor for much support. The

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researcher perceived Madison as having high self-efficacy beliefs based on her determination to be successful despite her mentoring experience.

Participant three, "Mary," was a new teacher with no prior teaching experience. She appeared to be in her 20s and not a member of a minority group. Mary was assigned a 20-day mentor, assumed full-time teaching responsibilities her first day of school, and seemed very apathetic about her mentoring experience labeling it as not very effective. Mary, however, reported enjoying teaching and will return in the fall but said that her decision had nothing to do with her mentoring experience.

Participant four, "Lisa," was in her first year with no prior teaching experience. She appeared in her 20s and not a member of a minority group. Lisa had a twenty-day mentor and assumed full-time teaching responsibilities her first day of school. Based on her comments, Lisa appeared to have a high level of self-efficacy beliefs and resilience. She described herself as a very determined person who wants to persevere in her district for a few years, before moving to a district that she described as "much easier."

Participant five, "Debbie," was a new teacher with no prior teaching experience. She appeared to be in her 30s and did not seem to belong to a minority group. Debbie was assigned a 20-day mentor and assumed full time teaching responsibilities her first day of school. Unlike the other participants, Debbie shared her 20-day mentor with another teacher, but surprisingly had more frequent contact than the others. The researcher noted that Debbie appeared to have a strong personality with a high level of self-efficacy beliefs based on her description of her needs. Debbie indicated that she was referred to as "easy" by her mentor because she generally handles issues on her own. Debbie indicated she loves the people she works with and will return to teaching but added that her mentoring experience had nothing to do with her decision.

Participant six, "Anne," is a veteran teacher appearing to be in her 40s or 50s with an extensive teaching background in private school settings and higher education in New York and New Jersey. Though the question was not asked directly, Anne appeared to be a member of a minority group. Because she now works in a public school in New Jersey where state certification is needed, Anne was participating in the alternate route process. Anne was assigned a 20-day mentor and assumed full-time teaching responsibilities the first day of school. Seemingly impatient with having to follow what she perceives as arbitrary protocols that are outside her control, Anne expressed disenchantment with the public school context. She liked her mentor and felt she helped her by providing a wealth of information and strategies to navigate the processes in the public school system. Anne planned on continuing with public school teaching but received notification that she would not be retained in her current position. Although Anne's mentor did not affect her decision to return to teaching in her present school, she did indicate that her mentoring experience positively influenced her opinion about working in a public school setting. The following section will share the participants' responses to the interview questions.

Initial Induction Experience

Question 1 asked the participants to describe the process that was used to match them with their mentors. Some probes were: Were you asked for input about personality types and experience when making a match? If so, describe. Were you asked about areas of need? If so, describe. Were you asked about areas of expertise? If so, describe. Was your schedule referenced? If so, for what purpose?

Madison was the only participant who indicated that she was able to express an opinion about who her mentor would be. According to her, "My supervisor called some of the teachers

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in the district and specifically asked me which I would prefer. I was lucky because not a lot of people get that option." Sue stated that they were only told, "Here's your person" when given a mentor. Mary indicated that the new teachers in her school received e-mails from the administrator with the contact information of the mentors who were assigned to them, and Lisa stated, "I wasn't given an option. They were just kinda like, oh, this person is mentoring another teacher; she can also mentor you." Debbie, who also was not given a choice stated, "They just told me who my mentor was. She was a math teacher they told me from an elementary school but now she's the testing coordinator, and she is in the high school and I was placed in the middle school." Having input into the selection of a mentor was important enough that Debbie reiterated this in her final comments before ending the interview. Anne had a similar experience to Debbie's, stating, "There was no process. She was the only one available and qualified in high school to mentor."

Five of the participants indicated that they were not given an opportunity to choose a mentor that they felt they could work with. Instead, mentors were assigned without regard to the elements identified in the literature as being beneficial to a productive mentoring relationship (Bullough, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). From the participants' descriptions of the selection process, it appears to have been completed without collaboration and much deliberation.

Question 2 asked the participants to describe the timeline for the assignment of their mentors. Lisa who started in November, was assigned a mentor after approximately one month. According to her, "there wasn't a rush." Sue explained that the assignment came in the summer, but the experience did not address issues that were important for her professional success. Although they spent 40-50 hours together before school started, Sue stated, "It was more from the beginning on a personal level, and things regarding academics and how the school runs, they

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were never addressed." Sue indicated that she attempted to initiate more of what to expect when beginning teaching but was unsuccessful, stating, "Anytime I tried to steer the topic to what's going to happen on the first day of school, there was never an answer." Madison was also given a mentor in August for a September opening. They met before school began at a district in-service day and discussed personal and professional issues throughout the structured sessions. Follow-up meetings occurred that helped Madison navigate the paperwork and logistics the first month of school. One mentee believed that the mentor's being a part of the Phase I-20 induction program was so important that she reiterated that in her final comments of the interview.

Mary, who began mid-year, was assigned a mentor immediately, but the method of notification was informal and led to confusion. According to Mary the principal of the school sent her an e-mail with the name and e-mail address of the individual who was assigned to mentor her. Mary went on to state, "I had her e-mail; I just did not know if I was supposed to contact her, or is she was going to contact me or what? She was in a different building, so we never really crossed paths." The first meeting occurred two weeks after she began teaching, and in lieu of a formal meeting schedule, Mary was told to call when she had a need.

Debbie reported that she was assigned a mentor before the first day of school and met her at a formal district induction session in August. Though Debbie was assigned a mentor who actually spent 40 hours observing her during the first 20 days, she appeared to be extremely independent. In fact, as the interview went on, she vehemently stated that she did not need someone for support, that she could find intrinsic motivation within herself, and did not need someone else to do that for her.

Anne was also provided a mentor at the beginning of the school year. While describing her assignment, Anne complained:

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I started immediately in September, the first week, the way our district has it . . . and I have to pay for this, by the way. So, every week, one hour is mandatory, we log onto mylearning.com; we log everything that we talk about, and this goes until the last week of school. It's a requirement.

Anne seemed agitated with much of the process associated with being assigned a mentor, gesturing passionately and making angry facial expressions.

Three of the participants were assigned their mentors before the school year started and had opportunities to meet prior to beginning teaching. These interactions were structured by the school districts as part of a larger formal induction experience. The fourth teacher's mentoring began when the school year started, and two teachers were hired after the school year began and were assigned mentors who they interacted with within four weeks of beginning teaching.

Question 3 asked the participants to describe their 20-day induction/mentoring experience. Since the 20-day induction period is designed to ensure that the novice teachers have their mentors working intensively with them and completing activities, such as demonstration teaching and providing advice in the areas of structure, pedagogy, assessment, behavioral problems, and other areas that the mentee may find important and/or relevant (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.). The participants are all required to be involved in "orientation, induction, pre-service or summer clinical experiences with in-class mentor support to achieve the 20-day requirement" (Doolan, 2006, p. 2); therefore, they should all have been provided in-class mentor support.

Though four participants had some form of a loosely structured induction program, it did not appear to have been tailored specifically for alternate route teachers and in at least one case particular to instructional needs. The two teachers who came after the school year started

indicated that they had no induction program and no timely interaction with an assigned mentor. Only Debbie, who had an experience that was most closely aligned to the mandated structure for the first month, also had issues with the overall protocol. Debbie reported, "My 20-day mentor had to be split with another teacher. My mentor wasn't in my room every period. She was in and out, and she taught one period a day with me." This statement shows that this teacher shared her mentor with another teacher.

Sue expressed to the researcher that she was not even aware of the 20-day induction period and the intensity of support that is required then. She also stated that she would have appreciated more time to spend with her mentor; many of their conversations occurred in the hallway between classes, in the cafeteria, or office when there was only time for a brief exchange. She believed that an in-depth discussion that allowed for a rich exchange would have been beneficial, but there were too many other responsibilities for that to happen. Madison also reported that she also was not aware of the 20-day induction period and that the first month was a difficult time for her. She stated, "I remember the first week; there was a lot of paperwork, things I didn't understand. I felt that was when I needed my mentor the most." Like Sue and Madison, Mary implied that she did not know what the 20-day induction period was and did not have a structured experience. She described their first encounter:

When I spoke with her, she told me she'd be mentoring me, and she gave me her cell

phone number and told me that if I had any questions at all whatsoever, you know, don't

hesitate to call her and I could ask any questions. We didn't really set up a meeting until

I really got involved in the work, and I realized that I didn't know a lot of the things I

needed to know, so I did need to meet with her.

Lisa seemed reflective about the challenges that came with her very first day of teaching, stating, "I was given a classroom at 8 o'clock; the kids came in at 8:15. I was told to put 12 desks together because I would have 12 students coming in. I had no books, no pencils." She had no formal teacher education preparation, no induction experience, and had not been assigned a mentor. She was forced to confront the problems on her own and appreciated when teachers came into her room in an informal way and offered her help and supplies which she desperately needed. Though Anne revealed she did not participate in the outlined 20-day induction experience but did have some support from her mentor mostly with resources and logistical information. Forced to travel from room to room to teach different classes, Anne's mentor told her where to get a cart and where to get basic supplies. Her mentor actually gave the participant her own paper to use in the classroom.

The mentees describe an initial teaching experience that did not adhere to the first 20-day mentoring protocol as outlined by the NJDOE. Five of the six participants did not have opportunities to observe their mentor teach, and none had the opportunity to co-teach with their mentor. Debbie was the only participant that was observed regularly by her mentor and who had her in her classroom several periods a day. Conversely Madison described her minimal experience. "She [her mentor] has her own classroom separate. I did observe her once; that's about it." All the participants indicated that they would have liked to have more support and structure from their mentors than they experienced during their first days of teaching.

Initial Classroom Immersion

When describing their initial classroom immersion, the participants varied in their level of emotion and comfort. The researcher observed that Sue appeared extremely upset and made facial expressions of dismay when she described her first few days of teaching. Mary calmly

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recounted her early days teaching and did not express strong emotion when describing them. Lisa recounted the challenges of her first day this way.

> So basically the first day was kinda like an overwhelming orientation that I really felt that they should have given me some heads-up another time, and the students really suffered because they sat there and had no idea what was going on all day with the parade of people in and out.

Lisa continued, "The first week was really kinda winging it . . . . I didn't do any co-teaching. I was told that people were going to come in and demonstrate lessons, and it never followed through." I was told that I was going have a language arts lesson modeled. I was told there was going to be a math lesson modeled, and it never happened." Anne also did not experience any demonstration lessons and did not have the opportunity to co-teach with her mentor. She reported that her mentor did not help with content or pedagogy but did help her get through her first day by providing her with information about where to go to get supplies and get things done, such as what forms to turn in and where to go to turn them in.

Only Debbie had the opportunity to observe a demonstration lessons, and none of the novice teachers co-taught. The novice teachers did not participate in a formal plan of varied activities to enhance their instructional repertoire and improve their confidence in their skill base.

<p style="text-align:center">Mentoring Experience</p>

Relational Elements

Trust. Question 5 asked if the participants had developed a trusting relationship with their mentors. Of the six participants only Mary felt that trust was not established and reported:

> She sets up a meeting and kind of forgets about it. She never really shows up and more recently she keeps on asking me whether I'm going to be hired next year.

I keep on telling her I have no idea; I would like to be rehired but with the economy, I'm

not sure. She's just very concerned about the fact that she's supposed to be mentoring

me until November, and I may not be there next year. That's why I don't really trust

her. She just keeps on asking me questions about whether I'm going to be here, not

about what I need.

Based on the discouraged tone of voice, it appeared to the researcher that Mary was not feeling

valued as a person or a professional, but as an opportunity to make additional money.

However, the other five participants described trusting relationships of varying degrees.

All emphasized a sense of personal respect. Sue described her mentor stating, "I love her as a

person. She is a fantastic person. I probably would remain friendly with her if I don't stay in

that district." However, Sue also shared that professionally she had reservations about trusting

her mentor's judgment and expertise. Madison, Lisa, and Debbie spoke about specific behaviors

that helped build a trusting relationship. Madison appreciated her mentor's concern about

whether all was well and if Madison needed anything. Lisa appreciated that her mentor "has

never given me false information." Debbie described how her mentor developed the relationship

over time.

We meet every Thursday, it's not even for advice, it's just me to go to her to kinda to tell

her how my day's going, how my week's going. She's more of someone I can go and talk

to, and I trust she will not take what I say out of her office.

Instructional support. Questions 6 and 7 specifically probed the mentor and mentees

relationship regarding instructional support. Question 6 asked the participants what strategies

their mentor utilized to make them feel comfortable about the challenges of teaching (i.e.,

effective vs. ineffective), and question 7 asked the participants what strategies did their mentor

utilize to support their teaching. She indicated that her mentor, whom she viewed as working very well with students, provided assistance with dealing with behavioral issues. Sue reported that most of the other insights the mentor provided in terms of speaking to her were "mushy stuff" that was not very helpful or beneficial and that she was looking for more concrete answers to support her growth in the instructional process.

Madison implied that her mentor has been helpful in many areas. She has shared materials from professional development sessions and encouraged her to attend an instructional workshop. Madison commented, "She shared professional development tools that she would receive. Probably just because she was an older teacher, she would constantly get info." The inference was clear that without her mentor's help, Madison would not know about these opportunities. She added, "Every time that I see her, she always is asking how I'm feeling, if I need help, if there's anything that I'm struggling with." Debbie reported a different scenario. Her mentor was not easily available because she is located in a different building making situations challenging when Debbie needed her. She had turned to a person in her building that had expertise in her content area for informal advice. In addition, Debbie's independence was affirmed by her mentor. "You're so easy because you don't ever come to me with any of your problems." Debbie stated, "if I have problems, I deal with them by myself." However, Debbie did indicate that her mentor comes to her classroom to observe.

Mary indicated that having access to her mentor was very beneficial, stating, "I would say the main thing is just knowing that I have her cell phone number, and she does reply to me very quickly when I text her or e-mail. So she's very prompt in responding, so that's a positive." Mary described the tangible benefit of her mentor observing her teaching on three separate occasions. She was able to implement the suggestions that were provided.

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Lisa expressed that her mentor is both reassuring and constructive with her comments and feedback. Like Mary, Lisa has benefited from classroom observations and feedback describing, "When we have to do our monthly progress thing, she always starts out with something positive that she has seen me do with the class. You know, she is always trying to be reassuring, in the aspect of, oh, I really like how you were teaching this lesson." Lisa indicated that she did not know of any specific instructional strategies that her mentor had shared but thought it was beneficial to have constructive criticism and hearing possible suggestions. She stated, "She'll go into something that I'm lacking or something I need to do differently." When faced with a strategy that did not work, Lisa commented, "She'll always give me a possible solution or something to try in place of it."

Anne indicated that she received no support in regard to instruction. Since she had taught previously in private settings, she did not believe that there was as much of a need. When comparing her observation experiences, Anne indicated that her mentor was able to help her identify how her students were learning when she was observed while an official school evaluator could not. Her mentor allowed her "to vent" about the evaluator's lack of expertise in her content area. Anne pointed out that her mentor's mutual appreciation for their content area provided a platform for respect.

Several mentees reported that experiencing an observation and feedback loop was very helpful. When constructive criticism was given and couched in positive terms, the mentees saw the benefit. When the mentors and mentees were not experts in the same content area or located in the same building, the relationship was not perceived as positively as when those elements were in place. Madison felt strongly enough about the advantage of having a mentor in the same subject area that she reiterated that recommendation in her final comments of the interview.

Support for professional growth. Question 8 asked the participants which strategies had their mentors utilized to support their professional growth. Sue, Madison, and Lisa believed that their mentors had provided some form of support for the mentees' continued professional growth while Debbie, Mary, and Anne claimed that they had no support and hypothesized about the possible reasons.

Sue, Madison, and Lisa received help but in different ways. Sue stated that she was given ideas about how to deal with behavioral issues. Madison reported that her mentor did offer information about professional development opportunities most often passing on information that she had been given but no longer needed. Describing her support, Lisa stated:

> We sat down, I don't know, I guess after Christmas break or winter break and went
>
> through a professional development catalogue to try to find professional development
>
> lectures that I could go to that would help me with some of the points I was working on
>
> in my professional development plan.

Debbie, Mary, and Anne reported no support. Mary bluntly stated, "I can't really think of any," and Debbie responded with, "I would say none." Anne appeared to have had a negative experience when it came to speaking about strategies pertaining to professional development. Anne stated, "What strategies? It's amazing strategies just protecting me politically and getting the tools that I need to teach effectively, essentially I was given nothing. I spent $1,500 of my own money and I was given nothing." Anne's body language and facial expressions appeared to express anger and frustration during the discussion of this topic.

Overall, half of the participants were offered assistance and advice pertaining to professional development. For those receiving assistance, it was sporadic and infrequent. One

participant in particular did not receive professional development advice until mid-year when she was working on her professional improvement plan.

Communication. Question 9 asked the participants to describe what happens when they have a question for their mentor. Of the six participants only Debbie taught in a different building than her mentor and had to rely on electronic correspondence. The other five participants taught in close proximity to their mentors. Sue who had no problems finding her mentor stated, "E-mail doesn't work; we're in close proximity all the time so I can always catch her like on break or something." Sue described her mentor as only helpful with behavioral issues. When Sue was explaining the scenario, she was very "matter of fact" and appeared dismayed because she viewed teaching as a helping profession and could not understand why she was not being supported. Madison, who also felt she had access to her mentor when she needed her, stated, "I just go to her room. We have the same prep period, which I was lucky enough to get that, because I know not a lot of people share that with their mentor." She indicated that her mentor gets back to her within a day after an inquiry and that the subject has to do specifically with classroom management, for example, how to work with a specific student; Madison reported that she never asks her questions pertaining to content, and this same comment held true for Sue as well.

Mary, who indicated that her mentor was easily accessible, stated, "I usually text her or e-mail her, and I would say it takes her only a couple of hours to get back to me." Lisa described her access when there is a question, "Usually I'll just stop by on my prep, and if she's there, she'll try to answer it right then." She indicated that if her mentor is busy, she usually responded by the end of the day. In regard to the content of the conversations, it was reported that in the beginning of the year, there was a need to discuss and get advice about student behaviors and

classroom management, but that as the year progressed, questions about topics, such as formal assessments surfaced. Like Lisa, Anne described good access to her mentor. When she needed to make contact with her mentor, an e-mail was sent, and there was an immediate response. Anne shared an example of this describing a problem with a teacher who shared her room who sold candy during class. Her mentor gave her advice on how to handle the situation in a politically correct way. She went on to state, "Sometimes she's just there to let me vent because there's nothing I can do."

Debbie indicated that the main mode of communication was e-mail, since her mentor taught in a different building. If a face-to-face meeting was needed, Debbie reported that they had to wait until Thursdays, which was their scheduled meeting time, unless it was an emergency. In terms of the content of the conversations, Debbie stated, "Sometimes it's behavioral. There are a lot of behavioral issues in the district, and some things are just about grades, you know, curving, you know." Debbie also indicated that at times it is difficult to have contact with her mentor, since her mentor is the district testing coordinator. Anne indicated that their meetings are approximately one hour and are in a place that allows for privacy.

Half of the participants utilized e-mail as a way to communicate with their mentors. All of the participants reported that their mentors have been responsive to their questions to some degree with generally quick response times. Other than one participant, who conveyed that the mentor only responds to e-mails some of the time, and one that reported that the information received was not very useful, the participants reported that for the most part their concerns are addressed.   Five of the six participants alluded to the fact that their communication was primarily about behavioral issues; with one participant stating that behavior management is the only area in which the mentor seemed to be helpful.

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Question 10 asked the participants to describe a typical mentor meeting. Debbie and Anne reported having participated in formal meetings lasting from 10 minutes to 1 hour. Both of these participants reported private meetings where strategies were discussed and resources were incorporated. Sue stated that the meetings are "very informal - sometimes there in the hall, sometimes at lunch, sometimes in the morning, or sometimes in the office." There were no set times for them to meet. Mary stated that her interactions were generally informal and occurred before or after school or at any other time that was convenient for both of them.

Madison indicated that meetings were need-based and held in her mentor's room. Lisa indicated her mentor tries to make contacting her easy. Her mentor is a coach and had a private office so she had a place where they could speak privately. Typically the meetings were about 10 minutes, but they could be as long as 45 minutes. The content focused on a myriad of different issues, and they use online resources to help find effective classroom strategies.

Debbie's scheduled meetings on Thursdays were sometimes cancelled because of her mentor's responsibilities as the testing coordinator of the school. Debbie also described the district meetings:

> If I have an issue that took place or story to tell her, I tell her. Sometimes, we'll
> have to fill out forms, "applying," "emerging," I don't know what they're called.
> I have to read a statement and tell her if I'm emerging.

Half of the participants reported that their meetings with their mentors were informal, while the other three reported meetings that are more structured. The three participants who indicated that their meetings were of a more formal nature, also reported that their meetings can last up to an hour in duration. The mentees reported appreciating when their meetings were held in a private space.

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Mentor Characteristics

Question 16 asked the participants how their mentor's background in education affected their mentoring relationship. Of the six interview participants, Madison, Lisa, Debbie, and Anne indicated that their mentor's background in education affected their mentoring relationship, while Sue and Mary said it did not have an impact. All four participants who reported a positive connection described the benefit of having a mentor in the same content area. Lisa further stated, "She was experienced with my grade level, so we were able to relate on a lot of different things."

Debbie indicated that her mentor's background in education did impact her mentoring relationship adversely, because her mentor taught in a different content area and at a different grade level than she did. Specifically, Debbie stated, "I can't relate to some of the things she says because she's elementary, and a lot of time elementary teachers don't have the same outlook as middle or high school teachers, you know." Debbie also conveyed that the complexity of her subject, high school mathematics, is very different from the mathematical concepts taught by elementary teachers.

Sue suggested that her mentor's background in education had not affected her relationship with her mentor. "I have a stronger personal relationship with her than I do a professional one." Mary conveyed that her mentor's background in education did not affect the relationship. She indicated that she did not really give consideration, or care, what her mentor thought or was doing. Mary felt that she had the requisite skills or knew how to get those skills to survive on her own without the intervention of a mentor.

Question 11 asked the participants to describe the perfect mentor. The participants reported relational characteristics as well as skills and behaviors that were important to making a mentoring relationship effective. Several of the mentees, including Sue, were emotional when

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responding that this was a very important issue to them. In fact, Sue appeared to be extremely

emotional and upset when describing what she perceived the perfect mentor to be.

> Maybe I have too many expectations, but this is it . . . it's so laughable what my perfect
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> mentor is, a person who says here's what you need to do. Do this thing, then if that
>
> doesn't work, then do this thing.

Sue stated that she did not necessarily have the skills necessary to come to a resolution of issues

and/or problems on her own. Sue also expressed how disenchanted she was with the teaching

profession in general stating, "I wasn't expecting that about teaching; I was expecting to have

support, and that's what drove me to teaching."

Madison stated that easy access to the mentor is very important to her. When asked what

her perfect mentor would look like to her, she stated, "Somebody that is available. I would

prefer, like I was lucky enough to have at least the same lunch, same prep, that they're in contact

with each other, and somebody who has experience." Madison went on to declare that she was

very bothered by the fact that she knew mentors who did not meet her expectations as to what a

perfect mentor should be and further stated, "Somebody who knows what they're doing and has

no/low behavioral issues in their classroom." Like Madison, Debbie indicated someone who

worked in the same building and had the same academic discipline. She also wanted someone

who could give good advice and be considerate and trustworthy.

Mary indicated that she thinks the perfect mentor would be someone who reaches out to

his/her mentee in the beginning of the school year. She stated, "They should be able to know

you're not going to know certain things so they should anticipate that and seek you out and not

have you always seek them out." Mary expressed that she would have liked to have someone

who was of assistance when it came to when the deadlines were to complete report cards and the specific required format, as well as to have someone who has good organizational skills.

Lisa suggested that it would have been helpful to have a mentor to meet with on her very first day. She described:

> The perfect mentor, I guess, would always have an answer to your question, would be able to anticipate issues or problems you might have. After working with you for a little bit of time and getting to know you, and someone who, you know, motivates you and makes you feel confident, as a teacher.

Anne responded that she had the perfect mentor. "She's (her mentor) totally it." When probed about the specific elements of the perfect mentor, Anne added that she wanted someone who was, "attentive, extremely knowledgeable how the school runs and the people who run it, thoughtful, takes her job very seriously, responsible, dedicated; all of those things."

When asked at the end of the interviews if they had any additional comments, three mentees emphasized that having a motivated mentor who wanted to be a part of the program was important. "Try to get mentors who really want to be doing it, not people who want to get paid an extra $1,000.00." One noted, "I see that people get matched up just because that the only mentor-and that because that's who's available."

Novice teachers described desiring a mentor who is easily accessible especially at the beginning of their experience. In addition, novice teachers wished for mentors who are knowledgeable about how the school works and caring, motivating, and trustworthy. They wanted mentors who would understand the challenges of a new teacher, avoid being judgmental, and build their self-efficacy beliefs. Several participants implied they needed specific, detailed advice that was directive rather than exploratory. The rigor of facing challenging conditions as a

novice necessitated a "do this" approach rather than a "what would you like to think about trying" perspective.

Effectiveness of Mentoring Experience

Question 12 asked the participants their perception of the effectiveness of their mentoring experience. Of the six interview participants, Sue, Mary, and Debbie indicated that their overall mentoring experiences were not good. When Debbie was queried about her mentoring experience, she asked, "Can I say it on a scale of 1-10?" After being told that this was acceptable, Debbie stated:

> I would say around a three or a four. I think it's a waste of time, personally. If you're a good teacher, you're a good teacher, and you'll figure out how to get through the day without having someone to cry to.

Throughout the interview process Debbie declared that one should be self-sufficient. She further stated that if a good person is there, available, and willing to help, that is great, but if not, it is up to the individual to work it out on his/her own.

Sue also stated that she did not have a good mentoring experience overall. Having pursued another career path prior to enrolling in the alternate route program, Sue expected the other teachers to be caring and reach out to help new ones. She was disappointed to discover that the level of support found in the teaching profession was not much different from the business world. Finally, like Debbie and Sue, Mary indicated that overall her mentoring experience had not been very helpful. Throughout the interview, however, Mary reiterated several times that she is an independent individual who usually can handle things with little to no assistance, so the mentoring relationship did not have much impact on her teaching experience.

Lisa and Anne indicated that their mentoring experience was helpful, while Anne described her experience as "tremendous." Lisa stated, "If I didn't have my mentor, I don't know whom I would have gone to for my questions or issues, or problems." Lisa went on to state that everyday logistical issues, such as the process for receiving paychecks or the scheduling of meetings, were areas that her mentor helped her with.

> My mentor, luckily, you know, she's easy to get along with, and she's pretty accessible, as far as, you know, because my prep changes on a day-to-day basis, and I never really have an issue trying to find her or to get in touch with her.

Although Madison related that her mentoring experience was somewhat helpful, she had a major issue with paying for the services that she is received. She stated:

> I don't think that her services are worth $1,000.00. I think I could have figured some of that stuff out from her anyway or from my colleagues anyway. To me, our relationship is what I always talk with any of my colleagues, not specific, like you deserve $1,000.00 for this.

Madison indicated that she had a conversation with her mentor concerning the fee, and her mentor stated to her that they felt guilty for taking the money. Madison also stated that the money for the mentors is taken out of their paychecks, so payment was by no means discretionary. Like Madison, Anne stated during the course of the interview that she was not happy with having to pay for the services, despite being happy with the services received.

When asked if they had any additional comments at the conclusion of their interviews, Madison posed that the mentoring experience works for some, but not for all. "I think that mentoring, overall, is a good thing, but I personally think it only works for certain people. I've seen it work negatively in more people around me than myself, like I was lucky enough,

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But . . . ." She emphasized that the mentoring relationship should not be a "one size fits all;" mentors need to meet their mentees where they are in terms of their ability or need, or the experience could actually be detrimental.

Three of the six participants reported being pleased with their mentoring, and three described not having a satisfactory mentoring experience overall. Two participants, one with an ineffective experience and one, who reported a very positive experience, emphasized that they were not happy with having to pay for their mentor's services.

<center>*Impact of Mentoring Experience*</center>

Attitude Toward Teaching

The quantitative data demonstrated that many of the participants had days when they did not enjoy teaching. To probe that further, during the interviews the researcher asked the participants how the mentoring experience affected their attitude toward teaching. The participants' perceptions of the impact varied widely. Sue indicated that her attitude toward teaching had been affected in an adverse way. She stated, "It's not good. I've been thinking, lately, that maybe, perhaps I need to find a third career." Sue also conveyed that she was terribly disillusioned, upset, and frustrated with the current economic environment where jobs are difficult to obtain. Sue elaborated that school budgets are being drastically reduced, and this has made it very difficult to obtain a teaching position. The researcher observed that Sue's voice became low, subdued, and somewhat melancholy after her initial outburst.

Madison quickly answered, "I don't think it really made a huge difference." The researcher observed that Madison appeared very nonchalant making gestures with her hands as she responded. Debbie and Mary stated that the mentoring experience had "no impact" on her attitude toward teaching. Mary described herself as being determined to work through any

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problems, challenges, and obstacles that occurred. When specifically asked about how the mentoring experience affected her attitude toward teaching, Mary responded with, "I don't think it's affected my personal attitude toward teaching. I'm just as motivated to be a teacher as before." Mary indicated that she was envious because of others who appeared to have a special bond with their mentors and described feeling as though she was "gypped".

Lisa and Anne implied that their mentoring experience had a positive effect on their perception of teaching. Lisa indicated that the poor mentoring experience made her stronger by allowing her to seek answers and come to solutions on her own. Lisa also stated that her mentor repeated several times that the following year would be better. Anne indicated that because of her mentoring experience she learned a lot about teaching in a public school setting. "It gives me what I think is a very realistic perspective of what to expect while teaching, dealing with the system." Anne also conveyed that it is not only important to know the systems and protocols of the school but to take them seriously. Anne stated, "I learned that it is paramount to stay focused on why am I here, who are my students, and what do I need to get through the day on my job." In her final comments of the interview, Anne emphasized that a new teacher should take his/her role seriously realizing that the beginners have much to learn.

Three of the six participants reported that their mentoring experience had no effect on their attitude toward teaching. One participant indicated it was helpful in terms of navigating the bureaucracy, and one participant indicated it affected her in a positive way and was grateful for it. Finally, one participant's attitude toward teaching was adversely affected by their mentoring experience.

Effect on Teaching Behaviors

Question 14 asked the participants if their mentoring experience influenced their teaching practice. Madison, Debbie, and Anne reported that their teaching practice was not affected at all by their mentoring experience, while Mary and Lisa stated that their teaching practice had been influenced. Sue commented that she was unsure if her practices had been affected by the mentoring experience, but if they were, it was possibly concerning one variable, classroom management. Madison, who typically elaborated on her responses, said only, "not at all."

Mary indicated that her mentor influenced her classroom management methodology. "She did offer me some good advice on classroom management. She has a very strict outlook on classroom management, and so she has offered me some advice on classroom newsletters and classroom management techniques." These skills and techniques provided her with tools to deal with behavioral issues. She further explained, "She's definitely given me some pretty good ideas, varied activities to do with the kids."

Anne stated that her teaching practice was not affected by their mentoring experience, as she taught at the graduate level for years at a prestigious college. She described herself as being well versed in effective teaching practices.

Decision to Continue Teaching

Question 15 asked the participants how their mentors had affected their decision as to whether to return to the teaching profession next year. Of the six interview participants, only Anne reported not planning to return to her current position, and this was because she was informed that she would not be rehired. However, Mary, Debbie, Lisa, and Madison reported that their mentoring experience had no effect on their decision to return to the teaching profession the following year. Mary indicated that she would return the following year because

"I know I want to return to the teaching profession because I enjoy it." When Debbie was asked if her mentor affected her decision to return to teaching the following year, she explained, "It doesn't matter what she (my mentor) says. It doesn't really affect my decision. I love the people I work with, so I'll probably stay there next year." Debbie indicated that her current position in a low socio-economic, urban school is a good starting place and that the experience will afford her more opportunities in the future. Lisa described a similar perspective stating, "I don't think that she [my mentor] really affected my decision one way or another. I'm just, you know, in general, a very determined person, and I'm not going to be put off by some bad experiences I've had this year." After describing an incident when a chair was thrown at her by a student, Lisa explained that while she is willing to work in a very rough urban environment for a few years, as soon as she gains experience, she plans to move to a teaching position in a suburban district, where she perceives easier working conditions exist.

Sue suggested that her mentor was a negative influence in her decision-making, but that she would return regardless of how she felt about teaching and her particular setting because financially she had to return. "If I have more of a choice, I probably wouldn't, but again, I don't attribute that all to my mentor; some of it was disappointing, and it was saved only by the fact that she was a great person." Though Sue holds her mentor partially responsible for her disappointing year, she describes her mentor as a good person. She indicated that the structure of the induction program had more of an influence on her negativity than her actual experience, and asserted that had she been more confident and had there been more structure her teaching experience might have been different.

> If a teacher doesn't know what's going on, and the kids find out, oh, you're done. I don't
> fault her [my mentor] for that, but I just fault the situation, and I feel like if things had

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been done the right way and if my confidence was built up, my kids would behave differently.

Anne revealed that her mentoring relationship did affect her philosophic decision to return to public school teaching; however, she had already been informed by the administration that there would not be a position for her the following year. She stated that she would search for another vacancy in a public school and expressed appreciation toward her mentor:

She's given me a lot of tools to survive in the public school environment. I was used to working with very high-level music students for many years. She's given me tools that focus specifically on public education, and I have no problem continuing in public school."

There were varying responses concerning the mentoring experience's influence on the novice teachers' decisions to return to teaching in the same position. Four of the six participants reported that her mentor was a negative factor in the decision to return. Several variables, such as personal finances and the economic climate, self-efficacy beliefs, and positive experiences with other people, surfaced as important considerations. As the novice teachers described their decisions to return, they indicated that their initial teaching experience had been challenging and not always satisfying or successful. The mentoring experience had not been able to mitigate the obstacles to the level that the first year teachers would be able to describe teaching as fun or rewarding. This held true for all participants.

The Emergence of Themes

An analysis of the six in-depth interviews with novice teachers uncovered four themes, timing of support, communication, pragmatism in decision-making, and self-efficacy beliefs.

The themes emerged as a result of commonalities that developed over the course of answering the questions.

Importance of Support at the Beginning of the Teaching Experience

The first theme to surface from the interviews is that the beginning of the year was a disorganized, hectic, and challenging time for all the participants. Each novice teacher was placed in a classroom their very first day of teaching and expected to assume full-time teaching responsibilities. Madison stated:

> Just, I think, in the beginning of the year, her easing me in I think alleviated stress on my part, and I felt more comfortable going right into my classroom and getting started, versus, Oh, my Gosh, I'm a newbee, and you know, what do I do?

The novice teachers described experiencing unexpected difficulties and at times being overwhelmed. Lisa captured the feelings of the participants when she commented that it would have been helpful to have a mentor to meet with on her very first day. She described, "The perfect mentor, I guess, would always have an answer to your question, would be able to anticipate issues or problems you might have.

Frequent and Varied Forms of Communication

A second theme that surfaced was the benefit of strong communication including the need for clear communication channels, access to the mentors when they needed advice or support, and informal and formal meetings about particular issues, both logistical and instructional. The novice teachers wanted to be able to have quick access to their mentors whether face-to-face or electronically through e-mails and texting. They could clearly report how long it took for their mentors to respond to a communication. They wanted their mentors to

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not only listen to their issues but be able to discern what their actual problems were so solutions could be offered. Classroom management problems were clearly the most compelling and on-going topic that the mentees wanted to discuss with their mentors, and they described wanting help finding specific strategies that worked. In addition, they described wanting a more direct, didactic approach to developing strategies because of time restraints and urgency of the situations. They also wanted to have their mentors have the answers to logistical questions, such as where does a teacher find paper or how is equipment reserved.

The mentees wanted their mentors to act as though they were invested in them and their success. They had anticipated that their mentors would be advocates for the profession and were disappointed when they perceived that they did not actually care about the mentees' professional growth. The new teachers appreciated having both informal check-ins to see how they were doing and specific times to have meaningful discussions. The novice teachers articulated that they wanted mentors who were interested in them rather than the money they were paid to be a mentor. This held true even for one of the participants who had an excellent mentoring experience and thought her mentor was instrumental in her completion of her first year of teaching.

Pragmatism in Decision-Making

Most teacher candidates are asked in their initial interviews about why they want to teach. They typically answer, "I want to make a difference," or "I love children." However, when the researcher interviewed the novice teachers about their intent to return to their positions the following year, the comments had a different flavor altogether. One of the mentees, an elementary teacher, wanted to return to teaching because she enjoyed it, but was not sure there would be a position open. One of the mentees discussed the impact of economic issues on her

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decision to return. She said that she would not come back if she believed she had a choice, but she needed to financially. Two of the mentees expressed that they only intended to return to build their resumes so they could move to what they perceive as easier positions. One other is returning because she expressed that she likes being at school because of the positive social relationships with the other teachers. The sixth teacher had already received a notice of non-renewal. It became clear that the challenges of the first year had tempered the new teachers' initial idealism and excitement about making a difference.

Self-Efficacy

More than half of the participants reported that they were determined to be successful teachers. In fact, two of the participants alluded to the fact that they were going to be a success regardless of the actions or inactions of their mentors. One participant stated, "I know I want to return to the teaching profession because I enjoy it, but I don't think that she [the mentor] had anything to do with it or with the decision." When another participant was asked about her mentor's effect on her decision, she stated, "I don't think that she really affected my decision one way or another. I'm just you know, in general, a very determined person, and I'm not going to be put off by some bad experiences I've had this year." This resolute attitude seems to have a positive effect on the intention of novice teachers to persevere in the face of daunting challenges, and despite what they encounter; their positive "can do" attitude can have a dramatic influence on their desire to remain in teaching.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

This study's first research question asked whether the New Jersey mandate for an initial induction experience was being followed. Three participants indicated that they did not even

know what the 20-day initial mentoring experience or the Phase I-20 day intensive summer and first month support program were. After an explanation all six participants responded that they had a mentor assigned as required; however, they explained that they did not have the opportunity to participate in a variety of mentoring activities as outlined by the New Jersey alternate route new teacher protocol. Only one participant described having a mentor assigned who provided a significant amount of "in-school time" to the new teacher as outlined in the New Jersey protocol. All of the teachers assumed all the duties of an experienced teacher on the first day of the school and had varying levels of support from their mentors. Three of the mentees participated in the Phase I-20 induction program, one did not, and two began teaching after the school year started. These two seemed to have the least structured and supportive experience most likely because they fell outside the typical plan.

Question 1b asked if the initial induction experience had any effect on whether the mentees planned to return to teaching. The interview participants reported no effect. Their reasons for returning ranged from financial to enjoying teaching and the other adults in the school.

The second research question asked the mentees which elements of the mentoring experience that have been identified in the literature as being important did they believe to be effective, and if these elements had any effect on their decision to return to teaching. Mentees reported that they wanted the following characteristics in a mentoring relationship: comfort in speaking to their mentors about both professional and personal issues; someone who is available and is close by; and, who is familiar with or who has the same background as they do. In addition, the interviewees recalled, it was determined that novice teachers found it extremely beneficial to have someone who they could communicate with in a timely manner. This access

could include formal meetings, texting, e-mail and informal face-to-face interactions. The

novice teachers reported wanting individualized assistance, a trusting relationship, and a sense

that the mentors were invested in them personally and professionally. They believed that it

would be helpful to provide input as to who their mentors would be and to have had a chance to

develop a relationship with them prior to the beginning of their first day. However, there also

seemed to be a strong personality component when it came to their evaluation of their mentoring

experience and their decision-making about returning to teaching. A strong self-efficacy belief

that allowed the new teachers to persevere and overcome obstacles was an important factor in

their view of remaining in the profession.

The third question this study examined was whether the mentoring experience affected

the novice teachers' decision to return to teaching the following year. All the participants

indicated that the mentoring experience had no influence on their individual decisions to return

to teaching in their district the following year. It must be noted that, in one case, the decision is

beyond the control of the novice teacher as she was notified of her release at the end of the

current school year.

Summary of Findings

Analysis of the data from the questionnaires that were completed by 53 novice teachers

from low socio-economic, underperforming, urban districts in Northeastern New Jersey and the

six in-depth interviews of beginning teachers provided answers to the three research questions of

this study. The first question investigated the extent to which the existing protocol for teacher

mentoring of beginning alternate route teachers as established by the Department of Education in

New Jersey was being followed. The data showed that 20 of the respondents participated in a

Phase I-20 experience of formal training prior to the first day of teaching while 26 new teachers

indicated that they received an initial mentor for the 20-day induction period. Nineteen respondents specified that they had both, which is the intent of the regulations. However, 26 subjects responded that they had not participated in an induction program before teaching or were not assigned an initial mentor during their first 20 days of teaching. Only six mentees described having daily contact with their mentors during the initial 20 days of teaching, and 20-one beginning teachers had only occasional or no contact with their mentors. The quantitative data shows a lack of compliance regarding the intent of the initial induction mandate, since almost 50% did not participate in either option. Three of the beginning teachers who were interviewed reported participating in the Phase I-20 induction experience, and all described being assigned mentors. However, the two teachers who began after the school year started reported issues with connecting with their mentors and did not participate in a structured induction program.

Research Question 1 had two sub questions; the first asked what structures were utilized to provide induction experiences, and the second asked about the way the induction experience was structured and whether it had any effect on the novice teachers' decision to return to teaching. Both questions were answered by qualitative and quantitative findings. Quantitatively, the data indicate that participation in both the Phase I-20 induction program and mentoring during the initial induction period produced a high probability of the novice teacher returning. When the novice teacher was provided with no initial training at all, there was the highest probability that the novice teacher would return. Finally, having on-going support from a mentor lessened the probability that they would be unsure about returning to teaching. As to whether the mentoring experience had any effect on whether the first year teachers planned to return to teaching the following year, the quantitative data showed that almost one-half of the respondents

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took into consideration the quality of their mentoring program when making their decision as whether to return to teaching for a second year. However, when the novice teachers were interviewed, all stated that they are returning to teaching and that the mentoring experience, including the 20-day structure, had no effect on their decision whether to return to teaching or not. The qualitative data shows that the participants' financial need for a job, regardless of job satisfaction during their first year of teaching, as well as the participants' self-efficacy neutralized the impact of the induction program on their decision-making as to whether to return to teaching for a second year.

Research Question 2 asked about which elements of the prescribed mentoring program novice alternate route certification teachers perceive to be effective or ineffective and affect their decisions to return to teaching for a second year. From quantitative perspective new teachers found it effective to have frequent, meaningful mentor interaction, a comfort level speaking to their mentors both professionally and personally, trust in their mentors professionalism, and confidence that their mentors were able to provide them with useful information when asked. Mentees, however, did not find it effective to have mandated meetings that were not purposeful and relevant to their needs. Qualitative data showed that mentees want contact with and accessibility to their mentors. The mentees also want pertinent information based on their academic discipline, as well as the paperwork requirements due to their administrators. Mentees need to feel a level of trust and confidentiality in their interactions with their mentors. The novice teachers wanted concrete strategies for classroom management and discipline problems within their classrooms. Mentees found it effective if the mentor taught the same academic discipline or grade level that they did. The qualitative data showed that one-third of the participants felt that the mentoring program was ineffective in meeting the above-referenced

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needs; though these individuals indicated that they liked their mentors as people, they felt that their strong will to persist and succeed was sufficient for them to complete their first year. The quantitative data identified attributes that are supported by the qualitative data as effective elements of the mentoring program. The strongest relationship was with comfort in speaking with their mentor regarding professional issues, flexibility on the part of their mentors in meeting their needs, and trust in their mentors. More than 75% described the relationship with their mentor as "excellent," "very good," or "good." Based on the qualitative and quantitative data analysis, it can be concluded that good interpersonal skills, support based on need, availability, flexibility, and a mentor that teaches the same academic discipline or grade level are effective elements of the mentoring program as perceived by novice alternate route certification teachers. Ineffective elements of the mentoring program as perceived by novice alternate route certification teachers are having a mentor in name only and having a "one-size-fits-all program" that is not individually tailored to the mentee's needs.

Research Question 3 asked if novice alternate route certification teachers perceive that the mentoring programs that they participated in had any influence on their decision to stay in teaching for a second year and if the results differed based on gender or race. The qualitative data show that the novice alternate route teacher's participation in the mentoring program had no effect on their decision to return to teaching for a second year. Described as more important were the mentee's self-efficacy beliefs and situational variables, such as the economy and financial need. The quantitative data indicate that one-quarter of the respondents believed that their mentoring experience definitely had an effect on their making the decision to teach the following year. The impact was even lower with the novice teachers who were interviewed who reported no effect as it pertains to their decision to return for a second year.

Questions 3a and 3b were answered exclusively through quantitative data because the interview participants were all females and all Caucasian except for one possible minority member. The quantitative data showed no significant difference for teachers based on gender or minority status in regard to whether their mentoring experience influenced their decision to return to teaching in the next school year.

This mixed methods case study utilized a questionnaire and interviews to investigate the induction experience for novice teachers in low socio-economic, underperforming, urban schools. The mixed methods approach allowed for a deeper and expanded understanding of the mentoring experience for new teachers participating in the alternate route program working in low socio-economic, underperforming district located in northeastern New Jersey. Chapter 5 provides information about the implications of the findings, the limitations and delimitations of the study, and the recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this case study, which utilized a mixed methodological approach, was to look at the induction experience of alternate route teacher candidates teaching in low socio-economic, underperforming, urban districts in Northeastern New Jersey. The research addressed three major questions:

1. To what extent is the existing protocol for teacher mentoring of beginning alternate route teachers as established by the Department of Education in New Jersey being followed?

    c. In what way is the 20-day intensive, beginning alternative route teacher experience being structured?

    d. Does the way the 20-day experience is structured for the mentee have an effect on the decisions of the alternate route teachers to remain in teaching?

2. Which elements of the prescribed mentoring program do novice alternate route certification teachers perceive to be effective or ineffective and affect their decisions to return to teaching for a second year?

3. Do novice alternate route certification teachers perceive the mentoring programs that they participated in had any influence on their decision to stay in teaching for a second year?

a. Do the perceptions of the influence of the mentoring program on the decision to remain teaching of the novice alternative route teachers differ based on gender?

b. Do the perceptions of the influence of the mentoring program on the decision to remain teaching of the novice alternative route teachers differ based on race?

In order to reach findings of the questions, a questionnaire was administered to 53 novice teachers who were members of a cohort of alternate route candidates participating in a state approved, alternate route teacher preparation program located at a college in Northeastern New Jersey, and 6 in-depth interviews were conducted with members of the questionnaire participants. This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the findings from these instruments reported in Chapter 4, discusses the broader theoretical and practical implications of the findings, outlines the limitations of the study, and makes recommendations for further study as well as ways to implement the findings.

<div align="center">Summary of the Findings</div>

Discussion of Research Question One

From the comprehensive responses of the questions that were gleaned from both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher was able to answer the questions. In response to Question 1, the data showed that for many new alternate route teachers the state established protocol for induction was not being followed. Half of the respondents answering the questionnaire indicated that they had not participated in any type of initial induction program. Likewise, only half of the participants had been involved with Phase I-20 with just one having an initial mentor who appeared to follow the guidelines for the

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20-day program. When asked, all of the novice teachers reported being given a mentor at some point in the year; however, it took as long as three months for some to be assigned and more than 40% had infrequent contact or never met. Only one novice teacher of those interviewed had a mentor who was not a full-time classroom teacher and was able to devote significant time to supporting the mentee. Clearly, the mandate that beginning teachers who have not been part of a traditional teacher education program should be given intense support during the initial month of teaching is not happening consistently.

There may be many reasons why the mandate, which requires 70 to 90 hours of mentoring during the first month, is not being consistently met. It may be unrealistic when both mentee and mentor are full-time teachers facing the significant demands of initiating a new year. The first days of a school year are extremely important and can set the tone for the entire year. Novice teachers in the study described needing timely access to experienced teachers to help them cope with the rigors of a new career. The novice teachers wanted specific strategies and suggestions to help them with their problems and questions, as well as concrete expressions of interest in their well-being and daily success. The needs of many new teachers are not being consistently met.

Particularly interesting was that a specific group seemed to not be acknowledged when it came to the initial induction experience. Although the qualitative sample was extremely small, if a teacher was hired after the school year began, then the system seemed to break down. Mentor contact was reported as a difficult process with no formal opportunity to meet, and the novice teachers had no opportunity to participate in the Phase I-20 preparation program. Novices who began after the school year started need even more support as they establish themselves, and yet they appeared to have less.

Research question one contained two sub-questions. Question 1a asked what structures were utilized to provide induction experiences, and the second asked if the way the induction experience was structured had any effect on whether the novice teachers made the decision to return to teaching. Almost 38% of the respondents were involved in some level of the Phase I-20 preparation program indicating that some districts are taking advantage of the new modification to the induction protocol. Once they began teaching, the novice teachers described a variety of activities that took place during their first month ranging from about a third of them observing their mentors teaching to one-third collaborating with teachers other than their mentors. However, there was only limited participation in co-teaching experiences with their mentors, and only one reported working collaboratively with students on a project. One might assume that there are certain activities that would be beneficial for all new teachers to experience. However, based on the questionnaire results and the interviews, it appears that the initial induction experience was not thoroughly defined. Both the Phase I-20 activities and the support after school began did not seem to have specific goals that were transmitted or a consistent structure followed. It appears that clear guidelines as to activities to include in the induction experience did not exist or were not followed leaving the decision as to what activities to include up to the discretion of the mentor. For example, at the school level there appears to be no expectation that the novice teacher would observe a master teacher or that an expert teacher would demonstrate a lesson or activity that the novice would later teach; therefore, if the mentor did not feel comfortable or did not believe a particular activity was important, then it was not included. This made the experience dependent on the motivation, interests, and biases of the individual mentors. During the

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interviews, three mentees discussed a "check-off mentality" where they met together with their mentors only to document that they had met. There was no evidence of an accountability loop so mentors appeared to have complete autonomy in decision-making. This lack of richness of experiences may be true for a variety of reasons, including lack of training, time, motivation, or expertise.

Studies of new teacher attrition report that 9.3%-17% of teachers leave during their first year (Breaux & Wong, 2003), 25 % within the first 3 years, and 30% during the first 5 years (Curran & Goldrick, 2002). There are even higher rates of attrition in low socio-economic, underperforming, urban schools with one study reporting that 50% leave after one year (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, n.d.). Surprisingly, in this study 77% of new teachers indicated they would return to their current position the following year, 19% were unsure, and only 6% reported that they did not plan to return. Eighty-nine percent of the beginning teachers indicated that they intended to remain teaching for the foreseeable future, and they all concurred that they did not plan to continue teaching. The discrepancy in results between the two questions is perhaps related to whether the teachers were planning to seek another position in a different educational setting. This desire to remain in teaching held true regardless of the mentees initial induction structure. Of the six novice teachers interviewed, three experienced Phase I-20, and three did not but all stated that they would return. Based on the questionnaire, if the respondents participated in both Phase I-20 and had a special mentor during the initial induction period, there was an approximate 34% probability of the novice teacher returning. This most closely mirrored the intent of the state mandates. If the novice teacher was provided with no program, there was the

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highest probability at approximately 38% that the novice teacher would return. Finally, the data indicated that having on-going support from a mentor increased the probability that the novice teacher reported feeling sure about returning to teaching. It would appear that having a poorly developed and implemented program that does not meet the adult learner's needs is more detrimental than having no program at all. It seems that the already very busy novice teacher resented the time and energy that had to be expended to participate in a program that they perceived focused more on completing the required forms than having meaningful mentor/mentee interactions that focused on success. At times this feeling was strong enough to instigate a negative reaction toward the teaching profession, as teachers could feel that the time required of them was not a good investment of their time.

The structure of the 20-day mentoring experience seems to have virtually no effect on the decision of the interviewed alternate route teachers to remain in teaching. Study participants reported that they would be returning to teaching for a variety of reasons and felt that their induction experience had little or no effect on that decision. This would suggest that the support program for novice teachers needs to be thoroughly evaluated to determine better ways to meet the individual needs of the alternate route teachers. It is important to establish why the current protocol is not being consistently followed and whether the current protocol is congruent with novice teacher needs suggested in the literature.

Discussion of Research Question Two

Research Question 2 asked which elements of the prescribed mentoring program do novice alternate route certification teachers perceive to be effective or ineffective, and affect their decision to return to teaching for a second year. The findings of the second research question suggested that the novice teachers perceived relational elements as important. Both the questionnaire respondents and participants described an effective mentoring relationship as one that includes easy accessibility with multiple ways to contact the mentor. They described a mentor who cared about them and their chances of achieving success in the classroom. The novice teachers emphasized the need for mentors to be flexible and able to tailor their support sessions to the needs of the mentee. The new teachers wanted to develop a relationship with their mentors that were based on trust and the common goal of success in the classroom. The novice teachers seemed less concerned with most of the logistical elements but valued mentor knowledge especially in the area of classroom management. In many districts, the protocol for choosing mentors emphasizes seniority, convenience, and payment for service. These elements are not necessarily congruent with the characteristics that the beginning teachers in this study chose when describing the effective mentor, which was flexibility, access, communication in varied forms, and comfort level of communication

Discussion of Research Question Three

The third research question asked if novice alternate route certification teachers perceive the mentoring programs that they participated in had any influence on their decision to stay in teaching for a second year, and if there was any differentiation based on gender and race. The questionnaire responses showed that only one-quarter of the

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respondents' decision-making was definitely affected by their mentoring. All the participants reported that participation in the mentoring program had no impact on their decision to return to teaching for a second year. Based on the qualitative findings, there appears to be a number of more compelling reasons why the novice teachers are deciding to return. They described a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, including financial challenges, qualities of self-efficacy, resilience, and persistence, and the belief that if they can gain experience, they would then have better opportunities available to them so they could apply to what they perceived to be easier positions in wealthier, suburban districts. Generally they did not describe mentoring relationships that were strong, meaningful, or that extended beyond the required work; therefore, the lack of a positive relationship between the mentoring experience and the decision to return to their schools the following year is not surprising. In fact, questionnaire respondents indicated that more than one-third never met their mentor throughout the entire year.

Two research sub-questions asked if there was any difference in frequency of response based on gender and race, and to whether the mentoring program that the novice teacher participated in affected his/her decision to return for a second year. In both cases there was no significant difference. Quite possibly this is a result of the unusually high rate of retention for all respondents. As part of the interview protocol, the researcher could not answer the question due to lack of participation by males or representation from a minority group.

The findings of the three research questions highlight a need for a thorough evaluation of the induction program including the year-long mentoring system. The high percentage of novice teachers in this study who reported that their mentoring program

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had no effect or a detrimental effect on their decision to return to teaching in the future demands an examination of the current program to determine whether these programs are irrelevant with this population, inadequately structured, should be optional, or have just been poorly implemented. The cost of these programs makes this review imperative.

Theoretical Implications

The findings from this study provide support for earlier studies; yet there is some dissonance with previous research. This study's findings are consistent with the work of Barclay, et al. (2007), which indicated that teachers often struggle on their own because their mentors have their own full-time teaching responsibilities and are unable to spend the time with their mentees that is needed. This study also supports Brown and Wynn (2007) and Ingersoll and Smith (2004) who found that frequent communication and support are very important components when teachers begin their careers. Hersh, Strout, and Snyder (1993) reported that teachers could benefit from having full-time mentors, especially at the beginning of their teaching experience. The findings from the above referenced studies are consistent with this study, which reported that novice teachers wanted easy access to their mentors especially at the beginning of the year. The novice teachers commented that the particular position of the mentor was not as important as their ability to free themselves to be there when they were needed. Finally, this study's findings of the observed pathways in Research Question 1 analysis, are congruent with the studies of Bullough (2005), McCann, Johannessen, and Rica (2005) that recommended it may be better to have no program at all, rather than one where the needs of novice teachers are not being met.

Research Question 2 asked which elements of the prescribed mentoring program do novice alternate route certification teachers perceive to be effective or ineffective and affect their decisions to return to teaching for a second year. Mentees view many things as effective, such as flexibility, time to meet with their mentor, a level of trust and understanding, and the ability to access their mentor. Mentees do not like a program designed where there is no adherence, and they do not like a "one size fits all approach when it comes to what they need."

The quantitative and the qualitative data from this study corroborate some elements that have already been recommended in the literature. Both the questionnaire respondents and the interview participants described wanting to feel as though they had accessibility and regular mentor interaction, a factor reported by Brown and Wynn (2007) and Ingersoll & Smith (2004) in their studies. Novice teachers also described the need for their mentors to have strong interpersonal skills and to be able to trust them and their ability to keep conversations confidential. This supports the work of Bullough (2005), Osgood (2001), Sacks and Wilcox (1984) who also found that relational skills were important. However, the recommendations that other researchers have suggested, such as utilizing retired teachers (Hammer & Williams, 2005; Sacks & Wilcox, 1984), has been denied by the state as a conflict with pension-receiving. The findings of this study do support the need for mentors with adequate time and flexibility of schedule. The benefits of another state requirement that mentors need to have at least three years of experience that was reported by Carter (2004) seemed less important to this particular research population. Experience was not perceived to automatically bring expertise. More important to this population was effectiveness on the part of the mentor at knowing how

to manage a classroom and being a resource for strategies to engage students. Finally, the novice teachers wanted someone savvy or political who knows how to navigate the system and meet the logistical requirements (Freedman & Appleman, 2008). This fact was corroborated by the responses of one participant.

Research Question 3 examined whether the mentoring program had any effect on whether the novice teachers decided to return to teaching the following year. In terms of the overall protocol of the mentoring of beginning alternate route teachers, all were assigned a mentor. All interview participants were meeting with their mentors at the time of the study, but one-third of the respondents in the questionnaire reported that they had not met at all. Having a quality mentor, where frequent contact is adhered to, as part of a comprehensive induction program can have an effect on teacher attrition (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). This is especially so in low socio-economic, underperforming, urban environments which have a plethora of additional challenges. Strong mentors can help alleviate and ease these challenges (Easley 2006; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Although many of the mentees in this study did not describe their mentoring relationships as meaningful, they did report additional challenges because of the environment. Therefore, this study is consistent with a study of a similar population of 110 novice teachers, which indicated that 62% of an alternate route training group decided to remain teaching despite their program (Easley, 2006). This pattern may suggest that alternate route candidates have stronger self-efficacy based on their life experience than traditionally educated teachers in their early 20s.

Practical Implications and Recommendations for Implementation

This study has initiated practical recommendations for change based on the needs of the particular population. The findings from Research Question 1 suggest the way that mentors are currently selected needs to be evaluated. The novice teachers from this study emphasized the importance of relational skills. A process that allows the administrators to screen for interpersonal skills rather than merely using seniority as the primary factor would be important. In addition, the reasons behind a teacher's willingness to mentor a new teacher should be explored, as interest in the new teacher's success rather than money paid to be a mentor may be a critical element. Finally a training program for mentors is critical to improving the first phase of the mentoring experience for the novice teacher. Mentors should have designated time to plan meaningful activities, develop conflict resolution skills and strategies, and role-play common problematic situations.

The data suggest that there are many variables that can affect a new teacher's decision to remain in teaching. This study found that new teachers can have a negative mentoring experience and induction period and still decide to remain in teaching, and that novice teachers can have a poor teaching experience and still return. Financial need, a limited job market, and strong persistence and resilience may play a role in a teacher's decision to remain in teaching. This scenario is extremely problematic and can have riveting negative consequences. It would be detrimental to have teachers remain in the classroom when they do not want to be there. This discord between teacher need and want could translate into a negative effect on student achievement.

Two topics, behavior management and navigating the system of a public school district, surfaced as important for most new teachers. However, there seems to be a need

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for tailoring the mentoring program to the individual needs of the novice teacher. The needs for novice teachers can vary considerably, and there must be flexibility to spend more time on one topic and less on others if the novice teacher does not need help in that area. For example, some novice teachers, as noted in the current study, have a high level of perseverance and intrinsic motivation, and may need different kinds of suggestions and support than those who are not as confident. In addition, a majority of these novice teachers have had no classroom teaching experience, so their first days can be pivotal points in determining if they did in fact make the right decision to become educators. Since, many of these individuals bring to teaching varied experiences and training, they often have much to offer. An example would be an individual who worked as an actuarial for a large company for many years and knows how to analyze numbers, passed several qualifying exams, and decided to become a math teacher through the alternate route process. Though there is no guarantee that their experience would translate to good teaching, they would in fact have the content area background to disseminate to the students, and the experience to connect the theoretical to the practical providing relevance for learning (Nagy & Wang, 2007; Quartz, Thomas, Anderson, Masyn, Lyons, & Olson, 2008). Having someone work with the novices on pedagogical skills and giving them suggestions concerning classroom management could make the difference between a teacher who loves teaching and stays and someone who decides they have made the wrong decision and leaves the profession.

It is imperative for districts to adhere to the state guidelines as they pertain to the training of alternate route teachers, and that there be continual follow through to ensure it is in fact occurring. A hands-on accountability system where principals observe and

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interact with mentors and mentees would challenge mentors to engage their mentees more meaningfully. In addition, novice teachers entering into an alternative route program need to be aware of the mandated structure. During the study the researcher discovered that many of the novice teachers were unaware of the components of the initial induction experience and the mentoring hourly requirements.

For those alternate route teacher candidates who make the decision to teach in an urban low socio-economic, underperforming, urban environment additional challenges, such as how to deal with low parental involvement, high absenteeism, and a general lack of interest on the part of the student when it comes to learning, may exist (Ingersoll & Smith 2004;Tillman, 2005; National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, n.d.). Low socio-economic environments have a large percentage of alternately certified teachers (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000). These beginning teachers need sustained assistance from their mentors. In addition, increased attention on the needs of novice teachers who begin after the school year starts is critical. A specific protocol for those who start after the first day of school would be beneficial. This protocol would need to include face-to-face interaction and the assignment of experienced mentors who have proven to be effective, need to be considered.

From a practical perspective the training of new teachers can be extremely costly to school districts (Barnes, et al., 2009; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). At the time of the current study, the overall economic conditions of New Jersey and the nation are challenging, and it is a time in which local school districts are struggling to fill their budget shortfalls. This is also tempered with a citizenry in the state of New Jersey, who at the time of the study is disenchanted with public education and

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looking for ways to save money. Improving the quality of the first year support

experience for new teachers, especially in the urban corridors where the majority of the

low socio-economic, underperforming schools are located might have a positive impact

on productivity.

<div align="center">Limitations of the Study</div>

Though the researcher had anticipated some limitations in the methodology of

chapter three, there were additional limitations after the completion of the study. The first

and most significant limitation of this study was that the researcher was unable to

examine the perspective of the mentors of alternate route teachers who work in low

socio-economic, underperforming, urban schools located in Northeastern New Jersey.

The researcher was unable to gain access to mentor teachers after exploring several

channels. There was a sense of apprehension on the part of the novice teacher to provide

their mentors with a letter of invitation to participate in a focus group, and agents for the

New Jersey Department of Education stated they were unable to release the names of the

mentors. This limited the perspective to only that of the novice teacher. Overcoming this

variable could elicit more data that could be a benefit to novice alternate route teachers

working in these areas.

A second limitation is that interview participants may have filtered responses

because of concern that negative comments could get back to their mentors. Even though

the researcher took great care in explaining to the participants that all of the responses

would be held in strict confidence, the novice teachers exhibited noticeable anxiety when

they indicated they were not comfortable giving a letter to their mentors inviting them to

participate in a focus group.

A third limitation of the study is that the researcher could not control certain contextual variables, such as the current economic crisis. If the economy was better and economically feasible, an unsatisfying mentoring experience may influence the novice teacher to leave the teaching profession.

Finally, the questionnaire format limited the depth of information elicited as the questions were close-ended. In addition, some respondents seemed unaware of terminology utilized, such as "initial induction period" and requested clarifications from the researcher. Although the researcher took the time prior to the distribution of the questionnaire to explain the elements of the questionnaire to the respondents as a group, and also attempted to answer individual questions, he cannot be sure all of the respondents understood, thus causing them to answer questions inappropriately, and to draw conclusions about the first 20 days of teaching and its effect on whether they would return to teaching. The researcher recognizes this as a limitation, specifically with regard to the data collected from Item 4 which asked if the mentee was assigned a mentor during the 20 day period and Item 5 which asked how often the mentee met with their mentor respectively.

Delimitations of the Study

Completing the study in only low socio-economic, underperforming, urban schools in northeastern New Jersey limits the ability to generalize the conclusions. The needs of novice teachers in schools further away from the New York City metropolitan area may vary considerably. For example, one small city on the Pennsylvania/New Jersey border is classified as a low socio-economic population and is home to a low socio-economic, urban district, yet retains many qualities typical of a more rural area.

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Not all alternate route populations may respond as this one did. Further limiting the

ability to generalize to other populations is the small size of the group surveyed and

interviewed. Looking at other types of districts, may provide more generalized needs for

novice alternate route teachers wherever they may work.

A second delimitation of the study was the reliance on self-reported data. The

teachers were asked to indicate if they planned to return to their positions the following

year, and whether they planned to continue to teach for the foreseeable future. The study

did not include a longitudinal strand that followed the teachers over several years and

allowed for the documentation of actions.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Further Study

Procedural Adjustments

In order to have a deeper understanding of the early years of alternate route

teachers' careers, a longitudinal study that tracks their perceptions and attitudes over a

three to five year period would be advantageous. Almost half of the teaching force leaves

after five years (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; National Comprehensive Center for Teacher

Quality, n.d.). Therefore, knowing whether those who leave teaching who work in urban,

low socio-economic areas in northeastern New Jersey have a higher or lower retention

rate than the general teaching force is important to uncover. In addition, how the needs

of alternatively trained teachers are the same or different from traditionally prepared

teachers would allow for better recommendations for programmatic support.

A second recommendation is to utilize an in-depth case study approach which

would have a researcher shadowing several novice teachers throughout their first year of

teaching. This methodology could add great insight as to the thought process of the novice teachers and could help identify the fluid changes that occur in terms of the growth and needs of new teachers.

Replication with a New Sample

It would be beneficial to broaden the characteristics of the population from this study. A recommendation would be to replicate this study with teachers who teach in high socio-economic areas, who work in low socio-economic rural and suburban areas, and who work in high performing rural, suburban, and urban areas. The purpose would be to determine if there are similarities between the needs and perceptions of teachers who are employed in low socio-economic districts versus those who work in suburban and rural districts that are considered higher economic areas. As part of the interview phase of this study, the researcher met with an individual who identified himself as working in a low socio-economic environment. When the researcher verified this, the person's responses were not included in the data because he did not work in an identified low socio-economic school. Before discarding the data, the researcher discovered a pattern of discrepancy between that respondent and the others. Therefore, the researcher recommends a comparative study isolating the demographic variable--urban, suburban, and rural--and a second study that isolates the socio-economic variable. A second study could isolate the difference in structure variable. This would allow the researcher to compare needs and programs to determine if any patterns exist. A third study could include open-ended responses in the questionnaire allowing the respondents to elaborate and provide detail in their answers. This would allow the quantitative data to give more information.

A third study that examines the needs of teachers who are new to public education but have some experience teaching in other settings would be beneficial. The current training program enacted in New Jersey lowers the hour requirement, but does not identify a protocol that addresses the experience the teacher's have or their particular needs. It is also important to look exclusively at the attrition rate of these candidates, as they are already coming to the classroom with experience, and it would be a benefit to have them remain in public school education, if they have prior positive observations and evaluations.

New Areas for Further Study

The current study uncovered data that teachers may remain in teaching even if they have an underlying desire to leave and are not completely happy with the teaching profession. After discovering this unexpected outcome, the researcher thought it would be prudent to conduct a case study that examines the teaching behaviors of educators who stay although they report not enjoying teaching. In a time where accountability is increasing, and successful pupil outcomes are at the forefront of American society, the impact of a teacher unhappy in his/her work should be analyzed and understood.

Summary

This study examined the induction experience of alternate route teacher candidates who teach in low socio-economic, underperforming, urban areas located in Northeastern New Jersey. The researcher utilized a mixed methods approach. This approach helped to draw broad conclusions and recommendations. Specifically, the quantitative inquiry included a larger pool of respondents, and with qualitative inquiry,

captured the human element with a small number of participants. It is clear that the structure, as designed is often not being adhered to, with half of the population from both a quantitative and qualitative perspectives not receiving their first phase of induction as designed and mandated by the state. The support structures are not impacting teacher attrition, which was lower than expected, and evidence suggests that teachers are remaining due to a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, such as the economy and strong self-efficacy beliefs.

Novice teachers found trust, confidentiality, mentor teacher accessibility and responsiveness, and comfort level with their mentor to be important components to an effective mentoring experience. This information is meaningful because districts and administrators can develop a profile to use when selecting mentors and provide training and guidelines for the mentor teachers to ensure that these characteristics are developed. Ineffective factors associated with new teacher mentoring include having a "one size fits all" approach where each person is treated in the same didactic way, and where the activities of a mentoring experience exist in name only and are not actually occurring. Having the knowledge of what works and what does not is important for the creation, implementation, and evaluation of teacher mentoring programs. Administrators need to consistently monitor the activities of the mentors and mentees, be an active presence during the induction program, and provide logistical support for activities, such as co-teaching that might need principal intervention to occur. This active accountability will strengthen the program and mitigate the finding that having a poorly planned implemented program is more detrimental than having no program at all.

Only a quarter of the quantitative respondents reported their mentoring program had a definite effect on their decision to remain in teaching. Another 8% stated that their mentoring experience most likely affected their decision-making. Though the nature of the instrument did not demonstrate if the experience was negative or positive, there is evidence of an effect as an effect was reported. None of the qualitative participant's decision to return to teaching the following year was affected by their mentoring experiences. They were returning even if they were not happy with their position or the teaching profession. This finding that teachers will remain teaching even if they are unhappy needs further study. There was no difference based on gender and race as to an individual's decision to remain teaching based on their overall mentoring experience.

The researcher examined the induction experience of alternate route candidates teaching in low socio-economic, underperforming, urban districts. Based on the literature, there was an expectation that the induction program would positively affect the decision-making of novice teachers to remain in the teaching profession. What the researcher found, however, was that the decisions to stay in teaching are not as affected by their induction experiences as they are by personal characteristics and contextual variables. The cost of beginning teacher induction programs is high and the benefits of a well-planned and implemented program have been documented to be significant. The current program for novice alternate route candidates teaching in low-socio-economic, underperforming, urban schools must be re-evaluated to see if the programs can be structured as designed, and if not, should there be a requirement to fulfill these obligations for new alternately certified teachers.

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APPENDICES

Alternate Route First Year Teacher Mentoring Experience Questionnaire

Mentee Questionnaire

Please take a few minutes to complete the following questions. Please put a check mark to the left of your response. Feel free to make any open-ended comments after any question or at the end of the form. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Demographic information:
   1. How would you describe your gender?
     ___a. Male ___b. Female ___c. No response__

   2. Do you identify yourself as a minority?
     ___a. Yes ___b. No

Initial Mentoring Experience:
   3. Have you participated in a Phase I -20-day induction experience as part of your alternate route program?
     ___a. Yes ___ b. No

   4. During your twenty-day induction were you assigned a mentor?
     ___a. Yes ___ b. No

   5. How often did you interact with your mentor during the initial induction period?
   ___ a. every day
   ___ b. twice a week
   ___ c. once a week
   ___ d. every two weeks
   ___ e. never
   ___ f. other _____

   6. What activities did you participate in after the initial induction experience? Check all that apply.
   ___ a. observed mentor teacher
   ___ b. observed other teachers
   ___ c. co-taught with mentor
   ___ d. collaborated with other teacher(s)
   ___ e. taught part of a lesson
   ___ f. planned activities/lessons
   ___ g. administered assessment(s)
   ___ h. assumed all the duties of a fully-certified teacher
   ___ i. other _____

Mentor Assignment:
   7. When was a mentor assigned to you?

___ a. before school began
___ b. the first day of school
___ c. the first week of school
___ d. the first month of school
___ e. other _____

8. Did you have input with regard to choosing a mentor?
    ___ a. Yes ___ b. No

9. Is your mentor a classroom teacher?
    ___ a. Yes ___ b. No

10. Is your mentor a retired teacher?
    ___ a. Yes ___ b. No

If your mentor is not a teacher, please skip to question 14.

11. Does your mentor teach the **same** content area or grade level that you do?
    ___ a. Yes ___ b. No

12. If your mentor does not teach the same content or grade level as you, does he/she teach a **related** one? (ie. Do you both teach elementary school or high
    school math?
    ___ a. Yes ___ b. No

13. Has your mentor been teaching for more than three years?
    ___ a. Yes ___ b. No

14. How frequently have you met with your mentor?
___ a. every day
___ b. twice a week
___ c. once a week
___ d. every other week
___ e. monthly
___ f. never
___ g. other

Mentoring Activities:
15. What activities have you participated in as part of your mentoring program since your initial 20-day experience? Check all that apply.
___ a. observed mentor teacher
___ b. observed other teachers
___ c. co-taught with mentor
___ d. collaborated with other teacher(s)
___ e. co-taught with teacher other than your mentor
___ f. attended a professional development program

___ h. other _____

Relationship with Mentor

16. Do you feel comfortable speaking to your mentor about professional issues?
___ a. always
___ b. usually
___ c. some of the time
___ d. never

17. Do you feel comfortable speaking to your mentor about personal issues?
___ a. always
___ b. usually
___ c. some of the time
___ d. never

18. Is your mentor flexible in terms of modifying his/her level of support based on   your particular needs?
___ a. always
___ b. usually
___ c. some of the time
___ d. never

19. Are you able to share with your mentor knowing that the discussion will be
    confidential?
    ___ a. Yes ___ b. No

20. Do you perceive your mentor as supportive in helping you to be a successful
    teacher?
    ___ a. Yes ___b. No

21. Would you describe your relationship with your mentor to be:
___ a. excellent
___ b. very good
___ c. good
___ d. poor

22. Did your mentor provide needed answers to pertinent information?
___ a. always
___ b. usually
___ c. some of the time
___ d. never

23. Would you describe your mentor as:
___ a. excellent
___ b. good

___ c. adequate
___ d. ineffective
___ e. unresponsive

Teaching Experience:
24. Do you enjoy teaching?
___ a. always
___ b. most days
___ c. occasionally
___ d. rarely or never

25. Does your district offer a program of professional development opportunities or a chance for further educational opportunities?
___ a. well-planned, consistent high-quality, congruent with school goals
___ b. planned, generally good, may or may not be congruent with school goals
___ c. scattered, infrequent, inconsistent in quality and purpose
___ d. not well-planned, infrequent, poor or fair quality, no relationship to goals
___ e. non-existent

26. Does your district offer a chance for further educational opportunities?
__ a. Yes ___ b. No ___ c. Unsure

27. How would you describe your school's culture of professional growth?
___ a. very supportive
___ b. supportive
___ c. neutral
___ d. not very supportive

28. Do you plan to return to your school next year?
___ a. Yes ___ b. No ___ c. Unsure

29. Do you plan to remain in teaching for the foreseeable future?
___ a. Yes ___ b. No ___ c. Unsure

30. Has your mentoring experience had any impact on your decision-making as to whether to continue teaching next year?
___ a. definitely
___ b. most likely
___ c. possibly
___ d. no

Comments:

Interview Questions

1. Describe the process that was used to match you to your mentor?   -- Probes:
   a. Were you asked for input about personality types and experience when making a match? If so, describe.
   b. Were you asked about areas of need? If so, describe.
   c. Were you asked about areas of expertise? If so, describe.
   d. Was your schedule referenced? If so, for what purpose?

2. Describe the timeline for the assignment of your mentor.

3. Describe your 20-day induction/mentoring experience.
   Probes:
   a. Describe any activities before the first day of school (Observing, small group discussions, problem-solving, e-mail connections, etc.).
   b. Describe activities that were helpful to you.

4. When did you begin your teaching?
   Probes:
   a. Did you do any co-teaching?
   b. Was there any demonstration teaching?

5. How has trust developed between you and your mentor during this experience?

6. What strategies has your mentored used to make you feel comfortable talking about the challenges of teaching?
   Probe: Which were effective? Not effective? Reasons why?

7. What strategies has your mentor utilized to support your teaching?

8. What strategies has your mentor utilized to support your professional growth?

9. Describe what happens when you have a question for your mentor?
   Probes:
   a. How is the question communicated?
   b. How long does it generally take to have an answer?
   c. What are the subjects/content (credentials, teaching advice, classroom management, etc.) of the questions?

10. Describe a typical mentor meeting.
    Probes:
    a. How long?

b. Where held?
c. How structured?

11.   Describe the perfect mentor.

12.   How effective has your mentoring experience been overall?

13.   How has your mentoring experience affected how your attitude toward teaching?

14.   How had your mentoring experience influenced your teaching practice?

15.   How has your mentor affected your decision as to whether or not to return to   the teaching profession next year?

16.   How has your mentor's background in education affected your mentoring relationship?

17.   Is there anything else that you would like to share about your mentoring   experience that could possibly help future participants?

APPENDIX C

Letter of Consent – Questionnaire

Dear Alternate Route Educator:

As a doctoral candidate enrolled in a collaborative delivery program between East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania, I am conducting research in fulfillment of a dissertation requirement. The purpose of the dissertation, *The Mentoring of Alternate Route Teachers in Low Socio-economic, Urban Districts in Northeastern New Jersey*, is to determine how the mentoring experience in these environments is structured, what elements are effective, and if the mentoring experience is having any effect on whether or not new teacher candidates remain in the teaching profession. Although there may not be a direct benefit to you, your contribution is important because the findings of this study could influence how alternate route program candidate mentoring is conducted in traditionally difficult-to-staff areas. Specifically, you are being asked to participate in taking a one-time questionnaire that will be given during a scheduled break during an alternate route class session at St. Peter's College. You may choose not to participate or withdraw from participation at any point with no repercussions.

This project has been approved by the East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. The IRB Administrator for East Stroudsburg University, Dr. Shala Davis, can be contacted at 570-422-5366 or SDavis@po-box.esu.edu if further clarification is needed or later questions about the protection of human subjects arise. In addition, as the primary researcher, I can be contacted by telephone at 973-727-5878 or by e-mail at SLocascio@njcu.edu to respond to any questions that you might have regarding the study itself. In addition, the chair of my committee, Dr. Andrew Whitehead, can be reached at 570-422-3356 to respond to any concerns regarding this study.

I am asking for your consent to participate in the administration of a one-time questionnaire about your mentoring experience. None of your identifying information will

be collected with the questionnaire, all data will be aggregated so that no one will be able to identify your individual responses, and all materials will be secured in a locked file cabinet that only the researcher has access to. Although I anticipate that there is no or minimal risk associated with participating in this study, there is the possibility that you could feel some anxiety related to assessing your career choice. Resource materials are available on the table at the front of the room if you are interested. Finally, you may withdraw from the study at any time with no repercussions.

I acknowledge that I received information about the research study, The Mentoring of Alternate Route Teachers in Low Socio-economic, Urban Districts in Northeastern New Jersey," have had time to review the materials, and had an opportunity to have any questions answered. I understand that the study will be examining how the mentoring experience in these environments is structured, which elements are effective, and if the mentoring experience is having any effect on whether or not new teacher candidates remain in the teaching profession.

Since current research indicates that beginning teacher attrition rates are a serious problem, this research can help establish ways to support and retain new teachers who are employed in low socio-economic, urban districts.

I, _____, hereby acknowledge my willingness to participate in this voluntary study. I realize I can withdraw from participation at any time.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

   I may be willing to participate in a follow-up interview about my mentoring experience. My contact information is:

Name: _____
Preferred Form of Contact:
        ___E-mail: _____
        ___Phone: _____

APPENDIX D

Letter of Consent - Interview

Dear Educator:

As a doctoral candidate enrolled in a collaborative delivery program between East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania, I am conducting research in fulfillment of a dissertation requirement. The purpose of the dissertation, *The Mentoring of Alternate Route Teachers in Low Socio-economic, Urban Districts in Northeastern New Jersey*, is to determine how the mentoring experience in these environments is structured, what elements are effective, and if the mentoring experience is having any effect on whether or not new teacher candidates remain in the teaching profession. Although there may not be a direct benefit to you, your contribution is important because the findings of this study could influence how alternate route program candidate mentoring is conducted in traditionally difficult-to-staff areas. It is anticipated that each interview will take approximately 60 minutes and the focus group discussion 90 minutes. You may choose to withdraw from participation at any point with no repercussions.

This project has been approved by the East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. The IRB Administrator for East Stroudsburg University, Dr. Shala Davis, can be contacted at 570-422-5366 or SDavis@po-box.esu.edu if further clarification is needed or later questions about the protection of human subjects arise. In addition, as the primary researcher, I can be contacted by telephone at 973-727-5878 or by e-mail at SLocascio@njcu.edu to respond to any questions that you might have regarding the study itself. In addition, the chair of my committee, Dr. Andrew Whitehead, can be reached at 570-422-3356 to respond to any concerns regarding this study.

I am asking your informed consent to participate in an interview or focus group discussion. No information collected will identify individual participants and there will be no repercussions in the event that you wish withdraw from the study. Furthermore, all

notes and recordings will be secured in a locked storage cabinet for three years after which they will be shredded.

I acknowledge that I received information about the research study, The Mentoring of Alternate Route Teachers in Low Socio-economic, Urban Districts in Northeastern New Jersey" and have had time to review the materials, and had an opportunity to have any questions answered. I understand that the study will be examining how the mentoring experience in these environments is structured, which elements are effective, and if the mentoring experience is having any effect on whether or not new teacher candidates remain in the teaching profession.

Since current research indicates that beginning teacher attrition rates are a serious problem, this research can help establish ways to support and retain new teachers who are employed in low socio-economic, urban districts.

I, _____, hereby acknowledge my willingness to participate in this voluntary study. I realize I can withdraw from participation at any time.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX E

Pilot Study Protocol

Part One: Letter of Consent

Dear Pilot Study Participant:

As a doctoral candidate enrolled in a collaborative delivery program between East Stroudsburg University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania, I am conducting research in fulfillment of a dissertation requirement. The purpose of the dissertation, *The Mentoring of Alternate Route Teachers in Low Socio-economic, Urban Districts in Northeastern New Jersey*, is to determine how the mentoring experience in these environments is structured, what elements are effective, and if the mentoring experience is having any effect on whether or not new teacher candidates remain in the teaching profession. Although there will not be a direct benefit to you, your contribution is important because the findings of this study could influence how alternate route program candidate mentoring is conducted in traditionally difficult-to-staff areas.

This project has been approved by the East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. The IRB Administrator for East Stroudsburg University, Dr. Shala Davis, can be contacted at 570-422-5366 or SDavis@po-box.esu.edu if further clarification is needed or later questions about the protection of human subjects arise. In addition, as the primary researcher, I can be contacted by telephone at 973-727-5878 or by e mail at SLocascio@njcu.edu to respond to any questions that you might have regarding the study itself. In addition, the chair of my committee, Dr. Andrew Whitehead, can be reached at 570-422-3356 to respond to any concerns regarding this study.

I am asking for your consent to participate in a pilot study of the instruments, questionnaire and interview and focus group questions, which will be used in the proposed research. Your feedback will allow this be a stronger study. Your identity will be confidential, and the researcher will use your feedback with the sole purpose of

revising the instruments. You may withdraw from the study at time with no repercussions.

I acknowledge that I received information about the research study, The Mentoring of Alternate Route Teachers in Low Socio-economic, Urban Districts in Northeastern New Jersey," have had time to review the materials, and had an opportunity to have any questions answered. I understand that this pilot study will be analyzing instruments developed to examine how the mentoring experience in these environments is structured, which elements are effective, and if the mentoring experience is having any effect on whether or not new teacher candidates remain in the teaching profession. By participating in this pilot study, you give permission to the researcher to use your suggestions to help improve the data collection instruments before proceeding with the formal study.

Since current research indicates that beginning teacher attrition rates are a serious problem, this research can help identify effective ways to support and retain new teachers who are employed in low socio-economic, urban districts.

I, _____, hereby acknowledge my participation in this voluntary study. I realize I can withdraw from participation at any time.

Signature: _____   Date: _____