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The Effects of Teacher Induction Programs on Teacher Retention in Early Childhood

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THE EFFECTS OF TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAMS ON TEACHER RETENTION IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

in

The School of Education

by
Heather Marie Reames
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	iv
ABSTRACT	v
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Problem	2
Statement of the Problem	7
Purpose of the Study	7
Significance of the Study	8
Research Questions	8
Hypothesis/Null Hypothesis	9
Research Design	10
Theoretical Framework	10
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations	12
Definition of Terms	13
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	15
Poor Work Conditions for Teachers	15
Lack of Respect for Teachers	15
Lack of Autonomy in the Classroom	18
Lack of Resources and Materials	23
Low Salary	24
Establishing an Effective Induction Program	25
Comprehensive Mentor Program	26
Administrative Support	30
Instructional Support	32
Professional Expectations	33
Professional Development	34
Best Practice in Survey Research	35
CHAPTER 3. METHOD	39
Appropriateness of Research Design	39
Research Design	39
Pilot Study	40
Setting and Participants	41
Instrumentation	42
Procedure	44
Data Processing and Analysis	45
Ethical Considerations	48
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS	50
Attrition	50
Poor Work Conditions	51
Retention	54
Induction Period	55
Mentorship	60

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION.....	66
Attrition.....	66
Work Conditions.....	66
Retention.....	67
Induction Period.....	67
Mentorship.....	70
Clinical Implications.....	72
Future Research.....	73
REFERENCES.....	74
APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE.....	81
APPENDIX B: PRE-SURVEY NOTIFICATION.....	96
APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM.....	97
APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL.....	99
VITA.....	100

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Attrition Rate Percentages of Surveyed Early Childhood Teachers	50
Figure 2. Percentages of Alternate Careers of the Surveyed Non-Practicing Teachers	51
Figure 3. Percentages of the Poor Work Conditions Existing in the Previous Schools of the Non-Practicing Teachers Surveyed.....	52
Figure 4. The Percentages of the Poor Work Conditions that Exist in Schools	53
Figure 5. The Percent of Frequencies of Non-Practicing Teachers Who had a Formal Induction Program.....	54
Figure 6. The Percent of Frequencies of Activities that Occurred During Both Practicing and Non-Practicing Teacher's Induction Period.....	55
Figure 7. The Percentage of Supports Given to Both Practicing and Non-Practicing Teachers During Their Induction Period.....	56
Figure 8. Percentage of Further Supports Given to Both Practicing and Non-Practicing Teachers During Their Induction Period.....	57
Figure 9. Greatest supports teachers received and things teachers wished they had during their first five years of teaching.....	59
Figure 10. The Percentage of Frequencies of Non-Practicing Teachers Who Had a Mentor	60
Figure 11. The Percentage of Supports Given to Both Practicing and Non-Practicing Teachers During a Mentorship	61
Figure 12. Participants That Identified as Having a Mentor, Both Practicing and Non-Practicing Teachers, Who Were Assigned Their Mentor Versus Those Who Chose Their Mentor	62
Figure 13. Percent of Mentor Meeting Frequencies	63
Figure 14. Participants That Identified as Having a Mentor, Both Practicing and Non-Practicing Teachers, Who Had Grade Level and Subject Area Match	64

ABSTRACT

Teacher retention has become an increasing problem in today's school systems. This vast amount of teacher turnover, or teachers leaving the field prior to retirement, is largely due to dissatisfaction with their jobs in the teaching field. There are a multitude of reasons why teachers become dissatisfied or frustrated with their jobs as educators, but it can be concluded that the initial reason for dissatisfaction in the field of education are the poor working conditions that exist for teachers (Halstead, 2013). Increased rates in attrition have also impacted the professional field of early childhood teaching. It is my objective to identify what aspects of the induction process, if any, are being implemented in early childhood classroom; as well as identifying the most beneficial aspects on teacher retention. A mixed method survey of a subset of 48 alumni from the LSU PK-3 program will be sampled using the online survey tool, Qualtrics, focusing on the teacher induction program. Data will be analyzed for trends related to teacher induction practices, as well as, most occurring environmental influences, in accordance with the literature in this area. Results will inform the field of early childhood education on practices that will contribute to keeping early childhood teachers in the classroom.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher retention has become an increasing problem in the United States school systems. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that of the approximately 419,000 new teachers will be hired in 2015, 40-50% will leave the field within the first five years (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). Estimates are more dire in urban schools, where it is anticipated that 50% will leave within just the first three years (Keilwitz, 2014). Estimates for preschool teachers suggest a turnover rate of 50% per year (Miller & Bogatova, 2009). Teacher attrition, or teachers leaving the field prior to retirement, costs the United States \$7.34 billion yearly (New York Times, 2011). Teacher turnover is largely due to dissatisfaction with their jobs in the teaching field (Strauss, 2012).

Teacher attrition is becoming a growing concern in today's school systems, and is something that needs to be addressed immediately (Halstead, 2013). The trend of increased rates in attrition has specifically impacted the professional field of early childhood teaching. The first few years of teaching, often referred to as the induction period, are critical for new teachers. Systematic programming, or formal induction programs, during this entry period to the profession has been documented in the literature to aid in teacher retention (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). Additionally, the literature has also noted that, even in the absence of a formal induction program, teachers who receive support fair better than those who do not (Strong, 2006). The purpose of the present study is to investigate the experiences of alumni from an early childhood undergraduate program to determine supports available during their induction period.

There are a multitude of reasons why teachers become dissatisfied or frustrated with their jobs as educators, one of which may be poor working conditions that exist for teachers

(Halstead, 2013), such as an overall lack of respect for teachers (Lynch, 2014), lack of teacher autonomy in the classroom (Walker, 2015), lack of materials and resources (Hudson, 2012), and a low salary (Bacolod, 2007). Having to perform in these in the face of poor work conditions may eventually cause teachers to leave the education workforce.

Background of the Problem

Poor Work Conditions. Poor work conditions are a contributing factor to problems with teacher retention. Recent research (Potemski & Matlach, 2014) suggests that there are four main components that lead to poor work conditions for teachers (a) lack of respect, (b) lack of autonomy in the classroom, (c) lack of materials and resources, and (d) low salaries. When teachers experience poor work conditions, morale is decreased; leading to dissatisfaction in the work place. Teacher burn-out is a result of persistent feelings of dissatisfaction, which then leads to teachers leaving the field of education (Halstead, 2013).

Lack of respect. A decline in respect for teachers has become an increasing issue since the early 1980's, when the report, *A Nation at Risk*, was published (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). This report suggested reforms to improve the alleged failing school system and society as a whole. This report, and the reforms that followed, led to an overall decline in the sense of respect and confidence toward the field of education, and more specifically, teachers. The result was a decline of respect from the public, administrators, parents, and even children (Lynch, 2014). The lack of respect was shown through a lack of support for teachers (American Federation of Teachers, 2010); which may contribute to the stress teachers feel in the classroom.

Lack of autonomy. Teachers also experience lack of respect through the loss of autonomy in the classroom. This communicates a lack of faith in the teacher's ability to plan

and implement effective instruction. Policies and mandates have removed teacher's ability to make daily classroom decisions (Walker, 2015).

Much of the standardization of the classroom curriculum has likely been in response to the influx of new teacher hires from fast-paced alternate certification programs. Recruits of these fast-paced alternate certification programs are college graduates in a discipline other from education, who take summer coursework combined with individual and team coaching across a one-year period (Teach for America, 2016). The philosophies of these programs appear to be that these candidates have content knowledge, needing only teacher training to be effective in the classroom. This influx of fast-track alternative certification teachers has lead to teachers who need more regulation and direct supervision from higher authorities (Friedrich, 2014).

Management of these regulations and supervision have resulted in not only less autonomy in the classroom, but also increased demands on teachers (Allegretto, Corcoran, & Mishel, 2011). These increased demands include scripted curricula, testing, and documentation, which consume both time and resources. Teachers report not receiving support with these additional demands, which contribute to feeling overwhelmed and stressed (Milner, 2013).

Lack of materials & resources. Supports can be both human and material in nature; teachers were not given the time to collaborate with other teachers or other faculty. They also report lacking the teaching materials needed to address curricular mandates. This created a *sink or swim* approach to teaching, which left teachers feeling isolated (Hudson, 2012).

Low salaries. Lastly, teacher salaries are not reflective of their new increasing demands. The salaries teachers receive are not competitive to other professions with similar educational requirements. In order to attract the most qualified professionals for the field of education, teacher salaries must be comparable (Allegretto et al., 2011).

Induction Programs. In order to address the poor work conditions in the field of education, an induction program must be put into place. An induction program “can consist of, a larger system of support/help that often includes mentoring but also includes additional supports such as help with curriculum planning and professional development,” (Potemski & Matlach, 2014, p.1), when entering into the field of education. This induction program can provide teachers with support throughout their entrance into the field of education. When an effective induction program is implemented in schools, teachers feel supported which, consequently results in a higher rate of teachers remaining in the field (Potemski & Matlach). Research reveals five main components that an effective induction program must encompass: a comprehensive mentor program (Keilwitz, 2014), support/leadership/communication from the school principal (Stewart, 2015), instructional support (Potemski & Matlach), professional expectations (Potemski & Matlach), and professional development (Mahmood, 2013).

Comprehensive Mentor Program. A comprehensive mentor program matches teachers with a specific individual who provides information, advice, support, and feedback in efforts to enhance the development of skills needed in the field of education (Glazerman, Senesky, Seftor, & Johnson, 2006). Research reports that in order for the mentor relationship to be effective, mentors must be qualified for their role. They must not only be experts in their field, but they must also possess an open-minded disposition for working with others (Ambrosetti, 2014). Mentors programs must have a set of program requirements, such as mentor training and time requirements, to establish a trusting mentor/mentee partnership beneficial for both parties (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). Lastly, mentors must be made aware of their individual duties. Research suggests that modeling of appropriate behaviors, observations to assess mentees’

behaviors, and feedback following the observation are the most imperative qualities in relation to establishing a conducive mentor program (Keilwitz, 2014).

Support/leadership/communication. School principals have an immense impact on the work conditions established in schools. Research has documented that support, leadership, and communication from school principals were regarded as the most beneficial aspects when transitioning into the field of education (Stewart, 2015). Support can be offered to teachers through a comprehensive orientation of the school's culture and an introduction to school infrastructure (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). Principals should be leaders in their schools advocating for teachers, encouraging their staff, and including teachers in the decision-making process of the school, while simultaneously providing them autonomy in their classrooms. Principals should promote open and constructive communication with teachers (Cross, 2011).

Instructional support. Instructional supports allow teachers to further develop their pedagogy skills in the context of their school. Supports should include training/resources/coaching on classroom management, developing lesson plans, and establishing differentiated instruction in the classroom (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The instructional supports offered to teachers should also align with clearly articulated professional expectations. Having expectations provide teachers with a goal to work towards throughout their induction period (Potemski & Matlach, 2014).

Professional expectations. Professional expectations are an important aspect of a teacher induction program. They ensure incoming teachers know what is expected of them in their new vocation. The literature reveals three different facets of professional expectation that should be included in teacher induction programs: (1) foundational, (2) structural, and (3) instructional. Foundational expectations express the overall vision of the program, structural expectations

express the responsibilities of the program members, and instructional expectations express different aspects of the teaching process. The professional expectations of a teacher induction program should be viewed and used as the requirements of the program (Potemski & Matlach, 2014).

Professional development. Professional development should be individualized, ongoing, pertain to issues faced by teachers, and convenient (Kidd, Brown, & Fitzallen, 2015).. The field of education is continuously changing; therefore, teachers need access to resources to keep their skills current (Mahmood, 2013). Access to resources can give teachers confidence and pride in their work. Each component of an induction program allows teachers the opportunity to feel revered in their field, which may impact teacher retention.

This present study examined the induction period of teachers in the field of early childhood education, and linked the results to the best practices in induction, through a thorough review of the literature on teacher induction in the field of education (kindergarten through twelfth grade). Survey research, through an online questionnaire, was utilized to determine what conditions present in the field of early childhood education are most frequently reported to teacher retention, as well as what aspects of a teacher induction period are most beneficial for teacher retention. An online survey questionnaire was sent to a sample of 160 alumni members who completed a four-year, cohort-based early childhood teacher education program in the Southern United States. The questionnaire was administered through an online survey program termed Qualtrics. The questions on the survey were both quantitative (Likert scale), and qualitative (open-ended). This method was used to render measurable data, while still obtaining specific details regarding aspects of teacher induction. A frequency of selection was completed to determine the occurrence of responses to the survey questions. The results offered insight on

what work conditions teachers most frequently report in regards to teacher retention and what aspects of the teacher induction teachers identify as most beneficial for teacher retention.

Statement of the Problem

A gap lies between what new teachers need and supports that are provided during the induction period (Burnham, 2015; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Induction programs can be implemented to provide new teachers with the supports they need to be successful. “A number of studies seem to provide support for the hypothesis that well-conceived and well-implemented teacher induction programs are successful in increasing the job satisfaction, efficacy, and retention of new teachers” (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004, p. 682). It is imperative to determine the most beneficial components of teacher induction program, in order to impact the rate of teacher turnover in the field of early childhood education.

Purpose of the Study

The present study was designed to determine if trends in teacher attrition, seen in the field of standard education, also found in a group of alumni from an early childhood education program. Additionally, the sought to determine supports provided for teachers during the induction period, and work conditions experienced. Alumni (n=160) who completed a four-year, cohort-based early childhood teacher education program in the Southern United States were invited to participate in this online survey. A subset of 48 alumni responded. The responses to the survey questions served as the dependent variables while the subjects (participants) of the study became the independent variables.

Significance of the Study

Research is needed to identify supports that contribute to teacher retention during the induction period, as well as work conditions that contribute to teacher attrition. This study sought to provide information regarding current teacher supports offered to teachers during their induction period. Policy makers or school administrations can use this information to present their teachers with the best form of induction program, in hopes to improve teacher's work conditions and provide an overall increase in teacher retention.

Research Questions

1. Does the attrition rate of early childhood teachers surveyed (n=48) mirror the national average?
2. Of those surveyed who left the teacher profession (n=6), why did these non-practicing early childhood teachers leave the field of education?
3. What are the poor work conditions that cause the greatest strain on early childhood teachers?
4. Is there an increase in retention of early childhood teachers when a formal teacher induction program is implemented in a school?
5. What aspects of the teacher induction period are most commonly used in the field of early childhood education?
6. Do induction periods that include mentoring contribute to teacher retention?
7. Of the teachers who reported having a mentor (n=31), whether or not they participated in a formal teacher induction program, what components of mentorship were of greatest impact on retention? (i.e., mentor choice, mentor meeting frequency, grade level match, subject area match)

Hypothesis/Null Hypothesis

1. The attrition rate of the early childhood teachers surveyed will mirror the national average.
 - The attrition rate of the early childhood teachers surveyed will not mirror the national average.
2. Early childhood teachers leave the field of education due to poor work conditions.
 - Poor work conditions do not impact early childhood teachers leaving the field of education.
3. The poor work conditions of: lack of respect, autonomy, resources, and materials as well as a low salary, impact teachers' decision to leave the field of education.
 - The poor work conditions of: lack of respect, autonomy, resources, and materials as well as a low salary, do not impact teachers' decision to leave the field of education..
4. Early childhood teachers stay in the field of education when they have had a formal induction program upon entry into the field.
 - A formal induction program does not impact early childhood teachers remaining in the field of education.
5. The components of a teacher induction period such as mentorship, support/leadership/communication with principal, instructional support, professional expectations, and professional development, have an impact on teachers remaining in the field of education.
 - The components of a teacher induction period such as mentorship, support/leadership/communication with principal, instructional support, professional expectations, and professional development, do not have an impact on teachers

remaining in the field of education⁶. Induction periods that include a mentoring contribute to teacher retention.

- Mentoring does not impact early childhood teachers remaining in the field of education.

7. Meeting frequently, grade level match, and subject area match are the components of mentorship that have an impact on teacher retention.

- Meeting frequently, grade level match, and subject area match are the components of mentorship that do not have an impact on teacher retention.

Research Design

A mixed-method survey research design was used in this study. Survey methodology is a low-cost, time-efficient method for systematically collecting data from a targeted group of individuals. Specifically, participants were drawn from a 10-year alumni database of a four-year, cohort-based early childhood teacher education program in the Southern United States. Questions on the online survey were developed from a thorough review of the literature and were designed using a both Likert-type questions to determine if our alumni's experiences were similar to findings in the literature, while also including open ended questions to allow teachers to provide individual experiences on the induction period that may not have been captured in the multiple choice questions.

The survey questionnaires were administered using Qualtrics software and disseminated at the beginning of the second semester, February 1 2016, of the 2015-2016 school year.

Theoretical Framework

The process of induction can be described within the context of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). Socialization, an aspect of the social learning theory, of teachers occurs as

teachers become assimilated to the culture of the school in which they teach. As new teachers observe the behaviors of veteran teachers in their schools, they begin to form a sense of the social norm that is expected in their new environment (Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, & Carver, 1999). Another aspect of Bandura's Social Learning Theory, self-efficacy, or having a feeling of confidence in a task, is addressed through the teacher induction process (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Bandura (1977) described the concept of self-efficacy as the belief that one can "successfully execute the behavior required to produce outcomes" (p. 193), even in the face of adversity. Self-efficacy is an important component of the induction of a beginning teacher; it strongly influences the ability of a teacher to feel as though they can be successful in the classroom (Keilwitz, 2014).

Professional socialization. Professional socialization, a process of learning and interacting with others in their field, new teachers begin to adopt the: "language, values, norms, mission, knowledge, ideology and technology of their field" (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999, p.15). Through this process of professional socialization, a need for, "shared standards, school-university partnerships, and graduated responsibilities for new teachers," (Feiman-Nemser et al., p.15), is valued. When this aspect of socialization is absent from the induction process, induction becomes a process of "learning the ropes" and simply trying to fit into the new community. This is when only short-term supports that help new teachers manage their new job are offered (Feiman-Nemser et al.). An induction period that includes socialization through observational learning can create a sense of security for new teachers by allowing new teachers to adapt to their new environment. Teachers are able to absorb the social context in which they are working and model the behaviors of other teachers present in the school. A formal induction program can help shape the work environment through the cultivation of mentors who are good models.

Self-efficacy. A study conducted at the University of Oklahoma in 2010, noted that emotional burnout, caused by the lack of confidence and ability to properly manage a classroom, was the most frequently reported aspect of teaching and greatly impacted the attrition rate of new teachers (Hong, 2010). Bandura (1977) noted that people who are not confident about their abilities to carry out a task often view that task as a threat, which they try to avoid. Teachers who feel they are unable to handle the pressures of teaching often, “have a hard time developing into quality teaching professionals” (Hong, p.1541). Beginning teachers need to have confidence in their abilities to instruct students and manage a classroom (Keilwitz, 2014). A teacher induction program that is comprised of, “a supportive, encouraging and collaborative teacher community,” that allows new teachers the opportunity, “to reflect on their practices by participating in earnest conversations with teacher colleagues,” can encourage self-efficacy within new teachers (Hong, p.1541). A teacher who feels confident in his or her ability to teach has a lower level of stress, which can influence whether that teacher remains in the field of education (Keilwitz).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions. It is assumed that the participants are currently or were previously classroom teachers. It is assumed that participants will accurately recall the induction period of their entry into the field of early childhood education. It is assumed that the participants will answer the survey questions truthfully and accurately to the best of their ability.

Limitations. Each method of data collection poses limitations. Limitations of survey research include a possible gap between what people report they do and what they actually do. The return rate for survey research may be lower for online surveys. Closed-ended questions may be restrictive and culturally sensitive or dependent. The meaning of items may not be clear

to participants and dependent on recollected behavior. Difficulty in coding open-ended responses can occur. Questions may be easily misunderstood, and finally it may be more difficult to generate reliability and validity for one-time-use questionnaires (Nardi, 2014). A limitation specific to this study is that the responses are self-reported; this meaning only the teacher's point of view is recorded and no other points of view. Other limitations may arise in errors of non-observation if participants do not fully answer the questions of the survey. This can cause an error in generalization of the data.

Delimitation. A delimitation of this study is the targeted sample. The sample chosen were 160 alumni members who completed a four-year, cohort-based early childhood teacher education program in the Southern United States; therefore, excluding any participants who did not fit this specification. The research questions chosen and the theoretical framework that grounds this study can prove to be another delimitation. These aspects of the study express specific interests and the study is designed to address these specific interests.

Definition of Terms

Teacher induction program: An induction program is defined as, “a larger system of support that often includes mentoring but also includes additional supports, such as help with curriculum planning and professional development,” (Potemski & Matlach, 2014, p.1)

Retention of teachers: keeping teachers in the field of education (Potemski & Matlach, 2014)

Attrition of teachers: teachers leaving the field of education (Halstead, 2013)

Mentor: a formal or informal learning relationship, usually between two individuals where the mentor has either experience or expertise in a particular area and provides information, advice, support, and feedback to the beginning teacher,” (Glazerman et al., 2006 p.76).

Mentor program: a program that pairs teachers with a another person, or persons, who provide both technical supports, such as advice and recommendations, as well as emotional support, such as moral encouragement (Keilwitz, 2014).

Socialization of teachers: Socialization of teachers can be expressed as teachers becoming assimilated to the culture of the school in which they teach; as new teachers observe the behaviors of veteran teachers in their schools, they begin to form a sense of the social norm that is expected in their new environment (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999)

Mixed-method survey research: a form of survey research that utilized both quantitative and qualitative questions (Stage, & Manning, 2015)

For the purpose of this study, a population of early childhood educators was surveyed in order to gain a greater understanding of their induction period. The literature used to determine best practices in teacher induction comes thorough investigation overall teachers; not just those in early childhood. This literature, in combination with the present study, will help to develop a clearer picture of teacher induction in the field of early childhood.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of literature is organized around the central concepts that inform the present study. It begins with an overview of the poor work conditions encountered by teachers, then moves into tenets of effective induction programs, then closes with best practices in survey research, which will be the mechanism for data collection in the proposed study.

Poor Work Conditions for Teachers

Research suggests that poor work conditions in schools negatively impact teacher retention (Halstead, 2013). Attrition rates of teachers are even greater when looking at schools with, “minority and low-income students”, (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012, p.4). However, attrition is not attributed to the school demographics, but due to the conditions in which the teachers must work and the students must learn (Johnson et al.). Ingersoll & Smith, (2003), identified that about two-thirds of teachers leave because of their dissatisfaction with their jobs and look for a better career in another field. . Teachers identify social conditions such as, “the school’s culture, the principal’s leadership, and relationships among colleagues” (Johnson et al., p.5), as causes of dissatisfaction. Improving work conditions for teachers may be the most feasible and cost-effective way to positively impact teacher retention (Halstead). Lack of respect for teachers, lack of autonomy in the classroom, lack of materials and resources, and low salary all contribute to poor work conditions for teachers.

Lack of Respect for Teachers

There seems to be a negative stigma today associated with being a teacher. In the media, teachers are being blamed for the lack of child preparedness and the broken educational system. This perception of teachers in the media has an effect on the way teachers are viewed by the public community, administrators, parents, and even the children in the classroom. This has been

occurring for decades; as far back as 1983, when the Department of Education's *A Nation at Risk* recognized that, "school reform [is] accompanied by declining public confidence in public education," (Lynch, 2014, p.1). Reforms, such as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB, U.S. Department of Education, 2001) and the *Race to the Top* (U.S. Department of Education, 2009), have caused America's public to view the education system as failing, thus creating a perception that teachers are not doing an adequate job in the classroom. This negative stigma has created a decline in respect that America's educators receive in their professional field and has caused teachers to have to work in this negative environment (Lynch). Unfortunately, teachers endure a lack of respect from the public community, their administration, their student's parents, and oftentimes, the children themselves.

Public community. The public community's opinion of whether a job is or is not respected plays an immense role in the way an individual views and values their work. In a survey of teachers in Chicago in 2012, the number one challenge identified by teachers was the judgment of public perception. On a scale of one (least problematic) to five (most problematic), the teacher's rating of this issue was a 4.3. Teachers' reported feeling a sense of blame, derision, and began to question their competence and commitment to their occupation. These feelings were due to daily negative press released in the media, derogatory statements from politicians, and higher authorities who overanalyze and monitor teachers every move (Lynch, 2014).

Administration. Teachers express that they often feel principals, and other administrators, do not have time for their direct needs, which leaves teachers feeling abandoned (Cross, 2011). This is especially evident when teachers have children with challenging behavior. Teachers express that classroom management can become a frustrating process when their efforts are being undermined by administrators who provide no support for their efforts of behavior

management, and when principals and administration do not enforce the policies that assist teachers in their efforts to effectively manage their classrooms (American Federation of Teachers, 2010).

Parents. Parent-teacher partnerships are important to child success in school (Patrikakou, 2016). Lack of communication between home and school environments is associated with negative outcomes for children (Kocyigit, 2015). This can create an overall sense of failure of the teacher in the classroom, which may not be an accurate partial of what is actually occurring. Working with parents of children in the school is often described as a daunting task from teachers. Teacher's express that a lack of support from parents is shown through un-reciprocal relationships between themselves and parents, and they voice that it is sometimes difficult to build relationships with the parents of their children in the classroom. Often, despite the teacher's best efforts, parents are unresponsive to techniques that are meant to build a positive parent-teacher relationship, this can lead to teachers feeling discouraged (Mahmood, 2013).

The value-added measure (VAM) system, which is a system intended to measure student progress across the year in relation to teacher performance, is also placing a strain on parent/teacher relationships (Sanders & Horn, 1998). The value-added model looks at children's progress throughout the year based on children's end-of-the year assessments, and adjusts teacher's pay according to the children's progress. There are many factors to consider when looking at children's success in school: child behavior, teacher/child relationship, school/classroom culture, and the child's home life, all in addition to teacher effectiveness. At times, parents can place blame for their child's struggle in school solely on the teachers. VAM creates an unfair viewpoint of child success. When the VAM system is put into place, it tends to

place more blame on teachers, therefore causing parents to doubt teacher's ability's at a greater level (David, 2010).

Students. The lack of respect teachers experience is also felt in their interactions with children in their classroom. When children lack respect for a teacher, challenging behavior arises (Stewart, 2015). Teachers who are unable manage this behavior become tremendously stressed, which can lead to emotional exhaustion. The Maslach Burnout Inventory was used to determine that this emotional exhaustion experienced by teachers was the leading cause for leaving the field of education (Hudson, 2012).

Lack of Autonomy in the Classroom

Autonomy is described as being able to have an opinion or make a choice in a matter that directly affects one's life (Keilwitz, 2014). Self-determination theory states that when a person gains a sense of autonomy, they are more likely to be content and productive in their life (Keilwitz). When teachers feel as though they have an opinion on how to run different aspects of their classroom, they tend possess a happier demeanor and are often more productive in the workplace (Keilwitz). Unfortunately, teachers' autonomy in the classroom is being threatened, and sometimes removed completely. This is due to mandates established by administration and acts passed by officials, who possess minimal and often no teaching experience. Teachers are increasingly finding themselves in the position of being unable to make decisions in their classrooms that directly affect their teaching on a daily basis (Walker, 2015). This can be attributed, in part, to policymakers' decisions to employ teachers who have participated in the fast-paced alternative certification programs, in tandem with increased demands that policymakers deem necessary to control for the constant turnover of new hires, including: scripted curricula, increased testing of children, and increased documentation.

Due to the current state of education, the teacher workforce is being depleted (Phillips, 2015). One solution to address the teacher shortage is to increase the number of teacher hires that have participated in fast-paced alternate certification programs (Friedrich, 2014). In fact, many school systems are using the majority of their funds on hiring new incoming teachers as opposed to supporting teachers already in the system (Walker, 2015). In 2009, 59,000 teachers were certified through these various fast-paced alternate certification programs (Friedrich). By only satisfying the minimum requirements for teacher preparation, while simultaneously placing teachers in increasingly difficult teaching situations, policy makers are contributing to increasing teacher attrition rates (Friedrich).

Fast-paced alternative paths to teacher certification are defined as programs that exist outside university-based practices; these certification outlets allow individuals, who are often college graduates, an advanced path to a career with a history of job security and a somewhat stable income (Friedrich, 2014). These programs are prone to view the teaching profession as techniques that are experimentally proven, which can be simplified and reproduced, (McConney, Woods-McConney, & Price, 2012). The techniques are then delivered to the new teacher recruits, often at an inadequately rapid pace, and combined with content knowledge college graduates already possess. This is done in hopes to create a numerous amount of “highly qualified teachers” who are dispersed to rural and urban classrooms, which are often the most challenging places to teach, to become “better teachers by teaching” (Friedrich, p.3). This process is creating a group of teachers who are often un-invested in the teaching field, due to lack of proper training and understanding of the field. A disconnect between what incoming teachers are learning in their certification programs and what they are being asked to execute in their daily procedures is also being created. It is argued that a lack in transfer of learning theory,

where learners are given the chance to practice a new skill, is to blame (Harris, Lowery- Moore, & Farrow, 2008). The lack of transfer theory is a direct result of the fast pace process of alternate certification programs.

The largest fast-paced alternate certification program for teachers to date is Teach for America, or TFA. TFA candidates currently make up between ten to thirty percent of newly hired public school teachers (Milner, 2013). This liberal education reform organization prides itself on, “bringing the elite into the teaching profession, even if temporarily, and supplying its recruits to impoverished school districts,” (Hartman, 2011, p.5). Members of TFA are chosen, based on “high standards”, and placed into a teacher-training program of varying lengths. This fact alone somewhat decreases the credibility of these teacher recruits. Members are then placed into schools that are low performing and must fulfill a two-year teaching stint before they are dismissed to carry on their career; for some this means continuing in education, for others this means moving on to “bigger and better” things (Hartman). In 2011, only 60% of TFA teachers continued as public school teachers after their two-year commitment with the program.

Furthermore, 56% of those teachers who stayed in the teaching profession leave their initial low-income public school placement after their two-year TFA commitment. Lastly, by the fifth year of teaching only 14.8 % of TFA teachers were still in their original low-income public schools (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011). Contrary to TFA’s beliefs, hiring “untrained college graduates” who lack knowledge in developmentally appropriate teaching practices, and sending them into the schools identified as challenging will not benefit teachers or children in the classroom. In fact, this program is increasing the teacher retention problem that is profusely hindering school systems today (Hartman).

Increasing demands. Due to an increase in teacher hires from fast-paced alternate certification programs, policy makers are constantly re-creating educational reforms by implementing rigorous national standards, increasing school-based accountability for children's performance, and placing demands on teachers that are elevated to an unprecedented level (Allegretto et al., 2011). This increase in demands leads to, "an excessive amount of paperwork, oversized classes, classes with differentiated learning abilities, imposed time constraints, and the need to teach subjects outside the teacher's particular academic area," (Stewart, 2015, p.40). Teachers are not only being held more accountable for children's performance but they are doing so while their resources, both time for personal collaboration and access to materials, are being exhausted and not replenished. Due to the increase in demands and decrease in resources, teachers are left feeling drained both intellectually and emotionally. Teacher's levels of stress are increasing at an unsettling rate; this in turn results in higher teacher attrition (Stewart, 2015). The lack of teacher autonomy and the increase in teacher demands in the classroom is causing teachers to feel micromanaged in their workplace.

Scripted curricula. One example of micromanagement in the classroom can be seen through the implementation of scripted, or narrowed, curricula. Although it has been stated that, "one size doesn't fit all, all children are different," (Walker, 2015, p.2), teachers are often forced to follow a scripted curriculum, which often enforces teachers to teach all children in the same manner. Although, if adapted in the classroom curricula can provide guidance for beginning teachers; however, many schools are forcing all teachers across all grade levels to follow a scripted curriculum regardless of their skill or experience (Walker).

In classrooms using scripted curricula, "teacher's professional expertise is overshadowed by curriculum manuals, pacing guides, and other materials intended to provide teachers with a

scripted roadmap,” (Milner, 2013, p.17). Reducing teacher autonomy and forcing them to, “rely on predetermined curriculum materials to shape their instructional practices rather than relying on their own professional judgment” (Milner, p. 17), can leave teachers feeling incapable by minimizing teachers’ creativity and proficiency in the classroom. This overall feeling is contributing to the rise in teacher attrition (Milner).

Testing. Teacher performance is now being determined, and measured, by student test scores. NCLB tied funding to student performance on high stakes tests. If schools did not score or increase their scores on said tests by a certain amount, funds and school supports were revoked (Darling-Hammond, 2012). This, combined with the increase in teacher demands and accountability for children’s performance, leaves teachers feeling pressured to spend more time preparing the children for testing than actually teaching meaningful instruction. Teachers’ fear that the amount of time spent on planning for tests, test-prep, test taking, and test evaluation have a negative impact on student learning. One teacher stated, “we lose four weeks of teaching a year to actual testing,” (Lynch, 2014, p.4), and this was not including test planning, test-prep or test evaluation. School days are dominated with low-level tests that are time consuming and often, the data is not even analyzed or incorporated into instruction (Tucker, 2014). The combination of excessive testing and scripted curricula prevents the expansion of meaningful teaching needed to improve the education; it also lessens the autonomy teachers have in their classrooms (Milner, 2013).

Documentation. Due to bureaucratic impediments, an overwhelming amount of paperwork and documentation is now required in the field of education (Cross, 2011). Although recording and analyzing data are essential throughout the teaching cycle, without time to collaborate with other professionals, paperwork and documentation can become overwhelming

for teachers (Strauss, 2012). “The mania for more child data, more meetings to discuss the data, and more high-level monitoring of the data is demoralizing teachers and undermining education,” (Cox, 2011). While the workload formerly consisted of preparing meaningful lessons for children, it is now overrun with teachers manipulating data and completing administrative chores. Burdensome, and often repetitive or useless data requirements are causing teachers to lose instructional time in their classrooms. Over time, this excessive amount of documentation can cause teachers to flee the field of education (Cox).

Lack of Resources and Materials

Teachers are often lacking in both human and material resources for planning, teaching, and assessing (Hudson, 2012). Resources are, “objects or qualities that an individual places value upon” (Stewart, 2015, p.19). Examples of these resources are social support and time. When these resources are present they stimulate personal growth, learning, development, and accomplishment. Stress can occur when resources are lost or when they are not replenished (Stewart). Teachers are not allocated time to collaborate with colleagues, thus leaving teachers feeling isolated. When teachers are left to plan their practices in isolation, a *sink or swim* feeling of teaching is created (Howe, 2006). Access to tangible materials, such as supplies, for teachers to utilize in the classroom is also declining. A survey of New York City’s public schools reports that elementary school teachers are spending an average of \$536 of their own funds on supplies and materials for their students due to the declining access of materials (UFT, 2014). The lack of materials and resources creates an isolated work environment, which leads teachers to an overall feeling of defeat and loneliness (Hudson).

Low Salary

Teachers make 14% less than other professions requiring the same educational requirements; teacher salaries have also been steadily declining over the past 30 years (Eggers & Calegari, 2011). This calls into question whether teacher salaries are adequate to attract the most qualified college graduates to the field (Bacolod, 2007). The demand for teacher performance has been raised to an all-time high due to “rigorous national standards and school-based accountability for child performance,” (Allegretto, Corcoran, & Mishel, 2011, p.1). “Teacher earnings have fallen below that of the average college graduate in recent decades, as earnings of college graduates grew 11% relative to the much lower 0.8% growth in teacher earnings,” (Allegretto, et al., p.2), which demonstrates the severity of the problem. Compounding this issue is the simultaneous cutting teacher’s salaries and pensions to stabilize state budgets while requiring teachers greater contributions to their pensions (Hartman, 2011). Although cutting teacher’s salaries may provide a temporary fix to the budget crisis, it is estimated that nationwide, the vast rate of teacher turnover costs the United States \$7.34 billion yearly (Eggers & Calegari).

This reduction of teacher’s salaries over the years exhibits a lack of respect for the professionals who identify with the field of education, and causes a decrease in the appeal of this profession for potentially qualified graduates. While problems that impact teacher attrition are numerous, there are some positive actions that can be taken by school administration to address these issues. The need for formal teacher induction programs is now more essential due to support teachers as they enter the profession in managing the various demands on now facing teachers (Keilwitz, 2014).

Establishing an Effective Induction Program

In order to combat teacher attrition, schools must work towards, “improving these social conditions [which] involves building relational trust between teachers and school leaders and engaging teachers in co-constructing the social context of their work,” (Johnson, et al., 2012, p.5). One way to address these social conditions is through the teacher induction process. All teachers experience an induction period; this is indicated as the first three years of new teachers entering into the field of education (Bartell, 2005). Induction can be categorized in three different ways: (1) as a “phase in teacher development” (Feiman-Nemser, et al., 1999, p.7) filled with intense learning, (2) as “a time of transition where teachers are moving from preparation to practice” (Feiman-Nemser, et al., p.7), which is often referred to as socialization, and (3) as a form of program (Feiman-Nemser, et al.). When discussed in educational policy and practice, meaning of induction is often referred to as a *program* but the implications of each mentor program can vary drastically (Feiman-Nemser, et al.). For the purposes of this research study, the terms induction process or period refer to the period of socialization; the term induction *program* refers to a formal plan developed by the school.

A formal induction program should be a part of the induction period into the teaching profession, and is defined as, “a larger system of support that often includes mentoring but also includes additional supports, such as help with curriculum planning and professional development,” (Potemski & Matlach, 2014, p.1). An effective induction program assists new teachers as they transition into the field of education. When these programs implemented into school systems, teachers can feel empowered in their careers; this leads to a greater sense of accomplishment, which, in turn, encourages teachers to remain in the field of education (Potemski & Matlach).

In 2010, the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality stated that teacher induction programs rose from 41% in 1990, to 80% in 2008 (Keilwitz, 2014). This increase in the implementation of induction programs is in an effort to reduce teacher attrition, increase teacher effectiveness, and promote child learning. In fact, a research study reported that children of first year teachers who received high-quality induction periods showed performance gains that were equivalent to that of fourth year teachers who did not receive an induction period (Strong, 2006). This statistic suggests that induction programs are beneficial in not only retaining teachers, but also increasing teacher effectiveness and child performance. Nonetheless, for programs to be successful, an effective induction program must be put into place. An effective induction program should include a comprehensive mentor program; administrative support; instructional support through collaboration with peers; a set of professional expectations; and finally, ongoing individualized professional development (Potemski & Matlach, 2014).

Comprehensive Mentor Program

A mentor program is defined as a program that provides teachers with both technical supports, such as advice and recommendations, as well as emotional support, through moral encouragement (Keilwitz, 2014). A mentor relationship is described as, “a formal or informal learning relationship, usually between two individuals where the mentor has either experience or expertise in a particular area and provides information, advice, support, and feedback to the beginning teacher,” (Glazerman, et al., 2006). A five-year study conducted by the National Center of Education Statistics (Long, 2015), showed that 92% of teachers who received a mentor during their first year remained teaching; in contrast, only 84% of teachers who did not receive mentors stayed after their first year. This study also showed that two years later, 86% of teachers who received mentors were still in the teaching profession, as compared to 71% of teachers who

did not receive a mentor. This shows a 6 percentage point decrease in teachers who received a mentor, as compared to a 13 percentage point decrease in teachers who did not receive a mentor (Long). This suggests that the effects of a mentor during the induction period persist over time.

Research suggests that mentors are a vital part of teacher induction programs, but in order for mentor programs to be effective, they must have stricter that both mentors and mentees can follow, they must be comprehensive and include many supports for both mentor and mentee, and they must be monitored fairly by an appropriate authority,” (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Wong). A mentor program should define mentor qualifications, mentor program requirements, and mentor duties.

Mentor qualifications. Mentoring is not a natural ability that people inherently possess; therefore, contrary to the belief of some, veteran teachers, or even the most effective teachers, do not automatically make effective mentors (Ambrosetti, 2014). Although these veteran and effective teachers may be worthy candidates, mentors have to possess specific qualifications in order to make a positive impact on their mentee. The most effective mentors, “understand specific goals of mentoring in the context in which they are working and are familiar with the tasks to be undertaken by the mentee,” (Ambrosetti, p.32). Mentoring involves actively constructing and reconstructing knowledge, therefore, “the mentor teacher needs the cognitive skills in which to not only pass on knowledge and skills, but also use them and justify them in regards to the learners, the curriculum and pedagogy,” (Ambrosetti, p.32).

While outstanding classroom practice and work experience are important aspects for mentor teachers to possess, interpersonal and leadership skills, along with respect for multiple perspectives and expertise in content-area/grade-level that is similar to the mentee, are revered as superior characteristics (Keilwitz, 2014, Potemski & Matlach, 2014). In fact, research shows that

having a mentor teacher from one's subject area with a common planning period was identified as one of the strongest factors to mentor program effectiveness (Ingersoll, 2012). Although, the mentor's role is to guide the mentee towards obtaining professional growth, the mentor/mentee relationship is viewed as reciprocal, where each participant contributes and benefits from all aspects of the relationship. Mentors must possess qualities that allow them to be open-minded and approachable to their mentees. These traits will allow a trusted mentor/mentee relationship to be formed (Ambrosetti, 2012).

Mentor program requirements. Research shows that, although mentors who meet specific qualifications are important, in order for the overall mentor program to be effective, it must have an established set of requirements (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012). Programs should provide mentors with a clear set of roles and responsibilities. An effective program provides mentors with a complete training process and the time requirements that must be met, to ensure mentors are adequately prepared for their duties (Potemski & Matlach, 2014).

Training. Research suggests that, "mentor training increases the positive impacts that mentoring can have on the growth of both skills and knowledge of the mentee" (Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002). "Courses that prepare participants for mentoring need to be structured and draw on both research and literature," (Ambrosetti, 2012, p.33). These training courses should also be organized in a way that best benefits the adult learners. Research suggests that adults learn best when an open-ended learning model is utilized, and when they have a say on both the pace and direction of learning, (Hunzicker, 2010). Training courses should provide opportunities for open-ended conversations where both mentors and mentees are able to, "share experiences, solve problems and make decisions," (Ambrosetti, p.33).

Time requirements. Time requirements should also be established for mentor programs. Many mentor programs report time as the most challenging obstacle for the mentor/mentee relationship. A minimal meet time should be established to ensure that mentors and mentees are getting ample time to discuss and collaborate on aspects of the mentee's progress. Programs should also allow specific release time for both mentor and mentee observations and feedback sessions. Allowing mentees time to observe mentors in their teaching environment will assist in their development of pedagogy approaches. Consequently, mentors need to have time designated for observing the mentees progress in their own classroom environment. Allowing this time will increase the communication and trust between mentor and mentees, which supports a respectful relationship between both entities (Potemski & Matlach, 2014).

Modeling, Observation & Feedback. Research suggests that the most effective mentors provide mentees with a model of instructional behaviors, observations to assess mentees instruction, and feedback provided following the observation. This reciprocal process should take place across the school year to provide continuous support to mentees (Keilwitz, 2014). Time is necessary to build trusting relationships, which will add the mentor in the fulfillment of other mentoring duties. . A trusting relationship provides a foundation for the successful development of mentees skills (Ambrosetti, 2014).

Both mentor and mentees involved in mentorship programs require release time to conduct observations. Mentees need time to observe effective teaching conducted by the mentor (Keilwitz, 2014). The philosopher Bandura (1977) stated that the human behavior is a learned process and that it can be developed through watching and modeling behaviors of others in their environment, thus inferring that mentors modeling best pedagogical practices while mentees

observe this behavior is an extremely beneficial aspect of mentor programs. Additionally, the mentor needs time to observe and assess the mentee's development of teaching skills (Keilwitz).

The final duty of mentors is providing feedback; feedback is defined as continual dialogue between participants that discusses progress (Ambrosetti, 2014). Constructive feedback from mentor teachers can validate teaching experiences of mentees, which in turn enhances mentees teaching skills (Keilwitz). Receiving constructive feedback can also support and provide encouragement to mentees throughout the day when dealing with various problems that occur (Kidd et al., 2015). Through feedback, mentees are able to reflect on their personal practices and develop their personal skills through this process (Walkington, 2005).

Administrative Support

Research suggests that the support of the principal is the most important support to teachers, even over that offered by colleagues; this is because principals are often responsible for decision-making regarding specific school policies (Stewart, 2015). "The most common induction activity that beginners participated in was having regular supportive communication with their principal, (87%)" (Ingersoll, 2012, p.50); and support from a principal, when pared with other induction supports, did show a decrease in teacher attrition rates (Ingersoll). In order for principals to provide their teachers support, they must first understand teachers' views on what support they need within their schools (Keilwitz, 2014).

Support. Support for teachers can be demonstrated by allowing teachers who need assistance in pedagogy practice, no matter their years of experience, equal access to induction program. Although the initial years of teaching are undeniably the most burdensome on teachers, support through the induction period should be open to all teachers who may need extra guidance (Kidd et al., 2015). Encompassed in these induction programs should be a comprehensive

orientation of school culture and infrastructure. A school's culture often impacts the way procedures are carried out in the individual classrooms, and in the school as whole. When teachers are well informed on school procedures, they have a direction in which to work and are more confident in their work performance (Potemski & Matlach, 2014).

Leadership. Leadership from school principals also plays a role in improving the work conditions for teacher. Teachers favor principals who, “build relationships, advocate for teachers, include teachers in their decision-making process, empower the staff, build leadership capacity within their school, allow opportunities for teachers to grow, be accessible to teachers, provide individual and team planning time,” (Cross, 2011, p.22). When principals advocate for their teachers, teachers are more likely to feel respected. When principals solicit teacher input on decision-making, this enables teachers to feel an overall greater sense of autonomy (Walker, 2015).

Communication. The National Education Association reported in 2015, that teachers who received a larger salary, over \$40,000, were more likely than those who were paid less, to continue in the teaching profession. It was also reported that many teachers from low socioeconomic schools would transfer to schools with higher socioeconomics in order to receive higher pay during their first five years of teaching (Long, 2015). Although teacher's salaries have been an ongoing topic, it is not the leading cause for teacher attrition (Walker, 2015). Teachers seemed more interested in open communication with their principal. Teachers prefer principals who use “school discretionary funds for ... in-school mentors, orientation, professional development, release time, professional learning communities,” and other forms of support (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 32).

Instructional Support

Due to the overwhelmingly high demands placed on teachers, a formal induction program should offer teachers instructional supports. These instructional supports should include allocating resources, promoting collaboration with peers, and adjusting workloads to ensure teachers participating in induction programs have proper time to complete their tasks (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). In 2011, Ingersoll and Strong conducted a critical review of research on regards to induction programs. Most studies reviewed showed when teachers participated in a variation of a teacher induction program, they were more proficient at various instructional aspects of teaching, such as: “keeping children on task, developing workable lesson plans, using effective child questioning practices, adjusting classroom activities to meet children’s interests, maintaining a positive classroom atmosphere, and demonstrating successful classroom management,” compared to beginning teachers who did not participate in an induction program (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p.1). Data, also from this study, was received on nine measures of teaching practice, such as, “instructional planning, reflection on practice, child questioning practices, feedback practices for children and depth of child understanding,” (Ingersoll & Strong, p.24). The study suggested that teachers with high engagement in induction programs outscored teachers with little or no induction program on seven of the nine teaching practices measured (Ingersoll & Strong).

Collaboration with peers is revered as one of the more beneficial aspects of an induction program, just after administrative support. In order for collaboration to be effective, teachers must be given sufficient time to meet, discuss, and share ideas. Collaboration contributes to an increase in teacher efficacy, through discussion of various pedagogy topics (Keilwitz, 2014). Teachers become more effective when they are able to share resources, collectively network, and

plan classroom management and procedures with other teachers. This often occurs within professional learning communities (PLC). PLC's involve a variety of staff, not solely teachers, who can guide new teachers throughout the beginning of their teaching career (Keogh, Garvis, & Pendergast, 2010). Time together collaborating also correlates directly to the self-determination theory by allowing one to feel comfortable around their peers and be able to develop meaningful relationships with these people (Karaarslan, Sungur, & Ertepinar, 2014). Overall, collaboration fosters a great sense of belonging for new teachers.

Professional Expectations

A set of professional expectations that align with standards is essential in establishing an effective induction program. These standards provide a layout for the consistent expectations that program/teachers should meet. The New Teacher Center identifies three different sets of expectations that should be included in program requirements; these expectations are foundational, structural, and instructional in nature and include many sub-standards that must be met. Foundational expectations should, “address program vision and goals, program assessment, evaluation, and accountability and information on leader engagement,”; *structural* expectations focus on, “members’ roles and responsibilities, professional development, and teacher assessment,” and finally, instructional expectations should, “focus on instructional practice, equity, and universal access,” (Goldrick, et al., 2012). A formal induction program must also have a specific set of requirements. These requirements should include (a) who must participate in the program and (b) the length of the program. Policies regarding required participation in induction programs ensures that all incoming teachers, as well as teachers lacking in certain pedagogics aspects, receive support. As of 2012, it is reported that 27 states required new teachers to participate in some form of teacher induction program (Goldrick, et al.).

Professional Development

“Teaching can be complex, ambiguous, and filled with dilemmas requiring ongoing learning,” (Mahmood, 2013, p.79), therefore professional development, or in-service prep days, are imperative for teacher growth and effectiveness. Professional development is a systematic support that assists teachers in increasing their pedagogy practices such as behavior management, curriculum development, developmentally appropriate instruction, and constructing learning environments, through collaborative meeting, in order to increase teacher confidence (Hudson, 2012). When teachers have an increase in self-confidence, they display a greater sense of self-efficacy and self-determination. Research suggests that teachers who demonstrate confidence in their ability to be a teacher are more likely to be satisfied with their work, thus allowing them to feel more comfortable in their job and remain in the field of education (Jamil, Ross & Bruce, 2007). Teachers experience lower levels of stress when they are confident; leading to an overall positive job experience for teachers (Keilwitz).

In order for professional development to be effective, it should be ongoing, individualized, address issues pertinent to teacher’s expansion of knowledge, and be offered at a convenient time for teachers (Kidd, et al., 2015). “Time allocation is a difficult issue for beginning teachers as they adapt to the new profession,” (Cross, 2011, p. 25). Just as children learn, grow, and develop differently, so do teachers; consequently, professional development should also not be prescriptive in nature, instead it should allow for variation as needed due to differentiation in people (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). Ingersoll and Merrill state that, “advanced education— ensuring that those in a field receive professional development and other opportunities for training, knowledge development, and skill-building,” is an essential dimension that characterizes any given profession (Milner, 2013, p.1). Ensuring teachers receive support

through appropriate, and meaningful professional development will allow teachers to advance in their pedagogy practices through, “collaboration, self-awareness, and self-reflection,” (Mahmood, 2013, p.79).

In order to improve work conditions for teachers, and increase teacher retention, a formal induction program should be provided for new teachers. When teachers receive continued instructional support from mentors and administrations, combined with a set of professional expectations and professional development, teachers are able to acquire “the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions to make curricular and instructional decisions,” that help make their classrooms successful. Giving teachers a greater sense of autonomy in their classroom communicates respect and confidence in their professional abilities. This, in turn, will create a more conducive work environment for teachers, which positively effects teacher attrition (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Best Practice in Survey Research

Survey research was used to collect data on early childhood teacher’s experiences during their induction period. Survey research is useful when sampling large groups, as surveys are relatively easy to administer and economical (Johnson, 2011). Surveys can be used for gathering both quantitative and qualitative information; both methods produce usable results that are valid and reliable (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). In general, quantitative questions allow researchers to measure if participant experiences are in alignment with what is reported in the literature, while qualitative questions allow participants to share their personal experiences.

Best practice in survey research suggests that there are four main steps to the survey process: (a) select an overall purpose of the survey and develop supportive questions, (b) determine the sampling of the survey, (c) determine the design of the survey, and lastly, (d)

process, analyze, and interpret the data presented from the survey (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). The most important aspect of survey research is to have a clearly defined research question to answer (Johnson, 2011). Survey wording should directly align to the question being measured to ensure topics, concepts, and content of the survey are clearly defined. The order in which questions are arranged, and the length of the survey also impact the results. The question order should not allude to any particular answer being chosen, while the length of the survey should provide for a thorough evaluation with out being too lengthy (Draugalis, Coons, & Plaza, 2008).

The surveyed population, or sample, plays a large role in survey research (Johnson, 2011). The sample selected should adequately represents the population being studied. This sample should be treated ethically throughout the survey process; study's show that a greater response rate is gathered through survey research when participants are kept anonymous (Scantron, 2012). Best practices in survey research indicate that the method chosen for the survey should be convenient to the participating sample. Due to an increase in the online population, web-based surveys are becoming increasingly popular. Online surveys are now an efficient way to collect data from people who are not in one location (Keilwitz, 2014). The sample was taken from an alumni database maintained by a four-year teacher education program; alumni all had computer access, were computer literate and checked email regularly. Additionally, alumni from this population were not centralized, but dispersed at a variety of schools throughout the South. This made the online survey distribution the best method of data collection for this study.

In order to improve response rates, it is recommended that surveys be disseminated in the following a multi-part procedure (Scantron, 2012). First, a pre-survey notification message should be sent to inform participants on the given survey being conducted. Through this

notification, participants should be encouraged to partake in the given survey, be provided with information regarding the survey process, and be given the importance of their individual feedback. Following the pre-notification, a copy of the survey with a short and easy to understand description should be sent out to participants (Scantron). The surveys should be administered with a minimum of a two-week span where other activities are not taking place in the school (e.g., avoidance of holidays or testing periods); consequently, the survey window should be open for access for a minimum of fourteen days (AdvancED, 2011). Following up the initial survey administration, non-respondents should be contacted using a combination of sending reminder messages and re-sending the survey. A study conducted through a web survey showed that after the initial survey was e-mailed the response rate began to level off around 44%; after an e-mail reminder was sent to non-respondents, the rate of response increased to 67% (Scantron). Finally, a final reminder should be sent to non-respondents informing them of the survey deadline. In the above example, after the final reminder was the response rate rose to almost 72% (Scantron). This concludes that when a follow-up process is utilized, a substantially higher rate of survey responses is gathered.

Finally, best practice for survey research states that specific statistical, analytical, evaluation, and reporting techniques of data should be competent and appropriate for the type of data collected (Draugalis, et al., 2008; Johnson, 2011). Both Likert-scaled and open-ended questions were asked in this study's survey to gain an understanding of the participant's induction experiences. The appropriate statistical tools used to analyze Likert-scale responses are modes, medians, and frequencies (Hudson, 2012). Responses to open-ended questions were analyzed using the constant comparative method, which, "combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning obtained" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994,

p.134). This process allowed for the data to be continuously refined as these three phases were conducted: (a) determining coding categories, (b) refining coding categories, and (c) exploring relationships and patterns of data (Maykut & Morehouse).

It is evident, through reviewing the literature, that teachers are leaving the field of education (Halstead, 2013, Potemski & Matlach, 2014); and that poor work conditions play a large role in these teachers leaving the field (Halstead). Social conditions such as school culture, leadership from the school principal, and relationships amongst all colleagues, both those in the same grade level and those in other grade levels, greatly effect teacher's job satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2012). Improving these work conditions may be the best way to counteract the teacher attrition problem in the field of education (Halstead); research shows that by providing supports for teacher through comprehensive teacher induction programs is an efficient way to reduce the poor work conditions that exist in education (Potemski & Matlach). These induction programs work towards building trusting relationships between teachers within the school and between teachers and school leaders; when these aspects of the work environment are reinforced, teachers feel supported in their social context at work (Johnson et al.). Finally, best practices in survey research states that that the method chosen for the survey should be convenient to the participating sample (Keilwitz, 2014); due to the ease which online-surveys can be taken, this avenue of research was chosen to collect data from the subjects of the study.

CHAPTER 3. METHOD

Appropriateness of Research Design

Survey research was used to collect data on early childhood teacher's experiences during their induction period. The questions in the survey were both quantitative, Likert-scale, checklist, or simple yes/no questions, and qualitative, open-ended. Likert-scale (Likert, 1932) questions measure participant levels of agreement/disagreement using information on a topic found in the literature (McLeod, 2008), checklist, or simple yes/no questions gain an understanding of specific aspects of the induction program that impact each participants, while open-ended questions allow respondents to provide additional information not captured through the quantitative questions. The combination of both types of questions provides for a more comprehensive picture of the sample.

Research Design

A mixed-method survey research design was utilized in this study. The mixed-method designed was utilized to answer the research questions using both qualitative and quantitative questioning. A sample of convenience was used; participants were targeted from an alumni database of 160 early childhood graduates. The sample consisted of forty-eight participants, thirty percent of total teachers from this database. The purpose of the study is to identify factors that contribute to teacher retention (independent variable). The survey was designed to identify elements of the teaching profession, such as, practices related to the teacher induction period (dependent variable) that influence teacher retention.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted using the original twelve survey questions that dealt with teacher induction programs, three questions from this survey were deemed demographical or procedural therefore not included in the assessment of the pilot survey, to determine clarity and readability of said survey questions. It was also used to ensure that the survey questionnaire utilized in this study was reliable. The test-retest method of reliability was utilized in this study. This is when an instrument is administered multiple times to the same group of people to ensure that the instrument is consistent, therefore demonstrating that it is reliable (Hendrickson, Massey, & Cronan, 1993).

A sample of convenience was used to pilot the survey. Teachers sampled were certified in early childhood or elementary education, and were in their first or second year of teaching in grades Pre-K to fourth. The survey was sent via email to a total of four teachers. In addition to the procedural survey instructions, the four teachers were given further instructions to think critically about the questions being asked, and asked to indicate any questions that may need to be reworded or any problems that you had understanding the survey. Communication between all four teachers and the primary researcher was kept open. Teachers were able to discuss question regarding the survey questions with the primary researcher via a comment section on the survey, and through both emails and text messages. Once the four teachers completed the survey, they sent them back via email to the primary researcher.

The survey was then revised based on the teacher's feedback from the survey and recommendations made by a three-member collegiate thesis committee. The following changes were made to the survey: two questions were deleted because they were deemed leading, two questions were deemed vague therefore six new questions were added to provide specification,

four questions were reworded to provide more clarification, and one questions was moved to a different order in the survey to ensure a flow of thought for participants as they progressed through the survey.

Once the survey was revised, the same four teachers were given the modified survey, which was approximately two and a half months following the completion of the original survey. Teachers' answers were then compared to their responses on the original survey to determine the survey's reliability through the test-retest method. A total of seven questions were compared (this included unchanged or modified questions) by comparing responses on original survey to the modified survey. For example, if a teacher responded 'yes' to a question on the original survey and responded 'yes' on the modified survey, it was considered to have 100% agreement. Consequently, if a teacher responded 'yes' to a question on the original survey and responded 'no' on the modified survey, it was considered to have 0% agreement. When completing a multiple answer question on the modified survey, each response was scored as an agreement on occurrence or non-occurrence, as compared to the original survey. For example, on the original survey, item #13 had three choices, but when modified, this question was expanded to have 12 choices (and moved to be item #18). Therefore, comparison of only those 3 items on the original survey could be calculated. The overall reliability calculated for this study was 93% (range, 84-99%).

Setting and Participants

Best practices in survey research states that online surveys are now considered an efficient way to collect data from people who are not in one remote location (Check & Schutt, 2012), therefore this research study was conducted through an online survey questionnaire. Teachers were able to fill out the survey anonymously, on a compatible electronic devise, and

send in results when it is most convenient for them. This form of survey research was chosen to ensure the greatest return rate from the sample selected.

Participants were fifty members of a sample of 160 alumni members who completed a four-year, cohort-based early childhood teacher education program in the Southern United States, who then choose to agree to the terms and conditions of the study and complete the online survey questionnaire. A file containing all 160 alumni emails, which are updated annually, will be utilized to distribute the survey. This sample is a subset of the alumni database, which is comprised of alumni from the past 10 years (2005-2015).

Instrumentation

The instrumentation utilized in this study is an online survey questionnaire. An extensive literature search revealed ample surveys utilized in the field of education that addressed the aspect of teacher induction in regards to teacher retention. Questions for the online survey questionnaire were obtained from these preexisting induction surveys: Mobility Questionnaire of The Study of Teacher Induction Program and the Induction Activities Teacher Questionnaire of The Study of Teacher Induction Program conducted by Mathematica Policy Research. (Glazerman et al., 2006), the Colorado Department of Education interview through the New Teacher Center's study of induction programs (Increasing the effectiveness of educator induction programs in Colorado), the 1999-2000 Teacher Staff Survey (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004), and finally a survey examining the effects of new teacher induction, conducted by SRI international and its partners, Consortium on Chicago Schools Research and the Illinois Education Research Council (Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010). The questions were altered and adapted in order to best reach the goal of the study; this means some questions were: reworded,

asked in an alternate question format, or portions of questions which were most beneficial to the survey were removed from the original question and utilized in the new survey. All questions were rationally chosen based on relevance to the topic following an extensive lit review of teacher induction.

The survey includes both quantitative and qualitative questions. Quantitative questions are asked on a Likert scale, checklist, or simple yes/no questions. Qualitative questions were presented through an open-ended question format; a space was provided for participants to indicate any additional thoughts they may have on the given question in order to provide a more specific answer. This will allow participants to express any additional information that may not have been directly addressed through the survey's questions.

The survey was conducted through the online survey system Qualtrics. Qualtrics' (Qualtrics: Online Survey Software & Insight Platform, 2015). survey software allows researchers to easily capture, analyze, and act on data collected. Using Qualtrics allows researchers the ability to easily build and share surveys with peers inside or outside ones particular organization through convenient online links (Online Survey Software Tools and Solutions, 2015). Participants in the study were able to easily access the survey from a link, which was emailed to them. Participants were able to receive the survey on a compatible device (either a computer or Smartphone which can connect to the internet), take the survey instantly, and submit responses anonymously. The frequency of responses were determined and used to answer the primary research questions. The survey questionnaire instrument utilized in this study can be located on Appendix A.

Procedure

Data was collected through a mixed-method online survey questionnaire. The surveys were sent to the 160 alumni members who completed a four-year, cohort-based early childhood teacher education program in the Southern United States via email, email addresses are updated annually. Following protocol of best practices in survey research, an initial email was sent to teachers on February 1, 2016, the beginning of the second semester of the 2015-2016, school year. This letter, called the pre-survey notification message, introduced the research study and informed participants on the given survey being conducted. Through this notification, participants were encouraged to partake in the given survey, provided with information regarding the survey process, and given the importance of their individual feedback (Improving survey response rates: Four tactics to increase participation, 2012). (See Appendix B for copy of the pre-survey notification). Two business days after the pre-survey notification was sent, the actual survey was administered via email, to the participants (See Appendix A for copy of the survey questionnaire). Attached in the email was a follow-up of a brief explanation of the survey, which prompted participants to the attached consent form (See Appendix C for copy of the consent form). The consent form indicated the benefits and risks (there are no known risks for participants of this study) of participating in the survey, along with the terms regarding the right to refusal and privacy. LSU's Institutional Review Board approved both the consent form and the survey; this indicates that taking part in the survey is not harmful to any human participants. The first question of the survey is in regards to reading the consent form and agreeing/disagreeing to the terms presented; this is where potential participants will have the opportunity to decline participation if they choose. Due to this question being added to the survey and responses remaining anonymous, LSU's Institutional Review Board said signed

consent forms are not necessary for this study. Once participants read the consent form, they will be prompted to the actual Qualtrics survey link. This is where Participants then clicked on the link, completed the survey (if they choose so), and submitted their responses anonymously.

Based on results obtained after the initial time the survey is administered, a follow-up message will administered two weeks after the initial survey is distributed. This follow up was extended an extra week (resulting in a total span of three weeks) due to the observation of the Mardi Gras holiday, which many teachers in Louisiana partake. This follow-up method contained both a reminder message and a re-sent survey. To ensure confidentiality and allow the responses to remain anonymous, no names are attached to the survey response, thus making it impossible to know exact participants who have completed the survey and exact participants who have not completed the survey. In order to meet best practices of survey research, while still maintaining ethical consideration of participants, the follow-up email was sent to all participants regardless of their survey completion but included an opening statement dictating that the email only pertains to those participants who have not yet conducted the survey. This was done in hopes to increase participation in the study.

Data Processing and Analysis

The mode, or response frequencies, for quantitative data was indicated through the Qualtrics survey research program; this program provided a bar graph to allow for the frequency of occurrence of responses to be determined. Qualitative responses were analyzed using a constant comparative method. The researcher read the responses, and determined how to classify the group of responses based on the research questions provided.

Quantitative data. Once the raw quantitative data from the *Teacher Induction Survey* was derived through Qualtrics, the data was then analyzed further to gain an understanding of the

frequencies of responses. Qualtrics presented quantitative data in values, percent's of the whole, and through visuals (bar graphs and column charts). This data was placed into Microsoft Excel to be organized into figures (seen in the Results section). Fourteen figures are used to represent the quantitative data of this research project. It reports the modes, or frequencies, of responses given by participants.

Along with the figures created, six chi squares were ran to determine the significance of the variables being measured, in relation to their impact on teacher retention. The statistics program SPSS was used to compare six different sets of variables: (1) retention vs. teacher induction programs, (2) retention vs. mentor programs, (3) retention vs. mentor choice, (4) retention vs. mentor meeting frequencies, (5) retention vs. mentor grade level, and (6) retention vs. mentor subject area. Once the tests were ran, the researcher was able to determine the significance of each variable.

Qualitative data. The process of qualitative data analysis was used to derive the meaning of responses given by the participants in the study collected through two open-ended questions from the Teacher Induction Survey, questions nineteen and twenty. The constant comparative method, which, “combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning obtained” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.134), and can be used to, “conduct an inductive analysis of qualitative data” (Maykut & Morehouse, p. 127) was used in this study. There were three phases of this process that were executed in this study: (a) determining coding categories, (b) refining coding categories, and (c) exploring relationships and patterns of data.

Determining coding categories. Open-ended responses were typed and transferred to a document on Microsoft Word, one document for question nineteen and

another document for question twenty. The units of meaning, which “serve as the basis for defining larger categories of meaning” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.128), were derived through this phase of the analysis process. The researcher carefully read the given data and identified any important concepts or themes that arose, this is called unitizing (Maykut & Morehouse). Next the look/feel alike criteria process, which is the systematic way for researchers to create, “salient categories of meaning” (Maykut & Morehouse, p. 136) was conducted. Through this process, the researcher looked at the units of meaning and decided if one unit of meaning was similar or different to another unit of meaning; units of meaning that were similar were grouped together and units of meaning that were different were grouped in a different category. This process was conducted many times in order to derive the provisional coding categories (Maykut & Morehouse). For question nineteen, six provisional coding categories emerged; for question twenty, nine provisional coding categories derived.

Refining coding categories. Next, the researchers created a propositional statement, or rules for inclusion (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), through determining a basis for the common qualities of the particular units of meaning that are placed under specific provisional coding categories. If a unit of measure satisfied the propositional statement, then that unit stays in that coding category, if the unit did not satisfy the propositional statement, then it was moved to another coding category. This process allowed for the meaning of the data under each provisional coding category to be derived (Maykut & Morehouse).

Exploring relationships and patterns of data. Lastly, the propositional statements that were able to stand-alone then became outcome propositions; these

propositional statements eventually became the outcomes of the study (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). For question nineteen, two outcome propositions emerged; for question twenty, two outcome propositions also emerged. The literature states that the data analysis process is complete when the researcher reaches redundancy in the data (Maykut & Morehouse); thus with the formation of the outcome propositions, the data analysis process for qualitative data was complete.

Ethical Considerations

Survey method of research innately poses fewer ethical dilemmas than other methods of research. Survey research allows participants to easily decline participation in a study, therefore concluding that participants are protected against un-willful involvement in the study. Participants are able to decide whether or not to participate in the survey based on the information provided in the pre-survey notification message. This information is sent to participants prior to receiving the survey questionnaire and provides information regarding the motivation for the study. All relevant information regarding the survey design, study procedures, and data collection are presented to participants. Participants are then able to take this information and choose whether to partake in the study (Check & Schutt, 2012).

Confidentiality is another aspect of ethical concern that must be addressed in survey research. To prevent any exposure to important information presented by the survey participants and ensure confidentiality is met, surveys are submitted anonymously through an online survey program entitled Qulatricks. No hard copy evidence remains once the survey is submitted; everything is completed electronically. Names are not attached to surveys or responses submitted, and in order to analyze data, a cluster of subject responses will be utilized. This form of data processing will ensure that responses are presented in a grouped structure as opposed to

being presented by individual participants. Consequently, received data will remain anonymous at all times, and identification of participants will not be available during or after the study (Check & Schutt, 2012).

Utilizing the mixed-method survey research design allowed for both qualitative and quantitative questions allowed a more comprehensive understanding of the teacher induction process to be derived from the sample of convenience. Following completion of a pilot study, and making necessary adjustments to the survey, the *Teacher Induction Survey* was sent out via an online survey system, Qualtrics. Analyzing the quantitative data, it was determined that visuals, bar graphs and column charts, were best for representing the percent of frequencies. Six chi square tests were also run to determine the degree of significance between the relationships of specific aspects of the teacher induction program. While analyzing the qualitative data, the constant comparative method was determined to be the most effective when looking for common emerging themes in the data. Finally, ethical considerations of allowing participants the choice to opt out of the study and keeping participants confidential were of utmost importance and therefore implemented in this study

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

The present study sought to examine both formal and informal processes that occur during the induction period (one to three years) (Bartell, 2005) of 48 alumni who graduated from a four-year, cohort-based early childhood teacher education program in the Southern United States. In general, participants surveyed had varying experiences with informal, and formal induction processes and mentoring relationships. Results are organized (below) by research question.

Attrition

Thirteen percent (n=6) of the teachers sampled (n=48) left the teaching profession, therefore are non-practicing teachers. Figure 1 indicates the percent of surveyed early childhood teachers (n=48) who are non-practicing teachers (n=6). The results show that out of the forty-eight participants surveyed: forty participants (87%) remain as a practicing teacher in the classroom, six participants (13%) are non-practicing teachers, and two participants did not indicate if they remained a classroom teacher or if they have chosen another vocation.

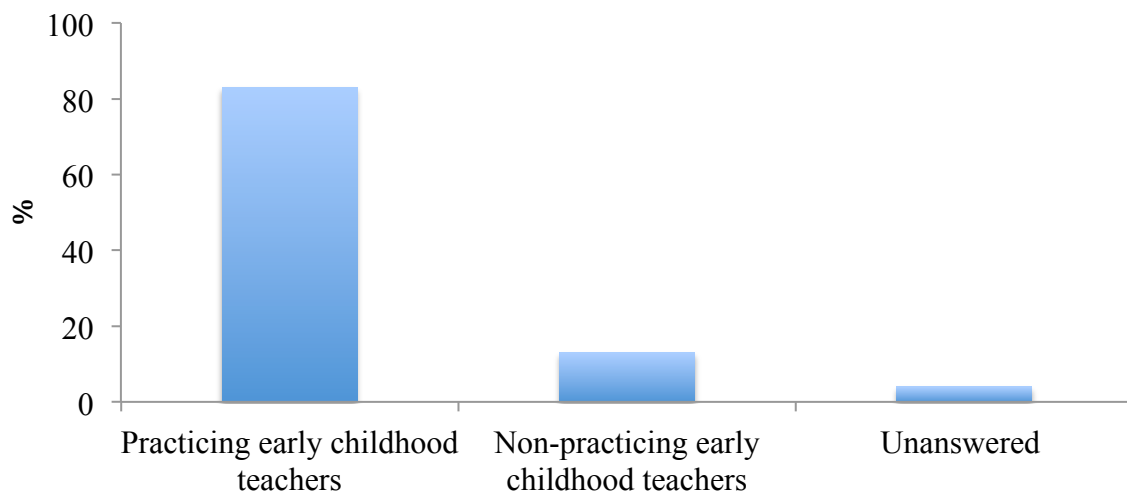


Figure 1. Attrition Rate Percentages of Surveyed Early Childhood Teachers

*Data taken from survey question 2

Figure 2 indicates the current vocations for each of the non-practicing teachers (n=6). Of the six non-practicing teacher: three are now stay-at-home moms (50%), one is a part-time substitute teacher at an early childhood education center (17%), one participant is currently working for the government in a department unrelated to education (17%), and one participant did not provide a description on their current vocation (17%).

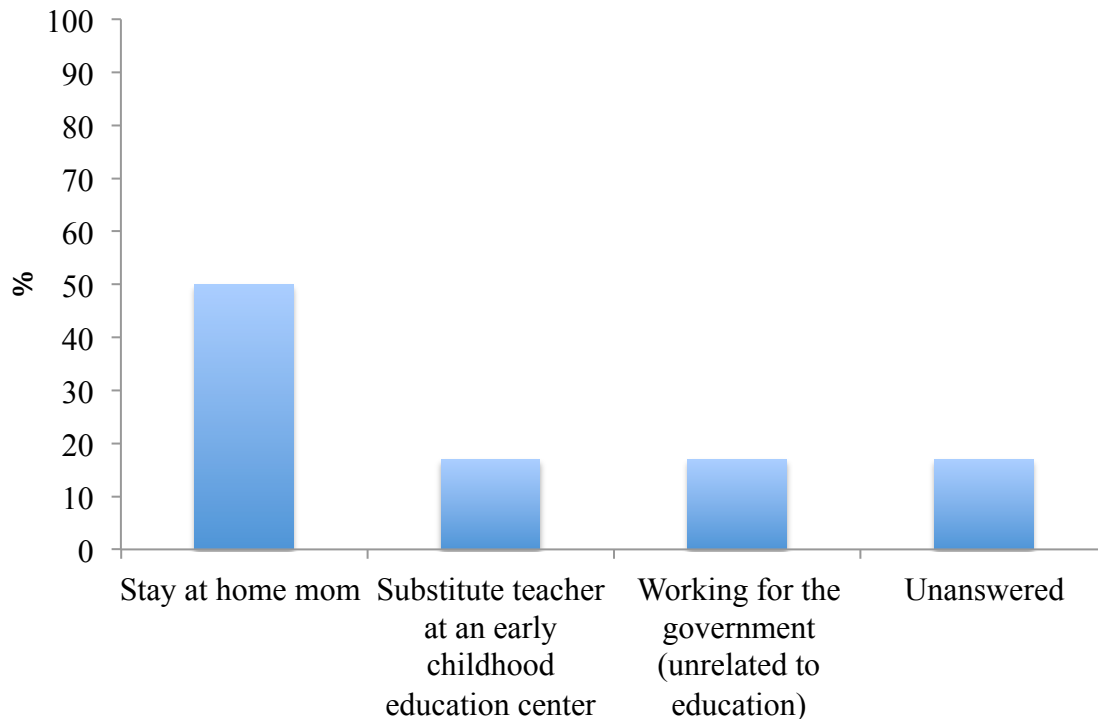


Figure 2. Percentages of Alternate Careers of the Surveyed Non-Practicing Teachers

*Data taken from survey question 2

Poor Work Conditions

Figure 3 indicates the poor work conditions that existed in the non-practicing teachers (n=6), previous schools. The following is a list of the poor work conditions, which impacted the participants, ranked in order from most frequently reported to least frequently reported: increased demands on teachers (83%), increased testing (67%), scripted curriculum (50%), increased documentation (50%), lack of respect from parents of students (33%), lack of respect from

students (33%), lack of respect from the principal or the school administration (17%), lack of respect from the public community (17%), lack of materials and resources (17%), lack of time to plan and implement new policies (17%), low salary (17%), Inconsistencies in policy (17%), and lack of autonomy in the classroom (0%).

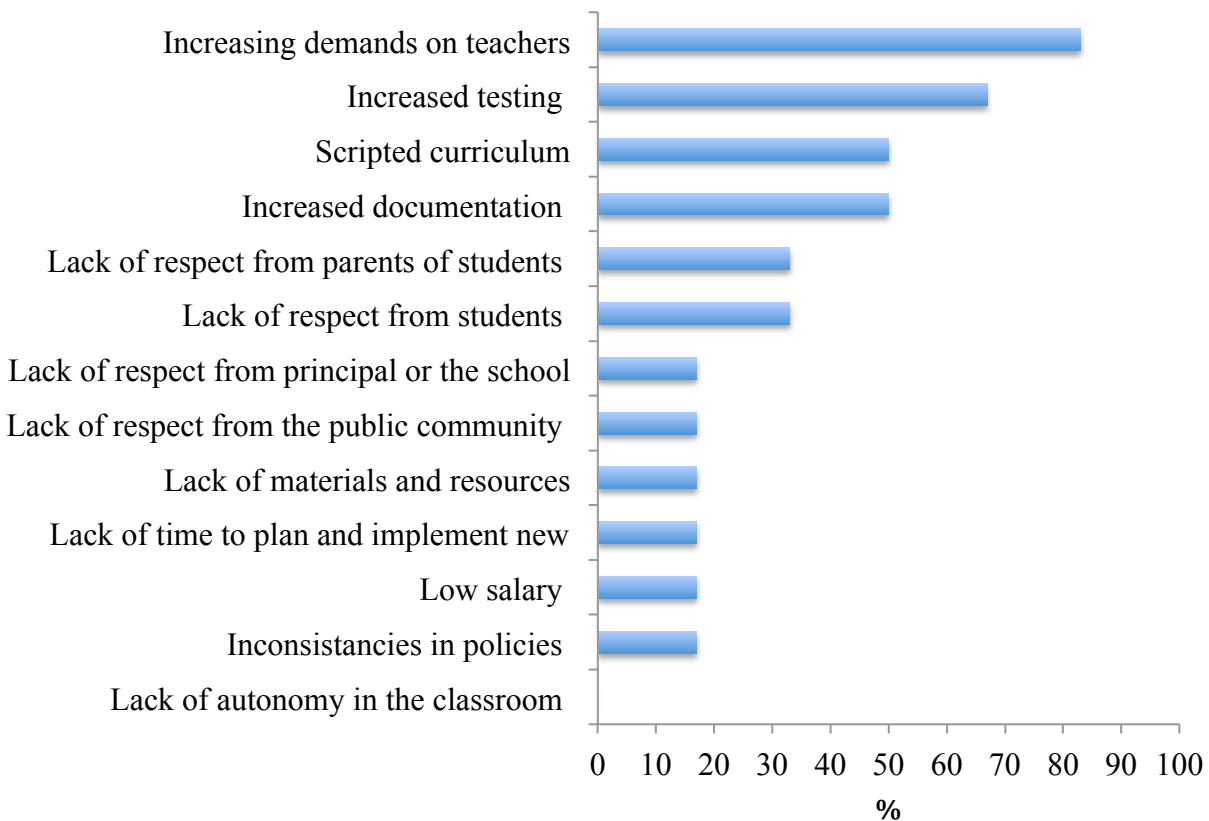


Figure 3. Percentages of the Poor Work Conditions Existing in the Previous Schools of the Non-Practicing Teachers Surveyed

*Data taken from survey question 3

Figure 4 indicates the poor work conditions that exist in schools and classrooms of surveyed teachers both practicing and non-practicing (n=48) during their induction period. The following is a list of the poor work conditions, which impacted the participants, ranked in order from most frequently reported to least frequently reported:

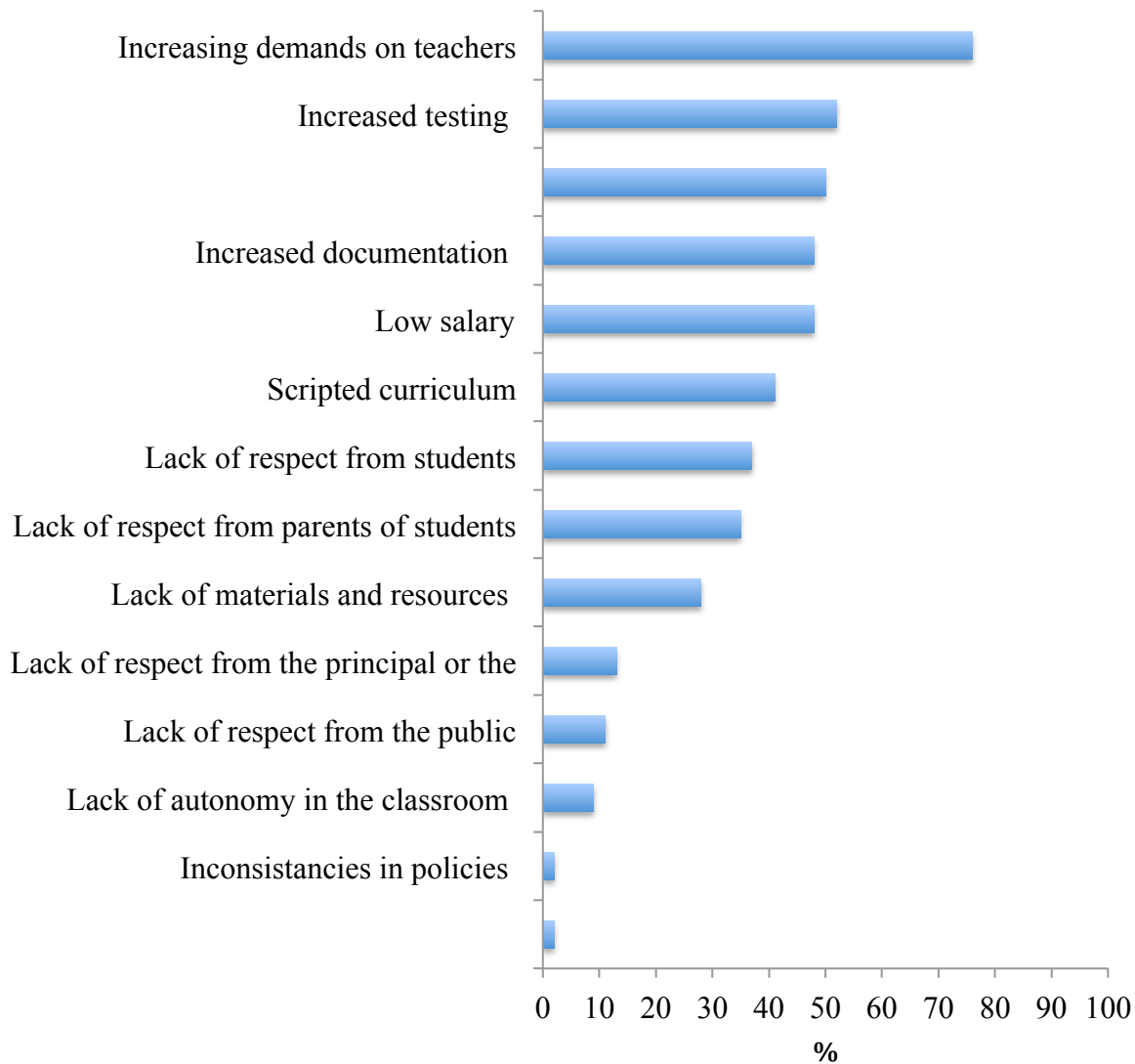


Figure 4. The Percentages of the Poor Work Conditions that Exist in Schools

*Data taken from survey question 3

increased demands on teachers (76%), increased testing (52%), lack of time to plan and implement new policies (50%), increased documentation (48%), low salary (48%), scripted curriculum (41%), lack of respect from students (37%), lack of respect from parents of students (35%), lack of materials and resources (28%), lack of respect from the principal or the school administration (13%), lack of respect from the public community (11%), lack of autonomy in the classroom (9%), inconsistencies in policy (2%), and many hours of personal time used in order to meet demands (2%). This data shows the majority of teachers agree that: (a) increased

demands on teachers, (b) increased testing, (c) lack of time to plan and implement new policies, are the most frequently reported work conditions in schools and classrooms; therefore, it can be understood that these three issues must be addressed in schools and classrooms today.

Retention

Figure 5 indicates the percent of participants who are non-practicing teachers (n=6) who recognized that they participated in a formal teaching induction program.

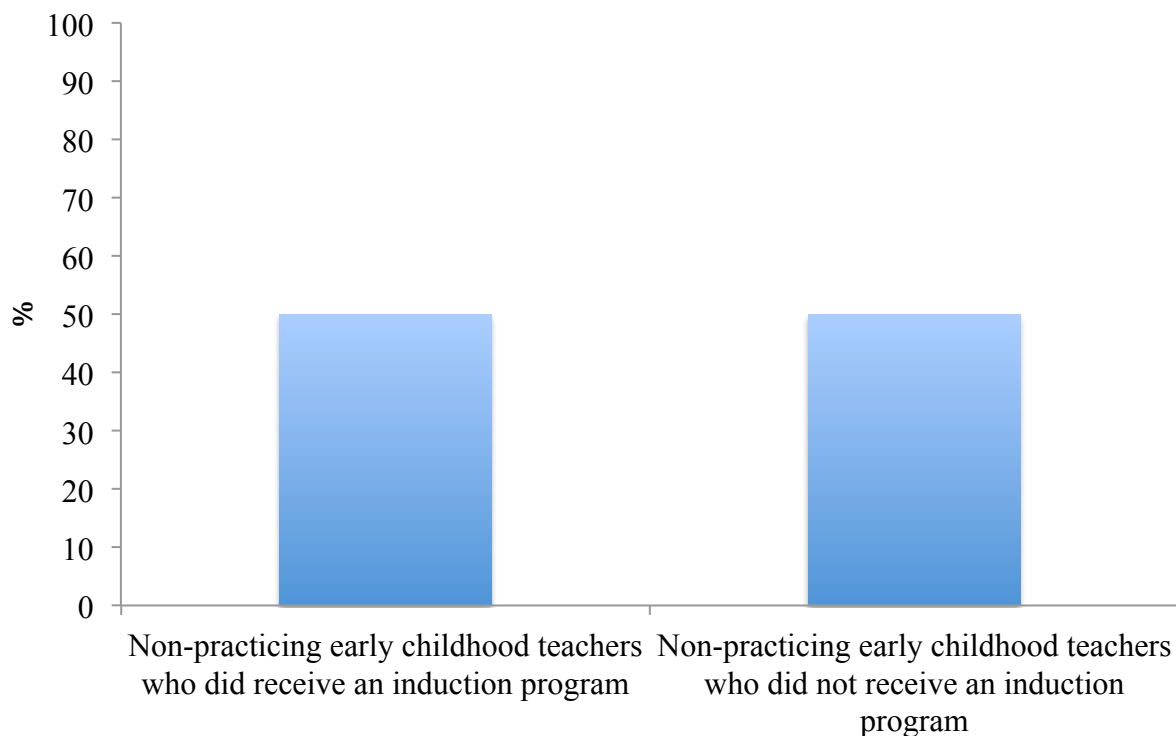


Figure 5. The Percent of Frequencies of Non-Practicing Teachers Who had a Formal Induction Program

*Data taken from survey question 6

Of these six participants, three indicated that they had received a formal teaching induction program (50%), and three indicated that they had not received a formal teaching induction program (50%). A chi square test was performed and no relationship was found between practicing teacher (PT) and teacher induction (TI), $\chi^2 (1, N=46) = .342, p=.559$.

Induction Period

Figure 6 indicates the main goal(s) for the induction period in schools from the surveyed teachers both practicing and non-practicing (n=48). Forty-three participants (90%) stated that their induction period was used as a time for orientation into the school/district when entering into the field of education, 41 participants (85%) stated that their induction period provided general support/guidance when entering into the field of education, and thirty-one participants (65%) stated that their induction period provided emotional support/encouragement as they entered into the field of education.

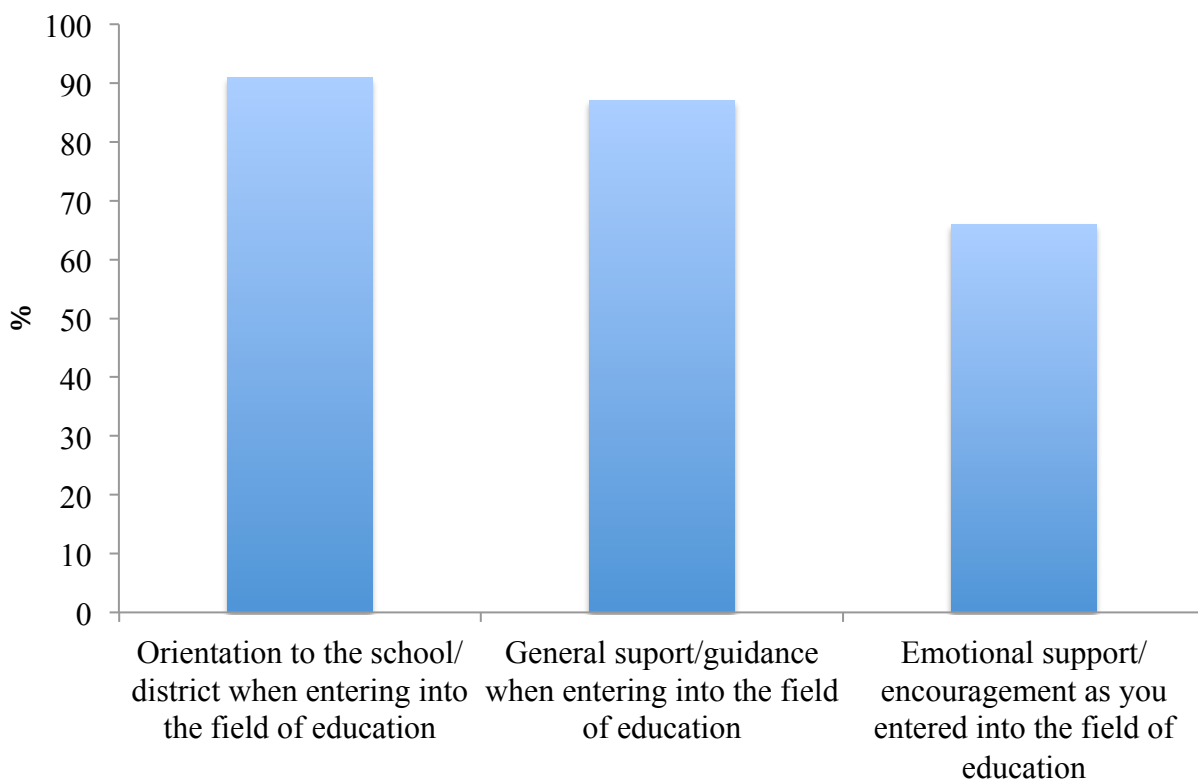


Figure 6. The Percent of Frequencies of Activities that Occurred During Both Practicing and Non-Practicing Teacher's Induction Period

*Data taken from survey question 8

Figure 7 indicates the supports given to surveyed teachers both practicing and non-practicing (n=48) during their induction period.



Figure 7. The Percentage of Supports Given to Both Practicing and Non-Practicing Teachers During Their Induction Period

*Data taken from survey question 9

The following is a list of the supports offered by schools, which impacted the participants, ranked in order from most frequently utilized to least frequently utilized: access to professional

development (81%), time and encouragement to collaborate with colleagues in the same grade/subject (79%), communication with school principal (75%), resources (human or materials) (75%), a set of professional expectations that align with observation rubrics (73%), support from school principal (71%), time for professional development (71%), mentor (67%), leadership from school principal, and (44%), adjustment of workload to ensure time to participate in induction program (8%).

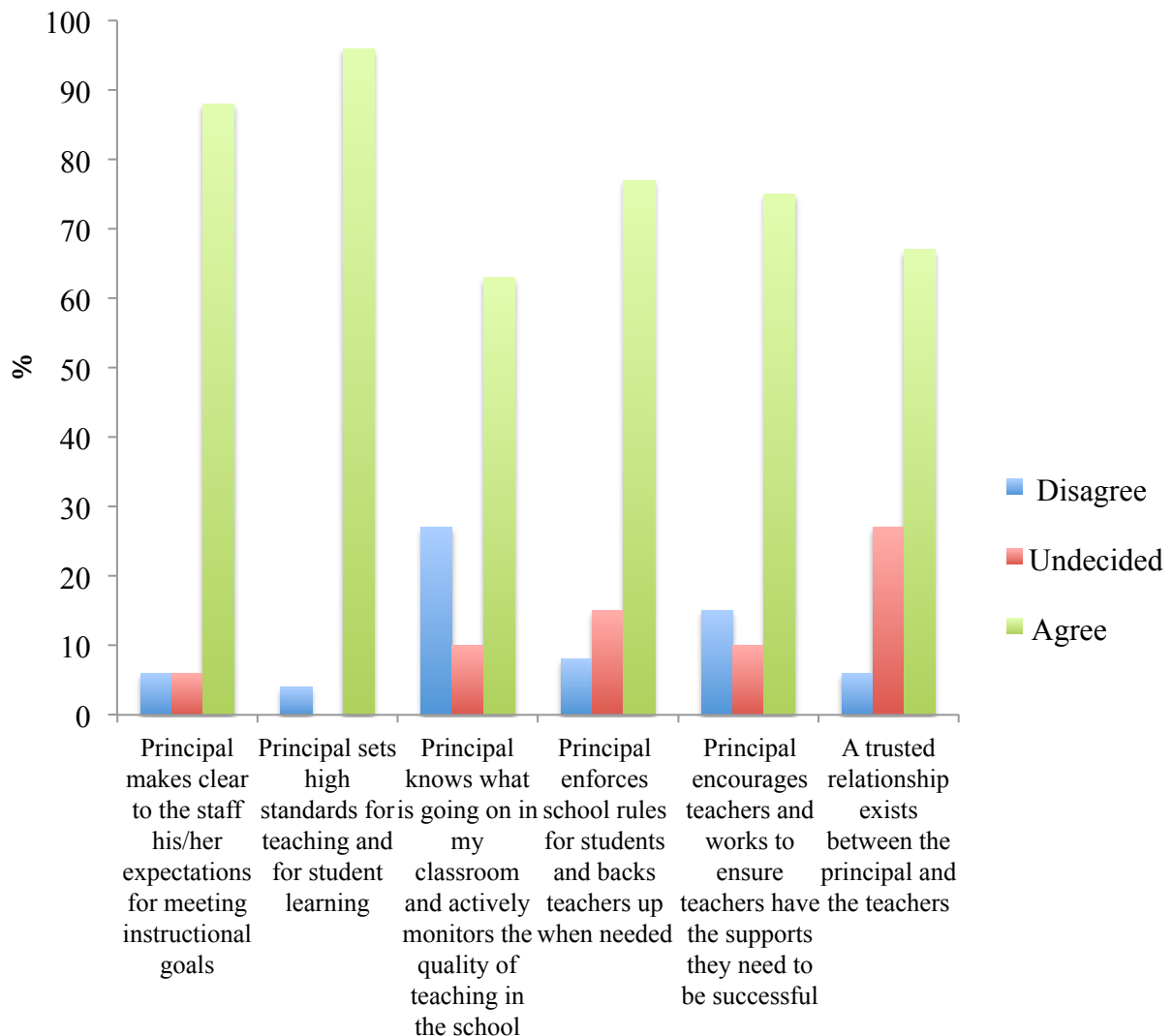


Figure 8. Percentage of Further Supports Given to Both Practicing and Non-Practicing Teachers During Their Induction Period

*Data taken from survey question 10 (1-6)

Figure 8 indicates further supports given to surveyed teachers both practicing and non-practicing (n=48) during their induction period. Eighty-eight percent of participants agreed their school principal makes clear to the staff his/her expectations for meeting instructional goals, subsequently six percent of participants disagreed and 6% of participants were undecided about this matter. Ninety-six percent of participants agreed their principal sets high standards for teaching and for student learning, subsequently 4% of participants disagreed and no participants were undecided about this matter. Sixty-three percent of participants agreed their principal knows what is going on in my classroom and actively monitors the quality of teaching in the school, subsequently 27% of participants disagree and ten percent of participants were undecided about this matter. Seventy-seven percent of participants agreed their principal enforces school rules for students and backs teachers up when needed, subsequently 8% of participants disagree and 15% of participants are undecided about this matter. Seventy-five percent of participants agreed their principal encourages teachers and works to ensure teachers have the supports they need to be successful, subsequently 15% of participants disagree and 10% of participants are undecided about this matter. Finally, 67% of participants agreed that a trusted relationship exists between the principal and the teachers, subsequently 6% of participants disagree and 27% of participants are undecided about this matter.

Figure 9 reports the results of the constant comparative, qualitative data analysis. It can be seen in Figure 9 which reports data for survey question nineteen (n=45) in regards to the greatest supports teachers received during their first five years of teaching, 40 participants (89%) indicated social supports at their schools and 5 participants (11%) indicated social supports outside of their schools. Through this data it can be determined that social supports at teachers' schools provide teachers a great amount of support during their first five years of teaching.

Figure 9 depicts responses for survey question twenty (n=39) in regards to things teachers wished they had during their first five years of teaching, 16 participants (41%) indicated they wished they had more social supports at school and 23 participants (59%) indicated they wished they had more access to resources at school, such as: more time built into the day to work on planning or observations of mentor teachers, more meaningful professional development, more instructional assistance, and more materials provided. Through this data it can be determined that access to more resources would provide teachers a great support during their first five years of teaching.

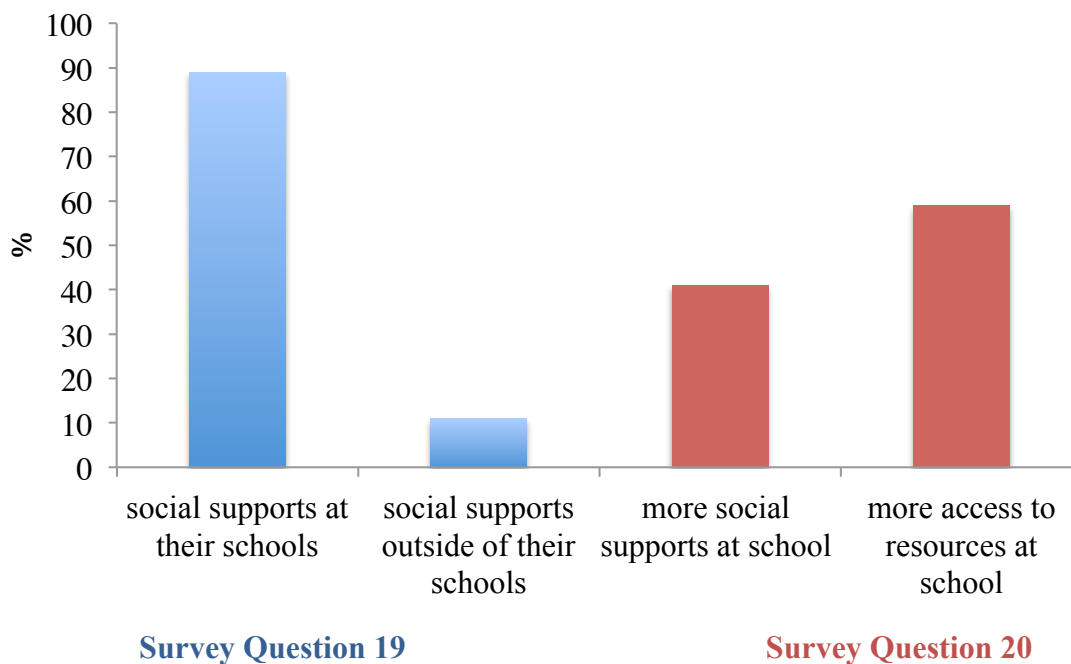


Figure 9. Greatest supports teachers received and things teachers wished they had during their first five years of teaching

*Data taken from survey question 19 and 20

Mentorship

Figure 10 indicates the percent of the participants who identify as non-practicing teachers (n=6), who recognized that they had a mentor during their induction period. Of these six participants, three indicated that they had received a mentor during their induction period (50%), and three indicated that they had not received a mentor during their induction period (50%). A chi square test was performed and no relationship was found between practicing teacher (PT) and

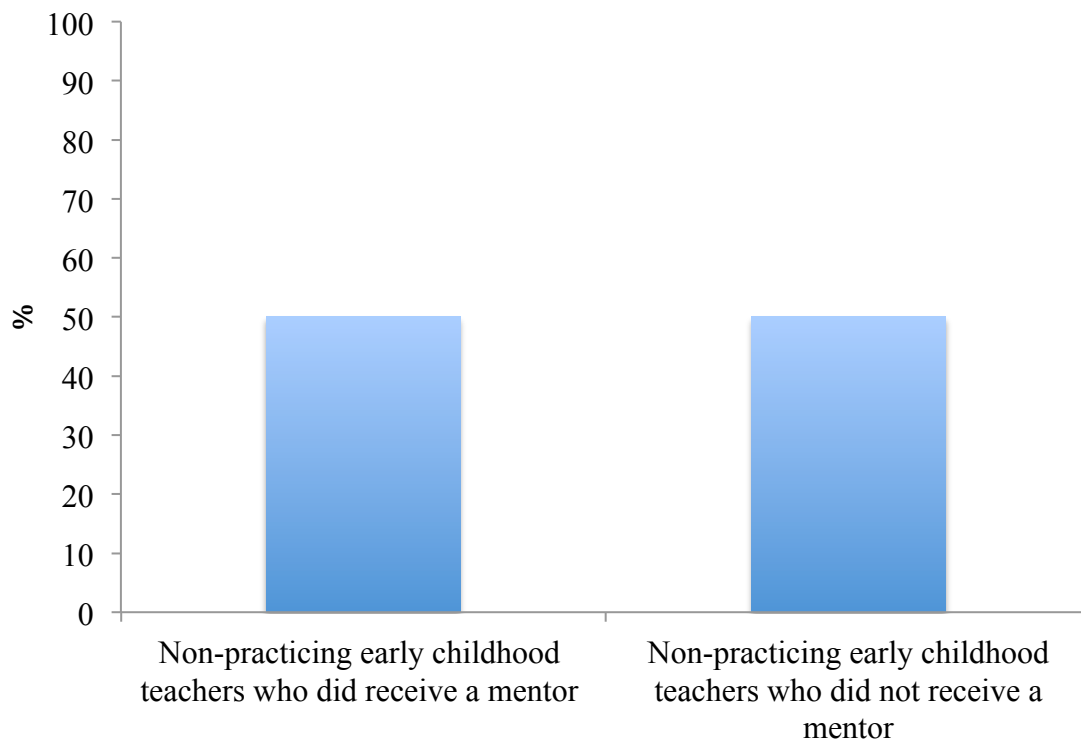


Figure 10. The Percentage of Frequencies of Non-Practicing Teachers Who Had a Mentor

*Data taken from survey question 11

Figure 11 indicates the frequencies of supports given to teachers with mentors (n=31) ranked in order from most frequently utilized to least frequently utilized:

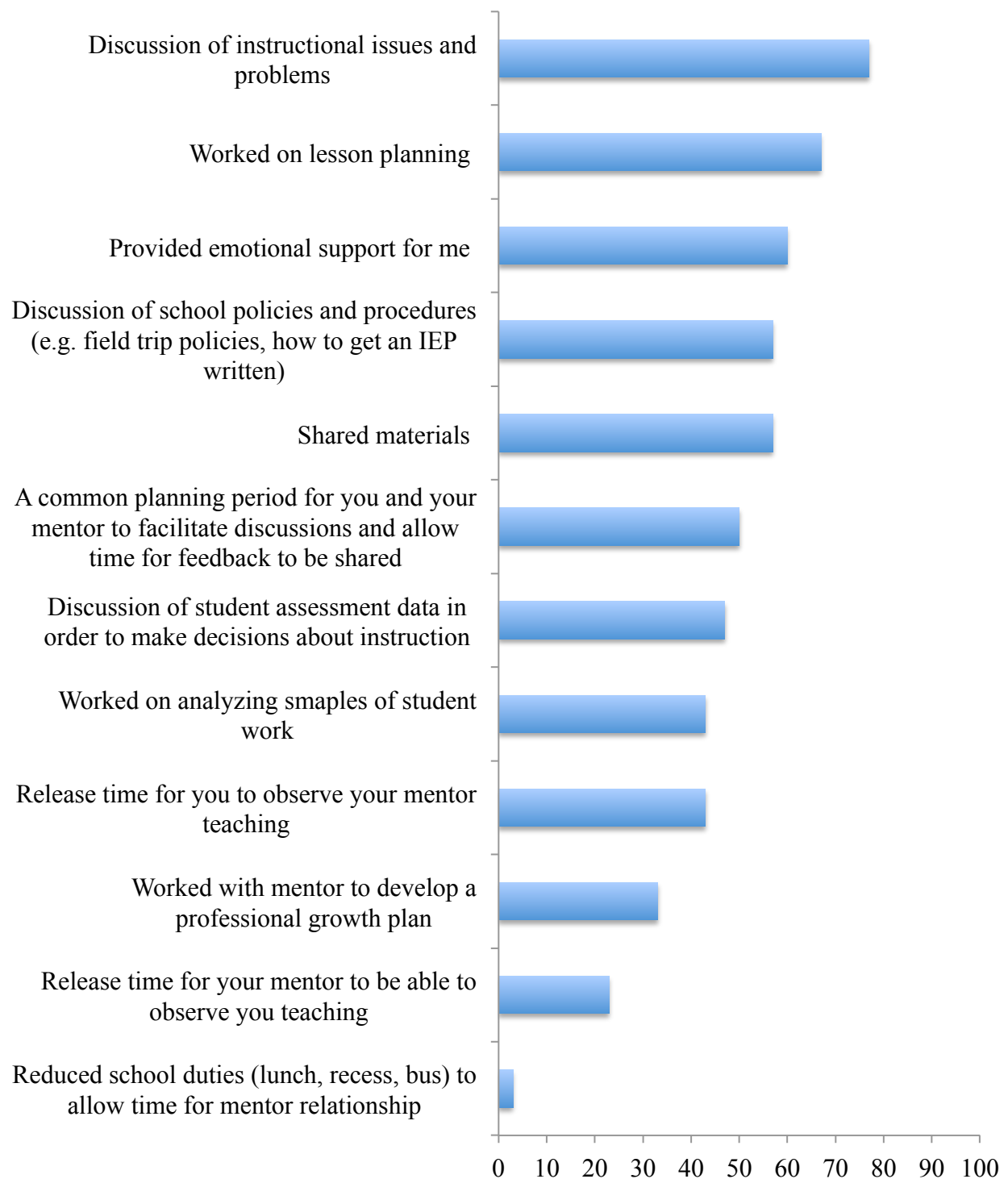


Figure 11. The Percentage of Supports Given to Both Practicing and Non-Practicing Teachers During a Mentorship

*Data taken from survey question 18

%

discussion of instructional issues and problems twenty-three participants (77%), worked on lesson planning twenty participants (67%), provided emotional supports eighteen participants

(60%), discussion of school policies and procedures (e.g. field trip policies, how to get an IEP written) seventeen participants (57%), shared materials seventeen participants (57%), a common planning period for you and your mentor to facilitate discussions and allow time for feedback to be shared fifteen participants (50%), discussion of student assessment data in order to make decisions about instruction fourteen participants (47%), worked on analyzing samples of student work thirteen participants (43%), release time for you to observe your mentor teaching thirteen participants (43%), worked with mentor to develop a professional growth plan ten participants (33%), release time for your mentor to be able to observe you teaching seven participants (23%), and reduced school duties (lunch, recess, bus) to allow time for mentor relationship one participant (3%).

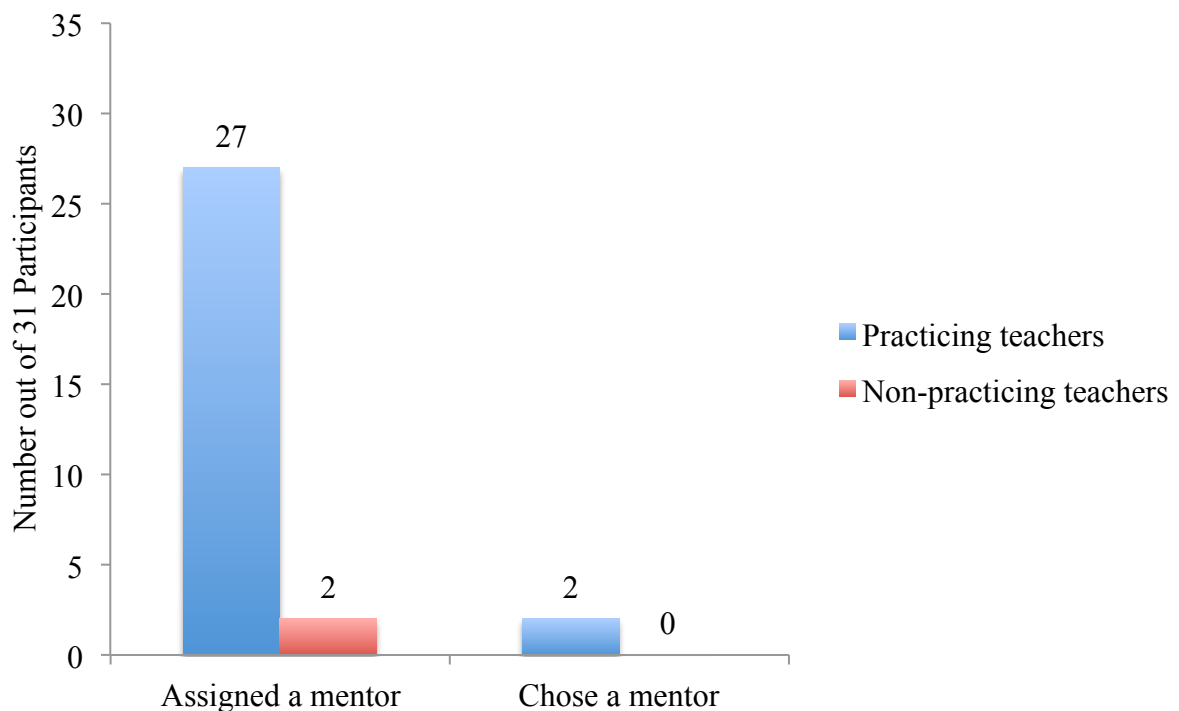


Figure 12. Participants That Identified as Having a Mentor, Both Practicing and Non-Practicing Teachers, Who Were Assigned Their Mentor Versus Those Who Chose Their Mentor

*Data taken from survey question 12

Figure 12 indicates the participants with mentors (n=31) both practicing and non-practicing teachers who were assigned their mentor or chose their mentor.

Twenty-seven practicing teachers (87%) and two non-practicing teachers (6%) were assigned a mentor. Two practicing teachers (6%) and zero non-practicing teachers (0%) were able to choose their mentor. A chi square test was performed and a p value less than .05 was found which makes a significant relationship between practicing teacher (PT) and mentor choice (MC), $\chi^2 (1, N=31) = 8.908, p=.003$.

Figure 13 indicates the mentor meeting frequencies expressed by the participants with mentors (n=31).

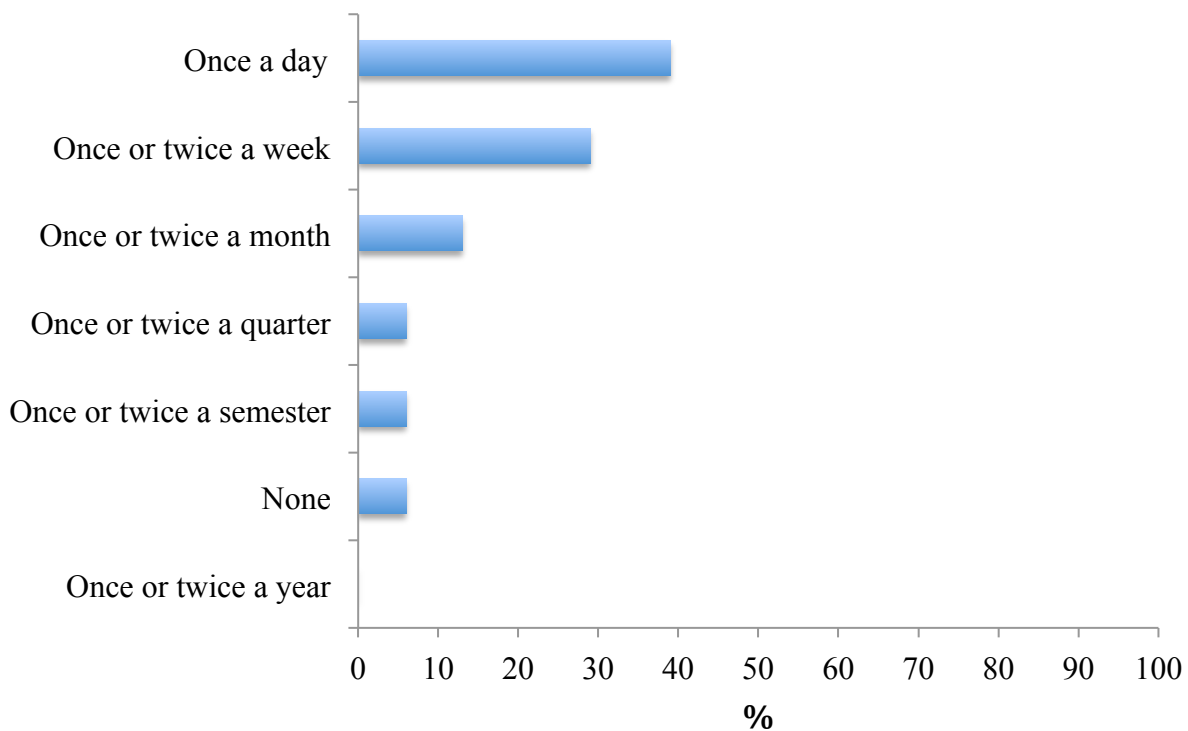


Figure 13. Percent of Mentor Meeting Frequencies

*Data taken from survey question 15

Twelve participants (39%) met daily, 9 participants (29%) met weekly, 4 participants (13%) met monthly, 2 participants (6%) met quarterly, 2 participants (6%) met one or twice a semester, 2

participants (6%) did not indicate that they met at all; none of the participants met yearly. A chi square test was performed and no relationship was found between practicing teacher (PT) and mentor meeting frequency (MMF), $\chi^2 (5, N=31) = 9.111, p=.105$.

Figure 14 indicates the participants who identified as having a mentor (n=31), both practicing and non-practicing teachers, who had grade level match and subject areas match with their mentor teachers.

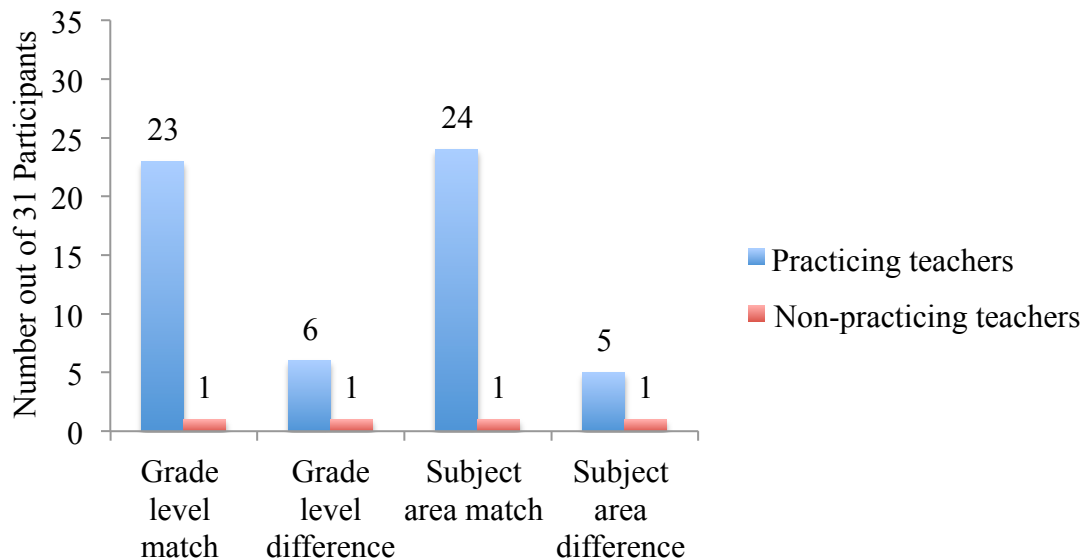


Figure 14. Participants That Identified as Having a Mentor, Both Practicing and Non-Practicing Teachers, Who Had Grade Level and Subject Area Match

*Data taken from survey question 13 and 14

Twenty-three practicing teachers (74%) taught in the same grade level as their mentor, while six practicing teachers (19%) did not teach in the same grade as their mentor teacher. One non-practicing teacher (3%) taught in the same grade level as their mentor teacher, which one non-practicing teacher (3%) did not teach in the same grade as their mentor teacher. Twenty-four practicing teachers (77%) taught in the same subject as their mentor teacher, while five practicing teachers (16%) did not teacher in the same subject area as their mentor. One non-practicing teacher (3%) taught in the same subject area as their mentor, while one non-practicing

teacher (3%) did not teach in the same subject area as their mentor. A chi square test was performed and no relationship was found between practicing teacher (PT) and mentor grade level (MGL), $\chi^2 (1, N=31) = .149, p=.700$. Another chi square test was performed and no relationship was found between practicing teacher (PT) and mentor subject area (MSA), $\chi^2 (1, N=31) = .034, p=.853$.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

Attrition

Although the attrition rate of the surveyed early childhood teachers (n=48) was not as devastating as the reported national average of 40-50% attrition rate of early childhood teachers within the first five years of teaching (Potemski & Matlach, 2014; Miller & Bogatova, 2009), the research did indicate that a subset of early childhood teachers (n=6) did not continue their careers as a classroom teacher.

Work Conditions

Of the six non-practicing teachers, half indicated that they left the field of early childhood education to become a stay at home mom, which appears to be a national trend. The percentage of stay-home mothers has risen over the past decade to 29% in 2012, up from 23% in 1999 (Toppo, 2014). The majority of the six non- practicing teachers cited their reasons for leaving to be due to (a) increased demands on teachers, (b) increased testing, (c) scripted curricula, and (d) increased documentation. When adding the data from practicing teachers, the majority of the surveyed participants (n=48) identified that (a) increased demands on teachers, (b) increased testing, and (c) lack of time to plan and implement new policies, as the most frequently reported conditions in schools and classrooms. This indicates that increased demands on teachers and increased testing were common poor work conditions between both surveyed groups, practicing teachers and non-practicing teachers. These findings are in alignment with teacher attrition literature, which goes further in stating that, not only do teachers experience these poor work conditions, but they additionally do not receive support, which leaves them overwhelmed and stressed (Milner, 2013).

Interestingly, low salary was not identified when looking at the data from only the non-practicing teachers, and when looking at the surveyed participants as a whole, which is also reported in the literature (Bacolod, 2007; Walker, 2015). It appeared that participants in their teaching practice wanted more control in their classroom to do what they felt was best for young children's learning (increased autonomy), while also being treated as a professional (increased respect), which is echoed in the literature (Milner, 2013; Potemski & Matlach; Riggs, 2013; Walker, 2015). In the literature, having time to collaborate with colleagues has been identified as contributing to the overall well-being of teachers (Howe, 2006; Hudson, 2012; Strauss, 2012). Teachers should consider inquiring about the school culture when interviewing for teaching positions.

Retention

Although the literature states that an effective induction program assists new teachers as they transition into the field of education (Potemski & Matlach, 2014), the data in Figure 5 indicates that a formal induction program did not play a large role in keeping teachers in the field of education. These findings may be skewed, due to the nature of the cohort-based teacher education program the population from which the sample was drawn; research suggests that cohort-based education programs provide peer support (Bista & Cox, 2014), which may have provided an ongoing support system to alumni into their professional practice.

Induction Period

Participants reported having supports during the teacher induction period (see Figures 6, 7 & 8). Consistent with previous research, participants identified their schools providing a comprehensive orientation of school culture and infrastructure (Potemski & Matlach, 2014),

guidance (Keogh et al., 2010), and emotional support (Keilwitz, 2014) for teachers should be encompassed in the induction period (Figure 6).

The literature characterizes effective induction programs as having mentor program; administrative support; instructional support through collaboration with peers; a set of professional expectations; and, ongoing individualized professional development (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). The majority of surveyed participants indicated that they received numerous supports, which mirrored those suggested in the literature. A substantial amount of participants, although less than half, indicated that they also received leadership from their school principal. Few participants indicated that they received an adjustment of their workload during their induction period.

The literature suggests that principal support is the most important support to teachers, as principals are often responsible for decision-making regarding specific school policies (Stewart, 2015). The majority of all teachers surveyed agreed that their school principals provided supports ranking as follows (a) sets high standards for teaching and for student learning, (b) makes clear to the staff his/her expectations for meeting instructional goals, (c) enforces school rules for students and backs teachers up when needed, (d) encourages teachers and works to ensure teachers have the supports they need to be successful, (e) that a trusted relationship exists between the principal and the teachers, and finally, (f) knows what is going on in their classroom and actively monitors the quality of teaching in the school. As the principal seems to be critical factor in teacher induction, teacher candidates should interview with the principal, to determine if he engages in the above-mentioned activities.

It was determined that a greater need of social supports such as: (a) support from principal and (b) support from colleagues; and access to more resources at school, such as: (a)

more time, (b) meaningful professional development, (c) instructional assistance, and (d) more materials provided, were needed in schools. In regards to support from school principals, one participant stated, “I would have liked to have had a principal who is a constant part of the school's daily life and activities”, while another participant stated, “More feedback from principal/administration” would have been beneficial. In regards to support from colleagues, one participant stated a mentor would be beneficial because “I am the only pk4 teacher at my school and it would be nice to have someone else I could bounce ideas off of”, while another participant stated, “mall group, grade level support, and more support within building,” would have been beneficial. In regards to needing more time, one participant stated, “more planning/reflecting time,” would have been beneficial. In regards to meaningful professional development, one participant stated, “more opportunities for professional development” would have been beneficial. In regards to instructional assistance, one participant stated, “being able to find a curriculum that best suits the needs of my students rather than a semi-scripted one,” would have been beneficial. Finally, in regards to more materials provided, one participant stated, “more teaching materials provided for me without me having to spend my own money,” would have been beneficial.

It was also identified that the most beneficial aspects of the teacher induction process for beginning teachers are, (1) social supports at school, such as: (a) co-workers from both same and other grades, (b) Mentor, (c) administration, and (d) parents of students; and (2) social supports outside of school, such as: (a) collaboration with other professional colleagues outside the school, and (b) family, would also prove to support the present research study. In regards to support from co-workers at the same school, one participant stated, “Having a supportive 1st grade team has helped TREMENDOUSLY as a first-year teacher. They are always willing to

give their advice/input and make sure I'm confident in myself.” In regards to supports from a mentor, one participant stated, “my mentor giving me support” was the most beneficial aspect of their induction program. In regards to supports from administration, one participant stated, “Having an administration and faculty that were accepting and excited about my joining their team,” was the greatest support. In regards to supports from parents of the students, one participant stated, “encouragement from the parents,” was most beneficial in their induction period. In regards to supports from professional colleagues outside of the school, one participant stated, “Bouncing off ideas from fellow, more experienced teachers (not particularly at my school site),” proved to be a great support. Finally, in regards to support from families, one participant stated, “ My family and friends were very supportive of me in my first 5 years teaching.”

This is supported by the literature which states that teachers identified social conditions such as, “the school’s culture, the principal’s leadership, and relationships among colleagues” (Johnson et al., 2012, p.5), as a cause of dissatisfaction in the workforce. Literature also indicates that improving work conditions, by improving the social conditions of a school, for teachers may be the most feasible and cost-effective way to positively impact teacher retention (Halstead).

Mentorship

Although the literature suggest better retention for teachers who have a mentor during their induction period (Long, 2015), the data from the current study indicated that mentorship did not play a large role in keeping teachers in the field of education. Of the teachers who left, half reported having a mentor. It may be difficult to ascertain the effect of having a mentor on teacher retention, as we did not have a large percentage of teachers who left the field in our sample

(13%), which may be due to the cohort-based nature of the program (discussed above). However, it is interesting to note that 65% of our sample reported having a mentor.

The literature states that mentors are a vital part of the teacher induction period, and in order for a mentorship to be effective structure must exist, the supports provided must be comprehensive, and the program must be well monitored, (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Wong, 2004). The majority of the participants who identified as having a mentor (n=31), agreed that the following were the most beneficial aspects of their mentorship were planning and discussing instructional strategies; as well as sharing materials. In order to preform the necessary planning discussions and sharing of material, a common meeting time had to be permitted in the day. Participants also said their mentors provided them with emotional support throughout their first five years of teaching. Teachers should inquire on mentoring programs when interviewing, as the benefits of having a mentor are clearly established in the literature.

Although it is most common for new teachers to be assigned a mentor teacher in the first year of teaching (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), it was difficult to determine the benefits/disadvantages of a mentor being assigned versus a mentor being chosen. Some literature suggests that informal mentoring (organic) has more impact than formal mentoring (assigned); mentees report more career-related support from mentors (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992). Due to the small amount of participants who were able to choose their mentor in this study, the relationship is hard to determine. It may be beneficial for formal induction programs to initially assign mentors, but to allow for flexibility if a mentoring relationship develops organically.

The greatest percentage of participants surveyed (88%) indicated that they were assigned a minimal meet time with their mentor, which echoed the literature (Potemski & Matlach, 2014), with the most common meeting frequency being daily; followed by weekly, which is the

suggested recommendation in the literature (Boyce & Boice, 1998). A minimal meet time established through a formal induction period between mentors and mentees may be a valuable asset.

Literature indicates that having a mentor teacher from one's subject area with a common planning period was identified as one of the strongest factors to mentor program effectiveness (Ingersoll, 2012; Keilwitz, 2014; Potemski & Matlach, 2014) as well as a grade-level that is similar to the mentee, is also revered as superior characteristics of a mentor program (Potemski & Matlach, 2014, Keilwitz, 2014). In the current study, there did not appear to be any differences based on grade/subject match. One confound may be the self-contained nature of many early childhood programs. This sample was taken from a population of teachers certified in preschool to third grade; many teachers, particularly in the lower grades, teach all subjects; therefore, having a mentor who taught the same subject area may not have been as important, as most early childhood teachers teach across subjects. While grade level may be important when considering extremes (i.e., a mentor relationship between a middle school and preschool teacher), when grade levels are close together (i.e., a mentor relationship between a kindergarten and first grade teacher), an exact match may not be as critical.

Clinical Implications

There are several recommendations that teacher candidates should be aware of when interviewing for their first teaching position. First, they should ask questions about formal induction programs available within the school or school district. This was shown both in the present study and in the literature as providing supports new teachers need to stay in the teaching profession. Teacher candidates should ask questions regarding the use of mentoring programs and the time allocated for mentors/mentee to build relationships, which are designed to strength

the instructional pedagogy of the new teacher, while also providing social support. Additionally, because the literature identified principals as having the most profound impact on the induction period, interviewing with the principal to determine how induction is handled at the school level seems warranted.

Future Research

This study aimed to gain a greater understanding of the effects of induction programs, on teacher retention. Future research on the needs of early childhood education teachers, may consider investigating the type of support needed from the principal and from colleagues; as well as which resources at school that would be most beneficial to new teachers (e.g., more time, meaningful professional development, instructional assistance, more materials). Because of the plethora of research on the impact of poor work conditions experienced by teachers, it seems warranted to study how to further decrease the poor work conditions in schools while working towards further developing induction programs in schools.

The small sample size of non-practicing teachers in the present study impacted the ability to make inferences from this population. Thirteen percent of teachers in this sample left the field of early childhood education. Collectively, practicing and non-practicing teachers identified poor work conditions in the field, although most received support teachers during their induction period. It seems reasonable, in consideration of the present study in combination with the literature in this area, that both poor work conditions of teachers and teacher induction programs are necessary to retain, and possibly even attract, teachers in the field of early childhood education.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Teacher Induction Survey

Instructions: Please read and complete all 20 questions that apply to you.

1.) I have read and agree to the terms and conditions stated in the attached consent form.

a.) yes

b.) no

If marked **YES** to question 1 please proceed to the following questions

If marked **NO** to questions 1, thank you for your time and consideration of this survey.

(This question was added due to IRB. This is to ensure that participants have seen and read the consent form, which contains the terms and conditions of the survey. It also offers a way for participants to decline participation in the survey.)

2.) Do you currently hold a position as a teacher?

a.) yes

b.) no

- If answered **NO**, what is your current job title. Provide a brief description, and state why you no longer teach in the classroom:

(The literature shows an increase in teachers leaving the field of education (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). Therefore, this question was added to obtain a general understanding of the participants who are non-practicing teachers and those who are practicing teachers in the field of early childhood education. This question was pulled from the Mobility

Questionnaire of The Study of Teacher Induction Program conducted by Mathematica
Policy Research. (Glazerman et al., 2006, p.2)

All participants (teachers and non-teachers) are to fill out the remainder of the survey questions. Reflect back on experiences you had during your first five years of teaching to answer the following questions:

3.) Mark ALL conditions that are present at your school/were present in your previous school:

- a.) lack of respect from the public community
- b.) lack of respect from principal or the school administration
- c.) lack of respect from parents of students
- d.) lack of respect from students
- e.) lack of autonomy in the classroom
- f.) lack of time to plan and implement new policies
- g.) increasing demands on teachers
- h.) scripted curriculum
- i.) increased testing
- j.) increased documentation
- k.) lack of materials and resources
- l.) low salary
- m.) other: _____

(The literature shows that poor work conditions in which teachers exist contribute significantly to teacher retention (Halstead, 2013). Therefore, this question was added in

order to determine which poor work conditions played the greatest role on teachers leaving the field of education. This question was pulled and modified to fit the needs of this study, from the Mobility Questionnaire of The Study of Teacher Induction Program conducted by Mathematica Policy Research. (Glazerman et al., 2006, p.5)

4.) Current teachers: how many years have you been teaching, Non-teachers: how many years did you teach before changing jobs?

- a.) I am/was in my first year of teaching
- b.) 2-3 years
- c.) 4-5 years
- d.) 6-10 years

5.) Please indicate the school year in which you began teaching:

(The literature shows a thirty nine percent increase in teacher induction programs from year 1990-2008 (Keilwitz, 2014). Therefore, this question was added to obtain a general understanding of when teachers received their induction program. This question was pulled and modified to fit the needs of this study, from the Mobility Questionnaire of The Study of Teacher Induction Program conducted by Mathematica Policy Research.

(Glazerman et al., 2006, p.2)

6.) Are/were you a part of a formal induction program? An induction program can consist of, a larger system of support/help that often includes mentoring but also includes additional supports

such as help with curriculum planning and professional development, when entering into the field of education.

a.) yes

b.) no

c.) other: _____

(The literature shows that an induction program assists new teachers as they transition into the field of education, and when these programs are enacted into school systems, teachers feel empowered in their careers. This leads to a greater sense of accomplishment, which, in turn, encourages teachers to remain in the field of education (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). Therefore, this question was added to obtain a measure of teachers who received an induction program. This question was pulled from the Induction Activities Teacher Questionnaire of The Study of Teacher Induction Program conducted by Mathematica Policy Research. (Glazerman et al., 2006, p.2).

7.) How long will/did you participate in the formal induction program?

a.) less than one year

b.) 1-2 years

c.) 3-5 years

d.) over 5 years

e.) I did not participate an induction program

f.) other: _____

(The literature shows that requirements should be set for the length of an induction program. 2 or more years is the agreement that researchers have designated as an

appropriate time in an induction program (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). Therefore, this question was added to obtain an understanding how long the induction program was for teachers. This question was pulled and modified to fit the needs of this study, from a Colorado Department of Education interview through the New Teacher Center's study of induction programs (Increasing the effectiveness of educator induction programs in Colorado, p. E-2).

8.) Mark ALL the activities that occurred in your first 5 years of teaching:

- a.) Orientation to the school/district when entering the field of education
- b.) General support/guidance when entering the field of education
- c.) Emotional support/encouragement
- d.) Other:

(The literature shows that a formal induction program provides ongoing supports for teachers (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). Therefore, this question was added to obtain an understanding of teachers who received an ongoing induction program and those who were simply given an introduction to their school. This question was pulled and modified to fit the needs of this study, from the Induction Activities Teacher Questionnaire of The Study of Teacher Induction Program conducted by Mathematica Policy Research.

(Glazerman et al., 2006, p.2)

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Undecided	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1.) Principal makes clear to the staff his or her expectations for meeting instructional goals.					
2.) Principal set high standards for teaching and for student learning					
3.) Principal knows what is going on in my classroom and actively monitors the quality of teaching in the school					
4.) Principal enforces school rules for students and backs teachers up when needed					
5.) Principal encourage teachers and work to ensure teachers have the supports they need to be successful					
6.) A trusted relationship exists between the principal and the teachers					

7.) A trusted relationship exists between the teachers at the school					
8.) Teachers feel responsible to support and help other teachers to ensure everyone succeeds					
9.) A conscious effort is made by faculty to make new teachers feel welcomed					
10.) The necessary textbooks and print resources to teach from are provided					
11.) Instructional materials (e.g., lab supplies, math manipulatives, classroom library books) are available without having to personally buy them					
12.) Classroom supplies (e.g., paper, pencils, staples, tape) are available without having to personally buy them					

9.) Mark ALL supports that are/were offered to you during your first 5 years of teaching:

- a.) mentor
- b.) support from school principal
- c.) leadership from school principal
- d.) communication with school principal
- e.) resources (human or materials)
- f.) time and encouragement to collaborate with colleagues in the same grade/subject
- g.) adjustment of workload to ensure time to participate in induction program
- h.) a set of professional expectations that align with observation rubrics
- i.) time for professional development
- j.) access to professional development
- k.) other: _____

(The literature shows that an effective induction program is comprised of: a mentor program; support, leadership, and communication from the school principal; instructional support through collaboration with peers; a set of professional expectations; and finally, ongoing individualized professional development (Potemski & Matlach, 2014).

Therefore, this question was added to obtain an understanding of the supports teachers gained through their induction period. This question was pulled and modified to fit the needs of this study, from the 1999-2000 Teacher Staff Survey (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004, p.36).

10.) Please mark the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements about the supports given by your school during your first 5 years of teaching:

(The literature shows that principal support was deemed the most important support to teachers, even over that offered by colleagues; this is because principals are often responsible for decision-making regarding specific school policies (Stewart, 2015). Data from the 2007-2008 school year, which is the most current on this topic, states, “the most common induction activity that beginners participated in was having regular supportive communication with their principal, (87%)” (Ingersoll, 2012, p.50). Also, due to the overwhelmingly high demands placed on teachers, a formal induction program should offer teachers instructional supports. These instructional supports include: allocating resources, promoting collaboration with peers, and adjusting workloads to ensure teachers participating in induction programs have proper time to complete their tasks (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). A set of professional expectations that align with standards is essential in establishing an effective mentor program. These standards provide a layout for the consistent expectations that program/teachers should meet (Potemski & Matlach). Therefore, this question was added to obtain a detailed understanding of the additional supports, besides a mentorship, given through the induction program. This question was pulled and modified to fit the needs of this study, from the survey examining the effects of new teacher induction, conducted by SRI international and its partners, Consortium on Chicago Schools Research and the Illinois Education Research Council (Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010, p.5).

11.) Are/were you offered a mentor during your first 5 years of teaching?

a.) yes

b.) no

c.) other: _____

(On the survey in Qualtrics, if answered no here, participants are prompted to question number 19)

(The literature shows that a study conducted by the National Center of Education Statistics, spanning from 2008 through 2012, showed in the 2008-2009 school year ninety-two percent of teachers who received a mentor during their first year remained teaching (Long, 2015). Therefore, this question was added to obtain an understanding of the teachers who gained a mentor through their induction period. This question was pulled from the Induction Activities Teacher Questionnaire of The Study of Teacher Induction Program conducted by Mathematica Policy Research. (Glazerman et al., 2006, p.2)

12.) How is/was the mentor/mentee relationship established?

a.) I was assigned my mentor

b.) I chose my mentor

c.) other: _____

(The literature shows that the mentor/mentee relationship is viewed as reciprocal where each participant contributes and benefits from all aspects of the relationship. Mentors must overall possess qualities that allow them to be open-minded and approachable to their mentees (Ambrosetti, 2012). Therefore, this question was added to obtain an understanding of how the mentor/mentee relationship was established. This question was pulled from the Induction Activities Teacher Questionnaire of The Study of Teacher

Induction Program conducted by Mathematica Policy Research. (Glazerman et al., 2006, p.4)

13.) Indicate what grade you do/did teach:

Indicate what grade your mentor does/did teach:

(Potemski & Matlach, 2014, Keilwitz, 2014)

14.) Indicate what subject you do/did teach:

Indicate what subject your mentor does/did teach:

(On the survey in Qualtrics, this above 2 questions (13 and 14) appear in a matrix format)

(The literature shows that having a mentor teacher from one's subject area with a common planning period was deemed as one of the strongest factors in regards to mentor program effectiveness (Ingersoll, 2012). Therefore, this question was added to obtain an understanding if mentor/mentees are in the same grade/subject level. This question was pulled and modified to fit the needs of this study, from the Induction Activities Teacher Questionnaire of The Study of Teacher Induction Program conducted by Mathematica Policy Research. (Glazerman et al., 2006, p.4)

15.) How often are/were you able to meet with your mentor?

- a.) once a day
- b.) once or twice a week
- c.) once or twice a month
- d.) once or twice a quarter

e.) once or twice a semester

f.) once or twice a year

g.) other: _____

16.) Were you expected to meet with your mentor?

a.) Yes

b.) No

c.) Other: _____

17.) If answered YES to above question, how often were you expected to meet with your mentor?

a.) once a day

b.) once or twice a week

c.) once or twice a month

d.) once or twice a quarter

e.) once or twice a semester

f.) once or twice a year

g.) Other: _____

(The literature shows a minimal meet time should be established to ensure that mentors and mentees are getting ample time to discuss and collaborate on aspects of the mentee's progress. Programs should also allow specific release time for both mentor and mentee observations. Allowing mentees time to observe mentors in their teaching environment will assist in their development of pedagogy approaches. Consequently, mentors need to have time designated for observing the mentees progress in their own classroom

environment. Allowing this time will increase the communication and trust between mentor and mentees; this, in turn, supports a respectful relationship between both entities (Potemski & Matlach, 2014). Therefore, this question was added to obtain an understanding of how often mentor/mentees meet. This question was pulled and modified to fit the needs of this study, from the Induction Activities Teacher Questionnaire of The Study of Teacher Induction Program conducted by Mathematica Policy Research. (Glazerman et al., 2006, p.4).

18.) Mark ALL supports that are/were provided with your mentor:

- a.) release time for you to observe your mentor teaching
- b.) release time for your mentor to be able to observe you teaching
- c.) a common planning period for you and your mentor to facilitate discussions and allow time for feedback to be shared
- d.) reduced school duties (lunch, recess, bus) to allow time for mentor relationship
- e.) worked to develop a professional growth plan
- f.) shared materials
- g.) worked on lesson planning
- h.) worked on analyzing samples of student work
- i.) discussion of instructional issues and problems.
- j.) discussion of student assessment data in order to make decisions about instruction
- k.) discussion of school policies and procedures (ex. field trip policies, how to get an IEP written)
- l.) provided emotional support to me

m.) Other: _____

(The literature shows that a mentor program provides teachers with both technical supports, such as advice and recommendations, as well as emotional support, through moral encouragement (Keilwitz, 2014). Therefore, this question was added to obtain an understanding of the supports given to mentor/mentees. This question was pulled and modified to fit the needs of this study, from the survey examining the effects of new teacher induction, conducted by SRI international and its partners, Consortium on Chicago Schools Research and the Illinois Education Research Council (Wechsler et al., 2010, p.5).

19.) What is/was most supportive to you in your first 5 years of teaching? Please explain below:

20.) What would you have liked during your first 5 years of teaching? Please explain below.

(Best practice in survey research states that qualitative questions in surveys are asked to better understand a specific need of a group of people and results are intended to produce usable data through actions that are valid and reliable (Potemski & Matlach, 2014).

Therefore, this question is a qualitative open-ended question added to ensure all thoughts, which were not previously addressed in the above questions were considered.)

APPENDIX B: PRE-SURVEY NOTIFICATION

Hello, I am Heather Reames and I am an alumni of the 2014, PK-3 program at LSU. I am currently conducting my thesis project on teacher induction and I am seeking your help in receiving some information on this matter through an online survey. The results of this survey will assist in determining best practices in the teacher induction process. It may also help participants gain a greater awareness of resources that may be available in their school district.

The email will be sent with the consent form and the survey questionnaire attached in two days. The consent form will need to be read first, and then you can click the link to being the survey. This survey is completed through the online program Qualtrics. This program is free to use and does not require any downloading. This program also allows all responses to remain anonymous.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Heather Reames

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Project Title: The Teacher Induction Program

Performance Site: Qualtrics, Web-based Survey Questionnaire

Investigators: The following investigators are available for questions

Heather Reames
M-Th, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm
LSU Graduate Student, Master's Candidate
School of Education, LSU
(225) 354-5526

Dr. Cynthia DiCarlo
M-F, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
Associate Professor
School of Education
College of Human Sciences and Education, LSU
(225) 578 -7005

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to collect data regarding aspects of the induction process that Early Childhood Education teachers receive, and the way the induction process impacts teacher retention.

Inclusion Criteria: sample of 160 alumni members who completed a two-year, cohort-based early childhood teacher education program in the Southern United States.

Exclusion Criteria: Teachers who are not alumni of the LSU PK-3 program.

Description of the Study: A mixed-method survey questionnaire will be presented to the subjects through the online survey system Qualtrics. Participants will receive an email prompting them to the link where the survey questionnaire can be located and completed. Results will then be analyzed

Benefits: Through partaking in the survey, participants may gain a greater awareness of resources that may be available to them in their school district.

Risks: There are no known risks for participation in this study.

Right to Refuse: Participation is voluntary, and the participant will become part of the study if only they agree to participate. At any time throughout the study, a participant can withdraw from the study. There are no consequences for withdrawing.

Privacy: Results from the study maybe published. However, there will be no identifying information of any of the participants in the publication.

Financial Information: There is no cost to participate in this study, and there is no compensation for volunteering for the study.

This study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Dennis Landin, Chairman, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I will allow my child to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

If you agree to the above statement, please navigate back to the email and access the link to the Qualtrics survey.

APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL

ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST



TO: Heather Reames
Education

FROM: Dennis Landin
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: November 9, 2015

RE: IRB# E9647

TITLE: The Teacher Induction Process

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: New Protocol

Review Date: 11/9/2015

Approved X **Disapproved** _____

Approval Date: 11/9/2015 **Approval Expiration Date:** 11/8/2018

Exemption Category/Paragraph: 1; 2a

Signed Consent Waived?: Yes

Re-review frequency: (three years unless otherwise stated)

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable):

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable)

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman 

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –
Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE: Make sure you use bcc when emailing more than one recipient.**

**All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>*

VITA

Heather Reames, a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, received her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Louisiana State University (LSU). She has been working in the School of Education at LSU as a graduate assistant in the department of Early Childhood Education. She enjoys working with the LSU faculty and the undergraduate students. She was accepted into the masters graduate program for the LSU School of Human Sciences in Education and is majoring in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in Early Childhood Education. She anticipates graduating with her Master's degree in May 2016. Heather plans to pursuing a teaching career in Baton Rouge or the surrounding areas.