

2001

## **Holding Up and Holding On: Socialization Experiences of Beginning Teachers in Differentially Effective Schools.**

Pamela Sanders Angelle

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College*

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**HOLDING UP AND HOLDING ON:  
SOCIALIZATION EXPERIENCES OF BEGINNING TEACHERS  
IN DIFFERENTIALLY EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS**

**A Dissertation**

**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  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**in**

**The Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Counseling**

**by**

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M.Ed., University of Louisiana, Lafayette, 1991  
December, 2001**



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Statement of the Problem .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Purposes of the Study .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Importance of the Study .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Hypotheses .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Hypothesis One .....	11
Hypothesis Two .....	11
Hypothesis Three .....	11
Hypothesis Four .....	11
Hypothesis Five .....	11
<b>Research Questions .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Phase One: Research Questions .....	11
Phase Two: Research Questions .....	12
Phase Three: Research Questions .....	13
Phase Four: Research Questions .....	14
Phase Five: Research Questions .....	15
Phase Six: Research Questions .....	16
<b>Definitions .....</b>	<b>17</b>
School Effects .....	17
School Effectiveness Index .....	17
Middle School .....	18
Beginning Teacher .....	18
School Context .....	19
Socialization .....	19
Intent to Stay .....	20
<b>Limitations .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF PERTINENT LITERATURE.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Review of Literature on School Effectiveness Research .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Historical Background of School Effectiveness Research .....	24
A Contingency Theory of School Effectiveness .....	27
Context and Schools .....	29
School Effects and Teacher Effects .....	36
Indices and “Value Added” .....	36

Differential School Effects .....	38
Review of Literature on Beginning Teacher Socialization .....	40
Two Models of Organizational Socialization .....	42
Assistance as a Process Variable in Socialization .....	46
Monitoring as a Process Variable in Socialization .....	51
Team Building as a Process Variable in Socialization .....	56
Teacher Intent to Stay .....	60
Summary .....	65
 <b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b> .....	 68
Introduction .....	68
Overall Design of the Study .....	69
Case Study Design .....	70
Sampling Design .....	70
School Effectiveness Index .....	71
Sample Selection .....	75
Data Collection .....	78
Phase One .....	81
Phase One: Research Questions .....	82
Phase One: Objectives .....	82
Phase One: Sample Selection .....	83
Phase One: Data Collection and Analysis .....	84
Phase Two .....	85
Phase Two: Research Questions .....	85
Phase Two: Objectives .....	85
Phase Two: Sample Selection .....	86
Phase Two: Data Collection and Analysis .....	86
Phase Three .....	87
Phase Three: Research Questions .....	87
Phase Three: Objectives .....	88
Phase Three: Sample Selection .....	89
Phase Three: Instrumentation .....	90
Phase Three: Data Analysis .....	91
Phase Four .....	92
Phase Four: Research Questions .....	92
Phase Four: Objectives .....	92
Phase Four: Sample Selection .....	93
Phase Four: Data Analysis .....	93
Phase Five .....	94
Phase Five: Research Questions .....	94
Phase Five: Objectives .....	94
Phase Five: Sample Selection .....	95
Phase Five: Data Collection and Analysis .....	95

Phase Six .....	97
Phase Six: Research Questions .....	97
Phase Six: Objectives .....	98
Phase Six: Sample Selection .....	98
Phase Six: Data Collection and Analysis .....	98
Sampling Problems .....	99
Summary .....	101
 <b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS FROM A PILOT STUDY.....</b>	<b>103</b>
Data Collection Sources .....	103
Data Collection Procedures .....	106
Case Study Report .....	107
West Bayou Parish .....	107
The Schools and The Beginning Teachers: Case 1 .....	108
Southside Middle School .....	108
Findings and Data Analysis: Southside Middle School .....	112
School Level Data: Principal Interview and School Observation at Southside Middle .....	112
Teacher Level Data: Interviews with Beginning Teachers at Southside Middle .....	113
Teacher Level Data: Beginning Teacher Observations at Southside Middle .....	117
Teacher Level Data: Absentees and Discipline Referrals at Southside Middle .....	118
Student Level Data: Dropout and Attendance Rates at Southside Middle .....	119
The Schools and the Beginning Teachers: Case 2 .....	119
Northside Middle School .....	119
Findings and Data Analysis: Northside Middle School .....	123
School Level Data: Principal Interview and School Observation at Northside Middle .....	123
Teacher Level Data: Interviews with Beginning Teachers at Northside Middle .....	124
Teacher Level Data: Beginning Teacher Observations at Northside Middle .....	125
Teacher Level Data: Absentees and Discipline Referrals at Northside Middle .....	126
Student Level Data: Dropout and Attendance Rates at Northside Middle .....	127
The Schools and The Beginning Teachers: Case 3 .....	127
Westside Middle School .....	127
Findings and Data Analysis at Westside Middle School .....	130

School Level Data: Principal Interview and School Observation at Westside Middle .....	130
Teacher Level Data: Interviews with Beginning Teachers at Westside Middle .....	131
Teacher Level Data: Beginning Teacher Observations at Westside Middle .....	133
Teacher Level Data: Absentees and Discipline Referrals at Westside Middle .....	133
Student Level Data: Dropout and Attendance Rates at Westside Middle .....	134
Survey Instrument Data Analysis and Findings .....	134
Beginning Teacher Questionnaire .....	134
Collegial Social Support Inventory .....	135
Teacher Intent to Stay Measure .....	137
Conclusions from the Pilot Study .....	137
Summary .....	143
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS .....</b>	<b>144</b>
Introduction .....	144
Quantitative Results .....	146
Phase Three: Research Questions .....	147
Phase Four: Research Questions .....	147
Phase Five: Research Questions .....	148
Phase Three Results: Survey Data .....	148
Phase Four Results: Teacher Self-Report and Demographic Data ..	151
Phase Five Results: Teaching Behaviors .....	154
Summary .....	159
<b>CHAPTER SIX: QUALITATIVE RESULTS .....</b>	<b>161</b>
Introduction .....	161
Case Studies as Qualitative Methodology .....	161
Case Study Sample .....	162
Phase Two: Research Questions .....	163
Phase Five: Research Questions .....	164
Phase Six: Research Questions .....	164
Organizational Processes .....	165
Metaphors in Qualitative Research .....	167
Results .....	168
Pair 1: Two Schools on the Fringe of an Urban Area .....	168
Barnstorming Middle School .....	168
Mir Middle School .....	186
A Comparison of Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools .....	202
Pair 2: Two Schools on the Fringe of a Mid-Sized City .....	206

Polar Flight Middle School .....	206
Blackbird Middle School .....	224
A Comparison of Polar Flight and Blackbird Middle Schools .....	242
Pair 3: Two Schools in Rural Communities .....	246
Cargo Middle School .....	246
Kamikaze Middle School .....	263
A Comparison of Cargo and Kamikaze Middle Schools .....	280
Multiple Schools Qualitative Analysis .....	285
General A Priori Themes .....	285
Specific A Priori Themes .....	289
Emerging Themes .....	293
Results from Multiple Schools .....	307
Summary .....	310
 CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	312
Overview of the Study .....	312
Findings .....	313
Organizational Components .....	313
University Component .....	320
LaTAAP Component .....	321
Discussion and Conclusions.....	322
A Model of Effective Teacher Socialization .....	324
Recommendations .....	328
Recommendations for Research .....	328
Recommendations for Policy .....	330
Recommendations for Practice .....	332
Summary .....	333
 REFERENCES .....	335
 APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO ENTER SCHOOLS .....	345
Superintendent's Letter .....	345
Principal's Letter .....	346
 APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS .....	347
Principal Interview Guide .....	347
Mentor Interview Guide .....	348
Beginning Teacher Interview Guide .....	349
 APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENT: BEGINNING TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE .....	351



<b>APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUMENT: COLLEGIAL SOCIAL SUPPORT INVENTORY .....</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: SURVEY INSTRUMENT: TEACHER INTENT TO STAY MEASURE .....</b>	<b>354</b>
<b>VITA .....</b>	<b>355</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

3.1	Conversion of Student Scores to School Index Scores .....	72
3.2	Matched Pair Sample for the Study .....	77
3.3	Data Collection and Analysis for All Phases of the Study .....	80
3.4	Total Number Beginning Teachers and Number of Volunteers .....	89
4.1	West Bayou Parish Middle Schools Residual Scores .....	107
4.2	Southside Middle (LE) Teacher Absences and Referrals .....	119
4.3	Northside Middle (T) Teacher Absences and Referrals .....	127
4.4	Westside Middle (I) Teacher Absences and Referrals .....	134
4.5	Conclusions Drawn from Pilot Study .....	140
5.1	School Performance Score Data Used for Sample Selection .....	145
5.2	Descriptive Statistics for Beginning Teacher Questionnaire Subscales .....	150
5.3	Descriptive Statistics for Beginning Teacher Absences and Referrals .....	152
5.4	Beginning Teacher Demographic Data .....	153
5.5	Descriptive Statistics for Components of Effective Teaching .....	156
5.6	Average Scores by School on Components of Effective Teaching .....	157
6.1	Teachers at Barnstorming Who Volunteered for Interview .....	172
6.2	Teachers at Mir Who Volunteered for Interview .....	189
6.3	General A Priori Themes at Barnstorming and Mir Middle .....	204
6.4	Specific A Priori Themes at Barnstorming and Mir Middle .....	206
6.5	Teachers at Polar Flight Who Volunteered for Interview .....	210

6.6	Teachers at Blackbird Who Volunteered for Interview .....	228
6.7	General A Priori Themes at Polar Flight and Blackbird Middle .....	244
6.8	Specific A Priori Themes at Polar flight and Blackbird Middle .....	245
6.9	Teachers at Cargo Middle Who Volunteered for Interview .....	249
6.10	Teachers at Kamikaze Middle Who Volunteered for Interview .....	267
6.11	General A Priori Themes for Cargo and Kamikaze Middle .....	283
6.12	Specific A Priori Themes at Cargo and Kamikaze Middle .....	284
6.13	General A Priori Themes for Multiple Schools .....	289
6.14	Specific A Priori Themes for Multiple Schools .....	290
6.15	Emerging Themes for Multiple Schools .....	306
6.16	Comparisons of Variables across Contexts .....	307

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

<b>7.1</b>	<b>A Model for Effective Beginning Teacher Socialization .....</b>	<b>325</b>
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## **ABSTRACT**

**The current study examined the socialization experiences of beginning teachers within the context of differentially effective middle schools. A mixed method design, using quantitative and qualitative approaches, was employed. The sample consisted of ten middle schools in Louisiana, five matched pairs, using an intensity strategy. The study was conducted in six phases of data collection. Phase One designed and carried out a pilot study.**

**Interview data from school principals and mentors was collected in Phase Two, while Phase Three involved the collection of survey data from beginning teachers to measure perceptions of assistance, monitoring, team-building, and intention to remain in education. Phase Four involved collection of self-report data, including absences, referrals, certification status, and university preparation program. Phase Five included data collection from interviews and classroom observations of beginning teachers to provide data regarding effective teaching.**

**Phase Six triangulated data collected from Phases 2, 3, 4, and 5 to explore the overall processes in the school which contribute to the socialization experiences of beginning teachers. All data were used to compile narrative case studies. The study detailed three matched pair cases.**

**Quantitative data found no difference in the perception of assistance, monitoring, and team building in differentially effective schools. Qualitative data found differences in the extent and quality of these areas as perceived by beginning**

teachers. Assistance, monitoring, and team building, when combined with social support, predicted teacher intent to stay. Observations of new teachers revealed marked differences in more effective and less effective schools in the components of effective teaching.

Findings from the study indicated that processes in the school play a larger role in the quality of the beginning experience than do the individual elements of assistance, monitoring and team building. The existence of these variables was insufficient for positive socialization. Socialization experiences were optimized from a school culture geared to learning and student achievement as well as from the guidance of an instructional leader. The study found that the state assistance/assessment program is ineffective as a certification process and viewed negatively by schools. Teacher preparation programs were found to inadequately prepare students for the realities of teaching.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

*Slogans, standards and exams do not teach reading. Only well paid and proficient teachers do, and only if they work under conditions that do not degrade their spirits and demean their students.*

*~ Jonathan Kozol, Child Advocate and former teacher*

*Why can't work be one of those wonderful things in life? Why can't we cherish and praise it, versus seeing work as a necessity? Why can't it be a cornerstone in people's lifelong process of developing ethics, values, and in expressing the humanities and the arts? Why can't people learn through the process that there's something about the beauties of design, of building something to last, something of value?*

*~ Ed Simon, President and CEO, Herman Miller, Inc.*

Entering the school building on the first day of school, Steve Watson was enthusiastic about the beginning of the school year. Just recently graduated from college, Steve excelled during his year of student teaching. He found his pre-service assignment of teaching Honors English to a group of juniors the previous semester energizing. Now, here he was, entering Herbert Hoover Middle School for his first real teaching assignment, ready to share that same energy with a class of seventh grade reading students. Herbert Hoover, an inner city school in the southeastern part of the United States, was vastly different from the suburban high school where Steve did his student teaching, yet Steve believed that "schools were schools," no matter where the school was located.

The Hanna County Public School District has a total population of approximately 500,000 with a student population of over 100,000 in 100 school sites. This school district has operated under a Department of Justice mandate to achieve racial equality for the last twenty years. While attempts have been made to desegregate through re-zoning, the current policy of the local school board prohibits busing in order to achieve this. As a result, students continue to attend neighborhood schools, thus contributing to a racially identifiable school system.

The Hanna County school district has a policy of filling vacated positions from within the system, based upon seniority of properly certified teachers who “bid” for each job. If a teacher retires or, for some reason, leaves the system, any teacher, currently within the system who has certification to teach the open position, may apply for a transfer. The teacher with the greatest seniority is awarded the position. The internal transfer process is then repeated as the transferred teacher’s position then comes open.

Politically, this practice is popular. This system rewards teachers who are loyal to the school district by often giving them chances to “move up.” However, in addition to being a time consuming system in placing teachers according to requests and seniority, this system leaves the least desirable locations open. These positions are normally filled with new teachers, who are often not hired until the end of the summer, or, occasionally, after the new school term has started. This is the system under which Steve, as a new teacher, was sent to Herbert Hoover Middle School.

A week before the school year began, Steve received a call from the principal of Herbert Hoover, Ryan Sanders, offering him a position teaching seventh grade reading and sixth grade language arts. He would also be required to teach one class of seventh grade earth science, a position for which he had no background or certification. However, it was only for an hour a day and the principal assured him that the other members of the science department would “pitch in.” Sanders informed Steve when to report to school for the opening faculty meeting. Steve asked about procedure for



accepting employment and Mr. Sanders told him to see the school secretary sometime the first week of school.

When Steve walked in to the library for the initial teacher inservice of the school year, he discovered that there would be no separate instructional meeting for new teachers. The next three hours would be spent in session with veteran teachers, none of whom had questions or seemed interested in the latest policies of the school district. What Steve did hear was a litany of complaints about facing “those kids” again. Steve was beginning to feel that bad attitudes did not just belong to the students. Along with the teacher handbook, Steve received forms to be filled out for student attendance and discipline. However, no instructions were given regarding attendance or discipline procedures. After the opening meeting, Steve spoke to the school secretary about any forms for employment that needed to be filled out. He received a benefits booklet and several pages of instructions and written forms, along with an admonition from the secretary that the forms had been due in the central office the previous week. Steve made no attempt to explain that he’d just been hired. Still certain that “life in the classroom” would be better than the first day of meetings and information overload, Steve anticipated the opening day of school. Reality hit Steve hard as he realized that many of his seventh grade students could not read at the third grade level. Several students in his class came to school with empty stomachs and home environments filled with violence and illegal activity. English was the second language for four of his students. Two students, at fifteen years old, had “street smarts” beyond their teacher. When Steve asked one of the other teachers for suggestions, he was told, “they don’t

intend to go to college. Just keep them busy during class. And, by all means, don't expect them to do homework or anything that requires studying!"

The earth science class was composed of students who were known as the "slow learners," the "difficult students." Taught during the last period of the day, the class had 32 students, some who left class to go to the resource room or to make use of "special testing time." Because of this, Steve was never sure who was supposed to be in class and who was excused, especially since communication with the resource teacher was minimal, as her services were shared with two other schools.

Throughout the first few months of school, Steve worked diligently to prepare lessons. Paper was scarce and often Steve spent personal funds to buy paper upon which to copy activities for his students. Ditto fluid was rationed and the ditto machine frequently malfunctioned. The classroom central air and heat did not work properly so the room temperature was often too cold or too hot. Students were crowded and uncomfortable, contributing to a lack of attention and misbehavior. Steve sometimes saw the principal as he walked through the office on his way to class. However, beyond a cursory nod, the principal did not conduct a conference with Steve or visit his classroom during the fall semester of the school year. The philosophy of the principal was that teachers were "college-educated and knew enough to handle children without his interference."

After the first semester of his first year, Steve was physically and emotionally exhausted. He had been absent seven of his ten allocated days, simply because he was too fatigued to face another day with the feeling he wasn't "getting through" to any

students. There were days when he was angry; others when he didn't care. When the year ended, Steve decided not to return to teaching and went to work selling insurance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Statistics regarding the teaching profession are alarming. Over the next ten years, American school systems will need to hire some 200,000 K-12 teachers on average; however, in the urban and rural areas with high rates of poverty, the figure jumps to a need to hire 700,000 teachers (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). The estimates regarding new teachers are even more alarming.

- The annual attrition rate for beginning teachers is twice that of more experienced teachers (Odell and Ferraro, 1992).
- Fideler & Haselkorn (1999) note that 9.3% of new teachers leave before they even complete the first year of teaching in public schools.
- Nationally, 30% leave within two years and almost 40% leave within the first five years of teaching (Odell and Ferraro, 1992).
- Schools must turn increasingly to inexperienced teachers to filling teaching positions and the demand for new hires, regardless of the qualifications of the new teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000).
- Approximately two million additional teachers will be needed as teachers leave the profession or retire and as student enrollment continues to increase throughout the United States. Private schools will need to hire an additional 500,000 new teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999).

**Trial by fire for the beginning teacher is a way of life for those novices relegated to large urban schools throughout the country. Young and energetic education graduates quickly become frustrated and disappointed. Teachers who feel overwhelmed by the system, who feel isolated in their autonomy, and who work in an environment that is dull and lifeless will be bound for other systems, one where employees can feel their work has value. Halford compares education's new professionals to those in medicine and law and ultimately calls education "the profession that eats its young" (Halford, 1998, p.33).**

**"Holding up and holding on" becomes the mantra for many new teachers. Many beginning teachers believe that if they can just hold up each day and hold on until the end of the school year, perhaps next year will be a better one. According to McLaughlin, Pfeifer, Swanson-Owens, and Yee (1986) the goal of most new teachers is simply survival. A secondary goal is proving to colleagues and supervisors that they have competence in the classroom. However, new teachers often receive the most difficult teaching assignments, frequently placed in large urban schools and/or teaching those students the more experienced teachers have managed not to teach. New teachers are also more likely to be assigned courses for which they lack the training to teach. Novices who survive this first experience may be successful in promoting student learning. At the same time, however, this teacher may feel a sense of personal failure because of the frustrating and tremendously difficult task of teaching. The novice's self worth in these cases has suffered. The task the teacher has set about to perform, while met, has come with a personal feeling of dissatisfaction and inadequacy. The**

conditions under which the new teacher has started his/her career have been set up in such a way as to deny the teacher a sense of efficacy and self-worth. This teacher, who began the school year as energetic and dedicated, has developed a feeling of personal failure (McLaughlin, et al, 1986).

### **Purposes of the Study**

The global purpose of this study is to examine the socialization experiences of beginning teachers within the context of differentially effective middle schools.

Specifically, this study will

- document the socialization experiences of beginning teachers in five pairs of middle schools;
- explore the differences in the socialization experiences within the context of the effectiveness of the middle school where these experiences took place;
- examine the new teacher's perception of assistance, monitoring, and team-building at the middle school as components of the beginning teacher's socialization experience;
- identify the extent to which the beginning teacher's socialization experience is related to the teacher's intent to stay in the field of education;
- provide an in-depth case study analysis of the similarities and differences of beginning teacher's socialization experiences in differentially effective middle schools.

### **Importance of the Study**

This study will examine school effects and teacher effects through the case study approach and will build on the work of Kirby and her colleagues (1992) and Teddlie and Stringfield (1993). This research will, thus, contribute to the literature in the areas of school and teacher effects. Understanding the role of the socialization experience as it relates to the instructional effectiveness of the new teacher can be crucial to the implementation of a school improvement plan. If the beginning experience contributes to teacher effectiveness in the classroom, this will, in turn, contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school.

This study will provide additional research at the middle school level. While effective schools research has been extensively conducted at the elementary school level (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993) and at the secondary level in the UK (Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P., & Ouston, J., with Smith, A., 1979; Reynolds, 1982), scant research can be found at the middle school level in school effectiveness research (SER). Therefore, this study will add to the knowledge base of SER by providing findings that may be applied to middle schools. Moreover, these findings can offer information to middle schools on the improvement process as it pertains to beginning teachers.

Descriptive studies of beginning teacher socialization experiences can be found throughout the literature (Fox & Singletary, 1986; Su, 1992; Cady, Distad, & Germundsen, 1998; Gratch, 1998a; Gratch, 1998b; Wells, 1984; Grant & Zeichner, 1981; Jordell, 1987; Nigris, 1988). However, socialization studies within the context of

effective schooling are few (see Kirby, et al., 1992). Practitioners and policy makers, alike, can benefit from the knowledge provided by findings which help to bridge the gap between school effects and teacher effects. Closing this gap in knowledge will support school districts in their school improvement efforts, specifically in the area of teacher induction. This study, while addressing constructs related to teachers, also has implications for students. The primary concern for schools is the promotion of the child's growth and development, and academic achievement, all which are stunted by frequent changes in the teaching staff, by too many substitute teachers, by teachers who teach out of their field because of shortages, or by teachers who are too emotionally and physically exhausted to be effective in the classroom. Understanding the school contexts which provide a beneficial socialization experience for the new teacher can help principals and district office personnel focus on those elements in the school improvement process.

Poor socialization experiences can have negative results for the beginning teacher, ranging from simply "a bad year" to a case study for burnout. The profile of the "burned out" teacher has been diagnosed, analyzed, and dissected throughout the literature of the past twenty years. This state of exhaustion has been looked at from the clinical perspective, the social-psychological perspective, the organizational perspective, and the social-historical perspective (Byrne, 1994). As cited throughout the literature, burnout affects the learning environment and interferes with the achievement of educational goals as they pertain to a teacher's cynicism, apathy, and absenteeism (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998).

New teachers are particularly vulnerable to this phenomenon. Therefore, given the seriousness of the consequences, logic would demand that the study of a beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education would be of paramount interest. This study will examine the relationship between the new teacher's socialization experience and that teacher's intent to stay in the field of education. Though studied within the context of SER, the research on adult development will be enhanced through the process variables addressed in this research as they relate to the new teacher's intention to stay in the teaching field.

Finally, while there has been an instrument widely used to measure teacher burnout, there has, heretofore, been no instrument to measure a teacher's intent to stay. This study will provide an operational definition for this criterion variable through the validation of an instrument intended to measure a teacher's intent to stay in the field of education.

### **Hypotheses**

This study was designed to answer the question: Are there differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at more effective middle schools and at less effective middle schools? A second question asks: If there are differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers, what are the processes in these differentially effective schools that account for these differences? To answer these questions, a six phase research study was designed. The pilot study, built on the work of Kirby and her colleagues (1992), resulted in the following hypotheses.



### **Hypothesis One**

Beginning teachers have a more positive socialization experience at more effective middle schools than at less effective middle schools.

### **Hypothesis Two**

Beginning teachers experience more beneficial administrative monitoring at more effective middle schools than at less effective middle schools.

### **Hypothesis Three**

Beginning teachers experience better assistance at more effective middle school than at less effective middle schools.

### **Hypothesis Four**

Beginning teachers experience greater collegial team building at more effective than at less effective middle schools.

### **Hypothesis Five**

A positive socialization experience for the beginning teacher will more likely result in that teacher's intent to stay in the field of education.

## **Research Questions**

The study was implemented in six phases, each phase guided by research questions. The following research questions were designed for each phase.

### **Phase One: Research Questions**

1. What are the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at differentially effective schools?

- a. Are there differences in administrative monitoring of the beginning teacher at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
- b. Are there differences in the assistance and mentoring received by the beginning teacher at more effective and less effective middle schools?
- c. Are there differences in collegial team building at more effective and less effective middle schools?
- d. Does the level and quality of assistance, monitoring, and team building lead to the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education?

Phase One was a mixed methods pilot study which looked at all areas of a beginning teacher's socialization experience to lay the groundwork for the larger research study. The first phase involved:

- test of an instrument to measure collegial social support.
- test of an instrument to measure teacher intent to stay in education.
- the analysis of the three subscales of assistance, monitoring, and team building and their relationship to the quality of a beginning teacher's socialization experience.
- analysis of the data from the pilot study for any emerging areas of interest to examine in the dissertation research study.

### **Phase Two: Research Questions**

- 2. What are the differences in administrative monitoring and assistance at more effective and less effective middle schools?

a. What is the level of administrative monitoring for beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

b. What are the differences in the hiring practices of the administration at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

c. What are the types of assistance given to beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

d. What is the role of the beginning teacher's mentor at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

e. What is the role of the administration and the mentor at more effective schools and at less effective schools in preparing the new teacher for successfully completing the Louisiana Assistance and Assessment Program?

The second phase of the study examined the level of assistance and monitoring that the beginning teachers received. Data were collected through interviews with the administrator of the school's induction program, normally the principal, and interviews with the mentor assigned to the beginning teacher.

### **Phase Three: Research Questions**

3. What are the beginning teachers' perceptions of the assistance, monitoring, and team building received during the socialization experience? Are these perceptions related to the beginning teachers' intent to stay in the field of education?

- a. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perceptions of quality and level of administrative monitoring received at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

b. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perceptions of the quality and level of assistance received at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

c. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perceptions of the quality and level of team building at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

d. Is the level of administrative monitoring related to the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education?

e. Is the level of assistance given to the beginning teacher related to the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education?

f. Is the amount of collegial team building related to the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education?

The third phase of the study utilized three survey instruments which were administered to all beginning teachers who participated in the study. Two of these instruments, the Beginning Teacher Questionnaire (BTQ) and the Collegial Social Support Inventory (CSSI), were designed to measure beginning teachers' perceptions of the assistance, monitoring and team building they receive during their initial teaching experience. A third instrument, the Teacher Intent to Stay Measure (TISM), was designed to measure the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education.

#### **Phase Four: Research Questions**

4. What are the differences in teacher demographic factors in differentially effective schools?

a. What is the difference in the frequency of teacher absences at more effective schools and at less effective schools?

b. What is the difference in the number of student discipline referrals from new teachers at more effective schools and at less effective schools?

c. What are the differences in the level of academic degree obtained by new teachers in more effective and less effective schools?

d. What are the differences in the number of certified and non-certified new teachers in more effective schools and at less effective schools?

e. What are the differences in the university preparation received by the new teachers at more effective schools and at less effective schools?

Data gathered during Phase Four of the study were intended to examine teacher demographics in the context of the SEI of each school under study. Data were collected to examine whether demographic differences may account for teacher effectiveness as a part of the overall school effectiveness.

#### **Phase Five: Research Questions**

5. What are the differences in the new teacher's perception of the processes within the school in more effective and less effective middle schools?

a. What are the differences in the classroom performance of the beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

b. What are the differences in the new teacher's perception of the assistance, monitoring, and team building received during the initial teaching experience at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

c. What are the differences in the new teacher's perceptions of their intent to stay in the field of education at more effective and at less effective schools?

**Phase Five involved collection of data from the new teacher. Data were examined to note any differences in the components of effective teaching between beginning teachers at more effective middle schools and beginning teachers at less effective middle schools. Interviews probed, in-depth, beginning teachers' perceptions of the assistance, monitoring, and team-building received during the socialization experience.**

**Phase Six: Research Questions:**

- 6. What are the differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at more effective middle schools and at less effective middle schools?**
  - a.. What are the differences in the level of monitoring for beginning teachers at more effective middle schools and at less effective middle schools?**
  - b. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perception of the mentoring assistance received at more effective and at less effective middle schools?**
  - c. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perceptions of collegial team building at more effective middle schools and at less effective middle schools?**
  - d. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perception of their place in the school community at more effective and at less effective middle schools?**
  - e. Do beginning teachers who are socialized in more effective middle schools have a greater propensity to stay in the field of education than do beginning teachers who are socialized in less effective middle schools?**

**The final phase of the study examined all levels of the school in an attempt to draw conclusions regarding a beginning teacher's socialization experience. Both**

qualitative and quantitative data were explored and triangulated to construct narrative case studies.

### **Definitions**

For purposes of this study, the following conceptual and operational definitions are used.

#### **School Effects**

School effects refers to the ability of schools to affect student outcomes (Good and Brophy, 1986). Sammons (1999) defines school effects as “the impact particular schools have on their pupils’ educational outcomes, taking account of differences in intake...(p.157).

Student outcomes are the achievement levels as indicated by the School Performance Score (SPS), a score published by the Louisiana Department of Education, derived from a weighted calculation from four areas. Chapter Three outlines the methodology used to derive the school’s SPS.

#### **School Effectiveness Index**

The effectiveness designation of the Louisiana middle school was derived from data obtained from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE). Using a linear regression formula, residual scores were calculated from the 1998-99 school performance scores in schools with grades K-8. Middle schools were selected and z scores calculated from the residual scores (see Chapter 3 for methodology). Those middle schools with a z score of  $+ .70$  or greater were operationally defined as more

effective. Those middle schools with a z score of  $-.70$  or lower were operationally defined as less effective.

### **Middle School**

Middle schools are those Louisiana schools serving grades 5-8 exclusively. Some schools in Louisiana are comprehensive schools which serve grades K-8 or grades K-12. These schools were not included in this study. In addition, some schools serve grades 7-9 but are named junior high schools. These schools were included and grouped with the middle schools in sample selection. However, new teachers assigned to grade nine students were not included in the study. Both middle schools and junior high schools were grouped together and were called middle schools for purposes of this study.

### **Beginning Teacher**

For this study, a beginning teacher was one who had less than three years total teaching experience; that is, a teacher presently in the first, second, or third year of teaching. While a teacher may be new to a school or new to a school district, but had total teaching experience exceeding four years, this teacher was not considered “beginning” for purposes of this study.

Teachers in the public school system in Louisiana are eligible for tenure after three years of teaching. Teachers examined in this study were non-tenured since the criteria for determining “beginning” was less than three years total experience.



### **School Context**

For purposes of this study, school context will be operationalized from the definition provided by Teddlie, Stringfield, and Reynolds (2000) which is as follows:

The study of context in SER refers to the differential effects associated with certain variables (specifically SES of student body, community type, grade phase of schooling, and governance structure) upon the scientific properties of school effects, the characteristics of effective schools, and the school improvement process (p.163).

### **Socialization**

Socialization is a process. From an organizational perspective, socialization occurs when the individual has gained the social knowledge and skills needed to become a part of the organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Some educational literature (Giroux, 1980; Hoy and Rees, 1977) assumes the beginning of the socialization process occurs at the university level when teacher training begins.

For purposes of this paper, socialization will focus on the process from an organizational perspective; that is, the ways in which the teacher learns the values and culture of the school where s/he begins the work of teaching as well as acquiring the skills and behaviors necessary to perform the work of teaching.

Socialization will be operationally defined using the Beginning Teacher Questionnaire (BTQ) (Kirby, et al., 1992) and the Collegial Social Support Inventory (CSSI) (Angelle, 1999).

### **Intent to Stay**

Conceptually, an intent is a person's clear and deliberate resolve to act in a certain way. Therefore, a teacher's intent to stay in the teaching field also involves a deliberate decision(s). A teacher's intent to stay is a state of mind, based on said teacher's perception and attitude toward the organization. If the values and attitudes of the organization's members are compatible with those of the teacher, the teacher becomes cognitively motivated to continue as an employee in the school's organization.

Operationally, a teacher's intent to stay will be measured using the newly developed instrument, the Teacher Intent to Stay Measure (TISM) (Angelle, 1999).

### **Limitations**

This study was designed to provide an expansion of the knowledge base in school effectiveness research, one which is limited regarding middle school education. However, utilizing only middle schools in the sample limits generalization to other grade levels. Comparison of these findings with elementary school and high school level teachers' socialization experiences should be approached with caution.

The sample for this study was based on school performance score data and a predicted school performance score received from the Louisiana Department of Education. Any inaccuracy in the regression analysis performed to produce the residual scores will limit the accuracy of the sample for this study, as well as the findings resulting from this study.

Subjects for the study were those teachers whose names were provided by the principals of the schools in the sample. Failure by the principal to provide access to all

beginning teachers, as defined by this study, limits generalization to all new teachers in that school. In addition, self-report data, which included number of absences, number of discipline referrals, and number of years experience, relied on the accuracy and truthfulness of the new teacher.

While every attempt was made to provide unbiased and accurate observations and analysis of qualitative data, the researcher for this study set about gathering data at each school with prior knowledge of the school effectiveness index of that school. Any unconscious bias of the part of the researcher will affect the reliability of the findings. Future study designs replicating this research may consider including a team of researchers or allowing an outside researcher to choose the sample. In this way, there will be no prior knowledge of school effectiveness index and thus, unconscious bias will not be an issue.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided an overview and the hypotheses and research questions to be answered in the present study. Chapter Two provides a review of recent literature, focusing on two major areas, school effects and teacher effects. School effects will be examined within the context of school effectiveness research. Teacher effects will be examined through the literature on teacher socialization. Chapter Three provides the study design and methodology employed in this study.

Chapter Four gives an overview and results of the pilot study which lead to the present study. Chapter Five presents the results from quantitative data collected in Phases Two, Three, Four, and Five of this study. Narrative case studies are documented

**in Chapter Six, along with cross case analysis. Chapter Seven provides a discussion of results, analysis of the theoretical implications of the study, and recommendations for future research.**

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF PERTINENT LITERATURE**

This literature review includes the two major areas which are addressed in this study: school effectiveness research and teacher socialization. An overview of the literature in these two fields provide a basis to address the question: What are the socialization experiences of beginning teachers in differentially effective schools?

The chapter begins with the historical background of school effectiveness research, continues with an overview of contingency theory and the the importance of context to school effectiveness research, and concludes with a discussion of school and teacher effects. The second section of the literature review summarizes research in teacher socialization. After two models of teacher socialization are discussed, an explanation is provided of the three factors examined in this study: assistance, monitoring, and team building. The teacher socialization literature review concludes with an overview of the construct of teacher intent to stay.

### **Review of Literature on School Effectiveness Research**

The framework within which this study will be conducted is from the field of school effectiveness research. Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) have identified three strands of school effectiveness research (SER). These include:

*studies of school effects* that attempt to relate school inputs to school outcomes using increasingly sophisticated mathematical models; *'effective schools'* *studies* that describe the processes of differentially effective schools using the

outlier and case study approaches; and *school improvement studies* that document the implementation and sometimes the success of school change efforts (p.26).

### Historical Background of School Effectiveness Research

SER began with an outcry against the Coleman Report (officially, the Equality of Educational Opportunity Study [EEOS]). Initiated as an equity study, the EEOS attempted to identify which characteristics of a school would explain the differences between schools as far as student achievement is concerned (Teddle, & Stringfield, 1993). The study had four goals it hoped to obtain through an extensive survey. These included: (a) the extent of racial and ethnic segregation; (b) the degree of inequality in the provision of school resources in these same racial and ethnic groups; (c) the performance levels of students with these differing backgrounds; and (d) the relationship between school and student characteristics and the achievement of students (Bowles & Levin, 1968). Coleman and his colleagues reported that both black and white students had nearly equal access to educational resources. However, despite this access, performance of black students was substantially below that of white students, leading the authors to conclude that the difference was due to family background, their neighborhood, or their peers. Utilizing regression analysis to predict student outcome, Coleman and his colleagues concluded that, independent of family background, schools bear little effect on student achievement (Teddle, Reynolds, and Sammons, 2000). Criticism of Coleman's methodology followed, as well as research studies that attempted to dispute Coleman's claim.

Prior to the Coleman study, most input-output research targeted access to educational resources. As noted by Edmonds (1979), Coleman's greatest contribution may be that he targeted pupil cognitive gain as the measure of school effectiveness. Therein, however, lay the danger of misuse of SER for solely accountability purposes. Sammons (1999) notes that SER should be used instead as a method of assistance to schools as they seek to evaluate and improve. Nonetheless, since learning is a concept which cannot be directly observed, public demands seek school accountability through measurement of the outcomes of student achievement. SER seeks to understand the processes and contexts by which optimum student learning can be achieved. This study will attempt to link school effects with teacher effects by examining the school processes and contexts by which optimum teacher socialization experiences can be had.

One of the many criticisms of the Coleman report dealt with understatement; that is, using a regression approach probably led to an understatement of the importance of teacher characteristics. Moreover, Coleman used average per-student expenditures for the school district. As schools with disadvantaged children commonly have lower expenditures than those more advantaged schools, using an average probably overstates actual expenditures in disadvantaged schools (Bowles & Levin, 1968). Though the methodology of the EEOS Report has been criticized, most particularly that the design of the study was biased in a direction that would limit the importance of the school characteristics (Bowles & Levin, 1968), the use of production function as a method of inquiry in education was also raised. Questions concerning its appropriateness as well

as its adequacy led researchers to focus on alternative means with which to study school effects (Teddle & Stringfield, 1993).

SER propelled Ron Edmonds, a Harvard University researcher, to the forefront of equity and school effectiveness. Edmonds were not interested in “just *describing* effective schools: [he] also wished to *create* effective schools, especially for the urban poor” (Reynolds & Teddle, 2000, p. 10, italics in original). Edmonds (1979) called for “a sense of fairness in the distribution of goods and services...a minimum level of goods and services to which we are all entitled” (p.1). Throughout the 1970s, Edmonds and a group of researchers investigated city schools in the northeast in an attempt to identify which schools were effective. Effective schools, as defined by Edmonds, were those schools where essentially no relationship existed between student achievement and family background. Edmonds’ work, and that of other like minded researchers of the time, became known as “school effects research” (Teddle & Stringfield, 1993). Edmonds (1979) noted that equity in schools begins with “teaching poor children what their parents want them to know and ends by teaching poor children at least as well as it teaches middle-class children” (p.2). If “smarter” is what children in the United States should be by attending public school, then it should not matter which public school the child attends. Edmonds saw the belief by some that family background, and not schools, as the determinant of student success in school as an abdication of responsibility by educators to be instructionally effective (Edmonds, 1979).

Literature on effective schools has attempted to provide a profile, the five factor model, of those characteristics, both organizational and process-oriented, which identify



a school as effective or ineffective, determined by the extent to which these characteristics are possessed. Through research, the five factor model has expanded to include the following characteristics: effective instructional leadership, effective teaching, developing and maintaining a pervasive focus on learning, high and appropriate expectations for all, emphasizing student responsibilities and rights, monitoring progress at all levels, developing staff skills at the school site, and involving parents in productive and appropriate ways (Reynolds & Teddlie, 2000).

Increasingly, multilevel studies have created better models of school effectiveness. By taking into account the student's background characteristics, such as social class, level of poverty, and the community in which the child lives, calculations of school effects upon student outcomes can be more accurately estimated (Sammons, 1999). As Sammons (1999) notes,

The development of multilevel methods enabled researchers to address the important but neglected question of the extent of internal variations in school effectiveness, as well as to obtain more precise estimates of the size of between school differences which had been a focus of earlier studies. Such analyses, it is argued, are vital to the investigation of equity issues in education, and to provide a better understanding of the complex world of schools (p. 72).

### A Contingency Theory of School Effectiveness

Critics have charged that SER possesses an empirical basis but no theoretical basis; that is, we know *what* but not *how* and *why*. Several models of school effectiveness have been designed including, but not limited to, the Carroll model (Carroll, 1963), the educational effectiveness model of Creemers, and Stringfield and

Slavin's QAIT (quality, appropriateness, incentive structures and time for instruction) model (see Creemers, Scheerens, & Reynolds, 2000). Sammons (1999) outlines a model which relates multilevel factors (national, local, school, department, teacher, student, and classroom) to the effectiveness of the school. Within this model, context factors such as accountability, input factors (SES, gender, prior attainments), process (such as leadership, shared goals, and expectations among others), and output (the resultant student learning) are interrelated.

Contingency theory also marks a contribution to school effectiveness research by providing a systems' based grounding for the field. Rooted in the science of organizations, contingency theory states that organizations which are open systems are influenced by the environments in which they are located (Mintzberg, 1979). As open systems, each organization (or school) has challenges which are common to all. In addition, each also has problems which are unique to the particular organization. In order to effectively perform, the organization must find a match between the requirements of those outside of the organization and the limitations of the organization itself (Turner & Bolam, 1998). Schools, as open systems, carry the same implications. The goals and/or mission of schools may be the same but how to achieve those generalized goals differs from school to school. All schools may be held to like accountability requirements but the path to accountability and the success or failure at the end of that path can take many diverging routes. Therefore, the path to success is "contingent" on the context within which the school functions; that is, the community, the students who attend the school, the home from which these students come, the

educational level of these parents, and other variables which relate to the context in which the school operates influence the operation of the organization.

Scheerens (1993) states “the central thesis of contingency theory is that in contrast to the assumptions of classic organizational theories, there is no one best way to organize” (p.29). Also called a situational approach (Creemers, Scheeren, & Reynolds, 2000), schools most optimally operate according to the contingency factors within the school. In other words, “organizational effectiveness results from a fit between situation and structure” (Creemers, et al., 2000, p. 293). Reiterating the importance of the context of schools, Creemers and colleagues state that “contingency theory should be able to predict results of what has been termed as ‘contextual effectiveness,’ the idea that different performance-enhancing conditions of educational organizations work in different contexts” (p.295).

### **Context and Schools**

The issue of context emerged in an attempt to study all types of students in all types of schools, thus, shifting the emphasis from equity to efficiency (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). Teddlie, Stringfield, and Reynolds (2000) note that context as it applies to SER is determined by the variable(s) measured in the study. Four general areas of context variables summarized by Teddlie and colleagues (2000) include socioeconomic status (SES), community type of school, grade phases of schooling, and governance structure of the school. Context refers to the differential effects of schools as they pertain to these areas. Student SES is the context variable used in this study.

**Socioeconomic status (SES) as a context variable.** Research studies in both school effects and effective schools have included SES as a context variable (Teddle, Stringfield, & Reynolds, 2000) to explain differences in student achievement. Teddle, Stringfield and Reynolds (2000) cite studies by Willms (1986) and Murnane (1981) to illustrate this difference. Conclusions from the Willms study point to the academic benefits for all students who attend high SES schools. Likewise, Murnane's research found that "the higher the average SES or academic ability of the student body, the more positive was the effect on individual students, although the effect seemed to be more pronounced for lower SES students" (Teddle, Stringfield, & Reynolds, 2000, p.166). Two widely referenced studies which used SES as a context variable are the research studies of Hallinger and Murphy (1986) and Teddle and Stringfield (1993).

The Hallinger and Murphy (1986) study involved eight elementary schools in California, schools that were classified as low, lower-middle, middle, and upper SES. Using school performance scores from state department data, sample schools which were selected if the students scored above the predicted level for three consecutive years. Results from the study found that regardless of SES, some schools were found more effective than others. The Teddle and Stringfield (1993) Louisiana School Effectiveness Study included 76 schools and also found differences in the effectiveness of schools, regardless of SES. Both of these confirmed that, regardless of the SES of the school, some school processes were consistent across contexts. These processes include: clear academic mission, a safe and orderly environment, engaged student time on task, and frequent monitoring of student progress.

**Community Type as a Context Variable.** Community type refers to the geographic locale in which the school finds itself. The Johnson codes are a widely used typing of locale in the USA. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2000) the Johnson codes, also called the Locale codes, were developed in the early 1980s to deal with the problems of two other coding systems, the Beale codes and the Metro Status codes. The Beale codes do not specifically identify small towns and are determined by county. This presented a problem for school systems since districts which are in small towns and have more than one district in a county were forced in to a category that may not accurately describe the school district. The Metro Status codes are not specific enough to describe rural districts. Thus, the Johnson codes were developed. This system is based on population size and density as well as proximity to metropolitan area. Parents and students interested in individual schools are aided by the Johnson code system because codes are assigned based on the address of the school. Therefore, areas within school districts can be identified by the Johnson, or Locale, code (NCES, 2000). Research (see Teddlie, Stringfield, & Reynolds, 2000; Freeman, 1997, Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993; Hannaway & Talbert, 1991) concludes that the school's community type influences the level of the school effectiveness.

As noted in Teddlie, Stringfield, and Reynolds (2000), research by Cuttance (1988) examined Scottish schools by community type, by school type, and by local educational authority (LEA). Cuttance found that urban schools had lower achievement than those in the Scottish equivalent of suburban schools. Research from Freeman (1997) found that schools in urban and rural areas were less likely to experience

“naturally occurring school improvement” than schools in small cities or suburban areas; that is, student achievement tends to increase without external implementation of school improvement programs. Freeman concluded that community resources, or the lack thereof, lead to these results.

Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) found context differences from their Louisiana School Effectiveness study which relate to community type. Cases under study included two rural, two suburban, and two urban elementary schools. Conclusions from this study were that community type context differences fell into the four major areas of community and district office support, leadership, faculty and instructional organization, and curriculum and professional development.

Using the High School and Beyond database, Hannaway and Talbert (1991) examined the relationship between external factors in the environment and processes of effective schools. The study focused on urban, suburban, and rural high schools and the way in which these schools shaped their internal organizational processes. Using the context variables of student characteristics, staff composition, and organizational context, Hannaway and Talbert found that even though the social, political, and organizational settings of the schools differed, the collegial support and principal leadership in the effective schools under study were equally distributed across schools. These findings suggest that, though schools may be effective in their community, the path to school effectiveness may differ from school to school.

Grade Phase as a Context Variable. Grade phase opens a “Pandora’s box” of differences between schools. Grade phase refers to the level, or grades, which the

**schools under study include. In the UK, where SER has focused on several levels, schools are divided into infant schools, junior schools, secondary schools, and post-secondary schools. Most typically, schools in the United States are divided into primary, elementary, middle (or junior high), and high schools, or some combination of these levels. Grade phase context highlights organizational differences which may confound data gathered across grade phases. For example, high schools are departmentalized while most elementary schools are not. High school teachers have different areas of specialization and certification from elementary school teachers. Middle school teachers are just that—in the middle—certified for either or both elementary and secondary education. Students across grade configurations are quite different in goals, attitudes, needs, and gifts. School processes vary from elementary to secondary school as well. Departmental differences, differing administrative structures (i.e., department chairpersons, assistant principals for instruction, Deans of Students), student exposure to several teachers and teaching styles, and an increased emphasis on co-curricular activities, such as athletics, all contribute to more complex organizational processes at the secondary level. Thus, grade phase will likely account for differences in school effects.**

**Studies in the USA have concentrated on the elementary level, while those in the UK have targeted the secondary level. Few studies have been conducted across grades, due perhaps to the difficulty inherent in successfully measuring and differentiating the processes which represent the effectiveness of the school. Those limited research studies which have included both elementary and secondary studies**

have found differences in curriculum emphasis, course content, teacher preparation programs, and instructional leadership (Virgilio, Teddlie, and Oescher, 1991; Hallinger and Murphy, 1986). Specifically, the Virgilio et al. (1991) study provided evidence that time-on-task at the elementary level could be successfully differentiated. However, at the secondary level it could not. The researchers of the study attributed the lower time-on-task scores to a greater emphasis on higher order thinking skills at the secondary level.

Considering the difficulties previously discussed which are inherent in a study utilizing schools across grade phases, this study focused only on the middle school grades, that is, schools with some combination of grades five through eight. Therefore, grade phase was not considered as a context variable for the sample of schools in this study.

Governance Structure as a Context Variable. Differences in the operation and administration of schools beg the question of whether these differences affect teachers, students, and student achievement. Studies of these differences began with the report from Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore (1981) who examined the differential effects of public and private high schools on the students who attended these schools. Concluding that private school students had higher achievement gains, they posited that the governance structure of the private schools allowed for greater discipline and greater quality of instruction. Other studies of governance structure have included governance by differing local education authorities (LEAs). One such study (Hofman, 1995) examines the differential effects of the LEA on the schools, finding that because of their



involvement with parents and the policies which control decision making at the school level, LEAs do have effects upon the schools in their jurisdiction.

The school effectiveness index which indicated the level of effectiveness for the sample of schools in this study was calculated using data from the Louisiana Department of Education (see Chapter Three of this dissertation). These data included School Performance Scores, drop out rates, and attendance rates. These data are only readily available for public schools in Louisiana. Thus, non-public schools were not included as part of the sample of schools for this study. As a result, governance structure was not considered as a context variable for this dissertation.

Context Variables in the Present Study. Four context variables as they apply to SER have been discussed. This dissertation study will examine the context variable of SES. The present study included only public schools, thus, governance structure was not considered. School Performance Scores were the basis for determining the school effectiveness index. Non-public schools in Louisiana are not assigned School Performance Scores since they are not under the mandate for standardized testing and reporting of test scores. Schools under study in the sample were limited to middle schools. Therefore, consideration of grade configuration was not necessary as no “across grade level” differences could account for differences in school effectiveness. Community type was also not a factor in the present study since schools in the sample were not selected or de-selected because of the community location of the school. The main context variable associated with the schools under study in this research was the socioeconomic status of the school and its surrounding community. As noted in

Chapter 1 of this study, school context in the framework of this research refers to the differential effects of SES of the student body as a context variable in the sample of schools under study.

### **School Effects and Teacher Effects**

Differentiating between school effects and teacher effects leads to studies which do a disservice to each. While studies of school level effects can impact the student in direct ways, most often school effects are felt by the student indirectly. Teacher effects, that is, factors at the classroom level, have the most direct relationship to student achievement (Reynolds & Teddlie, 2000).

Until recently, school effectiveness and teacher effectiveness research have operated as two separate fields, with SER concerned with processes across schools and TER concerned with processes across classrooms (Teddlie and Reynolds, 2000). As the two fields have matured, SER and TER have begun to merge. Classroom observation instruments have been developed to study teacher effects within the context of school effectiveness research. Creemers and Reezigt (1996) have called for a study of an “educational effectiveness” model which integrates the fields of SER and TER to bring the school process and classroom process level together.

### **Indices and “Value Added”**

An education indicator is “a statistic collected at regular intervals to track the performance of an education system” (Fitz-Gibbon & Kochan, 2000, p. 258). These indicators serve as gauges when reporting on an entire system from a few factors. If

these indicators are to be useful and valid, some features are necessary. General guidelines that Fitz-Gibbon and Kochan (2000) discuss can be summarized as

- The indicators must provide valid information relevant to accepted goals.
- The indicators must contain information about features of the system which can be influenced by staff and decision makers.
- The indicators must be accepted as credible by practitioners if they are to be used to guide change processes.
- The indicators must be informative and useful to justify the cost of their collection.
- The indicators must be sensitive to the change they have wrought (Fitz-Gibbon & Kochan, 2000).

Indicators can be classified as intake, process, or outcome variables. The outcome indicator in most SER is student achievement. One major goal of an indicator is to attach value to the outcome it measures. Intake variables, or indicators, on the other hand, are the inputs with which the school begins to measure achievement increases. In other words, in order to assess the progress the pupil has made, once a part of a school community, the intake variable is the point at which to begin the measure of progress. School effectiveness researchers (see Sammons et al., 1994; Fitz-Gibbon and Kochan, 2000) contend that schools are not responsible for a student's absolute achievement. Rather, the importance of a value-added approach to measuring school performance is advocated. In other words, a baseline performance (prior achievement) when the student enters the school is measured against the value added by the school as

the student progresses through his/her academic career. Thus, a school which gives “extra value” to the students it serves is more effective than similar schools with similar intakes.

To measure the changes in the academic progress of the student rather than the absolute level, the difference between actual achievement and predicted achievement is calculated. This will ensure that comparison of schools is valid and fair since school effectiveness comparisons will be made on a “like with like” basis (Sammons, 1999, p.26). In addition, Sammons points out that baseline assessments must be relevant to the curriculum and, therefore, reading and mathematics baseline assessments will provide a better basis for determining the value added by the school.

#### Differential School Effects

How schools differ in their effectiveness, that is, the extent to which the school adds value to student achievement, remains a concern of researchers (Sammons, 1999; Sammons et al., 1994). The distinction between context effects and differential effects is an important one. Context is related to the overall composition of the student body; on the other hand, differential effects refers to the differences between schools for different groups, once the average differences have been accounted for (Sammons, 1999). Teddlie, Stringfield, and Reynolds (2000) call this the “generalizability of the effect of certain variables” (p. 163) upon the variable under study. This issue again reverts to the “like with like” concerns previously discussed. In comparing school performance scores, differential effects is clearly important.

Schools, as complex organizations, work in multiple layers. The various layers of the school, including the classroom, the department, the grade level, and the administration all overlap and, at times, merge to contribute to the overall system. Effective schools will likely have effective classrooms with effective teaching. While research combining the study of teacher effects with school effects exists (e.g., Teddlie, Kirby, & Stringfield, 1989a; Virgilio, Teddlie, & Oescher, 1991), research of the type the present study undertakes, that is, focusing on the differential effects of schools on the socialization experiences of beginning teachers, is sorely lacking. Moreover, a secondary area of research addressed in this study is the relationship of the beginning teacher's socialization experience to that teacher's intent to stay in the field of education.

As more teachers intend to stay in the profession, turnover will concomitantly decline and stability of staff will increase. This stability in the teaching staff will likely contribute to school effectiveness. Davis and Thomas (1989) note the specific variable of staff stability as discussed by Purkey and Smith (1982, 1983). They conclude that an effective school, in order to maintain and continue to be effective, must work toward keeping its staff together. By doing so, goals for improved teaching, the development of better programs, and a stimulating working environment will be sustained (Davis & Thomas, 1989). Strong working relationships and high job satisfaction lead to staff stability, which continues to pave the road to school effectiveness and school improvement. This goal speaks directly to the need for a positive beginning teacher socialization experience.

### **Review of Literature on Beginning Teacher Socialization**

The process of socialization for the beginning teacher can determine whether the first year as a professional is a success or a failure. Thus, the process is an important one, not only for the new teacher but also for the school community which provides the socialization experience. This study examines the common aspects of socialization which include:

- social skills as the novice becomes a part of the organization and finds a proper place with colleagues.
- professional skills as the new teacher learns appropriate classroom management and instructional strategies.
- organizational skills as the beginning teacher accepts the school's mission, goals, culture, and "ways of doing business," achieved through the monitoring and evaluation of the administration.

The socialization experience can result in confidence and comfort as a professional or a sense of isolation and despair as a frustrated and burned out novice. Clearly, the socialization experience is one which has an impact beyond the initial year.

Yee (1990), in her examination of teaching as a career, points out the difficulties facing the first year teacher, challenges which are unique to the field of teaching. In the professional fields of law and medicine, those new to the profession are given a systematic way to induct beginners in to the job, a job which demands competence in a complex arena as well as the ability to make hundreds of management decisions each day. Conversely, Yee (1990) notes new teachers are required to enter their first year of

teaching with the same teaching load and same responsibilities as those many years their senior. Professional socialization has been shown to influence teacher quality and longevity. This socialization leads to identification with the school organization, allowing the teacher to take on the same goals and missions as the school. The job of teaching becomes an issue of loyalty to the workplace, thus, leading to a teacher's intent to stay in the teaching profession (Yee, 1990).

Effective support groups include people who will provide emotional comfort, as well as support the individual when behaviors are inappropriate. Of particular import to new teachers, social support can provide technical advice, such as task-relevant information, as well as reflective learning for the day to day challenges those novice teachers may face (Schwab, et al, 1986). McLaughlin and colleagues (1986) argue that feedback from support group members allows for a broadening of instructional strategies, thereby increasing effectiveness as a professional. The novice then receives the recognition that, oftentimes, beginning teachers feel is lacking. The resources invested in the new teacher will, moreover, send a signal that the school system believes this teacher is an investment of worth (McLaughlin, et al, 1986).

Veenman (1984) defines the socialization approach as one that studies the process as it "examines changes in the social person" and focuses on the "interplay between individuals' needs, capabilities, intentions, and institutional constraints" (p. 162). According to Veenman, this view of the socialization process links to Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs theory. As the beginning teacher enters the school system, stays in it, and works toward the goal of the autonomous (or self-actualized) teacher, the

novice must first attend to the needs of security, affiliation, and self-esteem. Thus, it follows that, in order to be successful, the beginning teacher must seek the support of administrators and colleagues before the higher order need of self-fulfillment can be reached.

### Two Models of Organizational Socialization

Zeichner (1980; 1990) views teacher socialization as a larger sociological question that is founded in the relationship of the individual to the institution. Citing Brim (1966), Zeichener (1980) notes that considering the school system as the teacher's society,

One interest is in how individuals adjust to society and how in spite of the influence of society on them, they manage to be creative and to transform the social order in which they have been born. The other is the interest in how society socializes the individual – how it transforms the raw material of biological man into a person suitable to perform the activities of society (p. 3-4).

Zeichener (1980) calls this a functionalist mode of inquiry since it emphasizes adjustment to the constraints of the structure in which the individual finds him/herself. The model Zeichener prefers is a dialectical model where the socialization process focuses on the interplay between the individual and the organization. In this way, people become both the recipient and the creator of the values of the system. Novice teachers, according to this model, are existentially related to the community in which they live and work. These teachers are socialized in to the dominant beliefs and practices of the culture where they work and eventually accept or reject the teacher subculture. Through participation, people construct meanings and attach significance to their social encounters as they move through the rite of passage from a novice to one



who believes and practices the organizational norms. Thus, new teachers can both influence and be influenced by their socialization experience within the context of their school community.

Feldman's work (1976) presents a model of organizational socialization which also focuses on the beginner becoming a part of the organizational culture. Feldman, however, examines two other pieces of the socialization process, adjusting to the work environment and developing the work skills needed for the work environment. Feldman's model proposes three stages in the socialization process, with eight process variables and distinct activities at each stage. A novice must complete all stages in order to completely socialize into the organization.

The first stage, *anticipatory socialization*, is the learning stage before the beginner enters the organization. The individual forms expectations about what the job may entail. Information about the prospective employer is gathered. The novice strives to form an accurate picture of the system and makes a decision about the extent to which the job will bring satisfaction to him/her (Feldman, 1976). In the school system, the more accurate and realistic the new teacher's information regarding the school and the extent to which there is congruence between the information and the teacher's value system may predict successful completion of this stage.

The second stage, *accommodation*, is that stage where the novice finds out what the organization is like and begins the process of becoming a member of the organization. Here the beginner learns the new tasks of the job and begins to establish interpersonal relationships at work. Competence and acceptance in the workplace by

supervisors indicate whether the new employee has progressed. Acceptance and trust from colleagues point to interpersonal success (Feldman, 1976). Congruency is achieved in this stage when the new teacher and the administrator agree on the beginners strengths and weaknesses as well as to what extent the teacher has become a participating member of the school community.

During the last stage, the new member resolves the conflicts and demands placed on them by their work and their life outside of work. This final stage is called *role management* by Feldman (1976). This stage focuses on the individuals personal life and the conflict between work and home. Decisions about time and quality of life are priorities during this stage. Beginning teachers who, as this study reveals, are often unprepared for the time commitments of grading papers, extracurricular sponsorship, and instructional preparation, often experience conflict during this stage. New teachers may credit the inability to mediate these conflicts as a determining factor in the decision to leave the profession.

Feldman also identified outcomes of socialization in his model. These outcomes include:

- **General satisfaction.** This is an overall measure of the degree to which the employee is satisfied and happy in his or her work.
- **Mutual influence.** This variable is defined as the extent to which individuals feel some control or power over the way work is carried out in their departments.

- **Internal work motivation.** This is the degree to which an employee is self-motivated to perform effectively on the job.
- **Job involvement.** This is the degree to which employees are personally committed and involved in their work (p.436).

This study will focus on the second stage of Feldman's model, that is, the stage at which the new teacher sees what the school system is actually like, then attempts to see him/herself become a participating member of the school community. During this stage, the new teacher seeks assistance with role definition, monitoring as s/he begins the task of becoming accepted as a work partner, and collegial support as s/he is initiated into the work group. This follows the work of Kirby (1993) and her study of beginning teachers in elementary schools in Louisiana.

As part of the Louisiana School Effectiveness Study, Phase IV, Kirby (1993) included a "Beginning Teacher Study" as a part of the overall LSES-IV. Kirby wished to examine whether there was a difference in the induction experiences of teachers in more effective and in less effective schools. She hypothesized that teachers who received higher levels of support would also perform as more effective teachers, than those teachers working in a less supportive environment.

The subjects for the study were 43 beginning teachers in the 16 schools which were a part of the larger LSES-IV study. Teachers were asked to complete the Beginning Teacher Questionnaire and were observed using the Virgilio Teacher Behavior Inventory, a modification of the Stallings Classroom Snapshot. Results of the study showed that teachers in more effective schools rated their schools higher than

those teachers at less effective schools in all areas. Mean scores at effective schools were greater on assistance ( $\bar{x} = 34.6$ ), monitoring ( $\bar{x} = 20.2$ ) and team building ( $\bar{x} = 15.3$ ) than were the mean scores at less effective schools on the subscales of assistance ( $\bar{x} = 30.5$ ), monitoring ( $\bar{x} = 18.1$ ), and team building ( $\bar{x} = 14.6$ ).

Data from the classroom effectiveness instruments tested differences in management, instruction, and climate in teacher performance at more effective and at less effective schools. Using the VBTI, Kirby measured differences in classroom performance from fall to spring. Findings indicated that beginning teachers at more effective schools scored higher on all subscales from the fall to the spring, while teachers in the less effective schools showed declines in all areas.

Kirby's work examined three general areas of the beginning teacher's socialization experience, assistance from a mentor, monitoring from an administrator, and team-building from colleagues. For purposes of this study and following the work of Kirby (1993) and Kirby, Stringfield, Teddlie, and Wimpelberg (1992) the general strategies for successful beginning teacher socialization will include the process variables of assistance, monitoring, and team-building

#### Assistance as a Process Variable in Socialization

The process variable of assistance is the extent to which a new teacher receives support in the work of teaching. This support may include instructional strategies, resources, or facilitation in the movement from novice to professional. Not to be confused with collegial fellowship, this variable acculturates the beginner into the

school as the beginner finds his/her place in the school community. Most commonly, though not exclusively, the role of assistance for the new teacher is given to the mentor. The structure and organization of schools are such that teachers are not only virtually autonomous in their instruction but also actually autonomous in their proximity to each other. The majority of the day for the beginning teacher is spent apart from other teachers. Moreover, unlike professionals in medicine, who have a period to slowly learn the full slate of skills and who are given time to specialize, teachers are immediately expected to carry the same work load as veteran teachers. In some schools, whose philosophy is to assign the new teacher extracurricular clubs and activities, the load becomes even greater. In situations such as this, a mentor can be the life raft for a drowning novice teacher.

The term *mentor* originated in the story of *The Odyssey* by Homer. When Odysseus left to fight the Trojan Wars, the goddess Athene took on the image of Mentor, a friend of the warrior, and was given responsibility to nurture Telemachus, the son of Odysseus. Mentor served as a guide and a counselor, helping the young man grow in wisdom (Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986). Mentors have been alluded to in many ways in the literature including: coach, model, sponsor, guide, counselor, friend, promoter, spokesperson, supporter, expert, facilitator (Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986; Peterson & Williams, 1998; Jacobi, 1991; Odell, 1986; Zimpher & Rieger, 1988; Hawkey, 1997).

Along with a variety of appellations given to mentors, the act of mentoring has been defined in several ways. Peterson and Williams (1998) note that Shannon (1988)

**calls mentoring “a nurturing process” and “an ongoing, caring relationship” (p.730).**

**Zimpher and Rieger (1988) state that mentoring conveys both a meaning and a function, in that mentoring is both a casual support system and also an educative function. Other researchers, as noted in Hawkey (1997) define mentoring in terms of teacher developmental stages. A common thread in all literature speaks to the need for facilitation, both in social support and also in professional guidance.**

**The mentoring relationship should focus on the needs of the new educator, rather than as an obligation as part of a state mandate. This relationship should take place in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality, as the new teacher must have the freedom to question and discuss instructional practices and problems. Thus, an imperative of any mentoring system should include the premise that evaluation is not a role taken on by the master teacher. In this way, the beginning teacher marks an easier transition into the profession, knowing that questions and challenges will not mark them as incompetent (Peterson & Williams, 1998; Huffman & Leak, 1986).**

**Mentoring for the beginning teacher helps the protégé move toward self-reliance and the accountability that accompanies the veteran teacher. The ultimate goal of mentoring should be to encourage reflective practice in order to strive for greater competency and motivation in the novice teacher. Encouraging young teachers to talk to one another about the work of teaching and to watch veteran teachers in their work as teachers can break the isolation many new teachers feel and provide them with role models to emulate (Peterson & Williams, 1998). Specific areas that mentors should target are dependent on the developmental stage of the novice. These may include:**

procedures regarding day to day activities, procedures regarding student assessment and student assessment reports, observations of other teachers, knowledge regarding curriculum, planning, and methods, classroom management, adaptation of new strategies, knowledge of the political landscape of the school, and continual reflection of positive educational strategies. Mentors may also run interference, keep distractions to a minimum for the new teacher, and act as a spokesperson when need be (Peterson & Williams, 1998; Blair-Larsen, 1998; Zimpher & Rieger, 1988).

Many induction programs include opportunities for the mentor to observe the beginning teacher. However, fewer offer the novices opportunities to observe their colleagues. Allowing new teachers to view teaching expertise will more likely socialize the teacher in to the norms of the school. Observing veterans utilize a variety of instructional strategies will promote professional growth, give new teachers a chance to see the advice they have received regarding classroom practices played out, and remove the feeling of isolation (Huling-Austin, 1992).

Research has shown that mentoring has a positive relationship to the retention of new teachers. The National Center for Education Information found that only 67% of nonmentored teachers, new to teaching, that is, five years or less, would still be teaching in five years (Odell & Ferraro, 1992). After a teacher-mentoring program was implemented, Odell and Ferraro (1992) found that 80% of mentored beginning teachers expected to still be in the classroom in five years. Likewise, Blair-Larsen (1998) contends that the more problems new teachers encounter, the more likely they will leave the education profession.

Though school districts have been enthusiastic about the concept of mentoring, in reality, not all mentoring programs are successful. The general idea of assisting the new teacher has been obscured by a lack of clarity of purpose, what mentors should do and what they actually do (Feiman-Nemser, 1996). As a result, mentoring programs in policy and mentoring programs in practice differ greatly, as will be pointed out in this study.

State legislatures throughout the nation have mandated mentoring programs as part of the certification process. The goal of providing excellence in teaching calls for an orientation process for novices, which will provide the needed social and professional support to keep new teachers in the system. As part of the Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program (LaTAAP), the Louisiana legislature called for such assistance<sup>1</sup>. The Louisiana Mentor Program became operational with the 1998-1999 school year. The goal of the program is twofold: a) to guide the beginning teacher to become a competent and confident professional; and b) to help the new teacher meet the performance standards for certification through support and assistance.

Each new teacher is assigned a mentor for two semesters, at the beginning of the first year of experience in a Louisiana public school. Primarily in the first semester, but throughout the two semesters of the initial year, the mentor provides support and technical assistance. During the second semester of the teacher's first year, an assessment team is assigned. This team is made up of the principal (or a designee of the

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<sup>1</sup>Information on the Louisiana Mentor Program was obtained from the Louisiana Department of Education website: The Louisiana Mentor Program [On-line]. Available: <http://www.doe.state.la.us>



principal) and an outside assessor. Each member of the team visits the teacher's classroom to collect data, using this data upon which to base the recommendation for certification. Noteworthy of this system is that the mentor has no role in the assessment process or the certification recommendation, reinforcing the confidential and trustworthy nature of the relationship.

The Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program states as advantageous the facts that the system: a) is uniform; b) is statewide; c) provides new teachers with a planned program of leadership and support; and d) provides assurances to the citizens of the state that when a teacher is issued a permanent Louisiana teaching certificate, that new teacher has demonstrated competency in the use of the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching.

#### Monitoring as a Process Variable in Socialization

While much of the literature centers on the importance of mentors in the beginning teachers' experience, principals are arguably central figures as well. A study conducted by Brock and Grady (1998) examined the role of the principal in the induction of novice teachers. While the results of the study indicated that principals and new teachers share common concerns regarding the initial experience, principals overlooked a key component identified as crucial by the new teachers – the expectations of the principal for the new teacher and the beginning teachers' need for year long assistance and monitoring. As the person instrumental in the hiring and evaluation of the new teachers, the beginning teacher is anxious to fulfill the principal's expectations. Lacking this, the new teacher can feel frustrated and abandoned.

Realizing this, it is fitting that principals consider their role in the socialization process of the beginning teacher.

Strategies, which offer the new teacher feedback about the instructional methodologies and processes utilized in the classroom, refer to the monitoring aspect of socialization (Kirby, et al, 1992). Monitoring offers a form of collegiality through the use of reflective practice. Frequent visits to the new teacher's classroom by the principal not only diminishes the teacher's sense of isolation but also helps the teacher overcome the fears associated with principal evaluation and fulfilling administrative expectations (Hope, 1992).

Used as a form of professional development, monitoring provides the new teacher a vehicle for this development through conferencing, observation, and feedback (Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). This form of supervision allows the teacher to take an active role in classroom practices, since reflection from the feedback leads to a reflection upon the classroom context, thus, leading to the most appropriate strategies for the students at hand (Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). As noted by Hope (1999), constructive feedback from the principal is essential for professional development and the new teacher's sense of efficacy.

Planning an induction program at the school level must include frequent and productive interaction between the principal and each new teacher (Hope, 1999). The design of the program should reflect an understanding that a positive socialization experience will ultimately benefit the principal and school as a whole by working to develop a teacher who will stay in the field of education. As a part of this design,

principals must take on the role of instructional leader by engaging the new teacher in discussions of the practice of teaching, thus, assisting them in their professional growth and their indoctrination as a colleague. Moreover, principals can end the sense of isolation through frequent classroom visits as well as increasing efficacy through timely and constructive feedback (Hope, 1999).

There are a number of other ways principals can ensure that the new teacher's first year is a productive one. While mentors are "assigned" to the new teacher, the principal can foster collegial relationships with other faculty and staff members. Accessibility to the principal is also a key ingredient. Knowing that "the door is always open" can be a great comfort to the beginner. Furthermore, principals should be ever mindful of opportunities to enhance a new teacher's professional development. Workshops, conferences, and other opportunities to gain additional skills can serve the school as much as the teacher. The principal can help maximize success for the new teacher through the classes and students that are assigned by the principal to the new teacher. Finally, one of the greatest fears of the novice is the evaluation. Principals can do much to alleviate this fear by stressing the evaluation as a means of improvement, rather than a means of criticism (Hope, 1999). Natriello (1984) cites an earlier study by Dornbusch and Scott (1975) which found a positive relationship between the frequency of administrative evaluation and teacher satisfaction. Natriello notes that increasing the frequency of evaluation leads to "teachers working smarter, not harder" and that teachers who report frequent evaluation also report being "markedly more effective in their teaching tasks" (Natriello, 1984, p. 592).

Rather than working in a context of “principal-sighting terror,” that is, fear of administrative visitation and evaluation, Niebrand, Horn, and Holmes (1992) recommend that principals use the simple strategy of building trust. Niebrand, et al.(1992) offer suggestions to administrators which generally include,

- always use the teacher’s name and attempt to make eye contact whether the meeting be in the hallway, the cafeteria, or on morning duty,
- give honest compliments, both verbally and in writing,
- provide options for the new teacher when requests for help are made,
- visit classrooms often and get involved in the lesson,
- spend time with the novice teachers, telling war stories, making expectations clear, and discussing the work of teaching.

Monitoring through reflective practice and professional feedback allows teachers to vary instructional strategies necessary for addressing the context variables of the classroom. This form of supervision moves away from what Sergiovanni (in Darling-Hammond, 1992) terms “reductionism” in teacher supervision; that is, reducing teacher interactions to tallies on a data collection sheet which comes from “looking at” teaching, rather than “seeing” it.

Engaging teachers in reflective practice through principal or peer monitoring enhances trust and raises teacher efficacy (Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). More importantly, new teachers will come to understand that the time and energy devoted to monitoring and feedback equates to the importance placed on effective teaching strategies. Moreover, through conferencing, the teacher will identify the norms and

values of the school, as well as the beliefs of colleagues and supervisors regarding teaching and learning. This, in turn, will lead to an increased commitment on the part of the new teacher to a school devoted to improved instruction and the achievement of students (Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). Increased commitment leads to stability of faculty in a school, a distinguishing characteristic of an effective school.

Finally, monitoring and feedback will diminish the sense of isolation that teachers often feel in the autonomy that comes with being a teacher. Talking about the “work of teaching” not only increases knowledge but also augments the new teacher’s belief that he/she is contributing to the efforts of the entire school for increased student achievement (Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999).

Administrators have, within their control, the mechanism to shape the importance of a school culture dedicated to teaching and learning or one dedicated to management and control. This culture of learning (or lack thereof) sends a powerful message to the beginning teacher about the priorities of the monitoring system at the school. Schein (1992) notes that the mechanism for conveying priorities is simply by what the administrator pays attention to. Schein (1992) states that what is paid attention to is a form of communication to the members of the organization. He says,

This can mean anything from what they notice and comment on to what they measure, control, reward, and in other ways *systematically deal with* [italics in original]. Even casual remarks and questions that are consistently geared to a certain area can be as potent as formal control mechanisms and measurements (p.231).

Principals who convey the message that student learning and the work of teaching are priorities in the school organization will also convey the message that the

people who go about this work are important to the overall success of the school. This will do much toward minimizing the stress associated with the assessment and monitoring process, which is so much a part of the first year experience.

### **Team Building as a Process Variable in Socialization**

A California study found that among several approaches to supporting new teachers, the most effective was the relationship between the new teacher and a support system (Halford, 1998). Researchers have argued that the absence of social support can lead to job burnout (Schwab, et al, 1986). Social support, also called esteem support, or need affiliation, offers the new teacher information from colleagues that one is valued. Sarros and Sarros (1992) note that people who have a strong social support systems are “both psychologically and physiologically healthier and less prone to stress and burnout than are those without the benefits of some form of social support” (p.56). Gerald Caplan, as cited in House (1981), has written widely on the role of support systems and its relationship to stress in the workplace. He defines support systems from colleagues as

attachments among individuals or between individuals and groups that serve to improve adaptive competence in dealing with short-term crises and life transitions as well as long-term challenges, stresses, and privation through (a) promoting emotional mastery (b) offering guidance regarding the field of relevant forces involved in expectable problems and methods of dealing with them, and (c) providing feedback about an individual’s behavior that validates his conception of his own identity and fosters improved performance based on adequate self-evaluation (House, 1981, p.17).

The source of the support is as important as the quality of that support.

Research by Sarros and Sarros (1992) found that the greater the support provided by the

principal, the lower the level of emotional exhaustion in the teacher. Following that, collegial support in the form of listening, concern, and trust was the most popular type of social support stated by teachers. This same study concluded that when teachers gave support to other teachers in the form of listening, concern, and trust, their own feelings of self-worth and personal accomplishment increased.

Odell and Ferraro (1992) contend that the quality of a beginning teacher's first teaching experience has a greater effect on their intent to stay in the profession than does the prior academic experience or the quality of their teacher preparation program. Implementation of a beneficial first time teaching experience can be had through some form of collegial support. The new teacher's support system is made up of not only administrators and colleagues but also members of the school community at large. Marlow, Inman, and Betancourt-Smith (1997) argue that the "degree to which beginning teachers perceive that these three groups are supportive of their efforts can be directly related to their comfort level and their desire to remain in the profession" (p. 212).

Cobb (1976), in his work in the field of psychosomatic medicine, has studied what he calls "need affiliation", that is, "information that one is valued and esteemed" (p.2). Social support theory posits that supportive relationships can prevent stress, reduce existing stress, and help one cope more effectively with stress (Jacobi, 1991; Sarros and Sarros, 1987). Called a protective mechanism, social support can supply information to a person that (a) s/he is loved and cared for; (b) s/he is esteemed and valued; (c) s/he belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation (Cobb,

1976). Cobb's research on the interaction of social support with environmental stress provides evidence that sufficient social support can furnish protection from a variety of pathological states for people in crisis (Cobb, 1976).

House (1981) cites research by LaRocco (1980), which supports the idea that social support buffers stress related complaints such as anxiety and depression. The organizational research of Mayo (1933) and Likert (1961) found that supportive behavior from work supervisors improves morale and productivity, thus reducing stress (House, 1981). Research by House on work stress and social support concluded that "high social support can completely eliminate the deleterious impact of stress on health" (p.80). However, the work and the kind of stress perceived by the employee determines the most effective support needed.

Social support can take several forms including (a) emotional support, such as esteem, trust, concern; (b) appraisal support such as affirmation and feedback; (c) informational support, such as advice, suggestions, directives; and (d) instrumental support, such as aid in kind, money, and labor (House, 1981).

Research on teacher empowerment has demonstrated the relationship between collegiality and teacher efficacy (Reep & Grier, 1992). The Total Quality Management (TQM) concept of Edwards Deming advocates the use of teams to solve organizational problems. In pilot studies of a leadership program intended to extend teacher's professionalism beyond the classroom, the researchers found that building teams to foster collegiality had the added benefit of shaping networks of decision making and "home-grown strategies" for problem solving (Reep & Grier, 1992).



Fox and Singletary (1986) emphasize the importance of a support system that will offer the new teacher a feeling of security during the crucial first year. New teachers should feel comfortable discussing ideas and concerns, thus minimizing feelings of isolation. While mentors may be assigned to coach, guide, and inform, the novice should also have opportunities to express themselves freely in a non-threatening atmosphere with their colleagues. A system of social support can provide that atmosphere.

Ashton and Webb (1986) in a study of middle school organizational frameworks found that schools which provide and encourage teachers to interact with each other as team members produced a greater sense of community, a greater commitment to the students in the school, a reduction in teacher isolation, and a greater sense of teacher's ability to affect student learning.

In a study examining the attitudes of beginning teachers toward their support system as a predictor of attrition, Marlow, Inman, & Betancourt-Smith (1997) found that the interpersonal aspect of the beginning teacher's experience was related to their teaching environment. Though teachers begin to develop their own ideologies with experience, the early years of teaching are important to developing an understanding of the work of teaching. According to the study by Marlow, et.al. (1997),

beginning teachers need to have colleagues with whom they can share ideas, make plans, and attempt to solve problems. When beginning teachers are mentored in this way, they gain knowledge, feel less isolated, and develop a greater sense of self-esteem and efficiency (p. 213).

Failing to receive this type of support network, prompts new teachers to feel isolated, to own reduced feelings of self-worth, to have no one to turn to on days where failure is the norm, and to limit any feelings of good will with the faculty (Marlow, et al., 1997).

Collegial support, as found throughout the literature, is an important construct in the professional life of the teacher. Mitchell and Sacknet (2000) argue that the need for teachers to rely on their peers for support and assistance is vital. They cite a study by Tartar, Sabo, and Hoy (1989) who found that while supportive principal leadership created a culture of trust, the level of trust and support among colleagues best determined the effectiveness of the school.

### **Teacher Intent to Stay**

Blair-Larsen (1998) contends that the more problems new teachers encounter, the more likely they will leave the education profession. Factors that influence a teacher's decision to remain in teaching often occur in the initial years of teaching. Thus, the induction experience can set the tone and quality of the novice's tenure in education (Chapman, 1984).

A study by Chapman (1984) pointed out that "the single strongest predictor of retention was initial commitment to teaching" (p.655). The conditions under which a person works is key to determining job satisfaction (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997). Shann (1998) notes that job satisfaction is critical to teacher retention and commitment. Schools, which provide opportunities to develop professional competence through a system of support, professional growth, and reflective practice may find job satisfaction increasing which, logically, will lead to teacher retention.

Intent is an attitudinal construct, one that is purposeful and clear. A person's intent is his/her resolve to act in a certain way. This attitude is based on the values a person intrinsically holds. Thus, if the values of the organization are compatible with the values of the employee, the employee will have a positive attitude toward the workplace. Therefore, motivation to continue employment will follow. This motivation leads to *holding power*, a construct discussed by Morris (1986) as it pertains to school organizations.

Morris defines holding power as "the sum total of elements that serve to attract, hold, and involve teachers, students, and others in the teaching/learning process" (Morris, 1986, p.1-2). A loss in holding power leads to absenteeism, turnover, and disillusionment, thus, contributing to the intent to leave the organization. A teacher who is "held" to the school is a teacher who is motivated to continue in that environment. Teachers who have perceptions of school processes similar to their personal values and characteristics will likely be held to that organization. That teacher will view the organization in a positive light and will be motivated to greater productivity and a greater intent to continue with the organization.

The social learning theory of Bandura (Bandura, 1977) may account for this motivation to stay. Bandura posits that people set goals for themselves that influence the tendency to perform certain modeled behaviors. If these behaviors match one's internal standards and have been reinforced, then the person will be motivated to repeat this behavior. The reinforcement for this motivation can be anything one values (Corsini, 1990). In the work environment, such as an educational setting, a teacher can

be motivated by setting goals for performance or by the discontent experienced through a substandard performance. If the new teacher models behavior framed in a school culture of discontent and a lack of priority for effective instruction, that teacher's values may conflict with the values of the organization. Moreover, if confusion over one's place in the school community exists and a lack of communication with colleagues and supervisors provide no role models or reinforcement from which to draw, the new teacher will find little motivation to continue. Any "hold" on the school organization will diminish. Setting higher standards will mobilize internal efforts to accomplish goals, which, once attained, will cause one to set higher goals to accomplish (Wood and Bandura, 1990). Motivation, according to Bandura, stems from cognition. Cognitive motivation is based on goals mediated by self-evaluation, perceived self-efficacy to reach these goals, and personal standards (Wood and Bandura, 1990). This type of self-incentive is what makes people persist. This persistence strengthens one's intentions, thus, leading to a disposition to act. In this study, that action is a desire and an intent to continue in the field of education.

The exit of good teachers from a school may have far-reaching effects. Frase and Sorenson (1992) found that when good teachers leave, the impact on those who stay is negative. The cycle of dissatisfaction with the school then increases. Dissatisfied teachers who stay in the classroom pass on their negative feelings to other staff members and to the children they teach. Ignoring the capacity of colleagues to help dissatisfied co-workers may encourage the onset of burnout among other employees (Sarros & Sarros, 1987; Marlow & Inman, 1993).

Dworkin (1987) notes the impact on the students of uncommitted teachers, reporting that these students have lower achievement gains and higher absentee rates. In addition, the cost of recruitment and training is high. School districts who place a priority on induction programs formulated to not only introduce but also to retain the new teacher may find a reduction in expenditures in the district's recruiting budget (Hope, 1992; Chapman, 1984). Other concerns regarding attrition include quality of the teaching staff, disruption of program continuity, poor long range planning, hindrance of student learning, and excessive expenditures as school systems recruit, hire, and train (Shen, 1998).

Satisfied teachers, on the other hand, will more likely feel a sense of commitment to the organization and exhibit a more positive attitude toward teaching. Rosenholz (1989) notes that specific behaviors exhibited by committed teachers include improved practice and increased engagement. This, in turn, leads the teacher to work harder in order to make classroom activities more meaningful. Moreover, engaged teachers will attempt to make lessons more relevant and of greater intrinsic interest to students.

Fox and Singletary (1986) identified the importance of commitment as a part of a supportive induction program. When induction programs develop a psychological support for the beginning teacher, the resulting attitudes and perceptions toward the system will likely result in increased commitment on the part of the teacher. This will, in turn, lead to retention.

Seashore Louis (1998) argues that collegial exchange and feedback are central to the teachers' commitment to the school, motivating the teacher to become involved in a variety of school activities. Encouraging class observations by both teachers and administrators, as well as discussing the teaching experience, will lead to this improved feedback, thus, to increased commitment.

Research (Gonzalez, 1995; Billingsley, 1993) has pointed to two common reasons for teacher exodus, a lack of administrative, collegial and parental support and a lack of involvement in decision making. Interactions with colleagues has been shown to positively influence a teacher's desire to continue in the field of education, more so than other factors (Yee, 1990; Bloland & Selby, 1980). Frase and Sorenson (1992) found positive correlation between feedback from supervisors and collegiality with a teacher's job satisfaction. Rosenholtz (1989) also found that administrative support was key to commitment on the part of teachers. This finding is logical as principals play a major role in shaping the conditions under which teachers work. Rosenholtz (1989) specifically points to the principal's role in providing feedback, encouraging teachers, and allowing participatory decision making.

Conversely, teachers who are more likely to leave the profession are those who perceive their principals as stifling their creativity, are a different race from their students and other teachers, and have a different approach toward teaching than their colleagues (Marlow & Inman, 1993). A lack of feedback and little collegial support can cause uncertainty in the new teacher, along with an insecurity about the effectiveness of the work they are doing. Failure to provide routine, constructive feedback promotes

isolation and, thus, decreases job satisfaction while increasing a teacher's propensity to leaving (McLaughlin, et al, 1986).

Reasons for leaving the field of education are as varied as are the teaching situations in which novices find themselves. Teachers who are satisfied with the work of teaching in an organization that they perceive supports and encourages them in this work will likely continue. This study will examine administrative monitoring, mentoring assistance, and collegial team building as these factors may predict job satisfaction, and thus, intent to stay in the field of education.

### **Summary**

This chapter has provided a review of the literature in the field of school effectiveness research and beginning teacher socialization. The review was conducted in an effort to build a basis upon which to conduct the present study.

An overview of the history of school effectiveness research initiated the review of the literature. As SER came of age, a profile of characteristics emerged which determined the extent of effectiveness in a school. These characteristics and the case for multilevel methods provide a basis for the design of this study.

The theoretical base for this research was laid in the literature review with a discussion of contingency theory being most prominent. With the school as the unit of analysis in the present study, it follows that a theory rooted in the science of organizations emerges as the theoretical cornerstone. Moreover, the issue of context plays a significant role in SER and contingency theory addresses the idea of different conditions in different contexts. A summary of those context variables frequently

identified in SER, specifically SES, community type, grade phase, and governance structure, followed.

School effects and teacher effects as an integrated field produces research which examines both school processes and classroom level processes. The “value added” by the school, using education indicators to inform, reveals the difference between actual achievement and predicted achievement. Using this measure, comparisons on a “like with like” basis can be assured. This, in turn, can clearly illustrate the differential effects between schools.

Using the framework of school effectiveness research, the literature review concluded with a discussion of teacher socialization, beginning with two models of organizational socialization. The first viewed the teacher as influencing and being influenced by the socialization experience within the school context. The second relied on the work of Feldman (1976) whose model presented stages in the socialization process. From these stages, the more narrow process variables of assistance, monitoring, and team-building emerge.

Assistance as a process variable refers to the professional support received by the beginning teacher. Most often, this support is received from a mentor assigned to the novice. Monitoring from the principal or other administrator provides the professional feedback and reflective practice as a process variable in socialization. Finally, team-building, also called peer support, social support, or need affiliation is a process variable that supplies the new teacher with collegial social support as a buffer from stress related complaints associated with the first teaching experience.



The discussion of process variables was followed by a concluding discussion in Chapter Two which addressed a teacher's intent to stay in the field of education. The literature review produced evidence that like values with the organization and internal motivation lead to the organization's holding power over the employee. This holding power evokes an intent to stay. The processes within the organization shape the employee's intent to stay or intent to leave the field.

This study continues with a description of the methodology used as outlined in Chapter Three. Quantitative and qualitative results are found in Chapters Four, Five, and Six, followed by the conclusions drawn from the study in Chapter Seven.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

The general purpose of the present study, as stated in Chapter 1, was to answer the question: Are there differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers in differentially effective schools? In order to answer this question, several objectives for the study emerged. These objectives were:

- Identify the differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools.
- Examine the efficacy of administrative monitoring and identify the differences in the administrative monitoring at more effective and at less effective middle schools.
- Examine the strategies for assistance and mentoring to beginning teachers and identify the differences in the strategies at more effective and at less effective middle schools.
- Examine the quality of collegial team building and identify the differences in the team building at more effective and at less effective middle schools.
- Identify the school processes in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers which might result in the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education.
- Provide in-depth case study analysis of the processes within the middle school that account for the differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools.

A mixed method design, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, was utilized for this study. Patton (1990) calls this a mixed form design utilizing naturalistic inquiry, quantitative data, and statistical analysis. The case study strategy employed a multiple case design (Yin, 1994). The remainder of this chapter will provide an overall design of the study, the specific case study design, a description of the data collection phases in the study, including research questions, instrumentation, and rationale for each phase, and will conclude with a summary of the methodology used in this research study.

### **Overall Design of the Study**

A mixed method design, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, was employed for this study. Patton (1990) calls this a mixed form design utilizing naturalistic inquiry, quantitative data inquiry, and statistical analysis. In arguing for mixed methods, Patton states that using a design of this sort is a “practical mandate in evaluation” (p.193). A mixed method design allows the researcher to

gather the most relevant possible information for evaluation users [which] outweighs concerns about methodological purity based on epistemological and philosophical arguments (p.193).

Combining methodologies, also called triangulation, strengthens the study by revealing different aspects of the data. Studies which use only one method are more prone to various types of error. Triangulation strengthens the validity and credibility of the study while providing useful information (Patton, 1990).

Patton (1990) notes that there are four types of triangulation. These include:

- data triangulation – using different data sources.
- investigator triangulation – using different researchers.

- theory triangulation – using different perspectives for interpretation.
- methodological triangulation – using multiple methods to study the question.

This research design will employ both data and methodological triangulation.

### **Case Study Design**

#### **Sampling Design**

The research design called for purposeful outlier sampling using intensity sampling strategy (Patton, 1990). This strategy involves carefully choosing a sample which provides “information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensely (but not extremely)” (Patton, 1990, p. 171). Intensity sampling is superior to extreme case sampling because deviant cases will likely distort the “phenomenon of interest.” In other words, extreme case sampling may provide information that is so unusual that the findings may be disputed (Patton, 1990).

The question that guided this research examined the processes in differentially effective middle schools; thus, a sample which documents an intense manifestation of the effectiveness of the middle school, either more effective or less effective, will reveal the most valuable information regarding the processes in these schools which will result in a positive or negative socialization experience.

Stringfield (1994) emphasizes the importance of outlier sampling for those studies seeking to understanding extraordinary events, calling the detailed outlier study a “most efficient research design” when questioning “what sets an exemplar apart” (p. 73). The efficiency lay in the ability to detail descriptions in the area of interest, thereby adding a richness to the overall study.

This study will examine outliers which are more effective middle schools and those which are less effective. Using both positive and negative outliers allows for maximum contrasts in the processes of the schools, a design strength which Stringfield (1994) posits “allows maximum differentiating power in the most efficient design” (p. 74). The disadvantage to this design is that typical schools, those which are the majority of schools in the total population, are not studied. However, by studying the processes in outlier schools, information gleaned will allow typical schools to more efficiently focus on those processes needing attention in their particular context.

#### School Effectiveness Index

School Performance Score (SPS). Each year schools in Louisiana are required to administer the state’s LEAP 21 test. There are two components to the test, English Language Arts and Mathematics (school year 2000-2001 inaugurated the Accountability Cycle 2, where the SPS included all four LEAP 21 tests; that is English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies). The SPS, calculated annually by the Louisiana Department of Education, is determined by combining results from four index scores with their corresponding weights. The formula for the calculation of the SPS follows.

**School Performance Score = The Sum of:**

<b>LEAP 21 index score</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Iowa Test index score</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Attendance index</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Dropout index</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>5%</b>

The index scores for the LEAP 21 and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills were derived through conversion. Scores not included in the conversion were for students who were expelled, transferred to another school or received a grade reassignment. The conversion resulted in a listing of schools and their individual school effectiveness index (SEI) for a consecutive two year period, as illustrated in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1. Conversion of Student Scores to School Index Scores.**

Students' raw scores *	→ converted to →	Students' scale scores **
Students' scale scores	→ converted to →	Students' z scores **
Students' z scores	→ converted to →	School's z scores **
School's z scores	→ converted to →	School's index score**
School's index score	→ converted to →	School's SPS score**

\* Raw scores on CRT mathematics and English Language Arts are for 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade LEAP 21 exam and on NRT total battery raw scores for 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grade Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

\*\* Scores are for each subject area and grade level.

Source: Louisiana Department of Education, Office of Management and Finance, Division of Planning, Analysis, and Information Services, Planning and Analysis Section, 2000.

**Establishing the School Effectiveness Index.** Before a sample could be chosen, a school effectiveness index (SEI) needed to be assigned to the middle schools in Louisiana. The SEIs were derived through a linear regression procedure whereby the criterion variable, in this study the school performance score (SPS), was regressed onto three predictor variables, which for this study were percent of students in poverty, percent of minority students, and percent of special education students (Sammons,

1999; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993). The three independent variables (percent of students in poverty, percent of minority students, and percent of special education students) accounted for 66.5% of the variance in the dependent variable (1998-99 school performance scores) (Yuan, 2000).

The result of this regression was a set of both actual and predicted scores for every K-8 school in Louisiana. The difference between the actual score and the predicted score was the residual score, either positive or negative. The residual scores served as the school effectiveness index for this study.

Contextual Effects and Differential Effects. As noted in Chapter 2, the context within which a school operates is related to whether that school is more effective or less effective in terms of student achievement. According to the school effectiveness literature, there are four major types of context effects (student socioeconomic status [SES], community type, grade phase, and governance structure) (Teddlie, Reynolds, & Sammons, 2000). Student SES is the context variable used in this study.

“Differential effects” in this study are related to residual scores (either positive or negative). Differential effects refers to the difference in the performance of students from positive and negative outlier schools, which have been matched on the SES of the student body.

Adjusted Scores. Research studies of school effects (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993) have used the strategy of adjusted scores in their study design. This strategy addresses the issue of internal validity in order to ensure that the study is designed to measure what it was intended to measure, while eliminating any extraneous variables that

might affect the outcome. Thus, variables which might be related to student achievement, other than the school processes under study, should be accounted for (Teddle, Reynolds, & Sammons, 2000).

Variables controlled for in the present study are those related to student background; that is, SES, special education, and ethnicity. SES refers to the income and educational background of the students' families. Data from student SES are often not maintained by schools and when data are available, they are often not accurate (Freeman, 1997). In the present study, SES is determined through data related to the number of students enrolled in each school's free and reduced lunch program. To enroll in the program, parents must produce information related to the family income. A school which has a high percentage of students enrolled in the free/reduced price lunch program will likely also have a high percentage of students living in poverty; therefore, the socioeconomic status of the school will likely be lower. For purposes of the regression analysis, the SES of each school was determined by the number of students enrolled in the free/reduced price lunch program at the school divided by the total number of students enrolled in the school (S. Kochan, personal communication, January 4, 2001).

Ethnicity and special education percentages were also predictor variables utilized in the regression analysis (Sammons, 1999; Teddle and Stringfield, 1993). The ethnicity variable was determined by the number of minority students at each school divided by the total enrollment at each school. The special education variable was determined in like manner. The total number of gifted and talented students in the school was divided by the total enrollment of students. Data indicating the total number of minority students



and gifted and talented students were received through the Louisiana Student Information System, which is a self-report system, but also an audited system as part of the Minimum Foundation Program school funding system (S. Kochan, personal communication, January 4, 2001).

### **Sample Selection**

Residual scores were received from the Louisiana Department of Education, Office of Management and Finance, Division of Planning, Analysis, and Information Services, Planning and Analysis Section (Yuan, 2000). This study examined only those schools with some combination of middle school grades (i.e., 4-8, 5-8, 6-8, or 7-8). In order to standardize the residual scores, the sample of interest (all middle schools), were extracted from the total sample. The effectiveness of middle schools was determined on the basis of a sample using all schools in the state; therefore, the regression analyses utilized by the Louisiana Department of Education were not recalculated. Instead, using the SPSS statistics program, the residual scores of the middle schools were standardized into z scores ( $\mu = 0$ ,  $\sigma = 1$ ). This procedure yielded a list of middle schools with standard scores which ranged from +3.07 to -3.07.

Several considerations came into play when choosing the schools which would serve as the sample for this study. The basic sampling strategy for this study called for schools which were outliers; specifically it called for an “intensity sample” of schools that demonstrates effectiveness/ineffectiveness intensely, but not extremely. Teddlie, Reynolds, and Sammons (2000) noted that studies which utilize an outlier design are more likely to demonstrate school effects.

In examining the distribution of residual scores for the school year (SY) 1998-99 data and looking for matched pairs of schools, it was determined that residual scores of  $\pm.67$  yielded a sample large enough to select an adequate number of more effective/less effective schools. Residual scores of  $\pm.67$  represent the upper 25% of the distribution and the lower 25% of the distribution (Lomax, 1992). The upper and lower 25% of the distribution constitute an appropriate definition of an "intensity sample." The upper and lower 25% of the distribution also approximates cut-off points used to determine more effective/less effective schools in prior school effectiveness research (e.g., Lang, 1991; Purkey & Smith, 1982; Scheerens, 1992). Following this line of thinking, middle schools with an SEI of  $\pm.67$  were examined for possible inclusion in the study sample.

Following the work of Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) a matched pair design was utilized for this study. Middle schools with an SEI of  $\pm.67$  were sorted first by school district, then by minority index, SES index, and finally, by size of school enrollment. This sorting process produced three matched pairs of middle schools.

Some small school districts in Louisiana have only one middle school. In order to increase the sample size, schools were sorted by minority index, SES index, and by size of school, without regard to school district. Middle schools which matched in these categories and were contiguous in location were examined for inclusion in the study. This produced an additional matched pair.

Sampling problems ensued once school districts were contacted or found upon initial visits to the school (see section: Sampling Problems). If schools were eliminated because of problems, the same sorting process previously used was employed again. The

final sample included five matched pairs of middle schools, two pairs in the same school district and three pairs in contiguous districts. The final sample of five matched pairs of middle schools is found in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2. Matched Pair Sample for the Study.**

Pair	School	District	Size	Minority	SES	z score
1	Polar Flight	Northside	986	29.8	54.6	+.72
	Blackbird	Northside	543	16.7	36.7	-.71
2	Barnstorming	Waterside	558	10.3	31.3	+1.24
	Mir	Riverside	715	14.7	37.6	-1.86
3	Cargo	Eastside	400	14	42	+1.79
	Kamikaze	Westside	458	12.8	49.8	-1.65
4	Concorde	Southside	687	75.9	44	+.94
	Tupelov	Southside	686	67.2	42	-1.52
5	Stealth	Northside	940	54	56.5	+1.30
	Tailspin	Southside	697	67	51	-1.98

Initial contact was made with each school district by telephone call to the district's central office. Personnel with the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction in all districts asked that a formal request be made in writing. The request was to outline the research, its purpose, what schools would be visited, which parties within each school would be contacted and the method of that contact (i.e., interview, observation, and/or survey response). The request to conduct research was also to include where and in what manner the findings of the research study would be dispersed. A letter was mailed to the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction of each school districts listed in Table 3.2 (see Appendix A). All schools in Table 3.2 agreed to participate.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection took place throughout six phases in order to answer the question: What are the socialization experiences of beginning teachers in differentially effective middle schools? See Table 3.3 for an overview of the data collection and analysis utilized in each phase. Phase One designed and carried out a pilot study for this dissertation research study. Chapter Four will outline the case studies, the instrumentation used, and findings from the pilot study.

Phase Two involved the collection of interview data from the middle school principals and the beginning teachers' mentors. The purpose of these interviews was to elicit information regarding the individual middle school's induction process and the role of the principal and mentor in this process. The principal and the mentor gave a perspective of the induction process different from that of the beginning teacher, the principal from the monitoring role and the mentor in the role of assistance. The data from the Phase Two interviews were then analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Lincoln and Guba, 1986). Once unitized and categorized, the data were entered in to the database to examine for a priori and emerging themes.

Phase Three involved the collection of survey data from the beginning teachers at the middle schools under study. Three survey instruments were administered to the beginning teachers. The Beginning Teacher Questionnaire (Kirby, 1992) (BTQ) elicited data regarding the level and quality of assistance, monitoring, and team building during the first (or first two) year(s) of teaching. The Collegial Social Support Inventory (Angelle, 1999) (CSSI) measured the level of quality of social support provided to the

beginning teacher during the initial experience as a professional teacher. The third instrument, the Teacher Intent to Stay Measure (TISM) (Angelle, 1999) was administered to the beginning teachers to measure the attitudinal construct of intention to remain in the field of education. Data from all three instruments were analyzed using analysis of variance to determine the significance of the relationship among the variables. T-tests were run to examine teacher perception of differences in social support in more effective and less effective middle schools. Finally, correlations were calculated to measure the relationship between the BTQ and CSSI and the TISM.

Phase Four involved the triangulation of quantitative data which included self-report data of the beginning teacher. A general “picture” of the beginning teachers in the study was formed from demographic data which included degree obtained, university preparation program, and certification status. The number of absences and discipline referrals were also compiled. Data were analyzed to discover the degree to which there were differences between the number of absences and number of discipline referrals within the context of the SEI of the school. Descriptive statistics were examined to look for differences in the typical beginning teacher in more effective middle schools and less effective middle schools.

Phase Five involved data collection from the beginning teachers through interviews and observations. Beginning teachers were interviewed to elude information regarding the needs, challenges, rewards, and successes of the initial years of teaching.

Table 3.3. Data Collection and Analysis for All Phases of the Study.

Phase of the Study	Level	Data Source	Data Analysis	Chap
1. Pilot Study	All Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sources from Phases 2, 3, 4, 5</li> </ul>	All techniques from Phases 2-5	4
2. Identify assistance and monitoring factors related to beginning teacher socialization	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal interview</li> <li>• Mentor interview</li> <li>• School observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constant-comparative method</li> </ul>	6
3. Identify perceptions of beginning teachers related to beginning teacher socialization	Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BTQ</li> <li>• CSSI</li> <li>• TISM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptive statistics</li> <li>• Analysis of variance</li> <li>• Correlation</li> <li>• t-test</li> </ul>	5
4. Identify teacher factors related to beginning teacher socialization	Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher degree/ preparation/ certification</li> <li>• Teacher absences</li> <li>• Teacher referrals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptive statistics</li> </ul>	5
5. Identify perceptions of beginning teachers related to the extent of their socialization into the school culture and to probe in-depth findings from Phase 3	Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data from Phase 3</li> <li>• LCET Teacher Observation</li> <li>• Teacher interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constant-comparative method</li> <li>• Descriptive statistics</li> <li>• Analysis of variance</li> </ul>	5 & 6
6. Explore, through case study analysis, the school processes and school contexts which lead to a positive or negative beginning teacher socialization experience	All Levels	Data from Phases 2, 3, 4, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross case analysis</li> <li>• Data triangulation</li> </ul>	6

Teachers were probed to reveal processes within the school which might account for their views regarding the socialization experience. The data from the teacher interviews were analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The data were then unitized, categorized, and put into the database to extract both a priori and emerging themes, then compared to those themes which emerged from the administrator and mentor interviews. Data from the observations were compiled using the scripting method, then the information was transferred to the classroom observation instrument using the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (School Effectiveness and Assistance Program, 1999). Analysis of variance examined the differences in both classroom management and instructional effectiveness of beginning teachers in more effective and in less effective middle schools.

Phase Six, the final phase of the study, examined all levels of the unit of analysis, the middle school. Phase Six triangulated the data collected from Phases 2, 3, 4, and 5 to confirm and explore the overall processes in the school which contribute to the socialization experiences of beginning teachers. All data were then used to compile narrative case studies. Cross-case analysis produced findings regarding the socialization experiences of beginning teachers within the context of the effectiveness of the school.

The following section outlines the data collection phases, the source of the data in this phase, and the data analysis method used.

### **Phase One**

Phase One was a mixed method pilot study which looked at all levels of the school in the examination of the beginning teacher's socialization experience. The

purpose of this phase of data collection was to lay the groundwork for the larger dissertation research study. Yin (1994) emphasizes the importance of the pilot case study by stating that the pilot study

helps investigators to refine their data collection plans with respect to both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed...The pilot case is used more formatively, assisting an investigator to develop relevant lines of questions—possibly even providing some conceptual clarification for the research design as well (p.74).

### **Phase One: Research Questions**

1. What are the differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at differentially effective schools?
  - a. Are there differences in administrative monitoring of the beginning teacher at more effective and less effective middle schools?
  - b. Are there differences in the assistance and mentoring received by the beginning teacher at more effective and less effective middle schools?
  - c. Are there differences in collegial team building at more effective and less effective middle schools?
  - d. Does the level and quality of assistance, monitoring, and team building lead to the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education?

### **Phase One: Objectives**

The first phase involved the:

- test of an instrument to measure collegial social support
- test of an instrument to measure teacher intent to stay in education



- the analysis of the three subscales of assistance, monitoring, and team building and their relationship to the quality of a beginning teacher's socialization experience
- analysis of the data from the pilot study for any emerging areas of interest to examine in the dissertation research study.

#### **Phase One: Sample Selection**

Dana O'Brien, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction in the Eastside Parish Schools, served as the gatekeeper for this study. Mrs. O'Brien provided permission for the study as well as information pertaining to the schools. She also served as the liaison with the principals of the schools and the beginning teachers. As such, Mrs. O'Brien contacted each principal, explained the purpose of the study, and assured each one that the researcher had permission from the central office to enter the schools and gather data during the spring, 2000 semester.

The Eastside Parish Public School System serves junior high schools (grades 7 through 9), rather than middle schools. Therefore, junior high schools, grades 7 and 8, served as the single, or holistic, unit of analysis in this pilot study. However, for purposes of this study and consistency of nomenclature, all schools in the sample, whether designated as junior high or middle school by the school district, will be called middle schools.

This was a multiple case pilot study (Yin, 1994), utilizing three middle schools in the West Bayou Parish School District, including: Southside Middle School, Northside Middle School, and Westside Middle School.

To control for SES of the student body in the study, all schools were similar in socioeconomic makeup, denoted as Johnson code (NCES, 2000) “urban fringe” schools by the state’s Department of Education (LDE). Each of the three schools was specified as less effective, typical, or improving (see previous discussion of SEI). There were no schools in West Bayou Parish which could be considered more effective because none of the middle schools reached the  $+.67$  residual score, the minimum SEI for this study; therefore, this category was not addressed in the pilot study. The status of “improving” was designated by the Eastside Parish Assistant Superintendent of Instruction for Westside Middle School, based on past performance, present performance, and the current instructional leadership at the school. This pilot study confirmed that designation.

All schools in the study were similar in size, ranging from 297 students at Southside Middle to 325 at Northside Middle to 442 students at Westside Middle. According to the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction at the district’s central office, these three schools could be considered differentially effective, both in terms of instructional leadership and organizational factors.

#### **Phase One: Data Collection and Analysis**

A detailed discussion of the data collection and case study analysis can be found in Chapter Four of this study. Conclusions drawn from this pilot study concur with the findings from SER (Kirby, et al., 1992) that beginning teachers in effective schools have a more positive socialization experience. Moreover, the BTQ subscales of assistance, monitoring, and team building were found to be related to the beginning teacher’s

socialization experience. However, results from the pilot study raised questions about sample selection, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter Four documents the results in their entirety.

## **Phase Two**

### **Phase Two: Research Questions**

2. What are the differences in the assistance and monitoring factors at more effective and less effective middle schools?
  - a. What is the level of administrative monitoring for beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
  - b. What are the differences in the hiring practices of the administration at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
  - c. What are the types of assistance given to beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
  - d. What is the role of the beginning teacher's mentor at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
  - e. What is the role of the administration and the mentor at more effective schools and at less effective schools in preparing the new teacher for successfully completing the Louisiana Assistance and Assessment Program?

### **Phase Two: Objectives**

The second phase of the study set out to:

- examine the level of administrative monitoring received by the beginning teacher

- examine the level of assistance received by the beginning teachers received
- detail the system of induction and the mentoring program provided by the school

### **Phase Two: Sample Selection**

The principal or administrator in charge of the induction and assessment process at each middle school (refer to Table 3.2 for school selection) comprised the sample intended to measure administrative monitoring. The mentors who were assigned to the beginning teachers in this study formed the sample intended to measure assistance.

### **Phase Two: Data Collection and Analysis**

Data were collected through interviews with the administrator of the school's induction program, normally the principal, and interviews with the mentor assigned to the beginning teacher. Data were unitized, categorized, then analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). An interview protocol was used (see Appendix B) to insure comprehensive interviews across schools. Questions were open ended and interviewees were probed to relate processes within the school which might contribute to the quality of the socialization experience of the beginning teacher.

For example, in measuring the beginning teacher's perception of the assistance received during the year, teachers were asked: Does the official mentor assigned to you offer you support? New teachers were then probed with the following questions: What kind of support were you given? Was the support beneficial? Could you go back to your mentor for other help, such as instructional assistance? For resources?

New teachers' perceptions regarding the monitoring from the administration provided data regarding the extent to which the new teacher had been socialized into the school's culture of instruction. During interviews, teacher's were asked, Does the principal monitor your instruction? Teachers were probed to describe types of monitoring (formal and informal) and the feedback from the monitoring (written or verbal) as well as the comfort level in asking questions or giving opinions.

Each site visit included an informal observation of the school operations. Overall observations of the school culture as a whole, the day to day rituals and dynamics of the school provided in depth information of the system within which the new teacher works. Data collected during observation of the school organization detailed the framework of the beginning teacher's socialization experience. Data were analyzed using the constant-comparative method with particular interest in the similarities and differences in the organization and culture of more effective middle schools and less effective middle schools.

### **Phase Three**

#### **Phase Three: Research Questions**

3. What are the beginning teachers' perceptions of the assistance, monitoring, and team building received during the socialization experience? Are these perceptions related to the beginning teachers' intent to stay in the field of education?

a. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perceptions of quality and level of administrative monitoring received at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

- b. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perceptions of the quality and level of assistance received at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
- c. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perception of the quality and level of team building at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
- d. Is the level of administrative monitoring related to the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education?
- e. Is the level of assistance given to the beginning teacher related to the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education?
- f. Is the amount of collegial team building related to the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education?

### **Phase Three: Objectives**

The goal of Phase Three of this study was to:

- gather data from the BTQ to examine beginning teachers' perceptions of the quality and level of assistance, monitoring and team building afforded to them during the socialization process.
- gather data from the CSSI to examine beginning teachers' perceptions of the quality and level of support received during the socialization process.
- gather data from the TISM to examine the relationship between the beginning teachers' perceptions of the quality and level of assistance, monitoring, and team building afforded to them during the socialization process and the beginning teachers' intention to stay in the field of education.
- confirm the reliability of the CSSI and the TISM from the pilot study.

### Phase Three: Sample Selection

All beginning teachers at the schools chosen for the sample of study ( refer to Table 3.2 for school selection) were asked to complete the three survey instruments, then were asked if they would be willing to volunteer to participate in Phase Five of this study which would entail interviews with the beginning teachers. Table 3.4 details the total number of beginning teachers and the number of beginning teachers who agreed to participate in the interviews from each middle school in the sample. The principal of each school provided the total number of beginning teachers; thus, any errors in the total number cannot be attributed to the researcher.

**Table 3.4. Total Number Beginning Teachers and Number of Volunteers.**

Pair	School	District	Total # Beginning Teachers	Number Beginning Teachers Volunteering for Phase 5 Interviews
1	Polar Flight	Northside	4	4
	Blackbird	Northside	4	3
2	Barnstorming	Waterside	4	4
	Mir	Riverside	4	4
3	Cargo	Eastside	2	2
	Kamikaze	Westside	8	7
4	Concorde	Southside	3	2
	Tupelov	Southside	9	8
5	Stealth	Northside	4	4
	Tailspin	Southside	9	5

### **Phase Three: Instrumentation**

Beginning teachers in the sample under study were administered three survey instruments, the Beginning Teacher Questionnaire (BTQ), the Collegial Social Support Inventory (CSSI) and the Teacher Intent to Stay Measure (TISM). Complete copies of all instruments can be found in Appendices C, D, and E.

**Beginning Teacher Questionnaire.** The BTQ is a 14 item, Likert-type instrument that covers items relating to the areas of assistance, monitoring, and team building (Kirby, 1992). Each item is rated on a four point scale with one indicating strongly disagree and four indicating strongly agree. This instrument performed adequately in previous studies (see Kirby, 1992) with alpha reliability coefficients ranging from .80 to .91 (total scale).

**The Collegial Social Support Inventory.** The CSSI (Angelle, 1999) measures the beginning teachers' perception of the level and quality of collegial social support received during the initial socialization experience. The Likert-type instrument is a thirty item survey with ratings from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). See information regarding reliability and validity of the CSSI in the next section.

**The Teacher Intent to Stay Measure.** The TISM (Angelle, 1999) is also a Likert-type instrument with ratings from one to four, with one indicating strongly disagree and four indicating strongly agree. This 15-item instrument measures a teacher's intent to stay in the field of education. The TISM also measures teachers' perceptions of the school's climate which contributes to the beginning teachers' view of the organization. This influences the teachers' attitude toward the field as a whole.



Both the TISM and CSSI are new instruments, initially used during the pilot study of this dissertation. Use of these instruments in this dissertation study sets out to confirm the reliability of the instruments found in the pilot study (split half reliability for TISM = .9161,  $n=48$ ; split half reliability for CSSI = .9162;  $n=48$ ).

Face validity for the TISM and CSSI was confirmed from inspection of test items by university undergraduate education majors ( $n=42$ ) in an educational psychology class. Face validity judges, through inspection of test items, whether the instrument measures what it intends to measure and is necessary in the overall validation of the instrument (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). Some suggestions were made regarding clarification in wording of items and instrument modification followed.

Content validity was confirmed by a university professor of educational research, with whom the instrument was developed. Content validity is “the degree to which the scores yielded by a test adequately represent the content, or conceptual domain, that theses scores purport to measure” (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p.250). It is generally agreed that content validity is important in selecting instruments to be used in research studies.

### Phase Three: Data Analysis

Data analysis of the three instruments included both descriptive statistics and analysis of variance. The effectiveness indexes (i.e., more effective and less effective) served as the independent variables with the three subscales of assistance, monitoring, and team building, along with teacher intent to stay, as the dependent variables. With four dependent variables in the study, a multivariate test was run to determine the

significance of the independent variable (effectiveness status of the middle school). In addition, correlations were calculated to elicit the strength of the relationship between the BTQ and the TISM as well as the CSSI and the TISM. Specifically, correlations were examined to determine whether the variables of assistance, monitoring, and team building could predict a teacher's intent to stay in the field of education.

### **Phase Four**

#### **Phase Four: Research Questions**

4. What are the differences in teacher demographic factors in differentially effective schools?
  - a. What is the difference in the frequency of teacher absences at more effective schools and at less effective schools?
  - b. What is the difference in the number of student discipline referrals from new teachers at more effective schools and at less effective schools?
  - c. What are the differences in the level of academic degree obtained by new teachers in more effective and less effective schools?
  - d. What are the differences in the number of certified and non-certified new teachers in more effective schools and at less effective schools?
  - e. What are the differences in the university preparation received by the new teachers at more effective schools and at less effective schools?

#### **Phase Four: Objectives**

Phase Four data collection were intended to

- examine teacher factors in the context of the SEI of each school under study.

- examine the differences in the number certified beginning teachers for each school under study.
- examine the differences in teacher preparation program and degree of beginning teachers for each school under study.
- examine the differences in the number of student discipline referrals of beginning teachers of each school under study.

#### **Phase Four: Sample Selection**

The sample for this data collection phase included all beginning teachers at each middle school under study (refer to Table 3.2 for school selection sample). Data were collected to examine whether demographic differences may account for teacher effectiveness as a part of the overall school effectiveness. Frequency tables were compiled which included teacher degree, university preparation program, certification status, and teacher selection. Complete tables are found in Chapter Five.

#### **Phase Four: Data Analysis**

Data from Phase Four were analyzed using descriptive statistics. These descriptive statistics were intended to form a picture of the average beginning teacher at each middle school under study. Data were examined to discover the significance of teacher demographic factors in the differential effectiveness of a school. The number of each beginning teacher's absences and the number of discipline referrals from each new teacher were collected through teacher self-report. Means and frequency distributions were calculated to observe any differences in trends in the absences and discipline referrals of beginning teachers in more effective middle schools and in less effective

middle schools. Interviews of beginning teachers solicited their opinion on whether beginning teachers and veteran teachers differed in number of personal absences and number of discipline referrals.

## **Phase Five**

### **Phase Five: Research Questions**

5. What are the differences in the new teacher's perception of the processes within the school in more effective and less effective middle schools?

a. What are the differences in the classroom performance of the beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

b. What are the differences in the new teacher's perception of the assistance, monitoring, and team building received during the initial teaching experience at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

c. What are the differences in the new teacher's perceptions of their intent to stay in the field of education at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

### **Phase Five: Objectives**

Phase Five involved collection of data from the new teacher. The objectives for this phase of the study were to:

- identify any differences in the components of effective teaching, including classroom management and instructional effectiveness, between beginning teachers at more effective middle schools and beginning teachers at less effective middle schools.

- probe, in-depth, beginning teachers' perceptions of the assistance, monitoring, and team-building received during the socialization experience.
- probe, in-depth, the beginning teacher's perceptions of those school process which will likely increase their intent to stay in the field of education.

#### **Phase Five: Sample Selection**

Phase Five data were collected from several aspects of the beginning teacher's school experience (refer to Table 3.2 for school selection sample). Beginning teachers in the middle schools under study were observed in their classroom setting where data targeting the Components of Effective Teaching were collected. Interviews with those beginning teachers who volunteered to participate (see Table 3.4 for number of volunteer teachers and from which schools in the sample) were also conducted to follow up from data collected during principal and mentor interviews. Moreover, interview probes were employed to elicit in-depth data collected from the three survey instruments (BTQ, CSSI, and TISM), completing Phase Five data collection.

#### **Phase Five: Data Collection and Analysis**

Due to confidentiality concerns, administrators at the schools under study requested that special education classes not be part of the observations for the study. Many of the beginning teachers in the study were special education teachers. In an attempt for consistency and objectivity, two beginning teachers from each middle schools under study were randomly chosen and solicited for permission to observe their teaching during two different class periods. Attempts were also made to observe classes with differing grade levels. Data from the observations were compiled using the scripting

method, then transferred to the classroom observation instrument using the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (School Effectiveness and Assistance Program, 1999). Analysis of variance were calculated to determine differences in classroom management and instructional effectiveness of beginning teachers at more effective middle schools and beginning teachers at less effective middle schools.

The classroom performance indicates whether the new teacher works toward mastery of the components of effective teacher or whether the new teacher works toward management control with no goal of effective instructional strategies. Classroom observations of the beginning teachers provided information on effective instructional techniques (or the lack thereof) of the new teacher. This, in turn, led to conclusions regarding the middle school's climate; that is, whether the climate was devoted to learning and instruction or whether it was devoted to management and control.

Data in this phase were also collected from beginning teacher interviews. Those beginning teachers who agreed to participate in this phase were interviewed in 30-45 minute blocks. Interviews with beginning teachers provided in-depth follow up information from the responses to the three survey instruments, the BTQ, the CSSI, and the TISM. Teachers were probed to outline their perceptions of the assistance, monitoring, and team building they received during their initial year of teaching. For example, the CSSI measures the level of social support the new teacher perceives s/he is given during the initial teaching experience. Interview probes included questions such as: Do you perceive yourself as a part of the school community? In what way? Are

there colleagues you can turn to for help and advice? Do you feel you are making a contribution to the school?

Data from interviews were analyzed using the constant-comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Both a priori and emerging themes were examined to look for differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools.

### **Phase Six**

#### **Phase Six: Research Questions**

6. What are the differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at more effective middle schools and at less effective middle schools?

a.. What are the differences in the level of monitoring for beginning teachers at more effective middle schools and at less effective middle schools?

b. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perception of the mentoring assistance received at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

c. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perceptions of collegial team building at more effective middle schools and at less effective middle schools?

d. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perception of their place in the school community at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

e. Do beginning teachers who are socialized in more effective middle schools have a greater propensity to stay in the field of education than do beginning teachers who are socialized in less effective middle schools?

### **Phase Six: Objectives**

The final phase of data collection included data from all levels of the unit of analysis, the middle school. The objectives for this phase of the study were to:

- triangulate data gathered from Phases Two, Three, Four, and Five.
- compile case studies to better articulate the processes by which beginning teachers are socialized in to the middle school.
- compile narrative case studies to differentiate between the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at more effective middle schools and at less effective middle schools.

### **Phase Six: Sample Selection**

Phase Six addressed all levels of the middle school in an attempt to draw conclusions regarding the beginning teacher's socialization experience (see Table 3.2 for school selection sample). Data from the school, teacher, and student levels were included as part of the sample selection for this phase of the study.

### **Phase Six: Data Collection and Analysis**

School level data included principal and mentor interviews, along with observations of the school as a whole. Teacher level data included correlations, descriptive statistics and MANOVA from the BTQ, the CSSI, and the TISM. LCET teacher observations, teacher interviews, number of teacher absences, and number and type of discipline referrals were also included as part of the teacher level data. Teacher demographic information completed the data for Phase Six.



Data collected from the previous phases were presented to triangulate the interpretations and conclusions drawn from each phase of data analysis. Triangulation of data, that is, combining methodologies, adds to the strength of the design and limits the vulnerability to error in the study (Patton, 1990).

Narrative case studies were constructed to represent the beginning teacher's socialization experience. Case studies were synthesized in an attempt to "form a picture" of the socialization experiences at more effective middle schools and those experiences at less effective middle schools. Patton (1990) notes that the purpose of qualitative synthesis is "to identify and extrapolate *lessons learned*" (p. 425, italics in original). The lessons learned from the socialization experiences at the more effective and less effective middle schools can serve future school improvement efforts through an examination of the processes within schools which shape a positive socialization experience for the new teacher.

Using the research questions which guided the study, case studies were constructed and analyzed using cross-case analysis. The case study analysis examined similarities and differences across the middle schools, exploring how these similarities and differences were the result of school processes and organizational effectiveness. The differentiation between the cases presented a profile of both a beneficial and detrimental socialization experience for the beginning teacher.

### **Sampling Problems**

Sixteen middle schools throughout south Louisiana were contacted for participation in this study. Throughout the course of the study, several sampling

problems ensued which forced the elimination of six schools from the study. The problems are documented here.

On the initial visit to one school in southwest Louisiana, I was told by the principal that he could not help me but could not articulate why. He offered to recommend other schools for visitation but the offer was declined. The elimination of this school forced the elimination of its paired school since no match could be found for the other school in the pair.

One school in southeast Louisiana was eliminated when, on arrival at the school on the appointed day, I was informed that the principal was absent. The assistant principal was unable to meet with me. The secretary informed me there was only one new teacher with whom she could schedule an interview. The teacher filled out the survey instruments and agreed to be interviewed. However, during the course of the interview, I discovered that this teacher was a transfer teacher from another school and actually had five years of experience. While this school had to be eliminated, another match was found for its paired school.

The school which replaced the previously mentioned school was contacted and a date for arrival agreed upon. When I arrived at the school, I was escorted to the principal's office who asked that I begin the day by interviewing him. I handed the principal the LSU Internal Review Board consent form. After reading the form, he asked me to immediately leave his campus and never return. He stated that he refused to sign a contract with LSU when no reciprocal contract was being signed by LSU. The

elimination of this school meant elimination of its pair since no other accurate match could be found.

The sixth school that was eliminated was one where I was allowed access to all parties. Interviews were conducted with the principal, two mentors, and seven beginning teachers. All teachers also completed all three survey instruments. Upon completion of the surveys and the interviews, the new teachers were contacted about class observations. Each teacher was sent three emails and phone messages were left twice. None of the seven beginning teachers responded to requests for observations. Contact with the principal requesting intervention for me with the teachers resulted in the principal explaining that direct contact should be made with the teachers and if they did not respond to the request, that was an indication that they chose not to invite me to observe their classes. Though data was collected from surveys and interviews, with no observation data, the school had to be eliminated from the sample. Another school was matched with its pair.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology and data collection methods used in this research study. This study design, divided into six phases, allowed for a complete and detailed construction of case studies which outline the socialization experiences of beginning teachers in differentially effective schools. Chapter Four presents results and conclusions from the pilot study. Chapter Five presents results from Phases Two, Three, Four, and Five. Chapter Six documents the narrative case studies which describe the differences of socialization experiences of beginning teachers in

**differentially effective middle schools . Chapter Seven documents the conclusions drawn regarding the socialization experience in more effective and less effective middle schools based on the findings derived from the data.**

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS FROM A PILOT STUDY**

**This chapter examines the case study reports from the pilot study for this dissertation research study. Like the dissertation study, this pilot study sought to answer the research question: What are the socialization experiences of beginning teachers in differentially effective schools? A description of the data collection, the three cases under study, along with the analysis and results follow.**

### **Data Collection Sources**

**This study was multi-layered, examining data collected at the school level, the teacher level and the student level. A mixed method design, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, was utilized for this study. The case study strategy employed a multiple case design (Yin, 1994) with the middle school as the unit of analysis.**

**Three middle schools in southwest Louisiana served as the sample and were denoted as less effective, typical, or improving, partially as a function of each school's effectiveness index (SEI) (see Chapter Three for methodology by which SEI were calculated) and partially from input provided by the school system's Assistant Superintendent. All residual scores in this pilot study were calculated from 1998-99 Louisiana school data. Variables controlled for in this pilot study are those related to student background; that is, percent of students living in poverty (SES), percent of special education students (including gifted and talented), and percent of minority students. Previous research (Sammons, 1999; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993) has found that taking into account the student's background characteristics (social class, level of poverty, community in which the child lives) allows for more accurate estimation of**

school effects upon student outcomes. Table 4.1 provides a residual score table for the three schools in this study<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 4.1. West Bayou Parish Middle Schools Residual Scores.**

School	SPS	SES	Minority	SPED	Predicted	Residual	Status
Southside	74.8	54.5	22.6	8	80.8	-.44	LE
Northside	58.4	76.6	63.4	15	58.9	-.03	T
Westside	54.0	78.1	63.8	20	58.2	-.4	I

**Legend:** SPS = School Performance Score; SES = Socioeconomic status; Minority = percent of minority students; SPED = percent of special education students; Predicted= SPS based on regression analysis; Residual = score of the difference between the SPS and predicted score; Status = effective status; LE = less effective; T = typical; I = improving (based on scores and recommendation of Assistant Superintendent of Instruction in West Bayou Parish School District).

Westside's designation of "improving" was based primarily on the input from the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction in West Bayou Parish, Dana O'Brien. According to Ms. O'Brien, the SPS of 54 was based on the previous year, a year filled with challenges for this small middle school. An ineffective principal, low morale of the teaching staff, and a negative school climate contributed to the SPS. Under new instructional leadership, this school was designated as improving by Ms. O'Brien. Her observations were validated by this study.

School level data were collected from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) School Report Card and from the principal at each of the middle schools in the West Bayou Parish School District. Data were collected at the classroom level from eight beginning classroom teachers, all of whom were non-tenured (six with no

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<sup>1</sup> All school and personnel names have been changed to insure confidentiality.

experience and one with two years teaching experience). Though one had four years total experience, the year under study was his first experience in West Bayou Parish Schools, as well as his first year as a special education teacher. Two teachers worked at Westside Middle School, with three each at Northside Middle School and at Southside Middle School. The student level data, aggregated to the school level, were collected from the LDE School Report Card.

Quantitative data were gathered using three instruments, all administered to the beginning teachers: the Beginning Teacher Inventory (BTQ) (Kirby, 1992), the Collegial Social Support Inventory (CSSI) (Angelle, 1999), and the Teacher Intent to Stay Measure (TISM) (Angelle, 1999) (See Appendices C, D, and E for copy of instruments). Chapter Three of this study provides a description of the instruments used in the pilot study and in the dissertation study in greater detail.

At the classroom level, the Components of Effective Teaching Scale provided additional data (School Effectiveness and Assistance Program, 1997). Number of teacher absences and number and type of discipline referrals from beginning teachers were also collected, allowing for triangulation of the data from the study. Student dropout and attendance rates as well as school performance scores (SPS) and class size were obtained from the LDE school report card.

Qualitative data were collected from beginning teacher interviews and classroom observations. Informal school observations during each site visit were included as part of the data collected at the school level. Interviews with the principal and mentors of each of the three middle schools were also conducted.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Initial introductions occurred at the monthly meeting of beginning teachers at West Bayou Parish Schools Central Office during spring 2000. At this meeting only three of the eight teachers that I would work with attended. Nonetheless, introductions were made, quantitative instruments were administered, and a calendar of meetings and observations were set up. At the time that the survey instruments were administered, the teachers were also asked to sign a release form, recognizing that the information given would be used for research purposes. Introductions, dates of observations, consent forms, and administration of instruments were given later on an individual basis with the teachers who were not present at this meeting.

Each of the three middle schools was located in a different town. Prior to meeting with the principal and the teachers, I spent some time in each town. The school's location played a part in the culture of the school itself. Pertinent data were also collected during the observation of each school prior to any interviews.

At the onset of the visit to each school, some time was set aside to interview the principal. Length of the interview varied according to the principal's schedule. Interview dates with three teachers were set up at the West Bayou Parish new teachers' meeting, while interview dates with the other five teachers were set up at the initial visit to each school. At the conclusion of the interview with each teacher, an mutually acceptable date was set up for the observation visit.

Absentee and discipline referral information were collected either from the teacher or from the principal, depending on the policy of the school. At Westside Middle School, the assistant principal gathered the data and mailed it to me. At



Southside Middle School, the school secretary gave me the absentee data but informed me that the principal refused to release discipline referral information, even though both the teachers and the assistant superintendent of instruction gave me permission to obtain this information. The principal was unavailable for discussion of this matter. As a result, the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction at the West Bayou Parish School District obtained the information for me. The Northside Middle School principal provided the discipline referral numbers to me but informed me that I had to check with each teacher to receive the number of days each teacher had been absent. Each teacher provided me with the information.

Classroom observation data were collected at various times of the day, determined by individual teacher preference. Data were collected using the scripting method, later analyzed using the Components of Effective Teaching rating form.

### **Case Study Report**

#### **West Bayou Parish**

West Bayou Parish sits in the predominantly rural portion of the southwest corner of Louisiana. The Acadian people, expelled from Nova Scotia in 1755, gradually settled this area of the United States. These people live along the bayous and prairies of this area and their descendants take the appellation of "Cajuns" (Gould, 1979). Cajuns, as a distinct ethnicity, make up forty per cent of the people who currently reside in West Bayou Parish (Louisiana Office of Tourism, 2000).

The population of West Bayou Parish steadily increased from approximately 40,000 in 1980 to almost 47,000 in 1997; however, manufacturing concurrently decreased (InfoLouisiana, 2000). McMahon Mills, a manufacturer of underwear and

tee shirts, employs the majority of those people. Other employers in the area include catfish processors, “Cajun Chef” products, and the local salt mine (InfoLouisiana, 2000).

West Bayou Parish, the home to students of the new teachers in this study, plays a role in the challenges that these beginning teachers face. The majority of these students, while growing up alongside the singular beauty of the bayous, also come from homes where the primary language of their grandparents is French. According to the principals of the schools, a majority of the students have no access to computers or the Internet and most have never traveled outside of the boundaries of their civil parish. The students, like their parents and grandparents before them, have lived and grown in Cajun country and, likely, will never leave. Along with the many problems facing educators today, the new teachers of West Bayou Parish faced a particularly challenging socialization experience.

### **The Schools and The Beginning Teachers: Case 1**

#### **Southside Middle School**

The location of the school is in the Village of Silver Streams, in the midst of the southern rural portion of West Bayou Parish. Silver Streams looks like a village, with no warning of the approach of an impending town; that is, neither fast food places nor businesses dot the outside of the village limits, or for that matter, within the village limits. Sugar cane fields spread on either side of the highway that runs through the middle of Silver Streams. Suddenly small houses on each side of the highway appear, with a primary school on the right and a church (“Revival this weekend! Silver Streams Baptist – everyone welcome”) on the left. Though no signal lights disrupt the scenery,

a four way stop sign just beyond the primary school alert drivers to halt. To the right the highway continues and to the left the village emerges. Bayou Sonnier winds its way through the town where cars cross a drawbridge to continue on in to the village. A bank and Tawahna's Restaurant ("Opening soon!") sit on the right side of the road, a Catholic Church and a subdivision, with only one home built, sit on the left. Taking a left, Southside Middle School sits directly behind the church.

Green fields surround Southside Middle School on two sides, with small, wooden homes on another and the back of a Catholic Church to its front. I reported to the school's main office upon arrival. I immediately noticed two handmade signs printed in colored markers hanging from the ceiling. One promoted school attendance (Attend School Every Day. Stop Absenteeism.) and another was "esteem promoting" (A smile is a curve that can straighten out a lot of things).

While I did not sit for a great length of time with the principal of Southside Middle on the first visit, I did have several short visits with him over the course of the spring 2000 semester. I did not press lengthy conversations with him as I found his speech difficult to understand.

On my first visit to the school, I entered the office and explained the purpose of my visit. Mr. Sorenson did not know why I was there and did not understand my business, even though the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction for the parish previously contacted him. On my second visit to the school, he forgot about the study. When I once again explained and asked to see the beginning teacher with whom I had an appointment, he called the teacher via the intercom and said, "some person from LSU is here." During that visit, I waited for the new teacher for approximately ten

minutes. In that time the principal used the intercom three times, interrupting classes to talk to various teachers. The teachers invariably asked the principal to repeat his request. Apparently, the teachers experienced difficulty understanding his speech as well.

Southside, an old school, badly in need of paint, still appeared quite clean. A storage room in the main building doubled as a faculty bathroom. Besides a toilet, a sink and one mirror on the wall, the restroom overflowed with school supplies and cartons of paper. Throughout the campus, construction sounds filled the air, with red tape blocking the area for the children; however, no one I asked knew the purpose of the construction.

Southside Middle School Beginning Teachers: Susan Sanders. Ms. Sanders was open and talkative, smiling often. As we walked from the teacher's lounge to her classroom, several students spoke to her and she acknowledged every one of them. Anxious to help with the study, Ms. Sanders answered each question willingly.

Ms. Sanders graduated from USL in 1981 with a bachelor's degree in General Studies. She currently works on a temporary teaching certification (a "T certificate") since her original degree is not in education. For Ms. Sanders, a twelve-year gap existed between obtaining a college degree and working for the West Bayou Parish school system.

Ms. Sanders obtained her job through the Personnel Director of the school system, Mr. Easley. She mentioned an interest in teaching and Mr. Easley informed her of the possibility of teaching, even without an education degree. She interviewed with Mr. Sorenson and took the position because she liked the location of the school, the

country atmosphere of the town and the smaller atmosphere of the school. Ms. Sanders received notification she got the job just two weeks before the start of school.

Southside Middle School Beginning Teachers: Sally Smith. With rapid speech, almost in staccato, Ms. Smith impressed me as the teacher version of a drill sergeant. On our initial meeting, she expressed concern about those who might see her comments and know what she said. I quickly reassured her that the interviews and observations were for research purposes for LSU, not for purposes of “reporting her” to anyone.

Ms. Smith graduated from a high school, also located in West Bayou Parish and went to USL to major in Home Economics. She taught 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade History and Reading but holds no certification in elementary school education. Thus, Ms. Smith also retained a T-certificate and was required to take six hours per year to obtain the proper certification.

According to Ms. Smith, the teacher training program at University of Louisiana, Lafayette fares well. Teacher education called her from an early age when she played school with her friends and siblings. However, in her view, the middle school level and this position are temporary ones. She still wants a home economics job but no openings existed this year so she accepted this job two days before the start of school.

Southside Middle School Beginning Teachers: Sharon Sullivan. Ms. Sullivan possessed a ready smile, accompanied by a ready laugh. Ms. Sullivan spoke intelligently and was anxious to provide information about beginning teachers’ experiences.

While Ms. Sullivan was from the nearby town of Nous Allons, also in West Bayou Parish, she attended college in the northern portion of the state. Ms. Sullivan graduated from college with a degree in Accounting. Immediately after graduation, Ms. Sullivan decided a career in accounting held little excitement for her. She wanted to give something back to West Bayou Parish because she loved her home. After speaking with Mr. Easley, the Personnel Director for West Bayou Parish, to find out about teaching requirements, he told her that she could teach immediately on a T certificate.

Ms. Sullivan recalled that middle school made a difference for her, and for many she knew, about the direction her life would take. She believed that during junior high, students make decisions whether to work toward college or not. This pre-high school time prepares children academically, times which influence a child's future. Students make decisions regarding academics and sports participation, or look to rebellion and disciplinary problems. Because of this thinking, Ms. Sullivan told Mr. Easley that she would like a teaching assignment at the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. Ms. Sullivan said teaching at this level affirmed her thinking. Ms. Sullivan interviewed with Mr. Sorenson and accepted a position with less than two weeks until school started.

### **Findings and Data Analysis: Southside Middle School**

#### **School Level Data: Principal Interview and School Observation at Southside Middle**

Southside Middle School is one in need of a leader. During my interview with Mr. Sorenson, communication was difficult. He could not understand my purpose for visiting his school, despite my best efforts to explain it. I had difficulty understanding

his speech, as did the teachers, from what I observed. When asked for a copy of the school's mission statement, Mr. Sorenson informed me that all information of that nature comes from the school system's central office; I would have to ask the superintendent for a copy of Southside Middle's mission.

Instructional time held little value from the administration at Southside Middle. During every visit, intercom interruptions were frequent and often for trivial purposes. During one visit, the secretary asked the teacher, whose class I was visiting, to send a student to the office to run errands for her. On another visit, the principal made a school wide announcement that there were two men in front of the school selling shrimp. He announced via the school intercom that if the teachers were interested in buying some shrimp, they could leave their classes to do so. He would send the school's secretary to walk up and down the halls, monitoring the students.

During two different visits to the school, as I arrived, the principal was sitting on a bench visiting with the custodian and was still there visiting when I left the campus. I observed construction at the school but no one I asked knew the purpose of the construction. Observations of the hallways of the school revealed signs that encouraged students to stop absenteeism, to take the LEAP test seriously, and the penalty for fighting on campus. However, there was a noticeable lack of student work in the hallways.

#### Teacher Level Data: Interviews with Beginning Teachers at Southside Middle

Interviews with the beginning teachers produced several common themes regarding initial socialization experiences. These themes relate to assistance, monitoring, team building and particular challenges faced by these new teachers.

**Assistance.** State legislatures throughout the nation mandate mentoring programs as part of the certification process. The goal of promoting excellence in teaching calls for an orientation process for novices, which provides the needed social and professional support to keep new teachers in the system. As part of the Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program, the Louisiana legislature calls for such assistance. Each new teacher is assigned a mentor for two semesters, at the beginning of the first year of experience in a Louisiana public school. Primarily in the first semester, but throughout the two semesters of the initial year, the mentor provides support and technical assistance.

The beginning teachers at Southside Middle School personally liked the mentor at the school but the mentor, overwhelmed with other duties, had little time for the novice teachers. Ms Sullivan stated that her contact with her mentor was limited and began when the mentor gave her a state curriculum guide and explained that she must cover the components in the guide by the end of the year. Ms. Smith agreed that the level of interaction with the mentor was limited. She says that due to overwork and “doing most of the principal’s work,” the school’s mentor offered little help for the new teachers.

The state sets a limit to the number of new teachers a veteran teacher can mentor. Since two teachers had been assigned to the school’s mentor, Ms. Sanders did not receive a state-trained mentor. As a result, she faced teaching on her own during the first three weeks of school. Ms. Sanders, also an assistant coach, turned to the head coach, Mr. Stokely, who took her “under his wing.” He showed her how to fill out a roll book and gave her advice on discipline and lesson plans. As the first semester



continued, Ms. Sanders could not find any one else to help her. When she asked other teachers, they were kind to her but they were always too busy with their students to spend any extended time with assistance. She ultimately just made it through the semester as best she could, using her own version of on- the-job training. The new teachers unequivocally wished to have a “real” mentor, rather than someone who merely goes through the motions of the state mandated requirements. Ms. Sullivan made a plea for help:

Give every new teacher her own mentor. Make the mentors be more responsible for the new teacher. Don't give the mentor so many other responsibilities so they can solely concentrate on the new teacher. The school system should hire a retired teacher or someone who can be a full time mentor. Not having a full time mentor should not be the new teacher's problem.

Along those same lines, Ms. Sanders felt strongly that new teachers should be able to watch veteran teachers as they teach. In this way, novices have models for lessons as well as classroom management. She stated,

New teachers should be given more opportunities to observe other teachers, without having the stress of them having to find someone to cover their class. The school should help because observing others would help the new teacher.

Monitoring and Instructional Leadership. The teachers at Southside agreed that the administrator sets the tone for how the school will be run. All three of the beginning teachers at Southside stated a problem with the administrative leadership. The teachers expressed a variety of concerns, beginning with the way the principal scheduled their classes at the beginning of the school year. Apparently, the principal, viewed the attitudes of the teachers as too relaxed so he decided to mix up the teaching schedules, hoping the outcome would produce motivated teachers. The beginning

teachers said that rather than motivated, they just felt tired. Ms. Sullivan's initial schedule included 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math. When school began in August, her classes included 7<sup>th</sup> grade math, 8<sup>th</sup> grade math, 8<sup>th</sup> grade basic math, 7<sup>th</sup> grade English, and 7<sup>th</sup> grade science.

Ms. Smith expressed a slightly muted anger at the principal. Her tone, body language, and what she didn't say, expressed a lack of respect and general dislike for the principal. Ms. Smith had little to no contact with the principal. He observed her once to fulfill the state requirements. However, no follow up conference materialized nor was any feedback received by her, though the observation had occurred over a month before the interview. Ms. Sanders still awaited her observation by Mr. Sorenson. Ms. Sanders expressed a wish that the principal attempt to motivate and listen to the teachers. Ms. Smith agreed. She would have liked to see more instructional support from her principal. She expressed a desire to see him walking the halls, showing an interest in the students and the teaching that is going on, rather than in the main office, reading a newspaper.

Team Building. Though the new teachers felt that the other faculty members were supportive of them in their work, very few of the faculty actually provided support. Ms. Sullivan remarked that her colleagues were willing to answer questions when she asked but, other than that, she was "on her own." Mr. Sorenson told Ms. Sullivan that she would receive help but nothing ever materialized. Ms. Sanders had to seek out the head coach to provide her with help. Ms. Sanders acknowledged that helping her was in the best interest of the coach because as long as she stayed at Southside, he had an assistant coach.

**Challenges for the New Teacher.** “Building up your files,” having folders of lessons so that there is material from which to pull each day, was a goal for each beginner. In this way, the new teacher could have the freedom to go home each night without having to prepare lessons for the next day. Each beginning teacher had different methods for handling this. Ms. Sullivan used the Internet quite a bit to download lesson plans. She had to wait until after the first month of school for the math program from the state department to arrive. Ms. Sullivan had no textbooks the first week of school so she received help from the teacher in the classroom next door to hers. When the books eventually arrived, there was no teacher’s manual. One of the other teachers offered her help with one of her science classes, though she received no help with the other science class.

**Teacher Level Data: Beginning Teacher Observations at Southside Middle**

Ms. Sullivan demonstrated the greatest mastery of instruction. Her students were comfortable in discussion and she encouraged them to think and provide “real world” examples for their science lesson. The textbook and a video complemented the discussion. Though some students moved off task at times during the lesson, they were corrected with a touch on their shoulder or a shake of the teacher’s head. Ms. Sullivan introduced a lesson on insects, which was interesting and informative.

Ms. Smith’s classroom climate was almost oppressive. No attempts to incorporate higher order thinking skills were observed. The instruction consisted of students reading aloud from their text as the other students followed along. The students had no interaction with the teacher. The class was all business, with no classroom management problems but no engagement from the students either.

Ms. Sanders seemed anxious to please both the observer and the students. Her lessons, while informative, centered around competition and games. A teamed competition was held to see how quickly students could identify solids, liquids, and gases from the information called out by the teacher. Ms. Sanders' other life as a coach was apparent in her teaching.

**Teacher Level Data: Absentees and Discipline Referrals at Southside Middle**

The principal at Southside would not speak with me regarding my request for absentee and discipline referral information. Table 4.2 outlines the absentee and discipline information for the beginning teachers at Southside Middle School for the 1999-2000 school year. The secretary provided the absentee information, with some absences indicated as "business days," but informed that the principal refused to provide any discipline information.

The beginning teachers at Southside explained the difficulties they encountered with the principal regarding discipline. At Southside Middle teachers can not issue detention slips to children. If a teacher wishes to issue a detention, s/he must first ask permission from the principal. Mr. Sorenson gives out detention slips one at a time. Ms. Sullivan commented that when she wanted to send a student to detention, she must first endure being "talked down to" by the principal for her inability to handle children. Ms. Smith said that the principal chastised teachers as one might chastise children. The Assistant Superintendent of Instruction at the school system's central office procured the discipline information for me.

The discipline referrals at Southside Middle School are unusually low for the typical beginning teacher. However, as previously noted, every teacher must receive

permission from the principal to write a discipline referral, with one referral form at a time issued to each teacher. The absentee information gives a more telling story of the school context. Teachers at Southside had the smallest number of discipline referrals but the greatest number of absences.

**Table 4.2. Southside Middle (LE)\* Teacher Absences and Referrals.**

Teacher by School	Absences	Referrals
Susan Sanders	10	4
Sally Smith	15	6
Sharon Sullivan	16	6
Mean by school	14	5.3

\* LE = less effective school

**Student Level Data: Dropout and Attendance Rates at Southside Middle**

Only one student dropped out of Southside Middle that year and there was an attendance rate of 96%. One would expect that with these totals, Southside would have a better school climate. It could be argued that the factors which account for the ineffective status of Southside are processes within the school, rather than apathy on the part of the students.

**Schools and the Beginning Teachers: Case 2**

**Northside Middle School.**

Northside Middle School is located in the town of Nous Allons, the picture post card of Cajun country. Founded in 1799 by an Acadian pioneer, Firmin Allons, the town grew along the banks of the Allons Bayou. Much of the charm of this Cajun town lay in its adherence to its French heritage. On my initial visit to the town, I frequently

saw indications of this heritage. The streets signs are in French, such as *Rue Principale* (Main Street) and *Rue Pont* (Bridge Street), and it was not uncommon to hear store merchants pepper their speech with French. The business district of Nous Allons was atypical of what might be expected in a small town but quite typical of the culture of the area. Main Street Snoball boasted a huge sign in front which said "Serving Crawfish Etouffee." Several merchants catered to the tourist industry, such as antique shops and souvenir shops. The mayor is known as "Coach" because he was the basketball coach to much of the male population in the town.

Northside Middle School is located in the center of town, across the street from City Hall and just down the road from the main Catholic Church (there are three in this small town). The school is an old one but well kept. Most noticeable, however, was the huge fence that surrounds the main part of the school and the iron gates at the front. Students must cross a main street to get to the school's gym. Located next to the gym, housed separately from the main portion of the school, is the health unit and the wing of special education classes.

The main complex of the school, three buildings, the main office, and the cafeteria, surround a courtyard. As I wandered through the school on my first visit, I was struck by the quiet atmosphere as a custodian swept the courtyard area. A bulletin board in this area posted the classroom behavior rules of the school and a notice about a "Safety Net", that is, phone numbers for students to call for help in abusive situations. On the outside walls of the classrooms were colorful murals, well done and interesting, obviously painted by students. As I peeked in to classrooms, most students were on task and quiet. My initial visit to Northside Middle School began at 7:00 a.m. I wanted

to speak with the principal of the school, Mr. Nathan Norfolk, before his workday began. Walking in to the main office area, I found Mr. Norfolk answering the phone, taking messages, negotiating with the school's custodian to work extra time because the other custodian called in sick, and sorting mail to be put in the teacher's mailboxes. Despite the hectic environment, Mr. Norfolk greeted me with a smile and, between phone calls, listened to the nature of my research. He offered his assistance and support and, once the school's secretary appeared, escorted me to the office's conference room where I was to meet with the school's only mentor.

On subsequent visits to the school, I found that morning not uncommon. Though always friendly and helpful, Mr. Norfolk often seemed to be administering "by the seat of his pants." I observed that both he and the assistant principal spent a large portion of their time doing clerical work; that is, answering the phone, greeting visitors, and handling student's who were checking in or out of school. During my visits, I never saw either one of them outside of the main office and rarely far from behind the counter in the main area.

Northside Middle School Beginning Teachers: Nancy Nettles. Concentration is necessary in any conversation with Ms. Nettles because she speaks in a rapid, clipped speech. She always seems in a hurry, as if she has much to do and will never get it all done. Ms. Nettles teaches the Language Resource classes at Northside. From West Bayou Parish, Ms. Nettles graduated from USL and is currently attending night school in pursuit of a master's degree in school counseling. Her goal is to teach for ten years, be a counselor for eight years, then to work as a central office supervisor until retirement. As in her teaching, this teacher's life plan had a no nonsense path. Ms.

Nettles was hired in July, leaving her most of the summer to plan her lessons and “fix up” her classroom. The previous teacher gave her resources, books, and supplies, as well as ideas for teaching the resource classes.

Northside Middle School Beginning Teachers: Ned Nottingham. Though this was Mr. Nottingham’s first year in West Bayou Parish, he previously taught for a year in a neighboring parish. He graduated from USL in General Studies with a concentration in Physical Education and was employed with a temporary teaching certificate. A successful athlete in high school, Mr. Nottingham helped pay for college by coaching at the high school from which he graduated.

After college graduation, a high school in his home parish created a position for him so he could work as a football and weight lifting coach. In this “created” position, Mr. Nottingham ended up teaching six different eighth grade classes. Exhausted after working a year in this situation, he decided to certify in special education because he realized he could have small classes. As there was no opening for a special education teacher in the parish where he worked, he accepted a position at Northside Middle School in West Bayou Parish.

Northside Middle School Beginning Teachers: Naomi Newman. With an elementary education degree from Prairie View A & M in Texas, Mrs. Newman worked in Louisiana as a result of her husband’s job transfer to the area. She commuted to Nouis Allons from the nearby larger city where she lived. Mrs. Newman spent much of the year in crisis because she compared this small Louisiana school system to that of the larger school systems in Texas and found the Louisiana schools much inferior.



Struggling to overcome the culture shock she experienced, she said if her husband was not transferred back to Texas, she will teach in a Christian school next year.

### **Findings and Data Analysis at Northside Middle School**

#### **School Level Data: Principal Interview and School Observation at Northside Middle**

As the school designated “typical” in this pilot study, Northside presented both ends of the spectrum in several ways. Mr. Norfolk appeared calm and professional at times, while at other times, he appeared flustered and highly stressed. Every time I visited the school, the office was full of parents and students. There was frequently frenzied activity ranging from students called to the office for discipline problems to parents demanding to see a teacher. Nonetheless, as I walked around the school, I saw indications of students on task and teachers actively instructing the students. When I asked Mr. Norfolk for a copy of the school’s mission statement, he said he was sure he had one but would have to look for it. By the end of the pilot study, he had not found a copy.

During my visits, the school was waging a “Stop the violence!” campaign to bring awareness of the problem of violence to the students. Students wrote essays, poetry, and songs to advocate an end to violence in schools. However, each time I visited the campus, class instructional time was interrupted every hour for a student to read his/her work via the intercom. The emphasis on stopping violence was interesting, as Northside was the only school where I observed a form of discipline that I had not seen or heard of before. Students who misbehaved were taken in to the hallways and told to squat with fists on the ground and hold that position until released by the

teacher. These “holds” were a common form of punishment. I was told that boys were sometimes punished by doing pushups in the hallway.

Mr. Norfolk and his assistant principal both appeared concerned about the faculty and students and expressed a desire that the faculty conduct themselves professionally. However, Northside was the only school I visited where the new teachers forgot my visits, were absent the day of my visit, or were not informed of my visit. My overall impression of the faculty and administration of the school was that of good intentions but inability to follow through.

#### **Teacher Level Data: Interviews with Beginning Teachers at Northside Middle**

**Assistance.** As with other areas, the perception of the mentor at Northside was mixed. Mrs. Newman had little contact with the mentor because they teach different subjects and he only offered general advice to her. The only contact she had with him was for the state-required observations. On the other hand, Ms. Nettles had frequent and profitable contact with the same mentor. She stated that he helped her with classroom management, taught her the importance of “recap” (don’t just ask, ask why), and affirmation. Mr. Nottingham was not assigned a mentor since he had a year of experience in another parish.

**Monitoring and Instructional Leadership.** The principal at Northside evoked strong feelings in his teachers but the teachers did not agree on their summation of Mr. Norfolk. Ms. Nettles appreciated the support of Mr. Norfolk. She stated that he visited her classroom often and provided feedback and affirmations. Mrs. Newman called Mr. Norfolk unorganized and said, “the people in charge are as country and backward as the students who go to school here.” Mr. Nottingham had unveiled contempt for the

principal. He felt that rather than support, Mr. Norfolk worked against the teachers, stating that he believed “the goal of this principal is to save his butt on paper.”

Team Building. Once again, the beginning teachers were divided at Northside. Ms. Nettles felt supported and affirmed by the rest of the faculty while Mr. Nottingham said “teachers are on their own, on an island.” Neither he nor Mrs. Newman felt valued or affirmed by the other staff members. Mrs. Newman made it a point to avoid the teacher’s lounge. She said, “I don’t associate with the other teachers much. I don’t go in to the lounge so the other teachers think I’m a snob.”

Challenges for the New Teacher. The teachers at Northside faced individual challenges. Ms. Nettles was called a “racist” by a parent. Mr. Nottingham daily fought battles for his special education students, working under the perception that the principal believed “Why bother with them? They can’t be saved.” Naomi, from Texas, faced daily struggles with a system she believed had not changed “since mama came here.”

#### Teacher Level Data: Beginning Teacher Observations at Northside Middle

Like Ms. Smith at Southside, Ms. Nettles’ classroom climate was also oppressive. Observations of the students in her class revealed that her rapid staccato speech either caused the students to be on the edge of their desks or, for some, caused them to completely tune out the class. Like her colleague at Southside, Ms. Nettles had no interaction with her students. Her frequent and enthusiastic use of the discipline procedure known as “holds” kept classroom management problems to a minimum but also evoked no engagement from the students. Mr. Nottingham demonstrated excellence in rapport with his special education students but no variety in instructional

methods. Perhaps he found a method that worked and feared deviating from that. Mrs. Newman's gentle manner conveyed a caring attitude but did not detract from the high expectations she held for her math students. They, in turn, obviously respected her and each student expected his/her peers to respect her as well.

**Teacher Level Data: Absentees and Discipline Referrals at Northside Middle**

The principal of the "typical" school readily provided the discipline information; however, he said if I needed absentee information, I had to consult each teacher individually. I later discovered that he thought I was requesting individual student absences for the year and felt consulting the teacher's grade book would provide the most accurate information. Once more, good intentions went further than the follow through. Table 4.3 provides a summary of Northside Middle teacher absence and discipline referral data.

Ms. Nettles had an unusually high number of discipline referrals. This could be because she teaches the resource classes where students are historically discipline problems (a number of Ms. Nettles's students live at the local juvenile detention center). Ms. Nettles also indicated she received a great amount of support from the principal, a view not shared by the other two new teachers. Perhaps because of this perception of support, Ms. Nettles felt comfortable allowing the principal to handle her discipline problems. Ms. Nettles was also an advocate of the "holds" punishment system (see section under school level data).

The two teachers at the typical school, who felt the least satisfaction, Mr. Nottingham and Mrs. Newman, were absent many days, while the teacher who felt

administrative support, Ms. Nettles, had a high number of referrals but very few days absent.

**Table 4.3. Northside Middle (T\*) Teacher Absences and Referrals**

Teacher	Absences	Referrals
Nancy Nettles	4	35
Ned Nottingham	14	20
Naomi Newman	10	13
Mean by school	9.3	22.6

\*T = typical school

**Student Level Data: Dropout and Attendance Rates at Northside Middle**

Ten students at Northside Middle School, or 2.7%, dropped out of school with an attendance rate of 92.5%.

**The Schools and The Beginning Teachers: Case 3**

**Westside Middle School.**

Like most small towns in southwest Louisiana, the Catholic Church lay at the center of Waterford. The red brick church with its huge steeple sits on a square by itself in the middle of the business district. Waterford positions itself as a mecca for tourists wishing to submerge themselves in Cajun culture. Thus, the surrounding square fills with small businesses such as antique shops, bed and breakfast homes, and coffee shops, all which cater to visitors. While the major draw to the town is the Evangeline Oak, statue, and "tomb," as well as the Waterford Pepper Festival in October, many of the local townspeople who do not work in the tourist trade make a living as sugarcane and rice farmers. One hears French, the common language, from both young and old.

Leaving the “city square”, traveling to the southern portion of the town, homes get smaller and businesses become more “blue collar.” Auto repair shops and car washes dot the sides of the street occasionally interspersed with house trailers. A government housing project sits between Greg’s Air Conditioning Repair Shop and Lucky’s Feed Store. Turning left from the main road on to Martin Luther King Drive, the yellow brick of the vocational-technical school is stark next to the bright blue of D’Mon’s Plate Lunches. A row of other small homes, many run down, can be seen just before the approach to Westside Middle School.

As I entered Westside Middle, I immediately noticed the emphasis on academics, while encompassing the history of the school. Once an African-American high school (“the black high school”), the pictures of the graduating classes of 1952 and 1953 hang at the inside entrance to the school. Along the left wall trophies, with dates going back several decades, decorate the glass case.

On the right, just outside the entrance to the main office, a bulletin board decorates the wall. The names of the students who achieved the honor roll the previous semester prominently hang there. Next to the names sits a laminated sign with the school’s mission statement. This statement expresses a belief that all students can achieve. The statement goes on to promise that the faculty, staff and administration will provide learning experiences which will assist students in achieving their highest potential and the development of good citizenship.

Upon entering the main office, a helpful secretary greeted me, then left her desk to escort me to the teacher’s lounge, promising to inform the principal of my arrival. The principal, Mr. Winchell, rushed in to the lounge. Mr. Winchell exuded high-

energy, graciousness, and obvious intelligence. He almost bounced in to the room. Mr. Winchell emitted the aura of a “hands on” administrator, with a genuine interest in the students and the faculty. He informed me that he also wears a student’s hat, just finishing his Ph.D. course work, writing his dissertation on ways to encourage middle school students’ interest in science. This year he helped the science classes plant a garden. Mr. Winchell made me feel welcome and volunteered to provide any information he could to smooth the way for my study. As the research progressed, Mr. Winchell was true to his word, cooperating in any way that he could.

Westside Middle School Beginning Teachers: William Wallace. Mr. Wallace is originally from Chicago. As a high school senior, he searched for an inexpensive college in an area of the country that sounded interesting, a place where he had never visited. He chose USL in Louisiana. Once in college, he met his future wife, a resident of Waterford and now plans to stay in this area.

Mr. Wallace began college with a major in physical therapy. He quickly discovered physical therapy was not how he wanted to spend his life. His mother suggested he major in education and he immediately knew education was the correct path for him.

Though Mr. Wallace holds a secondary teacher’s certification, a middle school position opened so he took it. He began teaching in January, 1999, when another teacher left the school. He liked the small environment and family atmosphere of Westside Middle.

Westside Middle School Beginning Teachers: Warren Wyatt. Mr. Wyatt’s masters’ degree in agronomy was conferred by Alcorn State University in Mississippi,

his home. Currently working on a temporary teaching certificate, Mr. Wyatt plans to go to summer school to take education courses, eventually obtaining a permanent certificate. In mid-April he took the Praxis examination, working toward certification. He decided to go in to education “just to see what it’s like, just to try it.” Mr. Wyatt was very self-assured, explaining that the highlight of his first year as a teacher was the energy that he brought to the school.

### **Findings and Data Analysis at Westside Middle School**

#### **School Level Data: Principal Interview and School Observation at Westside Middle**

Prominently hanging at the entrance to the school and in every classroom that I visited, Westside’s mission statement announced to everyone that the faculty, staff, and administration of Westside believed in the value of children and their potential. The mission statement expressed high expectations for the students of Westside, not only in academics, but also in citizenship and in the development of caring attitudes. My observations of the school verified that the school community believed in this mission. Mr. Winchell presented an enthusiasm for teaching and learning, which was infectious. A “science buff”, Mr. Winchell showed me the garden that the students planted and tended. He felt that “hands-on” learning instilled a love for any subject.

Mr. Winchell expressed concern for his new faculty as well. He asked that the results of this research be forwarded to him so that any concerns the new teachers expressed might be addressed. One of the new teachers, Mr. Wyatt, a non-certified teacher, appeared to have particular difficulties in the classroom. Mr. Winchell used school funds to send him to the National Science Teachers Conference, in the hopes that professional development might aid Mr. Wyatt. Moreover, he asked that I feel free



to give him any recommendations I might have for him as the administrator of the school.

Mr. Winchell was particularly protective of his teachers. He informed me that he was the first “source [sic] of complaints.” Mr. Winchell said he “would not tolerate foolishness from parents. Our teachers are professionals.” In seeking to enhance the instructional atmosphere of the school, Mr. Winchell encouraged team teaching, particularly teaming a veteran teacher with a new teacher. Mr. Winchell told me that by doing so, the teachers can learn from one another.

#### Teacher Level Data: Interviews with Beginning Teachers at Westside Middle

Assistance. At Westside Junior High, Mr. Wallace’s mentor provided no help to him. His mentor took on the role of a supervisor and the only contact with his mentor involved evaluation. According to Mr. Wallace, “She enjoyed the power of being over someone. I would have done better without her.” Mr. Wyatt agreed. He said the mentor provided what the state mandated but nothing beyond that. There was no mentor at Westside at the time of the pilot study because she had been promoted to a position at the school system’s central office.

Monitoring and Instructional Leadership. The principal of Westside Middle began the year as a novice. Mr. Wallace obtained initial employment there in January 1999 so had an opportunity to work under both the old and the new principal in his first year. Mr. Wallace stated that the previous principal lacked leadership skills. The school atmosphere changed at the onset of the current year, and Mr. Wallace attributed the change to the new principal. According to him,

The principal is the core of the school. The principal we have now establishes a personal relationship with every teacher. There is no hierarchy of power with Mr. Winchell. Mr. Winchell makes it a particular point to shield his faculty from outside influences, especially parents. Mr. Winchell has energy and has made a real difference in the discipline of the school. Last year there were kids all over the hallway during class time. Now there are none. I've seen both. The administrator makes the school.

The new teachers overwhelmingly felt that administrative support is vital to the new teacher. As Mr. Wallace, who hailed from Illinois, stated,

Support from the administration is needed more than anything. In these small town schools, many teachers are from the area and know the parents, grandparents, and everyone in town. They are respected by the kids because they know the families and can go straight to them and tell "mama" or "papa" how their child is behaving. For the outsider, like me, administrative support goes a long way.

Team Building. Westside Middle established a climate of support from all aspects of the school. Mr. Wyatt appreciated the fact that he did not have to search for resources; the resources were readily provided to him. Moreover, there was a policy of team teaching for the resource classes. This helped in the development of professional relationships between senior teachers and beginning teachers as well as providing instructional modeling. Mr. Wallace stated that one of the draws to Westside was the "small environment and the family atmosphere. There is no competition within the faculty. The faculty is together for one another."

Challenges for the new teacher. The wealth of paperwork overwhelmed the teachers, that is, progress reports, report cards, student folders and cumulative records, all information that was required of them but for which the new teacher received no induction. Moreover, veteran and novice teachers alike felt tremendous pressure to prepare students for the LEAP exam. Visits from central office personnel and the

superintendent were not uncommon. The beginning teachers had the perception they were being “checked up on” to verify that they were giving the students adequate preparation.

**Teacher Level Data: Beginning Teacher Observations at Westside Middle**

Mr. Wyatt had the most difficulty in organization and management. The text he used was different from the student’s text, causing confusion with the students. More students were off task and uninterested in his class than in any of the classes observed. Of note is the fact that the principal was aware of the difficulties in Mr. Wyatt’s classroom. Mr. Winchell sent Mr. Wyatt to professional development workshops and conferences. He admitted that Mr. Winchell provided a great deal of support to him in his development and hoped that the education classes he will take in working toward certification will help him.

**Teacher Level Data: Absentees and Discipline Referrals at Westside Middle**

Westside Middle School, the improving school, provided more information than was actually asked for. An absentee report on each new teacher, a report documenting each new teacher’s number and type of discipline referral, and the total school discipline reports of all faculty for both last year and the current year were provided. The assistant principal said he thought comparing the new teachers to the rest of the faculty, as well as to last year’s discipline reports, might prove interesting. The reports were attached to a personal note wishing me luck with my research and offering to provide more information. Table 4.4 documents absences and discipline referrals from Westside Middle School.

**Table 4.4. Westside Middle (I\*) Teacher Absences and Referrals.**

Teacher	Absences	Referrals
William Wallace	3	19
Warren Wyatt	5	7
Mean by school	4	13

**\*I = improving**

At the school labeled “improving,” teachers had relatively few days absent from school. Mr. Wallace had a high number of discipline referrals; however, these referrals covered three semesters because he began work at Westside Middle School in January, 1999. According to the data in this pilot study, absences have a greater relationship to school context than do discipline referrals.

#### **Student Level Data: Dropout and Attendance Rates at Westside Middle**

Westside Middle lost 9 students in 1997-98 and had an attendance rate of 93.9%.

#### **Survey Instrument Data Analysis and Findings**

The size of the pilot study sample places severe limitations on the results of the quantitative instruments. With only eight respondents, standard deviations were high and results could easily be skewed. Thus, generalizations from this data should not be made. However, some cautious conclusions can be made. Refer to Appendices C, D, and E for all three instruments utilized in the pilot study.

#### **Beginning Teacher Questionnaire**

The Beginning Teacher Questionnaire is a 14-item instrument with statements measuring the teacher’s perceptions of assistance, monitoring, and team building

(Kirby, et al, 1992). Descriptive statistics were calculated by school and by subscale. The teachers at Southside and Northside had wide variations in their perceptions, so much so that valid conclusions cannot be drawn. However, at the improving school, Westside Middle School, there was strong consensus in a number of areas.

In the area of team building both teachers strongly agreed that they fit in at the school, that there were others at the school who would help them and that the faculty worked together as a team. The only area of disagreement ( $sd = 3.53$ ) was the amount of input the new teacher had in setting school goals. In the area of assistance both new teachers strongly agreed that the principal and their colleagues provided them with professional support. Both Mr. Wallace and Mr. Wyatt also strongly agreed that they were assigned to teach the most difficult classes in the school, a policy the principal may want to re-consider in the future. Finally, in the area of monitoring, the beginning teachers at Westside strongly agreed that the principal discussed their teaching performance with them and the feedback was constructive and helpful. There was little, if any, consensus in these areas at the other two schools. This may indicate that at effective and/or improving schools there is consistency and constancy of policy while at typical and less effective schools, teachers receive inconsistent feedback and irregular support and monitoring.

#### Collegial Social Support Inventory

The Collegial Social Support Inventory (Angelle, 1999) provided information regarding the new teacher's perception of the degree of assistance received from colleagues. Descriptive statistics from this instrument confirmed wide discrepancies of opinion in the three schools.

Northside Middle School, the typical school, demonstrated the greatest diversity of perception. Mr. Nottingham and Mrs. Newman, most unhappy with the administration and the system, felt the least amount of teamwork at the school and strongly disagreed that "I feel there is a network of communication at this school." These same teachers felt least comfortable as a part of this team, disagreeing that "I feel comfortable cooperatively participating in decisions regarding school policy." Ms. Nettles, who had a fair amount of job satisfaction agreed with these items but held strongly different opinions from Mr. Nottingham and Mrs. Newman in the way to perform her job. Ms. Nettles strongly agreed with the statement "I prefer using technical skills in my job rather than personal skills," while Mr. Nottingham and Mrs. Newman strongly disagreed with this.

The new teachers at the least effective school, Southside Middle School, had a greater consensus on social support. All three teachers strongly agreed that they were good teachers and that there were other teachers they could turn to for assistance. Likewise, they all three perceived that "the other teachers just want to do their job and be left alone," strongly disagreeing with the statement "I receive timely and informative feedback about my performance in the classroom." Results from this instrument point to novices starving for assistance from the principal but unafraid to seek help from colleagues, who they perceived as unwilling to offer assistance.

The greatest amount of agreement came from Westside Middle School, the improving school. Both teachers recorded like answers on items that are significant to the school processes providing assistance to new teachers. Some of these statements are "My work is worthwhile," "Other teachers offer me help when I need it," and "I

genuinely enjoy my profession.” Both teachers strongly disagreed with the item “My work is intolerably difficult.”

Data from the CSSI (Angelle, 1999) affirms the hypothesis that teachers in improving and/or more effective schools are supported in their work, while teachers in less effective and typical schools receive intermittent or no support. This support comes from all aspects of the school, not just from the administration. Moreover, a school that operates effectively seeks to meet the needs of all teachers, regardless of their experience. In doing so, the teacher’s perception of their work is a positive one and their image of themselves as a professional is positive as well.

#### **Teacher Intent to Stay Measure**

Much like the other two instruments used in this study, the TISM (Angelle, 1999) indicated that the teachers at the improving school were more like minded than those at the other schools. Both Mr. Wallace and Mr. Wyatt strongly agreed that they intended to remain in teaching and were eager to begin next year. The teachers at the typical and less effective school differed in several regards; however, all eight teachers, whether they intended to remain in teaching or find another job strongly believed that their work was worthwhile and that their students knew they cared about them. This may indicate that those teachers who decide to leave the profession do so for reasons unrelated to the education and nurturing of children.

#### **Conclusions from the Pilot Study**

The challenges faced by the new teachers were not unusual but were ones which could be exacerbated or diminished by the processes within each school. The level of assistance, monitoring and team building provided to the new teachers was related to

the teacher's self-perception as a professional. Those teachers at the ineffective school faced daily frustrations, which impacted their attitude toward teaching and their view of their work. Teachers at the effective school, on the other hand, were enthused about their work, had no doubt they "fit in" at the school, and felt energized by the support from the faculty and administration.

Conclusions from the study draw a picture of the socialization experiences of new teachers at schools differing in their level of effectiveness. The following conclusions are drawn from interviews, observations, school level data, and teacher level data and include:

- Beginning teachers at all schools credited the instructional leadership and school climate to the success or failure of their socialization experience.
- Beginning teachers at the effective school perceived the climate of the school as one devoted to learning and protective of instructional time.
- Beginning teachers at the ineffective school perceived the climate of the school as one to manage and maintain control over students. The principal as perceived by the new teachers did not protect instructional time.
- Beginning teachers at the effective school perceived a network of communication and support from both principal and colleagues.
- Beginning teachers at the ineffective school perceived teachers as being on their own to find resources, seek out answers to questions, "learn as you go", and survive the first year.
- Beginning teachers at the effective school felt they were a valued part of the school community.



- **Beginning teachers at the ineffective school were uncertain about their place in the school community.**
- **Beginning teachers at the effective school understood the mission of the school and worked with the rest of the faculty and staff to fulfill this mission.**
- **Beginning teachers at the ineffective school either saw their mission as an individual, unrelated to the rest of the school, or saw their mission as mandated by the school system.**
- **This study provided conflicting information regarding the effectiveness of the school as it related to the teacher's performance in the classroom.**
- **This study provided evidence that the mentoring system, as implemented in West Bayou Parish, was ineffectual across school contexts.**
- **Beginning teachers' absentee rates were inversely related to the effectiveness of the school; the more ineffective the school, the greater number of absences. In the typical school, the greater the teacher's perception that the school was ineffective, the greater the number of absences.**
- **This study concluded that the number of beginning teacher's discipline referrals may not related to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the school but to circumstances unrelated to the effectiveness level of the school.**

**Table 4.5 provides a contrast of the findings from the three middle schools in the sample. Findings point out the differences in organizational processes in the three schools, which related to a new teacher's positive or negative socialization experience.**

**Table 4.5. Conclusions Drawn from Pilot Study.**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Southside (LE)</b>	<b>Northside (T)</b>	<b>Westside (I)</b>
<b>Principal</b>	An instructional leader, providing monitoring and feedback	Some monitoring and feedback; viewed by some as a leader	Provides no protection of instructional time; holds little value for monitoring and feedback
<b>Climate</b>	Devoted to learning and instruction	Sometimes devoted to learning and instruction	Devoted to management and control
<b>Communication</b>	Open and active communication between beginning teacher and principal	Some view communication as open; others as closed	Closed and/or inactive communication between beginning teacher and principal
<b>Resources</b>	Resources readily provided; answers to questions and available options readily given	Some resources provided; some answers given	Teacher must find own resources; teachers must seek out and find own answers and options
<b>School mission</b>	Clearly articulated to beginning teachers who works with rest of faculty to fulfill school mission	Some idea of mission but unclear about beginning teacher's place in mission fulfillment	Unclear or nonexistent mission; beginning teacher's mission is unrelated to others in the school or viewed as central office mandate
<b>Classroom performance</b>	Works toward mastery of effective teaching	Some elements of effective teaching	Works toward survival; no goal of effective teaching
<b>Mentoring system</b>	As implemented in West Bayou Parish, an ineffective system	As implemented in West Bayou Parish, an ineffective system	As implemented in West Bayou Parish, an ineffective system
<b>Teacher absences</b>	Minimal	Average	Frequent
<b>Discipline referrals</b>	Minimal	Varied depending on teacher	Policy of school calls for minimal referrals
<b>Intent to Stay</b>	Positive intent to stay	Some intent to stay	Some intent to stay

Beginning teachers' intent to stay in education was only somewhat related to the level of effectiveness in the school. Two teachers at the ineffective school intended to stay in education but hoped not to be at the same school. Both of the new teachers at the effective school intended to stay in education but both also intended to seek advanced education degrees, indicating a desire to eventually move out of the classroom.

Beginning teachers in the typical school in this study differed in many ways in their perceptions of the socialization experience. A common factor to all of the beginning teachers was their love for the children. Whether the climate and/or instructional leader were excellent or poor, the teachers all stated that the highlight of the year was the children. Ms. Smith commented that,

I enjoy seeing their faces light up when they get a concept or when they see their work hung on the walls or when they take a test and remember something they've talked about in class.

As a coach, Ms. Sanders enjoyed the after school time with the students, coaching volleyball and basketball and relating to them as a role model outside of the classroom. Observations of her with her students spoke to the positive modeling she was doing for the young people. As unhappy as Mrs. Newman was with the pay, the insurance, and the other faculty, she enjoyed the interaction with her students. Even though most of them came from poverty and had little, she said they taught her a great deal about self-respect and esteem.

As the semester closed and the new teachers survived the first year, a noteworthy fact was the absence of discussion of poor teacher pay. Even those beginning teachers who worked at the effective school viewed support and leadership as

more valuable to them than the poor salary. The only teacher who made note of the lack of pay was Mrs. Newman, the teacher who transferred to West Bayou Parish from Texas, taking a substantial decrease in pay. Overall, the problems of the new teacher were so overwhelming that survival took the forefront to the meager salary received by these teachers who worked so hard. Many of the new teachers literally viewed their work as being “in the trenches,” as a daily war fought which made the survival even more sweet. At the conclusion of the visit, Mr. Wallace remarked, “A teacher’s first year, you do your time. I’m in the classroom so it’s up to me.” Smiling broadly, he continued, “The year is over. I’ve won the battle.”

Though all eight teachers survived, teaching, as a career, was not foremost in their minds. Mr. Wyatt would, after that year, continue his education, then move on to Texas. Mr. Wallace is currently working on a master’s degree in administration and hopes to move out of the classroom within the next five years. Ms. Nettles is working on a degree in counseling and hopes to move in to a counseling position when she is certified. Mr. Nottingham left teaching all together to work in the trucking industry. Mrs. Newman hoped her husband would be transferred back to Texas. Ms. Smith wanted a home economics position at a secondary school. Ms. Sanders vowed to stay only if she could keep the same schedule. She says, “Starting all over with new lessons would be too much. This year has been too hard.” Only Ms. Sullivan, an accounting graduate, with no teaching certificate, planned to continue to teach middle school math. Some of the beginning teachers held up and held on. Others head forth to pursue other careers.

### **Summary**

**This chapter provided results of data collected from the Phase One Pilot Study of the dissertation research study. The beginning teachers gave insights into the school processes that may account for a positive socialization experience during the initial year of teaching. The teachers had strong feelings and firm opinions in the areas of mentoring and assistance, monitoring and instructional leadership, and collegial team building.**

**This pilot study served as a basis on which to build the dissertation study. Research questions posed were answered; yet, new questions evolved from this study. Will a sample which includes clearly effective (rather than improving) and clearly ineffective schools clarify the picture of an optimal socialization experience for the new teacher? Will a sample that includes a greater number of beginning teachers affirm the results found in this pilot study or produce different results? Will a greater number of classroom observations provide like or differing data regarding the instructional practices of new teachers at differentially effective schools? Will a matched pair sample design extending over several school districts produce the same findings? The dissertation findings documented in the following chapters will answer these questions.**

## **CHAPTER FIVE: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS**

### **Introduction**

Findings from the pilot study as documented in Chapter Four posed new questions to be addressed in the dissertation study. Specifically, will a larger sample of matched pairs produce the same results? Will a sample that includes a greater number of beginning teachers affirm the results found in this pilot study or produce different results? Will a greater number of classroom observations provide like or differing data regarding the instructional practices of new teachers at differentially effective schools? Will a matched pair sample design extending over several school districts produce the same findings?

Before the research questions posed in this study could be answered, the questions concerning sample had to be initially addressed. As outlined in Chapter Three, schools for this study were matched from residual scores received from the Louisiana Department of Education, Office of Management and Finance, Division of Planning, Analysis, and Information Services, Planning and Analysis Section (Yuan, 2000). In order to standardize the residual scores, the sample of interest (all middle schools), were extracted from the total sample. Using the SPSS statistics program, the residual scores of the middle schools were standardized into  $z$  scores ( $\mu = 0, \sigma = 1$ ). This procedure yielded a list of Louisiana middle schools with standard scores which ranged from +3.07 to -3.07.

Middle schools with an SEI of  $\pm .67$  were sorted first by school district, then by minority index, SES index, and by size of school enrollment (Sammons, 1999; Teddlie

and Stringfield, 1993). As discussed in Chapter Three, residual scores of  $\pm .67$  yielded a sample large enough to select an adequate number of more effective/less effective schools. Residual scores of  $\pm .67$  represent the upper 25% of the distribution and the lower 25% of the distribution (Lomax, 1992). Middle schools which matched in these categories and were contiguous in location were examined for inclusion in the study. The final sample of five matched pairs of middle schools is found in Table 5.1, including the predicted, actual, and residual scores from SY 1998-1999, and the actual score from SY 1999-2000 (scores for SY 2000-2001 were not available at the time of this writing).

**Table 5.1. School Performance Score Data Used for Sample Selection.**

Pair	School	Status *	1998-99 Predicted	1998-99 Actual	1998-99 z score (SEI)	1999- 2000 Actual
1	Polar Flight	ME	79.2	80.4	+.72	90.1
	Blackbird	LE	91.6	76.4	-.71	85.9
2	Barnstorming	ME	95.44	102.5	+1.24	102.3
	Mir	LE	90.27	64.3	-1.86	83.8
3	Cargo	ME	88.53	101.9	+1.79	101.4
	Kamikaze	LE	87.7	64.8	-1.65	84.3
4	Concorde	ME	68.2	71.9	+.94	83.3
	Tupelov	LE	71.7	50.5	-1.52	57.8
5	Stealth	ME	69.2	77.0	+1.30	85.6
	Tailspin	LE	67.84	40.2	-1.98	56.0
<b>MEANS</b>						
All Schools		ME	80.11	86.74	+1.19	92.54
All Schools		LE	81.82	59.24	-1.54	73.56

\* ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Schools labeled more effective are those schools in each pair which have a positive school effectiveness index (SEI). Schools labeled less effective are those schools in each pair which have a negative SEI (see Chapter Three: Methodology for a discussion of school effectiveness index and its calculation). Some of the schools in the sample have relatively high school performance scores but, nonetheless, are labeled as less effective. This seeming paradox is explained by the “value added” concept (see Chapter Two); that is, prior achievement of the student when s/he school is measured against the value added by the school as the student progresses through her/his academic career. Thus, a school which gives “extra value” to the students it serves is more effective than similar schools with similar intakes, without regard to school performance score or variables such as minority, SES, or special education.

As can be seen in Table 5.1, the value added by more effective schools is evident from an examination of the SPS of the schools. From SY 1998-1999 to SY 1999-2000, the actual SPS of all schools increased. However, noteworthy is the fact that the increased scores for the less effective schools do not rise to the level of the 1998-1999 predicted scores, while the increase in the actual scores of the more effective schools continued to exceed the predicted score.

### **Quantitative Results**

This chapter presents quantitative data collected during Phases Three, Four, and Five. Data findings from these phases will address survey results, teacher self-report and demographic data, and teaching behaviors. Data results presented here will answer the following research questions:



**Phase Three: Research Questions**

3. What are the beginning teachers' perceptions of the assistance, monitoring, and team building received during the socialization experience? Are these perceptions related to the beginning teachers' intent to stay in the field of education?
  - a. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perceptions of quality and level of administrative monitoring received at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
  - b. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perceptions of the quality and level of assistance received at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
  - c. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perception of the quality and level of team building at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
  - d. Is the level of administrative monitoring related to the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education?
  - e. Is the level of assistance given to the beginning teacher related to the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education?
  - f. Is the amount of collegial team building related to the beginning teacher's intent to stay in the field of education?

**Phase Four: Research Questions**

4. What are the differences in teacher demographic factors in differentially effective schools?
  - a. What is the difference in the frequency of teacher absences at more effective schools and at less effective schools?

b. What is the difference in the number of student discipline referrals from new teachers at more effective schools and at less effective schools?

c. What are the differences in the level of academic degree obtained by new teachers in more effective and less effective schools?

d. What are the differences in the number of certified and non-certified new teachers in more effective schools and at less effective schools?

e. What are the differences in the university preparation received by the new teachers at more effective schools and at less effective schools?

#### **Phase Five: Research Questions**

5. What are the differences in the new teacher's perception of the processes within the school in more effective and less effective middle schools?

a. What are the differences in the classroom performance of the beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

#### **Phase Three Results: Survey Data**

Survey data were gathered from beginning teachers using three instruments: Beginning Teacher Questionnaire (BTQ) (Kirby, 1992), the Collegial Social Support Instrument (CSSI) (Angelle, 1999), and the Teacher Intent to Stay Measure (TISM) (Angelle, 1999). Two of the three instruments (CSSI, TISM) were new and determination of their reliability was a secondary goal of the study. The alpha reliability coefficients for both the CSSI ( $\alpha = .87$ ;  $n = 43$ ) and the TISM ( $\alpha = .88$ ;  $n = 43$ ) were acceptable for the data from this study (Gravetter & Wallnau, 1996).

The BTQ measured the beginning teacher's perception of the subscales of assistance, monitoring, and team building, through subscales of the BTQ (Kirby, 1992). Beginning teachers in this sample perceived support in these three areas as generally very positive. The average for the full sample, that is, for teachers in both more effective and less effective schools ( $n=45$ ) was  $\bar{x} = 43.4$ . The most positive response for items on this 14 item Likert scale was 4; therefore, the highest possible mean was  $\bar{x} = 56$ .

Using the teacher as the unit of analysis, a MANOVA was calculated to determine whether beginning teachers in more effective schools differed in their perceptions of the socialization experience from novices in less effective schools. The overall multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) indicated no difference ( $F(3, 41) = .905$ ;  $p = n.s.$ ). Following this, another MANOVA was run to determine if there was a difference in perception of socialization experiences with the school as the unit of analysis. Once again, no statistical significance was found. Scores on assistance, monitoring, and team building varied little in the more effective and less effective middle schools, as seen in Table 5.2. Therefore, responses to Phase Three research questions indicated no differences in beginning teacher's perception of assistance, monitoring, and team building in more effective and less effective middle schools.

Collegial social support was also measured to determine whether beginning teachers perceived a difference in this area in more effective and less effective middle schools. Regardless of school type, teachers perceived social support to be strong. Using a Likert scale, with 4 indicating the highest level of support, the mean score for more effective and less effective schools was 95.5 and 94.16, respectively, out of a

possible 120. A  $t$ -test indicated no statistical difference ( $t(1,41) = .468$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ) in teacher's perceptions of collegial social support at more effective and at less effective middle schools. Descriptive statistics for collegial social support indicate  $\bar{x} = 95.53$  ( $SD = 10.51$ ) in more effective schools and  $\bar{x} = 94.16$  ( $SD = 8.03$ ) in less effective schools.

**Table 5.2. Descriptive Statistics for Beginning Teacher Questionnaire Subscales.**

BTQ Subscale	More Effective Schools ( $n=14$ )		Less Effective Schools ( $n=31$ )	
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
Assistance	16.71	2.67	16.22	2.48
Monitoring	17.07	3.58	17.83	3.03
Team building	9.78	1.62	9.41	1.52

The final area of interest related to Phase Three of the study was to determine whether the assistance, monitoring, team building and collegial social support were related to a teacher's intent to stay in the field of education. Assistance, monitoring, and team building were used to predict intent to stay. Regression analysis indicated no statistical significance ( $r = .37$ ,  $r^2 = .135$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ). Therefore, only 13.5% of the variance in intent to stay could be explained by a combination of assistance, monitoring, and team building.

A second regression combined the variable collegial social support with assistance, monitoring, and team building to determine the relationship of these variables to the beginning teacher's intent to stay in education. When collegial social support was included, 37% of the variance ( $r = .61$ ,  $r^2 = .37$ ,  $p < .05$ ) in intent to stay could be explained. Therefore, the subscales of assistance, monitoring, and team building as

measured in the BTQ predict teacher intent to stay when combined with collegial social support in this study.

A third regression was run to determine if the variable of collegial social support alone was related to a teacher's intent to stay in the field of education. Regression analysis indicated that 30% of the variance in intent to stay ( $r = .55$ ,  $r^2 = .30$ ,  $p < .05$ ) could be explained. Therefore, collegial social support emerged as a significant predictor variable in a new teacher's intent to stay, whether singular or in combination with assistance, monitoring, and team building.

Three regressions were considered superior to using the stepwise method because of the inherent problems associated with stepwise regression. Thompson (1995) suggests three problems with the stepwise method which can be summarized as follows: (1) incorrect degrees of freedom in stepwise computations lead to inaccurate inferences; (2) stepwise methods greatly reflect sampling error and therefore, conclusions cannot be replicated in future research; (3) stepwise methods do not identify the best predictor variables in the set. Therefore, given the sample size of this study and the problems associated with stepwise analyses, linear regression analysis was considered superior.

#### **Phase Four Results: Teacher Self-Report and Demographic Data**

Data regarding number of beginning teacher absences and number of beginning teacher discipline referrals were collected to look for differences in these numbers by school context, as seen in Table 5.3. Confidentiality constraints limited the collection of the data to teacher self-report and should be viewed in this light. Not all beginning teachers provided this information. Table 5.4 outlines the demographic data.

**Table 5.3. Descriptive Statistics for Beginning Teacher Absences and Referrals.**

Pair	School	Status*	Absences ( $\bar{x}$ )	Discipline Referrals ( $\bar{x}$ )
1	Polar Flight	ME	4.5	27.5
	Blackbird	LE	2.33	20.33
2	Barnstorming	ME	4.3	18
	Mir	LE	5.12	8.75
3	Cargo	ME	2.5	15
	Kamikaze	LE	.8	5
4	Concorde	ME	5	27.5
	Tupelov	LE	6	20.87
5	Stealth	ME	2.5	20
	Tailspin	LE	1.3	19
<b>MEANS</b>				
	All Schools	ME	3.8	22
	All Schools	LE	3.6	15

\* ME = more effective; LE = less effective

Beginning teachers at more effective schools had both a greater number of absences and discipline referrals. However, the narrow difference is not conclusive for findings based on context because, as indicated by interview data, frequent absences may be due to a novice's long term illnesses or pregnancy as often as for burnout. Large numbers of referrals may be due to a lack of discipline, a rigid discipline policy, or a policy that discipline should be handled by the administration. Low numbers of referrals may be due to a school's strict discipline or fear of seeming incompetent if large numbers of discipline problems are reported. As a result of the vague nature of the findings, no clear conclusion could be drawn from this data.

Table 5.4. Beginning Teacher Demographic Data.

Pr	School	Degree		Certified		Teacher Prep**				Intend to stay	
		BA/BS	M.Ed.	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	Yes	No
1	Polar Flight	4	0	3	1	0	0	3	1	4	0
	Blackbird	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	3	0
2	Barnstorming	3	1	4	0	0	0	2	2	4	0
	Mir	4	0	4	0	1	0	0	3	2	2
3	Cargo	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
	Kamikaze	7	0	4	3	1	0	3	3	5	2
4	Concorde	1	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
	Tupelov	8	0	7	1	3	5	0	0	5	3
5	Stealth	4	0	4	0	1	0	3	0	3	1
	Tailspin	3	2	2	3	0	4	0	1	3	2
All Schools ME*		14	2	15	1	3	0	9	4	15	1
All Schools LE*		25	2	20	7	5	9	6	7	18	9

\*\* Teacher Preparation Program: 1 = LSU; 2 = Southern; 3 = UL, Lafayette; 4 = Other

\* ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Demographic data were collected to view differences in university preparation, certification status, and degree for new teachers in more effective and less effective schools. Data indicate that new teachers in more effective schools are more likely to be certified and are more likely to continue in the field of education. Teachers who indicated they would stay in education did not necessarily indicate they would like to stay at their present assignment.

### **Phase Five Results: Teaching Behaviors**

Data measuring teaching behaviors of beginning teachers were gathered using the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (LCET) instrument (School Effectiveness and Assistance Program, 1999). Observations were conducted in ten schools, five more effective and five less effective. Thirty seven regular classes (nineteen beginning teachers) were observed, seventeen in more effective schools and twenty in less effective schools. Beginning teachers were observed during the spring semester. Teachers who began teaching in the spring semester were not observed.

Scripting was used to record events during the instruction. The LCET, a measure of teacher effectiveness in the classroom was then completed on each observation. The instrument measures two domains: management and instruction. Each attribute of the domain is scored from 1 = 'Unsatisfactory' to 4 = 'Demonstrates Excellence.'

Upon initial contact with each school, several principals and teachers stated reservations about observations of special education classes, due to confidentiality constraints. Many of the beginning teachers were assigned to the special education classes, which initially eliminated several from the sample of observations. Considering this, as well as the number of teachers eliminated by a start date in January, it was determined that two teachers at each school would be observed two times each. In this way, each school would have a minimum of four classes observed. In addition, the reliability of the observations was increased by lowering the chance of observing teaching that was uncharacteristically good or bad for that teacher.



There were two exceptions to this. Overall study problems encountered at Concorde Middle School disallowed all but one observation. Problems were also encountered at Kamikaze Middle School, where four observations were conducted but only two were considered reliable, rather than the total of four. As a result, Concorde Middle School was eliminated from this phase of data analysis. In addition, only the two observations of the same teacher was included in the data analysis at Kamikaze Middle.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was calculated to determine whether beginning teachers in more effective schools differed in their teaching behaviors from beginning teachers in less effective schools using the teacher as the unit of analysis. The overall MANOVA indicated a statistically significant difference between the two ( $F(2,34) = 90.54; p < .05$ ). The univariate  $F$ s for both the management and instruction variables were also significant as indicated in Table 5.5. Another MANOVA was run to determine if there were differences in teaching behaviors with the school as the unit of analysis. Once again, there was a statistically significant difference ( $F(2,7) = 55.31; p < .05$ ).

Therefore, responses to Phase Five research questions regarding differences in classroom performance indicated a significant difference in beginning teachers in more effective and less effective schools. Table 5.5, also presents the mean scores for the teachers in more effective and less effective schools, indicating that those in more effective schools are much better teachers.

**Table 5.5. Descriptive Statistics for Components of Effective Teaching.**

<b>Effectiveness Status</b>		<b>Management*</b>	<b>Instruction*</b>
<b>More Effective Schools</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>21.90</b>	<b>44.75</b>
	<b>Number of Observations</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>1.51</b>	<b>2.31</b>
<b>Less Effective Schools</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>11.70</b>	<b>24.65</b>
	<b>Number of Observations</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>1.77</b>	<b>5.29</b>
<b>Total All Schools</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>16.80</b>	<b>34.70</b>
	<b>Number of Observations</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>
	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>5.59</b>	<b>11.27</b>
<b>Statistical Analysis</b>	<b>F (1,35)</b>	<b>111.91</b>	<b>165.30</b>

**\*Note:** Higher scores indicate a greater mastery of the component.

Average scores were calculated with the individual teacher within each school as the unit of analysis and reported in Table 5.6. This descriptive data from the LCET provided even more pronounced differences in the more effective and less effective schools than that indicated by MANOVA.

Beginning teachers in more effective schools scored highest in the area of management on the organization of the classroom space to facilitate learning (3.9) and on the promotion of a positive learning climate (3.8). In the instructional domain, these “demonstrates excellence,” providing evidence that these teachers consistently met or teachers score highest in presenting accurate subject matter (3.9), encouraging higher order thinking skills (3.9), and presenting the content at a developmentally appropriate level (3.9).

Table 5.6. Average Scores by School on Components of Effective Teaching.

Pair	Schools		Management	Instruction
1	Polar Flight	Mean	24.0	47.25
		Std Deviation	0.0	1.5
	Blackbird	Mean	11.25	32.
		Std Deviation	1.25	5.22
2	Barnstorming	Mean	21.0	44.7
		Std Deviation	2.44	1.5
	Mir	Mean	14.7	27.5
		Std Deviation	2.21	1.0
3	Cargo	Mean	21.0	45.75
		Std Deviation	2.44	1.5
	Kamikaze	Mean (n=2)*	15.0	27.5
		Std Deviation	0.0	3.5
4	Concorde	Mean (n=1)**	N/A	N/A
		Std Deviation	N/A	N/A
	Tupelov	Mean	10.25	23.75
		Std Deviation	1.25	5.22
5	Stealth	Mean	20.5	45.0
		Std Deviation	4.12	4.24
	Tailspin	Mean	10.75	18.25
		Std Deviation	3.86	3.77
All Schools (more effective)		Mean	21.625	45.68
		Std Deviation	2.80	2.44
All Schools (less effective)		Mean	12.11	21.55
		Std Deviation	2.84	5.58

The average score in the Instructional Domain by teacher in more effective schools was 45.68 of a possible 52 on the thirteen indicators in the domain. In other words, by teacher, the average score was 3.49. A score of '3' on any indicator reflects an "area of strength" while a '4' reflects exceeded the standard.

The average score in the Instructional Domain in less effective schools was 21.55 of a possible 52 on the thirteen indicators in the domain. This translates, by teacher, to an average individual score of 1.66. A score of '1' reflects "unsatisfactory" demonstration of the indicator, while a '2' reflects an indicator that "needs improvement."

The Management Domain on the LCET measured six attributes of the classroom climate. The average score in the Management Domain in more effective schools was 21.625 of a possible 24.0 on the six indicators of management. By teacher, the average score was 3.60, indicating at least an "area of strength" for each indicator. The average score in the Management Domain in less effective schools was 12.11 of a possible 24.0 on the six indicators. By teacher, the average score was 2.0, indicating that the indicators "need improvement."

Beginning teachers in more effective schools scored lowest in the management domain on using monitoring techniques to facilitate learning (3.2). In the instructional domain, these teachers scored lowest on adjusting the lesson, when appropriate (3.5).

Beginning teachers at less effective schools scored highest in the area of management in the organization of the classroom to facilitate learning (2.6). In the area

of instruction, these teachers scored highest in demonstrating the ability to communicate effectively with students (2.9) and presenting accurate subject matter (2.76).

Beginning teachers at less effective schools scored lowest in the area of management in managing routines and transitions in a timely manner (1.5). In the instructional domain, teachers at less effective schools scored lowest in adjusting the lesson when appropriate (1.28) and in the promotion of higher order thinking skills (1.11).

### **Summary**

Quantitative data in this study produced findings which prompted more questions than answers. Results addressed all research questions asked. However, results were not as expected.

While I thought the perceptions of beginning teachers at more effective schools regarding their assistance, monitoring, and team building during the initial year would produce results vastly different from those teachers at less effective schools, actual data indicated no difference. While initially surprising, upon further reflection, this can partially be explained by the negative impact of LaTAAP on the resources of the middle schools and by the positive results of the implementation of interdisciplinary teaming (see Chapter Seven for a more thorough discussion).

Unexpected results were also found in the lack of significance of assistance, monitoring, and team building as predictors of intent to stay in education. However, the significance of collegial social support as a predictor of intent to stay may also be

explained through the emphasis on and success of interdisciplinary teaming, as well as new teacher reliance on informal mentoring by veterans.

Quantitative data additionally reveal that beginning teachers in more effective schools were more likely to be certified and intend to continue in the field than were the beginning teachers in ineffective schools.

Clearly, the greatest difference in beginning teachers in more effective and less effective schools was demonstrated in the area of effective teaching. In both management and instruction, teachers in more effective schools outperformed teachers in less effective schools. Teachers in more effective schools held higher expectations for their students and more often encouraged higher order thinking skills in their students. While teachers in less effective schools communicated well with their students, they held low expectations for student performance and had difficulty in managing routines and transitions. This, in turn, led to a failure to present material at a developmentally appropriate level.

Chapter Six will further document differences in more effective and less effective schools through detailed case studies. Qualitative data results will increase understanding of the quantitative results by describing the socialization experience within the context of three of the five pairs of schools under study. Chapter Seven will conclude the study with a discussion of the implications of these findings.

## **CHAPTER SIX: QUALITATIVE RESULTS**

### **Introduction**

Results of the pilot study as documented in Chapter Four addressed the research questions and objectives in Phase One of the data collection. Quantitative results of this study and research questions from Phases Three, Four, and Five of the data collection were discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Six documents the qualitative data collection, addresses the research questions in Phases Two and Six and answers the qualitative questions from Phase Five. The qualitative results presented in this chapter provide a greater understanding of the socialization experiences of beginning teachers as they take place within the context of more effective and less effective middle schools. An in-depth look at three pairs of middle schools details the processes of assistance, monitoring, and team building in three more effective and three less effective middle schools. These qualitative results should be considered in conjunction with the quantitative results presented in the previous chapter to better understand the socialization experiences of beginning teachers in differentially effective schools.

### **Case Studies as Qualitative Methodology**

As a research strategy, Yin (1994) calls the case study method a “comprehensive research strategy” (p.13), a method which investigates a phenomenon in its natural context. While Yin (1994) cites the case study as useful in the study of organizational processes, Patton (1990) notes that case studies as qualitative methodology may be preferred when unusual failures or unusual successes are being documented. Moreover,

the holistic nature of case studies allows for an overall picture of the phenomena under study.

Case study research examines a phenomenon and then uses a case to explain a particular instance of that phenomenon (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Researchers employ the case study to describe the phenomenon and search for themes as features of the case, to explain the phenomenon through patterns, or to evaluate in order to make judgments about the phenomenon (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). This study produced large quantities of data which were best examined and understood with case study methodology in order to accurately describe and explain the socialization experiences of beginning teachers in differentially effective middle schools. In this way, the findings from the study were better confirmed.

#### Case Study Sample

The research design called for purposeful outlier sampling using intensity sampling strategy (Patton, 1990). This strategy involves carefully choosing a sample which provides “information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensely (but not extremely)” (Patton, 1990, p. 171). Stringfield (1994) emphasizes the importance of outlier sampling for those studies seeking to understanding extraordinary events, calling the detailed outlier study a “most efficient research design” when questioning “what sets an exemplar apart” (p. 73). The efficiency lay in the detailed descriptions in the area of interest, adding a richness to the overall study.

The question that guided this research examined the processes in differentially effective middle schools; thus, a sample which documents an intense manifestation of the



effectiveness of the middle school, either more effective or less effective, will reveal the most valuable information regarding the processes in these schools which will result in a positive or negative socialization experience. From the sample of five matched pairs of middle schools, three matched pairs of middle schools will be documented here to detail the processes in six schools, three more effective and three less effective. These pairs will describe two schools on the fringe of a major urban area, two schools on the fringe of a mid-sized city, and two schools in rural communities. These six schools were chosen to detail school processes which demonstrate differing emphases on interdisciplinary teaming (two schools on the fringe of a major urban area), diverse roles in leadership (two schools on the fringe of a mid-sized city), and diversity in the level of support from all members of the community (two schools in rural communities).

These cases, along with the cross case analysis at the conclusion of this chapter, will answer research questions gleaned from data collection in Phases Two, Five, and Six. These research questions are as follows:

#### **Phase Two: Research Questions**

2. What are the differences in the assistance and monitoring factors at more effective and less effective middle schools?
  - a. What is the level of administrative monitoring for beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
  - b. What are the differences in the hiring practices of the administration at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

- c. What are the types of assistance given to beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
- d. What is the role of the beginning teacher's mentor at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
- e. What is the role of the administration and the mentor at more effective schools and at less effective schools in preparing the new teacher for successfully completing the Louisiana Assistance and Assessment Program?

**Phase Five: Research Questions**

- 5. What are the differences in the new teacher's perception of the processes within the school in more effective and less effective middle schools?
  - a. What are the differences in the classroom performance of the beginning teachers at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
  - b. What are the differences in the new teacher's perception of the assistance, monitoring, and team building received during the initial teaching experience at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
  - c. What are the differences in the new teacher's perceptions of their intent to stay in the field of education at more effective and at less effective middle schools?

**Phase Six: Research Questions**

- 6. What are the differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at more effective middle schools and at less effective middle schools?
  - a.. What are the differences in the level of monitoring for beginning teachers at more effective middle schools and at less effective middle schools?

- b. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perception of the mentoring assistance received at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
- c. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perceptions of collegial team building at more effective middle schools and at less effective middle schools?
- d. What are the differences in the beginning teachers' perception of their place in the school community at more effective and at less effective middle schools?
- e. Do beginning teachers who are socialized in more effective middle schools have a greater propensity to stay in the field of education than do beginning teachers who are socialized in less effective middle schools?

### **Organizational Processes**

As part of the data collection in Phase Five, beginning teachers who volunteered to do so were interviewed regarding their perceptions of assistance, monitoring, and team building. Two elements of the organizational processes emerged which bear explanation. An understanding of the middle school concept of interdisciplinary teaming and the procedures advocated by Harry Wong is called for as beginning teachers pointed to them as impacting their successful socialization experience.

**Middle School Concept of Interdisciplinary Teaming.** Interdisciplinary teaming is commonly associated with the middle school level. Teams of two to five teachers, normally representing core disciplines (language arts, social studies, math, and science), share the same group of students, have a common planning time and teaching schedule, and are located in the same area of the school building (Erb, 1997; Manning &

Saddlemire, 2000). Though team roles and responsibilities vary by school, effective teams usually emphasize caring, respect, and success (Manning & Saddlemire, 2000).

Research on the teaming concept (Lee & Smith, 1993) has concluded that students in teamed settings were more engaged and less bored, more often completed their homework, and were less likely to be aggressive. In this same study, students in schools which were more teamed and less departmentalized scored higher on standardized achievement tests in both math and reading.

Teachers also garnered benefits from being members of teams. A sense of collegiality gave teachers a more positive outlook on teaching which led to an increase in teacher efficacy and a more positive professional self-image (Erb, 1997).

Not all middle schools in this study utilized the middle school concept of teaming (n=5) and, of those which did, three were less effective schools. However, as noted in the following case studies, for those new teachers who worked at schools embracing this concept, teams played a substantial role in their socialization experiences in terms of collegiality and social support.

First Year Procedures Advocated by Harry Wong. Harry Wong, a former high school science teacher, is the author of The First Days of School, a book based on Dr. Wong's lectures on the importance of classroom management (Starr, 1999). Wong focuses on classroom management as a key to student achievement, positing that classroom routine and procedures ensure that students know what is expected of them. Procedures are vital because children cannot learn in chaos (Starr, 1999).

Several major concepts are discussed in Wong's book, including some of the following: (1) start each class with an assignment, rather than by calling roll; (2) position yourself near the students because problems are proportional to distance; (3) rehearse procedures with the students until they become routines; (4) ask a question after 10 sentences then wait five or more seconds for responses after asking a question; and (5) you can have achievement or you can have excuses (Wong, 1998).

Not all beginning teachers interviewed referred to the work of Dr. Wong. However, some of the new teachers interviewed for this study reported Wong's work as part of their teacher preparation program or as a part of the school system's induction. Those teachers who reported reading his book and utilizing his concepts also reported more success in first year classroom management.

### **Metaphors in Qualitative Research**

Patton (1990) and others (e.g. Eisner, 1998) have called for the use of metaphors to summarize complex sets of situations, behaviors, and patterns. Metaphors are used as a way of "communicating the connotative meanings of analytic categories" (Patton, 1990, p. 400). Powerful and clever metaphors can convey meanings with a single phrase. Throughout the case studies from this research, a metaphorical name will be given to the schools and, in the cross case analysis, to the new teachers and appropriate others.

Teachers, upon graduation from their university preparation program, are flying high. These teachers enter the school system idealistic and ready to impact the lives of children. Once assigned to their crew (the faculty) and led by a pilot (the principal) and a

navigator (the mentor), the beginning teacher is prepared to take flight. The resulting socialization experiences of that first year greatly depend on the flight plan of the aircraft to which the new teacher is assigned, the collegiality and support of the crew, and the leadership of the pilot and navigator.

## **Results**

### **Pair 1: Two Schools on the Fringe of an Urban Area**

#### **Barnstorming Middle School**

**Introduction.** After World War I, demobilized airplane pilots, searching for employment, became stunt pilots. These highly trained aviators took their knowledge into the lives of the average American through exhibitions at county fairs, race tracks, and anywhere people would pay a fee to see them fly. The stunt fliers were known as “Barnstormers” because they often flew into cow pastures and slept in barns. Barnstormers frequently improvised in creative ways to keep the plane flying, such as repairing a broken wing spar with a piece of pine from a fruit crate or using the steel barrel of a fountain pen for an engine arm (Lopez, 1995). Team work and invention led the barnstormers to face overwhelming odds to reach their goals and, though a dangerous occupation, success was often their reward.

**Background Information.** West of a major urban center in Louisiana, Waterside Parish sits at the mouth of a Corps of Engineers Spillway. Surrounded by swamps, bayous, and the Mississippi River, Waterside Parish is aptly named. Waterside Parish is well known for its superb educational system, one which advocates high expectations for children and participatory decision making for its employees. The schools in the

**Waterside School System commit to the mission of the parish to provide high quality educational opportunities for the children.**

**A two lane highway, called the River Road, curves along the levee protecting the area from the Mississippi River. Just across the River Road sits Barnstorming Middle School, not far from the foot of the interstate highway exit. An older building, circa 1970s, Barnstorming's main area is surrounded by temporary buildings. The school's mission, posted on the front doors to the school, greets visitors. The mission reinforces the idea of teamwork, a theme which is reiterated throughout the data collection. The mission says that all members of the school community,**

**should work as a team to meet the needs of the middle school child. The purpose of this team effort is to establish a climate of mutual respect conducive to the intellectual, emotional, moral, social and physical development of the child. The educational opportunities and experiences afforded each student during his or her school career are the joint responsibilities of this team.**

**Housing approximately 558 students, only 9%, or 50 students, are in special education. The other 91%, or 508 students, are in regular education classes. One third of the students (31.3%) are of minority race and 40.2% of the students come from lower SES households. The school has consistently performed well, with a School Performance Score (SPS) of 102.5 in SY 1998-99, garnering a Performance Label of School of Academic Achievement. With a predicted SPS of 95.44, Barnstorming's SEI is +1.24,<sup>1</sup> making it the more effective school in Pair 1. The SY 1999-2000 SPS of 102.3 remained almost unchanged from the year before. The class sizes are evenly divided**

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<sup>1</sup>SEI indicates 1.24 standard deviations above the mean. See Chapter 3 for discussion of residual scores.

with 34% in classes of 1-20, 33% in classes of 21-26, and 33% in classes of over 27 students. The attendance rate at Barnstorming is higher (96%) than the state average (94.6%). The dropout rate of .2% is much lower than that of the state (2.3%). While 37% of teachers statewide attained a master's degree, the Barnstorming faculty had 43% with master's degrees.

My contact with the school was limited to the assistant principal, Mrs. Irving. Though I saw the principal, Mr. Istre, on several occasions, he never introduced himself nor stopped to speak with me. Though my first encounter with school personnel was a somewhat bungled one, with Mrs. Irving aware of, but unprepared for, the visit, subsequent visits were well planned and productive.

The concept of middle school teaming as implemented at Barnstorming was explained before data collection began. While other middle schools in the study implemented some version of teaming, nowhere was the vision of teaming more enthusiastically embraced by every staff member than at Barnstorming. Each teacher at Barnstorming was a member of two teams, a grade level team and a learning team.

The grade level team was determined by the grade and the discipline taught. For example, the seventh grade has two teams. Each team has a math teacher, a science teacher, a language arts teacher, and a social studies teacher. Each team teaches the same students. There is also an enrichment period during which the team participates together. All teachers on the same team have the same planning period and are required to meet for 45 minutes each day.



The learning team is a group of teachers with common interests, not necessarily in the same discipline or with the same grade level. The focus chosen by the group must, in some way, be related to the school's goals. For example, a group of teachers who were interested in the use of manipulatives formed a team. They focused on how manipulatives can help the student progress through math, discussed activities with manipulatives and why they are worthwhile, and studied student's work with and without manipulatives to gather data regarding the usefulness. Teams also formed around technology, action research, and other professional development areas.

On Wednesday mornings students arrive at school an hour later than on a normal day. During this time, the learning teams meet. Teachers refer to this time as the "faculty study time." As part of the school's professional development program, teachers are sometimes called upon to present their findings, or the progress of the learning teams, to the rest of the faculty or, perhaps, to the school board members at the monthly meeting.

Barnstorming also has implemented the district initiative of the responsive classroom. As a part of this initiative, there is a daily morning meeting or advisory period, called a CPR, that is, Circle of Power and Respect. There are four components to the CPR, which include: (1) news and announcements, where the teachers inform the students of school news; (2) greetings, where the students greet each other; (3) sharing, where students are allowed to share whatever they chose; and (4) activity, normally something fun with which to begin the day. According to Mrs. Irby, the CPR sets the tone for the day for the children.

**Beginning Teachers at Barnstorming Middle School.** There were four beginning teachers at Barnstorming Middle School, all who volunteered to be interviewed for this study, as seen in Table 6.1. All four teachers reported that they selected Barnstorming for employment because there was a job available for them there and they were anxious to teach in Waterside Parish.

**Table 6.1. Teachers at Barnstorming Who Volunteered for Interview.**

Teacher	Subject	Position Selection	University	Degree	Experience*	Certified
Inez Indest	Social Studies	Job was available	University of New Orleans	M. Ed.	2 years	Yes
Ivana Ingram	Special Ed.	Job was available	Southeastern Louisiana University	M.Ed.	3 years	Yes
Isabelle Ireland	Math	Job was available	Nicholls State University	B. S.	1 year	Yes
Imogene Issacs	Special Ed.	Job was available	Nicholls State University	B. A.	3 years	Yes
Teacher		Position				
Isadore Irving		Assistant Principal				
Inga Irby		Mentor				

\* Experience includes current school year

**Assistance.** Waterside School System was the exception to the other parishes in the seriousness with which they took their obligation to induct the beginning teachers. Waterside held a week long induction inservice right before the fall semester started. Topics addressed during the week include the teacher's job description, the program

areas upon which the district places the greatest importance, and the benchmarks. As part of the induction week, the new teachers spend a day at the schools where they will teach. Mrs. Irving said that during the induction week when the new teachers arrive, the team members with whom they will serve are there to greet them. After Mrs. Irving meets with the beginners and goes over the handbook, she gives them a tour of the school. The team members then take the new teacher to his/her classroom, show him/her the supplies, and make a list of the supplies and materials the new teacher thinks are needed. Finally, the team meets as a whole and discusses the curriculum of their discipline at Barnstorming.

Both Mrs. Irving and the mentor, Mrs. Irby, thought the parish system did a fine job of induction for those teachers beginning in August. However, they both indicated that other than a one day meeting which addresses policies and insurance, those teachers who begin their job once the school year has started do not receive an adequate induction. The burden then falls upon the school. As the school counselor, Mrs. Irby fulfills that role but suggests that the team and mentor become even more important in that instance.

*Mentor Support.* Because of the emphasis placed on teams at Barnstorming, all of the new teachers agreed that the mentor's main purpose was to help them with the state's assessment program. Therefore, contact with the mentor was informal and, after meeting frequently during the first few months of school, mentees formally met on an "as needed" basis with their mentor. This arrangement was by design of the interdisciplinary teaming concept.

At the beginning of the assistance period, Mrs. Irby met once a week with the mentees. She first aids the novices in filling out a self-assessment survey which helps them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Mrs. Irby then asks the new teachers to target traits on which they want to work. Once the new teachers are comfortable with the school and its routine, they meet at the beginner's request.

While two of the new teachers, Miss Ireland and Mrs. Ingram, turned to their team for any social support they needed, one of the beginning special education teachers, Mrs. Issacs, viewed Mrs. Irby as her support in all aspects of being new to the school. Mrs. Issacs particularly appreciated her help with teaming since she was new to the concept. All three new teachers reported that aid and advice with resources came from their team.

Formal observations were limited to those required by the state assessment system. However, all three new teachers reported that informal observations were frequent. The special education teachers at Barnstorming were not members of grade level teams because of the nature of their classes. Therefore, they depended more on the mentor than did the other beginners. As Mrs. Ingram noted, the mentor was "in and out all of the time and always left a note." The regular education teachers noted that even though the mentor's main role was the state assessment, in that role Mrs. Irby was particularly helpful. Miss Ireland stated that the feedback from the mentor helped her "talk through" the formal observations. She was encouraged to "reflect on what I think I could be doing better." Mrs. Irby said that she preferred the verbal feedback, rather than written, because "the verbal is not as intimidating."

*Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program. Miss Ireland*

appreciated her experience with LaTAAP, saying that it helps her “think about things I should be doing each day.” Mrs. Indest was a little more cautious in her evaluation of the process. While she admitted it was “a step in the right direction,” she also said she

found it fairly intimidating to know that someone was watching me and writing down every word I said for an entire one and one half hour class period...before I was observed, I focused more on dotting i’s and crossing t’s...I was putting on a show rather than on relating to my students. Once again, it is a procedure to deal with that can ultimately interfere with getting a good curriculum in motion.

Mrs. Irby agreed with Mrs. Indest that, while LaTAAP was stressful, she also saw the benefits of the program. Mrs. Irby liked the “little pink book” distributed by the LDE which explained effective teaching strategies and the domains under which the new teacher is assessed. She said,

I think this program [LaTAAP] does a good job in being very specific about what good teaching encompasses. It’s very specific and I think it helps the teachers to know that. I think they strive to be good teachers and I think the program helps them to be good teachers.

Mrs. Indest suggested that a beneficial strategy might be to videotape the new teacher, then view and discuss the instruction with the new teacher and mentor. Mrs. Indest thought this helped the novice prepare for the state assessment observation.

Monitoring. As with the grade level instruction, teaming was used in teacher selection at Barnstorming. Members of the team involved in teacher selection included the principal, the assistant principal, and one or more members of the team on which the candidate would be assigned.

Basic questions were asked of every candidate but team members are encouraged to generate questions of their own. Mrs. Irving stressed the importance she places on eliciting the applicant's views on instruction, classroom management, and parental involvement. The process for choosing who will be interviewed begins at the Waterside Central Office. Personnel from the school system visit job fairs throughout the state to accept applications, then initially screen them through the human resources department. Once appropriate candidates for the parish are selected, a stack of applications is sent to the schools, determined by need. The principal, assistant principal, and one member of the team then select who they will interview. Mrs. Irving reported that the team, as a whole, looks for certain criteria.

There are several things. Whether or not they have a philosophy of the middle school teacher, whether or not that person feels comfortable working with a team, not just the knowledge base but a very good knowledge base. And then there's always a question of classroom management and feeling comfortable at the middle school level because it's a difficult level.

*Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program.* Mrs. Irving believed that the state program for new teachers was a useful one. She noted that while Waterside Parish had a good evaluation instrument, there wasn't a plan in place for using the instrument's results. LaTAAP, on the other hand, "has built instruments that says this is an area where I can improve, this is how I can improve it, and a check to see that it is improving." For administrators and mentors, this has been a helpful in guiding the new teacher to more effective instruction.

Mrs. Irving reports that she visits every classroom twice a week. Mrs. Issacs agreed that administrators often “pop in for 15 minutes or so.” Administrators don’t always come at the beginning of the class period. Mrs. Issacs states,

Say it’s the principal. He’ll come in. He’ll sit down and observe for 15 minutes of a lesson. It might not be the beginning. It could be the end. It might be an activity. While he sits, he takes a few notes. He writes on a carbon pad, tears off a copy, and leaves me a note. After, he may see me in the hall and say, ‘Did you get my note? This went well. You might want to try this.’

As Miss Ireland noted with mentor feedback, Mrs. Irving said all feedback is presented in the form of reflection. Mrs. Irving stated that at the follow up meeting, “I tell them to tell me what I saw. What did I observe? To see if they can come to the same conclusion I did.” If no problem is seen during the observation, Mrs. Irving does not give feedback. She notes, “If I don’t address it, then they know everything is OK.”

Team Building. As previously explained, the middle school concept of teaming played a significant role in the everyday lives of the new teachers. As such, Miss Ireland often turned to the members of the team for professional and social support. She looked to the other team members as her informal mentors. The members of the learning team provided critical resource help.

As special education and inclusion teachers, Mrs. Issacs and Mrs. Ingram did not belong to grade level teams. Therefore, the members of their department served as informal mentors and purveyors of resources. The learning teams, for them, were helpful in information and knowledge, rather than actual classroom resources.

Whether the source was the grade level team, the department, or the learning team, all of the new teachers at Barnstorming reported other faculty readily helping them, rather than having to procure support and resources on their own. Mrs. Ingram called it a “reliance on colleagues.” Lack of concentrated mentor support, other than for LaTAAP, was not observed as a lack of concern on the mentor’s part but rather as a by-product of the teaming concept. Both the mentor and the beginning teachers accepted this as a part of the way the school worked.

*School Culture and Colleagues* As the concept of the learning team was explained, it was clear that the work of teaching was discussed often and the discussions were carried in to the classroom. Miss Ireland’s team discussed various activities using math manipulatives, took these activities to the classroom, then charted data to determine the effectiveness of the activities on overall math achievement.

In a conversation with Mrs. Irving regarding the importance of the team members to the new teachers, I asked whose job it was to address the concerns of a teacher who had difficulty fitting in with the faculty. She replied,

It’s everybody’s job. The whole school needs to help the new teacher fit in. I would say, specifically, it falls on the administration and the team to help that new teacher out...[during team time] not only are academic things talked about but also just, how are things going in the classroom? So they give feedback to each other, assisting each other. And I think that this kind of builds a camaraderie. And last year, I did see a teacher who was not fitting in with her team. And my questions were to the team, ‘How are you helping this person? What are you doing to make this person feel more comfortable?’

When asked about the school administration’s openness to new teachers observing the veterans teachers, Mrs. Irby replied that the administration encourages the



practice. At times, Mrs. Irby has recommended to the principal that a particular new teacher be given time off from class and a substitute provided by the school, for the purpose of observing veterans. Mrs. Irby reported that the school is amenable to this. However, most new teachers are not. As Mrs. Irby said,

The only thing that I find is that the new teachers are so conscientious and so wonderful that they find it more difficult to have a sub come in to their rooms to be freed up to do observations. They find it more difficult because they have to leave plans for a sub. Sometimes with what they're planning to do, they're not comfortable with a sub doing. So it's like double planning for them. So, it's like they say to me, "oh, gosh, I'll give up my planning period. I don't want to go during a class period." And that's admirable.

Mrs. Irby said the administration, of course, submits to the new teacher's wishes.

However, the new teacher then misses the experience of watching a veteran work.

Intent to Stay. Challenges of the New Teacher. Six interviews were conducted at Barnstorming. When asked about challenges, the mentor and two beginning teachers reported that classroom management caused the greatest concern. The administrator and two of the beginning teachers stated that handling responsibilities outside of teaching was the greatest challenge. Miss Ireland believed classroom management was the most difficult for her because "there's so much to learn when you actually get your own classroom and it can be very overwhelming." Mrs. Indest agreed. She stated that most new teachers "have learned their subjects and theories of teaching and managing a classroom" but replicating college work into a real classroom can be a jarring experience. Even though student teaching experiences may offer similar conditions, Mrs. Indest commented that

the presence of the students' 'real' teacher keeps students' behavior somewhat in check and gives the student teacher someone to look to in moments of indecision. When beginning that first job, the new teacher must not only plan rules and consequences, but also how to respond when things don't go according to plan. They should think through some worst-case scenarios, but I don't think new teachers do that.

Mrs. Irby, a proponent of the CPR (see Background Information section), states that while these morning meetings go far toward building mutual respect and diminishing classroom problems, they still exist. The beginning of the school year, before these relationships are established, are particularly difficult for the beginning teacher and management. However, according to Mrs. Irby, Barnstorming helps the new teacher through conferencing, prior to an actual problem occurring. She stated,

So basically what we do is we talk about an instance, a 'for real' life instance that may have happened in the room and talk about what could have been done to solve the problem in a more constructive way.

The two special education teachers, on the other hand, see duties, outside of actual teaching, as the greatest challenge. Mrs. Issacs called it "stuff that doesn't have to do with my class." In other words, "stuff" such as special education documentation and paperwork required by the school system. Mrs. Ingram explained,

We have to present to faculty, to central office. It's for professional growth and development. And I'm all for that stuff but my question is – and now we have parish tests for math – you have to grade the test. Then you have to sit down and make a document saying who got what wrong for every student. And you're expected to go back and re-teach it but you don't have time...And then you have to cover the whole book. That's the biggest thing. It's just all the other stuff.

The administration sees this frustration in new teachers. Mrs. Irving believes that new teachers don't really know what is required of their time when they enter the field.

They're overwhelmed by the number of things that they have to do and the number of things that they have to be involved in. For instance, you may have to be a sponsor of a team. You're not just a teacher. You may have to stay after school to tutor students. Papers have to be graded. There may be an astronomical number of them. Then our district has criteria for the way you grade certain things. And so I don't think they come in knowing those kinds of things.

Mrs. Irving commented that Waterside Parish was very hands on, as far as district requirements for teacher's instruction. While the requirements were beneficial for increased student achievement and teacher professional development, these criteria also presented challenges. Mrs. Irving explained,

Our parish has gone to scoring essays using the LEAP rubric, whether you are teaching science or social studies, it doesn't matter. We encourage you to use that so that students will know that once this is how it is being used in the classroom, that can carry over in to your assessment for LEAP. But, if you don't know that coming in, and you are a first year teacher, and you are instructing in math, you are expected to give some sort of essay that pertains to math. And that's something that you have to score.

Mrs. Irving suggested that university preparation programs might address this for new teachers by offering more "real world" experiences before student teaching.

*Beginning Successes.* Mrs. Indest and Miss Ireland were pleased with the relationships they had established with their students. Miss Ireland said that "the parents tell me they really enjoy the class and they have a lot of fun in my class. That kind of thing makes me feel good." Mrs. Ingram and Mrs. Issacs also believed they had achieved success with their students but for other reasons.

Mrs. Ingram, in particular, was protective of the special education students she taught and was especially proud when they succeeded.

Watching children in special ed who have been told all of their lives, whether it was insinuated or directly told, realize that they can do and they can learn and they can go out in the regular class. And they can do the 8<sup>th</sup> grade work or the 7<sup>th</sup> grade work and when you see the lights go on like, my God, it makes you feel good.

More than successes in teaching, Mrs. Issacs found success in seeing students grasp social skills and increase their self-esteem as a result.

I think that's more important than the materials in the textbook that I have. For a lot of these children, the environments that they come from, you can give them all the math drills, all the language arts drills you want. But until they are OK with themselves, emotionally, or their self esteem, they're not going to learn.

Mrs. Issacs related a story about a student who was traumatized by a shooting and how this became a learning experience for both the student and the teacher.

We had one that we both [Mrs. Issacs and Mrs. Ingram] taught that was involved in a shooting and watched his friend get shot and buried in a ditch. You can't teach during that. So both of us took him in the back and watched him cry and helped him grieve...It was still a learning experience. It might not have been science or social studies. But there was some form of education taking place...This child now knows where he can go and who he can go to. He knows that people care about him. That child made a difference in our lives, too.

Thus, the new teachers viewed the successes of the child as their own.

*The View of the Profession.* All four beginning teachers at Barnstorming enjoy teaching and view themselves as professionals. The beginning teachers stated that their "work was important" (Mrs. Ingram), that they "take the job seriously" (Mrs. Issacs), and that "seeing the students respond to what we are doing is a joy" (Mrs. Indest). Miss Ireland felt she was acting as a professional because she was able to "see the results of [the instruction] and that they're achieving."

***Holding Power.*** When asked what held them to education, each new teacher stated that the desire to teach was intrinsic and they stay because that is what they have chosen for their career. As Mrs. Issacs said, “Teaching is inside me.”

**School Processes.** The emphasis on teamwork and learning is evident on entry to Barnstorming Middle, where the mission statement of team work in an atmosphere of mutual respect is practiced daily. The school community promotes excellence and is proud of the achievement of the children. The walls of the main hallway are lined with trophy cases filled with school awards. A display table at the corner holds ceramics made by children in the art classes. The bulletin board is filled with news clippings about the school and with a section devoted to “School Toons,” that is, cartoons about the school and some caricatures of faculty members, all drawn by Barnstorming students. At the immediate entrance to the school, just outside the main office, is a large suggestion box, where parents, also a part of the team, can give input to the administration.

From the central office to the newest teacher, excellence and achievement are a part of the culture. Excellence becomes not merely a goal, but an expectation. This aspect of the culture gave pause to some of the beginners as they saw this expectation as an additional pressure. Mrs. Ingram commented that,

The pressure is from the state and it trickles down. You know, I think part of the stuff from the system, from the district that Waterside Parish has always been at the top. And we don’t have unions and so, we paid you this much money and we kept you at the top and so we expect this standard from you. And here’s all of the extra stuff that we are going to have you do because it’s a compensation.

Nonetheless, all four teachers reported that even with the pressure to excel, none would choose to leave the parish.

*Instruction at Barnstorming Middle School.* Two eighth grade Louisiana History classes, one seventh grade math, and one eighth grade pre-Algebra class were observed. Creativity was the byword in the social studies classes as Mrs. Indest sent her students on a “Mission Impossible.” Using cooperative grouping, with each student assigned a task (Commander, Runner, Time Keeper, and Writer), students used an atlas, physical maps, and political maps to find out where the headquarters of the spies were located. Students did so with clues provided by the teacher. When a geographic location was correctly found, the group runner received another clue to the whereabouts of the headquarters. The winning group was rewarded with candy treats. The students had an exciting class as they learned geographic map skills.

In both math classes, students were continually challenged to think and affirmed for doing so. As Miss Ireland assigned two problems to introduce a lesson on probability in the seventh grade math class, she told the class, “They’re challenging. Don’t give up. Try for me!” Students were praised as they worked (“Jerry asked a good question.” “You know how to do this.”).

High expectations for the seventh graders were evident as they made frequency tables and discussed theoretical probability. A discussion of options and outcomes prompted an explanation of experimental probability. Before the students were given their assignment, Miss Ireland asked them to compare experimental and theoretical probability. The students were able to articulate the difference in their own words.

**Metaphorical Synopsis.** While no element of the school stood out in marked superiority to other elements in the school, all areas of Barnstorming permeated excellence. The emphasis on professional development by the school district molded teachers who had knowledge and training geared to increasing student achievement. The efforts succeeded, as seen in high test scores and an enthusiasm for learning in the children. A highly trained crew can overcome great obstacles, as demonstrated by the barnstormers in history as well as the barnstormers in Waterside Parish. However, as with the risks taken by the barnstormer pilots, teachers at Barnstorming Middle were concerned that as excellence became an expectation, rather than a goal, the novice teachers were sometimes overwhelmed with the demands made upon them.

Team work was a priority at Barnstorming, just as it was for the barnstorming aviators of the 1920s. Teachers relied on each other and together formulated optimum strategies for increasing student learning. Though the students were not without need, as indicated in the stories told by Mrs. Issacs and Mrs. Ingram, care and nurturing of the child were ingrained in the teachers at Barnstorming. Learning teams and instructional teams gave new teachers the professional, social, and resource support necessary for a successful “flight plan.”

Creativity in instructional strategies also played a part in the excellence that permeated Barnstorming. Encouraged by the administration to take risks, with the goal of increased achievement, teachers were empowered to use invention in order to help the child excel.

Training, creativity, and team work all combined to create a successful learning environment for the children of Waterside Parish. The barnstormers in the classroom, led by an enthusiastic pilot and navigator, worked together to perform stunts designed to educate the whole child. The reputations of the World War I pilots were of skillful aviators, willing to take risks, in order to succeed. The crew of Barnstorming Middle is developing just such a reputation.

### **Mir Middle School**

**Introduction.** As part of a new era in space exploration, Russia built a 143 ton space station in 1986. The space station called Mir was a source of pride among Russians. Nonetheless, the station, over its lifetime was beset with many problems. Accidents, a near-fatal collision, and drastic funding cuts eventually caused its demise. After orbiting in circles for 15 years, the station plunged to the earth on March 23, 2001, some parts of it destroyed, some parts of it forever lost in space (AP, 2001).

**Background Information.** Mir Middle School is located in Riverside Parish outside of an urban center in Louisiana. The area is an historic one, the site of several battles in American history. Museums and plantations intermittently dot the landscape. However, the community itself is surrounded by, and the lifeblood of the residents depend on, the industrial area which surrounds the main highway that runs through the parish. The Mississippi River provides easy access for the barges which service the area industries.

In addition to the industry and the tourism, Riverside Parish depends on commercial fishing for its livelihood. Most of the community earn their living in blue



collar jobs which provide a comfortable, though not luxurious, lifestyle. Access to Riverside Parish comes from the main east/west interstate or by ferry from the urban center across the river.

Mir Middle School is located in a lower middle class neighborhood just off the main highway which runs through the industrial section. The architecture of the school is that of a flat roofed, square building, associated with those built in the 1970s. The school has a large glassed breezeway that provides sunshine and an open air feeling as the students walk to class. On entering the breezeway, however, the area becomes a trap for the heat from the sun. Mir houses students in grades six through eight, with a student population of 715 (612 in regular education; 103, or approximately 12 %, in special education). The minority population of the school accounts for 14.7% of the total school population and 37.6% live in poverty.

According to the Louisiana Department of Education, in SY 1998-1999 Mir was labeled as an Academically Below Average school, due to a School Performance Score (SPS) of 64.3. An SEI of -1.86 SD was assigned based on the predicted SPS of 90.27. Noteworthy is the fact that the SPS in SY 1999-2000 increased to 83.8, though still not as high as the predicted score for this school. In Pair 1, Mir was designated as the less effective school. The attendance rate of 90.9% is well below the state average of 94.3%, while the dropout rate (.7%) is significantly better than the state (2.3%). Few teachers at Mir go on to receive advanced degrees, only 13%, compared to other middle schools in the district, which average 22% of the faculty possessing advanced degrees. Class size at Mir is much larger than other middle schools in Riverside School District. Core

classes in the district averaged 21-26 students in 31% of the classes and over 27 in 51% of the classes. At Mir only 22% of the core classes had 21-26 students. Most classes (71%) had 27 or more students. Class size above 26-27 has been shown in a number of studies to be a negative indicator of student success (Glass & Smith, 1979; Eisner, 1998; Rutter, Maugham, Mortimore, Outston, & Smith, 1979; Fowler & Walberg, 1991).

Mir Middle has also instituted the middle school concept of interdisciplinary teaming. Classes meet in ninety minute blocks, teachers are assigned to grade level teams, and each team is organized by core subjects. However, while the structure of teaming exists at Mir, the philosophy of teaming has not been embraced. Beginning teachers did not report the existence of learning teams, in addition to the grade level teams, nor did teachers report daily meetings with the teams.

On my initial visit to Mir, the principal, Mrs. Jennifer Jackson invited me to arrive before school started so that we could map out the day. Since school began at 8:45 a.m., I arrived at 8:30 a.m., hoping to visit with Mrs. Jackson before her day started. As students entered the school, few teachers were observed in the hallways, monitoring students. The bell rang for the beginning of school, announcements were made over the intercom by a student, and there was a moment of silence. Classes started and Mrs. Jackson had still not arrived. Questioning the secretary, I was informed that she would arrive shortly. At 9:10 a.m. Mrs. Jackson breezed in, greeting everyone as she came through the office. With no apology or explanation, she invited me in to her office to give me the new teachers' schedules for the day.

**Beginning Teachers at Mir Middle School.** There were four beginning teachers at Mir Middle, all of whom volunteered to be interviewed, as can be seen in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2. Teachers at Mir Who Volunteered for Interview.**

Teacher	Subject	Position Selection	University	Degree	Experience*	Certified
Janice Jefferson	Science	Job was available in January	Our Lady of Holy Cross	B. A.	1 year	Yes
Julie Jenson	Science	Job was available	LSU	B. A.	1 year	Yes
Jamie Johnson	Math	Job was available	Mississippi University for Women	B. S.	1 year	Yes
Jocelyn Jones	Social Studies	Knew faculty at Mir	Southeast Louisiana University	B. A.	2 years	Yes
Teacher		Position				
Jennifer Jackson		Principal				
Joy Jagneaux		Mentor				
Jane Jacoby		Mentor				

\*Experience includes current school year

**Assistance.** During the year prior to the present study, the Riverside School District piloted a new teacher induction program. New teachers were removed from the classroom for one day each semester and substitutes were hired to cover their classes. These full day workshops, along with half day workshops once a month, provided new teachers with information ranging from the state assessment program to how to handle a parent conference to classroom management strategies. Only one of the four teachers I

spoke with, Jocelyn Jones, participated in this program. Miss Jones described it as helpful and as a way to receive professional development without being overwhelmed all at once. The program ended after one year because the district concluded that it was a poor idea to remove new teachers from the classroom so often. Moreover, the cost of substitutes for the new teachers became prohibitive. As a result, during the current school year, the district induction program was downsized to a one day workshop.

Both mentors and new teachers agreed that the current district and school induction programs were informal ones. A couple of days before school started a one day workshop was held at the Riverside School District Central Office. The content of the meeting covered insurance, district policies, and a viewing of the Harry Wong video (see discussion in introduction to Chapter Six). At Mir, teachers reported a variety of induction efforts at the school. Mrs. Johnson reported her induction consisted of a tour of the school by Mrs. Jackson the day she was hired. Miss Jenson said the other teachers were going to a workshop in New Orleans so the principal sent her as well so she could get to know the faculty and gain knowledge from the workshop, too. Janice Jefferson was hired in January so she reported no official induction from the school or the district.

*Mentor Support.* All of the new teachers who were interviewed stated that they had to teach for approximately four weeks before a mentor was assigned to them. During the first few weeks without a mentor, they were forced to figure out the system on their own or solicit help from fellow teachers. All of the teachers also agreed that once they were assigned a mentor, the contact was neither frequent nor regular. Miss Jenson offered that she'd only met with her mentor once and had only been observed for

about half a class, feeling that the mentor offered her little help. Mrs. Johnson stated that her meetings with the mentor were “just occasional – kind of nonchalant. Not really a set time at all. We could go several months without any communication.” Mrs. Jefferson agreed that the only time the mentor met with them was when it was time for the official observation.

While all four teachers reported that the mentor met with them only sporadically and only observed their classes once or twice a semester, as required by the state, the mentors had a different view of the relationship. Mrs. Jacoby, a veteran of over twenty years in the school system, stated that she made frequent informal observations, often “popping in” the classes, which she did with the entire faculty as part of her role as curriculum coordinator. Mrs. Jacoby viewed a part of her job as helping the new teachers locate activities, and learn “teacher tricks.” Additionally, the principal, Mrs. Jackson, sent Mrs. Jacoby to workshops, rather than allowing faculty members to miss class to attend. Mrs. Jacoby then shared materials that she received from the many workshops with the rest of the staff.

Mrs. Joy Jagneaux, the other mentor, saw her role as one to guide new teachers to work toward better relationships with the faculty and the team on which they serve. She wanted to make the teacher feel good about what s/he’s doing and encouraged each not to give up. The new teachers did not mention this as a function of their mentor. Rather, the principal was mentioned more often in the role of social supporter, along with other teachers.

*Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program.* All new teachers at Mir Middle agreed that the mentor's primary role was to prepare them for the state assessment program, the Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program (LaTAAP). Both Mrs. Jacoby and Mrs. Jagneaux disagreed with this portrayal. However, Mrs. Jacoby did remark that by knowing what the state assessor is looking for, she can better prepare the new teacher for the assessment and help the novice improve any weak points.

Opinions varied about LaTAAP. Affirmations as well as problems with the program were expressed. Mrs. Jagneaux and Miss Jones agreed that the program was both useful in that it helped to develop good teaching habits and classroom routines and strategies. While Mrs. Johnson commented that it was worthwhile work, she also noted that the arrangements for the outside assessor visit should be more carefully planned by the school. Her outside assessment was completed on a Friday afternoon at the last period of the day on a pep rally schedule. As a result, she felt that her assessment was not a true picture of her classroom. Mrs. Jacoby and Miss Jenson had a different take on the program, both taking issue with the single visit by the outside assessor. During assessor training, Mrs. Jacoby disputed the rating that the trainers gave to a filmed practice assessment. When she asked for an explanation for the rating, the state trainers could not explain why that particular rating was assigned. Their answer to Mrs. Jacoby was "they said it was a two," unable to clarify who "they" were. As a result, Mrs. Jacoby felt that the assessment system was too subjective. In her opinion,

An outside assessor coming in and watching somebody teach two times, I don't think you can tell watching somebody's class one time...I think it would be better left to the local school than bringing in an outside assessor. These people – I've seen them teach for nine months. They've seen them teach for one hour. I see these people in the halls. I've seen them dealing with children. I've seen them on duty. I think I and Mrs. Jackson have a much better view point of what these people are capable and not capable of.

Likewise, Miss Jenson was comfortable with the mentor and the principal observing and assessing her classroom performance. However, she also was apprehensive about the outside assessor.

But the outside person, you met with them once and they came in your classroom once. And if something bad happened to you during that period, they didn't see you any other time besides that one fifty minute block that you taught.

Monitoring. The administration at Mir was not proactive in the selection of new teachers to the school. The Personnel Director at the Riverside School System Central Office attends Job Fairs at the local universities to recruit new teachers, then offers the beginners a choice of schools in which they might be interested. If an opening occurs in the middle of the school year, the Personnel Director sends out letters to those students in the student teaching semester, informing them of the nature of the opening and the school that has the opening. Because the district is so close to an urban center with a poor school system reputation, the district would seem to be in an optimal position for recruiting. However, according to the administration at Mir, the school receives a large number of uncertified teachers sent to them from the district. In response to a question about the number of certified teachers in the school, I was told

It's hard to keep young people in this profession because the pay is so low and the working conditions are not always so great. We're getting a lot of young people who were not trained for education. We've got Teach for America people. Last year we had a whole fleet of young people come in – one who had graduated in journalism, one who had graduated in communications. They had never had a methods course. They had never done student teaching. That experience is valuable.

Cursory observations throughout the school during a site visit to Mir Middle School confirm the view that Mir has teachers who were obviously not trained as educators.

*Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program.* Mrs. Jackson, the principal, sees her role in LaTAAP as one of observation and feedback. The requirements for the state assessment are fulfilled and feedback is given within a week. A secondary role of the principal, one that is not necessarily associated with LaTAAP, is that of general support. Mrs. Jefferson and Mrs. Johnson note that the social support they received at the school has come from the principal. Though not an older woman, the impression of Mrs. Jackson was that of a caring and compassionate motherly figure. Mrs. Jacoby explains,

This is a very supportive administration. I've worked under a lot of principals and she is, by far, the best. She can be critical without tearing a person down. She wants to help the young teacher. I've worked with principals who just wanted them out the door. And they didn't care how they did it. But not Mrs. Jackson. She's willing to work with anybody to try to help them be a better teacher. She does a wonderful job with it.

However, observations of the school on a typical day reveal that while the principal may care about the teachers, academic press and pedagogy were not priorities.

**Team Building.** Three of the four teachers interviewed agreed that informal mentors were more integral to their first year survival than was their assigned mentor.



From these informal mentors, the beginners received both professional and social support. Though the support was received, once solicited, the teachers noted that they first had to seek it out. The help and/or resources were not freely offered. The teachers who were called informal mentors were either the chairperson of the department to which the new teacher was assigned or a member of the team on which the new teacher served.

*School Culture and Colleagues.* Discussion of the “work of teaching” by faculty members was limited to current lesson plans and the success of these plans, according to all four teachers. They did, however, note that this type of discussion was common. New teachers did not observe other veteran teachers because, they surmised, the teaming concept made doing so difficult. The provision of substitutes for observing at a time other than their planning period was unavailable. Moreover, since all grade level teachers have the same planning period for team meetings, if a veteran were observed, it would have to be at a grade level the observer did not teach.

*Intent to Stay. Challenges of the New Teacher.* The problems of new teachers, as articulated at Mir Middle, were as many and as varied as the participants who were interviewed. The most vocal consensus centered around the challenge of proper classroom management. The new teacher mentor, Mrs. Jacoby, stated that many new teachers use detention as a first and last method, failing to understand the difference between discipline and punishment. Mrs. Jacoby believed discipline was more than a classroom policy. She equated the level of classroom discipline to the level of discipline in the young person’s life. Mrs. Jefferson, an elementary certified teacher, felt her

difficulty lay in coming from a student teaching experience in elementary school to Mir where she had to discipline eighth grade students.

Time management loomed large for Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Jefferson, and Miss Jenson. All three said there was never enough time to do all that was required of them. A major problem for Mrs. Johnson, one that was under the control of the school, was having four class preparations. She never seemed to get more than a day ahead of her class. Miss Jenson's problem with time management began to take a toll on her. She shared that "the reason I cried the first three months of school was because I was working 18 hours a day. I mean, I'd go home and I didn't have a life." Mrs. Jefferson was simply unprepared for the number of papers she had to grade.

The day to day workings of the school caused frustration for the novices. The correct way to set up a roll book, the correct way to make out a report card, and the correct method to complete a cumulative folder are all activities within the purview of the school's administration to educate the new teacher. However, the mentor and the novice had different views on how to deal with this. One mentor, Mrs. Jacoby, stated,

Who knew that you had to do a cum folder in black ink? I didn't know. Nobody told me. I did mine in blue. I was there 'til doomsday writing in grades because nobody taught me. Some of it you just have to learn through experience.

Miss Jones concurred on the problem but not the solution.

I totally messed up my grade book the first nine weeks. And that's just something they don't cover in college classes. You know, the technical things. My mentor didn't cover that with me. Couldn't she have?

While Miss Jones felt the problem could have been alleviated and stress ultimately reduced for the new teacher through mentoring in the basic operations of teaching, the mentor took the attitude that this was on-the-job training because that is how she learned. This viewpoint harkens the adage “I had to go through it. Now so do you.”

*Beginning Successes.* Three of the four teachers interviewed attributed their successes to seeing their own students succeed. Stories of unmotivated students who were now trying were told, along with the story of a student who overcame problems at home to successfully complete a class, were viewed as personal successes by the novice teachers. Only one teacher, second year teacher Miss Jones, saw success in herself. In looking back over the past year, she stated,

I’ve grown. Last year I found that I grew in one area mainly – classroom management. This year I’ve grown in so many different areas. The scope just widens a lot in the second year. I’ve grown in meeting deadlines a little bit earlier this year and I guess being more responsible for my team and ...forming relationships.

This mirrors the advice of Mrs. Jacoby to new teachers; that is, to persevere. Mrs. Jacoby says that if new teachers know that they will make mistakes but that these mistakes can be overcome, they will survive.

*The View of the Profession.* Though Miss Jenson and Mrs. Jefferson readily agreed that they loved teaching and would stay in the profession, Miss Jones was a little more cautious. She stated that she loved the subject of history more than she enjoyed the “job of teaching.” Miss Jones disliked the technical aspects of the profession such as homeroom folders and grading papers. Somewhat ambivalent, Miss Jones said she could probably be happier in another job but also enjoyed the challenge of teaching. Mrs.

Johnson was the most outspoken of the new teachers regarding the field of education – a field she had no intention of pursuing in the future. Mrs. Johnson’s husband wanted to pursue a degree so while “teaching is not my ideal...I thought what’s the quickest degree I can get and get out of here. So it was mainly just a means to an end to get out and graduate.”

*Holding Power.* Miss Jones and Mrs. Jefferson believed that the key to holding teachers to the profession was money. Riverside Parish, an industrial center, provides a job market that is both plentiful and high paying. Realizing this, Miss Jones stated that she could be making more money and not bringing home any work if she worked in industry, rather than education. Mrs. Jefferson frankly said it was depressing to see secretaries with fewer skills and less education make more money than she did. Only Miss Jensen said a love of the job is what holds her to the profession. She said that teaching comes from the heart.

Since I was seven years old, I’ve known that I want to be a teacher. But even so, the first three months of school, it was such an adjustment. I cried. And my dad said, ‘Quit. I’ll pay for you to go back to school.’ And I was, like, ‘What else will I do?’ There’s nothing else that I want to do. Even if I go back to school, this is what I want to do. I want to be a teacher. But it’s really hard.

School Processes. Though all four teachers and both mentors agreed that the principal was caring and supportive of the faculty, no one mentioned the principal as an instructional leader. The extent of beginning teacher monitoring was limited to that required by LaTAAP. Mrs. Jackson was never observed by me outside of the main office area.

During change of classes, few teachers were observed in the hallways monitoring students. An exception was the change time after lunch. Several teachers stood by the stairwell as students walked up the stairs to the sixth period class. One teacher was observed coming in to the main building from lunch, quickly followed by a student who was challenging the teacher regarding an incident in the cafeteria, one for which he was being turned in to the office. Announcements about an Eighth Grade Dance and an Art Club Sale lined the main hallway but there was no evidence of student work anywhere outside of the classrooms.

*Instruction at Mir Middle.* Four classes were observed during the spring semester at Mir Middle School, two math and two social studies classes. In each case, at least once, and during one class more than once, during the instructional time, there was an interruption; either a student delivering a note to the teacher or another student, an intercom interruption, or a student in the classroom coming in late or leaving early. The teachers seemed to take this in stride as a normal part of each class period. Overall, the classes were large, though none observed for this study held over 27 students.

Transition time was slow in all classes observed and students were easily led off track. An example of this occurred in one eighth grade Louisiana History class. The students were watching a video provided by the D-Day Museum on the Invasion of Normandy. A wasp flew into the room. Several students, as well as the teacher, were involved in the extended killing and disposal of the wasp; meanwhile, the video continued to play.

The casual climate modeled by the principal was also evident in the classroom. At the beginning of one class period when the seventh grade math teacher, Mrs. Johnson,

was collecting homework, she informed the class that if they did not have their homework, that was fine. They could turn it in the next week. Before the class broke in to groups to work more problems, the teacher opened a discussion with the class on how well they liked the layout of the text book for that particular chapter.

The overall lack of academic press in the school was best exemplified in the eighth grade math class. The students were quite animated about the project on which they were currently working, called "The Sugar Baby Project." The premise was that the females in the class had just found out they were pregnant (and in the case of the males, that their girlfriend was pregnant). The students were given a copy of a checkbook balance sheet and occasionally, throughout the project, Mrs. Johnson deposited "funds" in their accounts. The students were to budget, write checks, and balance their checkbook. The homework that was returned to them on the day the class was observed was a sheet of construction paper on which the students had pasted catalog pictures of baby furniture that they intended to buy. On the day of the observation, they brought newspapers and coupons to class and were shopping for baby food. An argument may be made for the practical life lessons that this project offered to these adolescent students. However, as high school loomed ever closer for these eighth grade students, the skills required to balance a checkbook or the construction of baby furniture collages offered little preparation for higher level math.

Like the hallways of the school, student work was rarely found on the walls of the classrooms. The walls of the social studies classroom were bare. The math classroom had paper fishes hanging from fishing line from the ceilings. The fishes were

colored on graph paper, a project that the teacher explained was a lesson in counting the cells on the graph paper and the coloring was “just for fun.”

**Metaphorical Synopsis.** Much like living in a space station, the novice teachers at Mir Middle School were Lost in Space. Serious about their work, and with the potential to one day be fine teachers, in the learning climate at Mir, they were merely muddling through. Though the teachers reported that teaching was a frequent topic of discussion, the “lounge talk” I overheard centered around the price of tickets to an amusement park and the scope and fear factor of the rides in the amusement park.

The principal of the school obviously cared for the teachers from the perceptions of the novices. However, a love of children never surfaced as a priority in a discussion with anyone, not even in the new teacher’s explanation of why they intended to stay in teaching. There was some discussion by the mentor of respect given to children in return for respect received, within the context of classroom management. Yet, the welfare of the child seemed secondary to the beginner’s self-imposed role of survival. Every day tasks, such as record keeping, which veteran teachers could easily address with the new teachers, were viewed as tasks the novice had to learn through experience. In the classroom, academic press was sacrificed for fun. Just as the space station was beset with problems, so also were the novices at Mir Middle. Without the guidance of a mentor or an instructional leader, these new teachers floated through the year, working in Mir and lost in space.

### **A Comparison of Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools**

Interdisciplinary teaming was part of the organizational structure at both Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools. However, the concept as implemented at each school was vastly different.

Teams are a part of life at Barnstorming, from teacher selection to instructional strategies to collegial support. From the first day of school, beginning teachers understand that they will be a part of a team. Learning teams aid in professional development, while grade level teams deal with student problems, parent concerns, and instructional ideas. Beginning teachers realize that though they are autonomous in their classroom, they are never alone because they are a part of a community.

Teachers are encouraged by the Barnstorming administration to share in decision making through teaming. One of the new teachers at Barnstorming was concerned about teaching seventh grade one day, then eighth grade the next, a result of the block scheduling. Discussion with her team members resulted in the decision to teach the seventh grade for four weeks, then the eighth grade for four weeks, switching with the other team members. Rather than questioning the decision and the adjustment, the administration encouraged and applauded the cooperation of the team members to help the beginning teacher.

Interdisciplinary teaming is also a part of the school organization at Mir. However, beginning teachers at Mir view the concept as a structural one; that is, they define teaming as all grade level teachers meeting at the same conference period, rather than viewing it as an opportunity to share ideas and support one another. New teachers











at Mir did not report any instructional or classroom management help from the team members. One teacher indicated that her roll book was incorrect for the first nine weeks because no one instructed her on how to complete it. Another new teacher commented that she cried for the first three months of school because no one would help her. Two of the four new teachers reported turning to the principal for social support because they perceived it was not available anywhere else for them. Mir did not incorporate learning teams as a part of the interdisciplinary team concept.

As a result of teaming, the mentor at Barnstorming took more of a background role, providing support when needed, but encouraging the new teachers and the team itself to work for the success of all members. Likewise, the principal fulfilled the requirements of LaTAAP, but, in addition to the minimum requirements, also demonstrated leadership through shared decision making. The administration urged the team to take on the roll of instructional leadership as well as professional development through the learning team.


Conversely, the mentors at Mir were viewed negatively by the beginning teachers. One new teacher reported that after seven months of school, she'd only met with the mentor once. Another teacher stated that she did not get much help from the mentor in any area. Though personally supportive, the new teachers did not perceive effective instructional monitoring from the principal. The predominant goal of the classes appeared to be ensuring that the lesson was fun, rather than the primary goal of learning and achievement.

As outlined in Table 6.3, general a priori themes from Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools point to several differences. The category of mentoring assistance refers to the level of professional, social, and resource help provided by the school's official mentor. Even though interdisciplinary teaming played such a large role in the school's organization, the mentoring assistance at Barnstorming was effective and overall support early in the year. By design, the mentor eventually allowed the grade level team to take on the induction of the novice. Mir's mentor, in the opinion of the beginning teachers, was ineffective. Administrative monitoring refers to the level of instructional assistance, as well as the leadership provided by the administration in increasing student achievement. Though advocating shared decision making and reliance on the team, Barnstorming's administration, nonetheless, provided instructional leadership which allowed the faculty to successfully implement the teaming. Mir's principal, on the other hand, provided social support but no instructional leadership. Team building was an integral part of Barnstorming but was only of average help at Mir, as perceived by the beginning teachers.

Table 6.3. General A Priori Themes at Barnstorming and Mir Middle.

School	Mentoring Assistance	Administrative Monitoring	Collegial Team Building	Effective Instruction
Barnstorming (ME)*				
Mir (LE)*				

\*ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Legend: Effective:  Ineffective:  Holding Steady: 

In addition to school effects, teacher effects were also examined in this study. Classroom observations examined instructional strategies in light of the components of effective teaching. Instruction at Barnstorming was creative, effective, and geared to increasing student achievement. Seventh grade math students at Barnstorming were observed discussing the difference between theoretical and experimental probability. While there was instruction taking place at Mir, it could not be considered effective, as demonstrated by the seventh grade math lesson. The Sugar Babies Project, while instructive, were designed for student enjoyment, not student achievement.

Specific a priori themes include the additional areas of challenges faced by the beginning teacher, successes of the beginning teacher, teacher intent to stay and interdisciplinary teaming. There were few differences in the beginning teachers' perceptions of these themes across contexts, other than their perception of teaming as implemented at their school. Table 6.4 documents the specific a priori themes by as perceived by the beginning teachers at Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools.

The challenges and successes are documented by frequency of mentions. Teachers at Barnstorming were evenly divided over whether discipline or paperwork were the greater challenge. Teachers at Mir cited time management and adjusting to "the real world" of teaching as challenges. All but one of the teachers at both schools reported that the children's successes were their successes. One teacher at Mir reported self-growth as her greatest success. Interdisciplinary teaming was documented from interview data.

Table 6.4. Specific A Priori Themes at Barnstorming and Mir Middle.

School	Greatest Challenge		Greatest Success		Interdisciplinary Teaming		Intent to stay		
	Discipline	Other	Student Success	Other	Professional and collegial support	Structural concept	Intend to Stay	Intend to Leave	Intend to Stay but not at present school
Barnstorming (ME)*	2	2	3	1	X		4	0	0
Mir (LE)*		4	3	1		X	2	2	0

\*ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Table 6.4 also notes the number of beginning teachers at each school who intend to stay or leave education. This intent is based on the teacher's perception at the end of the current school year. As outlined, all of the new teachers at Barnstorming intend to continue in the field, while only half of the new teachers at Mir plan to stay in education.

### **Pair 2: Two Schools on the Fringe of a Mid-Sized City**

#### **Polar Flight Middle School**

**Introduction.** In 1926, Richard Byrd, a Commander in the U. S. Navy, successfully completed the first flight to the North Pole. The aircraft was fitted with special fuel tanks to increase their capacity, and thus, increase the range of the flight (Lopez, 1995). Though navigation was difficult, Byrd proved himself as a focused and disciplined leader. With no landmarks, Byrd relied on a sun compass, a reversal of a sundial, to act as the plane's directional (Lopez, 1995). Byrd was an adventurer and sent out to explore dangerous areas, previously uncharted. However, despite these

challenges, Byrd provided the solid foundation for his crew, ultimately leading them to a successful flight.

**Background Information.** Polar Flight Middle School is located in the small town of Corcoran in Northside Parish. Like the majority of the population of Northside Parish, the people of Corcoran are largely descendants of French-speaking Acadians. Though located just off the interstate between Houston and New Orleans, Corcoran is easily bypassed by travelers. Thus, most business is local and related to the oil and gas industry.

As part of the Northside Parish School System, Polar Flight was directly affected by the United States Department of Justice's desegregation lawsuit against the school system of the parish. During the 1999-2000 school year, the school system was found to be surreptitiously disobeying the law by operating a racially identifiable school system. Four new schools were built during the 1998-1999 school year in direct defiance of the U.S. Department of Justice 1967 decree which stated that, under the desegregation order, court ordered permission must be sought before any school construction could begin. This construction, according to a Dallas-based consultant for the Justice Department, further segregated students by raising the number of racially identifiable schools from 16 to 19 (Billiot, 2000). The result, when the issue was brought before the U. S. District Judge, was that two predominantly black schools would close, black students would be bused to predominantly white schools, black principals would be placed at predominantly white schools, white principals would be placed at

predominantly black schools, and teachers would be transferred in order to racially balance teaching staffs (Billiot, 2000).

Polar Flight Middle School felt the impact of this judicial order through the teaching staff, both losses and gains, and a loss of some students to other schools. A new African-American assistant principal was assigned to Polar Flight during the 2000-2001 school year, as well as new African-American faculty members. While the issues associated with desegregation lay like a cloud over the school, teachers also face challenges from the student body, particularly those fifth grade students who enter the school for the first time. The majority of the student body come from a cross-section of small country towns across the area known as Acadiana. Therefore, upon entering Polar Flight in fifth grade, students come from several elementary schools in several communities, most of which are rural. These new students come with differing levels of achievement and experiences at the elementary level into classrooms where the novice must teach to some semblance of homogeneity.

Located in the middle of the business district of Corcoran, surrounded by a Catholic church, a cemetery, and a middle class neighborhood, Polar Flight is a modern brick structure in front, which has been added on to the older part of the school in the back. Housing almost one thousand students, Polar Flight is so large that there are two teacher's lounges, three separate full size school buildings and a host of portable buildings. Despite its size and the problems inherent to large schools, during instructional time, the hallways are quiet and clean.

There are 986 students in grades five through eight at Polar Flight. Regular education students number 869 (88%) and there are 117 (12%) students in special education. Of these students, 29.8% are minority students and 54.6% of the students live in poverty. Though Polar Flight is located in a small town, its Johnson code designation (NCES, 2000) is urban fringe of a mid-sized city (see Chapter Three for a discussion of the Johnson codes). The Louisiana Department of Education has labeled Polar Flight as a school which is Academically Above Average, with a School Performance Score (SPS) of 80.4 during the 1998-1999 school year (SY). A regression analysis predicted a score of 79.29 for Polar Flight. The residual score is a +.72 SD, making Polar Flight the more effective school in Pair 2. During SY 1999-2000, Polar Flight continued to improve with an SPS of 90.1. Both the dropout rate (2.5%) and the attendance rate (94.5%) are about average for the state (2.3% and 94.3%). Likewise, the class size is average, with 67% of the classes containing 21-26 students in each class. Slightly more faculty at Polar Flight (38%) have masters' degrees than the state average (37%).

The initial visit to the school verified the first impression of the principal I received from a phone conversation. The school was run efficiently and was a no nonsense organization. The secretaries greeted me graciously, showed me where to sign in, and where to wait until the principal was ready to see me. I observed, as I waited for the principal, that the office staff was never idle. Though friendly on the phone and with guests, there was a "well oiled machine" quality to their work. There were no students wandering the halls and no teachers loitered in the lounge. When the bell rang for

change of classes, both assistant principals left their offices, picked up a walkie-talkie, and proceeded to monitor all hallways during the transition time. This was a consistent routine observed on all subsequent visits to the school. My appointment was set up for 9:30 a.m. and that was exactly the time that I was ushered in to the principal's office.

**Beginning Teachers at Polar Flight Middle School.** All four beginning teachers at Polar Flight volunteered to be interviewed for the study, as can be seen in Table 6.5.

**Table 6.5. Teachers at Polar Flight Who Volunteered for Interview.**

Teacher	Subject	Position Selection	University	Degree	Experience *	Certified
Courtney Campbell	Lang. Arts	Substitute then hired full time	University of Louisiana, Lafayette	B. A.	1 year	No
Christy Cassidy	Lang. Arts	Recruited by Mr. Clinton	University of California, Los Angeles	B. A.	2 years	Yes, not in LA
Candy Collins	Special Ed.	Assigned by Central Office	University of Louisiana, Lafayette	B. S.	1 year	No
Connie Coussan	Lang. Arts	Recruited as a result of desegregation	University of Louisiana, Lafayette	B. A.	1 year	Yes
Teacher		Position				
Cecil Clinton		Principal				
Cathy Crane		Mentor				

\* Experience includes current school year



Though the mentor, Mrs. Crane, is listed as a volunteer for the interview, an interview never actually took place. Amid promised phone calls and broken appointment dates, Mrs. Crane's duties as the district's union representative did not allow time for an interview since the study took place during district budget talks and statewide threats of walk outs. Thus, data regarding the mentor is limited to the perceptions of the beginning teachers at Polar Flight.

Assistance. Three of the four new teachers interviewed stated that the only formal induction they received was a workshop, prior to the first week of school, held at the Northside School System's Central Office. All teachers agreed that the induction was only minimally helpful. Christy Cassidy, a beginning teacher in her first year in Northside Parish, was a second year teacher who moved to Louisiana from a school system in California. Having another system with which to compare the induction, she was very disappointed.

I went to one afternoon kind of thing with all of the new teachers and they gave us kind of your typical pep talk and welcome to the parish...I was actually very disappointed and very frustrated when I came away from it... My question was where are my content standards? And the answer was that we'll get those out to your school as soon as possible...So you're getting new spelling books this year. Well, do you have them yet? Do you have the teacher's manual for them? Well, no. We'll get those to your school as soon as we can. So it was pathetic.

One of the new teachers, Courtney Campbell, began the year as a substitute who was then hired as a full time teacher during the second six weeks of school. Therefore, she was not able to attend the district's one day workshop. The only induction she received was a meeting with the teacher she was replacing.

The principal of the school, Mr. Clinton, admitted that both the district and school level inductions were minimal. However, his philosophy was that, though it was important that the new teachers understand the policies and practices of the school, “setting a tone” during the first two or three weeks was just as important as a workshop. Mr. Clinton makes it a point to offer assistance through faculty partners or his own personal input during those first weeks because, in his view, that time is critical to how the classrooms will operate in March, April, and May. Mr. Clinton relied on his own compass to guide the new teachers through the beginning weeks of school, rather than expecting the district to do so.

*Mentor Support.* While all of the beginning teachers at Polar Flight agreed that their mentor, Mrs. Crane, was “just the most adorable person,” they also agreed that beyond the requirements for LaTAAP, they did not have much contact with her. Teachers stated they received help from their mentor in writing the lesson plan for the assessment and how to answer the questions for the interview. However, Candy Collins, a new uncertified special education teacher, noted that Mrs. Crane knew nothing about special education so she was no help with the district and state paperwork nor with writing the Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Mrs. Cassidy called Mrs. Crane “a formality” though she admitted that the mentor’s goal was to help them become better teachers.

In addition to her duties as mentor, Mrs. Crane was also the union representative for the Northside Parish school teachers. She often had meetings to attend regarding union concerns, particularly when the issue of teacher pay took center stage in the spring

semester. As a matter of fact, three different appointments were scheduled by me with her and all three appointments were cancelled by her. The semester ended with her promise to call me so that a phone interview could be conducted. The call never came.

The mentor's area of expertise is middle school science. None of the new teachers taught science. Therefore, in the process of seeking help in their teaching area, beginning teachers turned to others for professional support as well as social support and resources. If the beginner wished to speak with the mentor, meetings had to be scheduled in advance either before or after school.

*Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program.* As meetings with the mentor were few, so also was contact in the classroom. Observations and feedback from the mentor came only as the state required for LaTAAP. The teachers at Polar Flight viewed the process of LaTAAP as something of a necessary evil. Mrs. Cassidy compared the program to some of the teacher preparation courses she took in college. She said,

This is how I look at it. I look at it like those classes I took in college that are supposed to teach you how to be a teacher and don't teach you anything. They mean well. It's kind of like you have to say you did it.

As a special education teacher, Miss Collins was required to go through the alternate assessment. She is an uncertified teacher, having worked the previous year as a social worker and case manager for Goodwill Industries. Miss Collins's view was that one meeting explaining the alternate assessment was insufficient preparation. In addition, she looked at the expectations for her assessment lesson as "going overboard" and "not reasonable" for a regular day's lesson.

Connie Coussan, a Language Arts teacher, came to Polar Flight as part of the desegregation issue with faculty balance, having worked as a long term substitute at an inner city middle school in Northside Parish. She was more vocal in her dislike of the state assessment program. Stating that it was not useful and only brought additional stress to beginners, she said,

They give you these rules and things that you should follow and how it should happen in the classroom when it doesn't happen like that every day...And, to me, you have to teach to your children and to the environment that's in your classroom. And I understand that they want us to know that these are the things that should happen in the classroom. Realistically, those things do not happen.

Monitoring. Polar Flight has a reputation in Northside Parish as a school with a solid learning environment, coupled with strict discipline. Because of this reputation, in addition to referrals from the district's central office, teachers, both new and veteran, leave their resumes for the principal to keep on file. The school principal, Mr. Clinton, reports that this is an advantage in teacher selection. Along with the typical interview questions, Mr. Clinton also requires that applicants write a short paragraph explaining how they would be an asset to the school. This paragraph allows him to see the teacher's writing style and use of grammar as well as an informal view of their teaching philosophy and what is important to them. Mr. Clinton's emphasized the need for his new faculty, or crew, to make discipline and student achievement a goal. Finally, before seriously considering any candidate, Mr. Clinton calls the teacher's supervisor from the previous semester.

*Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program.* Mr. Clinton and his teachers stress the importance of his class observations. Along with the four formal observations that must be completed for the state, Mr. Clinton often “pops in” to the teachers’ classroom. For the beginning teacher, this is sometimes a daily occurrence. However, the teachers who were interviewed seemed to appreciate this. Mrs. Coussan said that

It’s good because I like to show off what I’m doing with my kids. I have a good group of kids and I’m very confident in the things that I do. It also gives me an opportunity to really see myself and not follow the formalities of being observed and the different things like that. And also gives him an opportunity to see me working with my kids.

Mrs. Cassidy agreed. She noted that the principal’s expectations did not change, just because the visit was informal.

He pops in all of the time. He’s such a funny man, too, because he’s always so serious...He’ll go to your desk and you have to have your lesson plans right there and he’ll grade them. They need to be done for the whole week, Monday morning. He’ll walk through and sometimes he’s here for 10 minutes and sometimes for 30 seconds, looks around and leaves...I think that’s very cool that he wants to know what is going on. He doesn’t tell you when he’s coming in.

For the new teacher, knowing that the principal is interested in what goes on during class is appreciated. The teacher is always in top form, knowing that the expectations of the principal requires that. The students observe that how they perform in the classroom is important enough for the principal to frequently visit. Mrs. Coussan also commented that the feedback is timely and the comments are constructive. The encouraging words of a principal in the first few trying months mean a lot to the new teacher trying to find her “professional face.”

**Team Building.** Informal mentors played an important role in the initial year of teaching for the novices at Polar Flight Middle School. These mentors came from different roles and played different parts for each teacher but all new teachers agreed they could not have survived the first year without them. As a special education teacher, Miss Collins had two teacher's aides and a nursing assistant. One of the aides, an eight year veteran of Polar Flight, was with the same children last year. She helped Miss Collins with the routine and matching the students' IEPs with the lessons. While Mrs. Coussan depended on the Language Arts teacher next door to her, Mrs. Campbell relied on the fifth grade counselor, particularly during standardized testing. Mrs. Cassidy's partner, Mrs. Connery, was the social studies teacher who "shared" the same students. As a transfer from California, Mrs. Cassidy faced adjustments that extended beyond the classroom. Mrs. Cammie Connery was her "savior" during the adjustment period.

I consider Cammie my mentor because she has just helped me out so much in learning the school culture and she's just a dear friend to me now. The paperwork she's helped me with tremendously. When I first got here...I was just homesick all of the time. It was hard for me to leave my other school...They're very, very strict here which I wasn't used to. It was a different culture. The "yes, ma'am, no, ma'am." The boys couldn't wear earrings. They have to have their hair a certain length. Those kinds of things. I didn't know if it was a 5<sup>th</sup> grade thing or if it was a Louisiana thing. Is it a Polar Flight Middle thing or a Louisiana thing? And Cammie was very helpful.

Resources also came from different sources, either other teachers, central office supervisors, or were readily available in the classrooms. Teachers at Polar Flight were satisfied with the type and amount of resources that the principal budgeted for them. Mrs. Cassidy shared that she met other new teachers from other schools in the parish

who had no textbooks or desks. She felt lucky to have a well stocked room when she began the year.

*School Culture and Colleagues.* The beginning teachers agreed that it was not uncommon to hear veteran faculty discussing teaching both in the hallways and in the teacher's lounge. Mrs. Campbell said that this type of conversation occurred often.

Opportunities to observe veteran teachers were available and encouraged, though Mrs. Coussan admits she has not availed herself of that opportunity. Mrs. Campbell found observing teachers especially helpful. She shared that seeing different instructional strategies and various classroom management strategies was beneficial since she was moving from a substitute position to a full time teaching position. The observations also reassured her that she was "more stressed out than I needed to be."

*Intent to Stay. Challenges of the New Teacher.* Each of the four new teachers interviewed expressed a different challenge that they believe new teachers face, each concern conveying their own particular "beginner's demons." Moving from substitute to teacher, Mrs. Campbell believed that discipline was the most difficult challenge. Holding a degree in speech pathology, Mrs. Campbell was untrained for dealing with the problems of middle school children, stating that she didn't have the "tools" to handle classroom discipline.

Mrs. Coussan, on the other hand, was concerned about the Language Arts block, feeling that ninety minutes was too much time for middle school children to sit in a desk. As a special education teacher, Miss Collins was overwhelmed by the paperwork, not only keeping up with it but keeping it organized. Mrs. Cassidy agreed that paperwork

was a problem but she believed the greatest challenge was the unrealistic expectations that the community had of teachers.

I think, as teachers, we have this gift to be with wonderful children. But there is not another profession that is expected to put up with the amount of crap than we are. Children getting up and yelling, cussing at you, fighting, calling you horrible, nasty things...But as a first year teacher, I've seen that because of the profession, it attracts some of the most wonderful, caring, dynamic people who can go out and conquer the world. But sometimes it conquers them.

*Beginning Successes.* For three of the four new teachers the successes they viewed in their students were the most rewarding. Whether it was students who began to ask questions or take pride in themselves or think about their future, the teachers considered themselves a success if they reached a child in a positive way. The fourth teacher, Mrs. Coussan, was the only teacher who mentioned that her greatest success was completing the assessment and receiving her certification.

*The View of the Profession.* All four teachers used the word "love" in expressing their feelings toward teaching. All four teachers consider themselves professionals because of the reward of seeing the outcome of the work they do each day. These beginning teachers held a firm belief that, as Mrs. Coussan stated, they "shape the minds of tomorrow and impact the lives of young people."

*Holding Power.* All four teachers stated that five years from now they would still be teaching. Three of the four teachers (Mrs. Cassidy, Miss Collins, and Mrs. Campbell) believed the reason they choose to stay is because of their first experiences at Polar Flight Middle School. Mrs. Coussan reported that while she will continue in education, her long term goal is to work with young women. She wished to "set up a program to



help teenage girls that have had children and feel like they can't succeed in life. I feel like we need to provide resources for them to continue their education and to become professionals in their lives."

For the other three teachers, Polar Flight Middle School was the catalyst for their intent to stay in education. Mrs. Cassidy said while teaching is an intrinsic desire, she will stay in education because of the other teachers she works alongside each day who continually inspire her. Miss Collins cited the fact that

this school, in particular, is run so well and I do have so much support and I feel safe here....I think it comes from Mr. Clinton but I think everyone appreciates that part of it....It's all about the education here and educating the kids.

Mrs. Campbell, as a 665 employee (a temporary employee, hired under the Interim Emergency Policy on a one year basis, degreed but with no Praxis scores), seemed most appreciative of the school, knowing that the possibility existed that she may be assigned to another school the next year.

I think the school's got more potential than a lot of schools out there to be the best. I really do...This school really energizes me...I learn something new every day, just like the kids do...Whether it's out of a book or an experience...So I think this is where I am meant to be. This is God's plan. This is my calling.

School Processes. Polar Flight Middle School is all about learning. Student work covers the hallways. On several classroom doors were pictures of the students in the class or decorative colorings with the students' names drawn on them. On one door were colored fishes that students had designed with their names on the fishes and a sign

that said, “Come swim through fifth grade with us!” While the hallways were quiet, the classrooms buzzed with teaching.

Student discipline was evident throughout the school. During the transition time between classes, administrators roamed the halls and teachers stood in their doorways, greeting students as they entered. On one visit to the school, during this transition time, two large male students had words with each other. As one began to remove his jacket, ostensibly to ensue fighting, there were immediately three teachers surrounding them to diffuse the situation. No threats of suspension or detention were made. The teachers spoke to the students, though in commanding voices. The students moved to class and a fight was avoided.

*Instruction at Polar Flight.* Four Language Arts classes were observed, two at the fifth grade level and one each at the seventh and eighth grade level. During all classes, students were engaged and active learning was observed. There was a high degree of respect evident in all classes, for the teacher and for each other.

Display of student work was common in the classrooms I visited. The Language Arts class had post cards on the door with the students’ names on them. Posters made by students, entitled “What do Good Readers Do?” adorned the walls. While there were motivational prints on most walls, they were overshadowed by the colorful work of the students.

Teachers at Polar Flight Middle exhibited high expectations for their students and observations validated that the students worked hard to live up to these expectations. One fifth grade Language Arts Block demonstrated this. Mrs. Cassidy, their teacher,

informed me that at the beginning of the school year these students could not define a summary. They could not articulate that the word “sum” meant “add together”. The majority of the fifth grade students came to Polar Flight Middle from several surrounding rural elementary schools. According to the teachers at Polar Flight, these rural schools were not known for their academic press. Therefore, the fifth grade teachers at Polar Flight began the year modifying behavior, attitudes, and readiness for learning. Empowering the students to define the rules for behavior and the rubrics for grading stimulated discussion about the teacher’s expectations for the year, as well as the student’s. Consistency in these expectations molded the attitudes of the young people to value the educational adventure they began that year.

Mrs. Cassidy believed in conducting her classes in an atmosphere of student empowerment. At the beginning of each lesson one student was appointed to time her. She was allowed fifteen minutes to introduce the lesson (though, she informed me, this time varied according to the difficulty of the concept introduced). After her allotted time was up, the students took over. If there were questions, students raised their hands and the questioning student called on another student to answer the question. In this way students were motivated to pay attention, not only to receive information but in order to answer any questions other students may have. Mrs. Cassidy only interjected if clarification was needed or if members of the class could not answer the questions. She said this method placed importance on the students’ participation as learners and teachers as well.

The students in the class I observed had moved from understanding the concept of summary at the beginning of the year to reading novels for their “Literature Circles” in the spring semester. This day students had completed their work on a novel and were constructing a rubric before they moved into the “Literature Circles.” The students gave a name to each rating and an explanation for how the student might attain that rating. After much discussion the final scoring guide was 4 = We’ve Got the Power; 3 = Still My Kind of Person; 2 = Dude; and 1 = My Bad. The teacher then had the students review a basis upon which to assign each rating.

Prior to that day, every student was given a job for their “Literature Circle.” Each circle had four students, each of whom had a different job. The “Predictor” told the circle what s/he believed was going to happen next in the book. The “Connector” told the circle what s/he believed their assigned reading had to do with their world and their lives. The “Summarizer” summarized what they read so far. The “Questioner” asked the group questions on what they had discussed so far. Each job was put in writing for the teacher to grade. While the teacher graded their “job”, the students graded each other on participation, according to the scoring guide the class drew up.

Just prior to moving into the “Literature Circles”, Mrs. Cassidy asked the students three questions: What does it mean to listen? What is a thoughtful answer? What does it mean to participate? After class discussion, they quickly and quietly moved into their groups. As the “Literature Circles” met, discussed literature, and questioned each other, the teacher moved from group to group asking her own questions, encouraging debate, and prompting students to justify the answers they gave. As she left

each group, Mrs. Cassidy shook the hands of each group member and thanked them for their knowledge.

As the class grew to a close, two of the groups invited me to join their circle. One group wanted to tell me about the book they were reading. The other group asked for my input on their “connector” discussion. The students were serious about their work but delightful in their enthusiasm for reading. They were anxious to tell me about the books they were reading at home. After the students returned to their desks and had graded each other on participation, Mrs. Cassidy told the class how proud she was of their participation and that they had earned the privilege of having an outside “Literature Circle” for their next novel. Beginning the year not knowing the meaning of the word summary to group discussions of literature, I observed that these fifth grade children had traveled far on their academic flight.

Metaphorical Synopsis. The Polar Flights to Antarctica and the South Pole were dangerous flights, ones in need of a leader to guide the crew through treacherous weather. As commander of the flights, Byrd was the indispensable and fundamental foundation which the crew required to keep them focused on the mission. The principal of Polar Flight Middle is that “piece” of the school which unites all facets of the community – the teachers, the students, the parents, and the community at large.

One of the keys to success for Polar Flight Middle School rests in the office of the principal. The school runs like clockwork with an emphasis on learning, following the goals and expectations of Mr. Clinton. Ever serious and rarely smiling, Mr. Clinton walks the hallways more as Commander Clinton. Somewhat meekly, Mrs. Campbell

confessed she was a little intimidated by the principal. However, she and all of the other new teachers knew that their welfare and the welfare and best interests of the children were priorities for him. As one teacher stated, Mr. Clinton “is all about the kids.” For Mr. Clinton, the fundamental basis of their work was increased achievement for the students. This vision for what is important and where the priorities for the school should lay is conveyed beyond the office of the principal and into the classrooms, where effective instruction was evident.

Forced to seek informal mentors because of the other obligations of Mrs. Crane, the mentor, the beginning teachers at Polar Flight, nonetheless, found the support they needed to successfully complete the year. These informal mentors, who acculturated the novices to the school community and its every day workings, became another key to success for the beginning teachers. Effective teaching was evident in the classrooms of the new teachers. An obvious love of children, along with high expectations for their success, rank these beginning teachers as a vital part of the crew who work to weather the storm and successfully take their students to greater achievement. Three of the four teachers attribute their desire to stay in the profession to their experiences at Polar Flight Middle School, affirming that the novices and their instructional leader together provide a solid foundation for the children whom they educate to eventually take flight on their own.

### **Blackbird Middle School**

**Introduction.** Blackbird was a huge reconnaissance plane which flew high and fast. The speeds at which the plane flew heated the plane’s surface to dangerous levels,

so much so that corrugations in the wing had to be added to avoid warping (Time-Life, 1999). Imposing in size, the pilot of this towering jet had to wear a 40-pound pressure suit to prevent blackouts and give the pilot a chance of survival if forced to eject. As a spy plane, details about it were vague. Called a “surreal craft,” its appearance was deceptive and, at first glance, the aircraft was not what it appeared to be (Time-Life, 1999). The Blackbird was a craft under pressure whose outward appearance disguised its true nature.

Background Information. Like Polar Flight Middle School, Blackbird Middle School is located in Northside Parish. This section of Northside Parish is in a predominantly rural area and the school itself is surrounded by farmland and sugar cane fields. Pastures with grazing race horses can be seen from the windows of the school. These horses are the livelihood of many of the parents of students at Blackbird, who raise or train horses and are employees of the local racetrack. Unlike Polar Flight, the issues and backlash of the desegregation problems of Northside School System evaded Blackbird (see Polar Flight Middle School case study for a discussion of the Department of Justice order for Northside School System).

Blackbird is a huge brownstone building built during the 1950's with the original hardwood floors and thick oak doors. An old school with a great deal of local history attached to it, Blackbird Middle School is an imposing structure on a rural highway. While the interior of the building has been somewhat modernized, the entire structure is reminiscent of simpler times when the grandparents of the present day students attended school here. Though the exterior of the building looks like it houses a large interior,

there are actually very few classrooms inside the main structure. There are only four classrooms on the first floor and six classrooms on the second floor, in addition to the library, the computer lab, the teacher's lounge, and the administrative offices. The building has central air conditioning though it remains cool from the thick outer stones and the massive oak trees that provide shade on all sides. A gymnasium was added some years ago, though, it, too, is an old structure, cooled by huge circulating fans. Three temporary buildings are placed in the back of the main structure, not visible from the street.

Though Blackbird received an LDE performance label of Academically Above Average because of the SPS of 76.4, with a predicted score of 91.67 and an SEI of -.71 SD, Blackbird was designated the less effective school in Pair 2. The SY 1999-2000 SPS improved to 85.9, but was still below the previous year's predicted score. With a total student population of 543, Blackbird has 56 students (10%) designated as special education and 487 students (90%) as regular education. Of this population, 16.7% are minority students and 36.7% come from a low SES background. Class sizes are fairly evenly divided with 27% in classes of 1-20 students, 33% in classes of 21-26 students, and 39% with classes over 27 students. An attendance rate of 95.2% at Blackbird is higher than the state average of 94.6%. However, the dropout rate (4.8%) is double the dropout average of the state (2.3%). Statewide, schools employ faculties whose qualifications include 37% with master's degrees. Almost half of Blackbird's faculty (47%) has obtained a master's degree.



On the initial visit to Blackbird, as previously agreed, I arrived in the office at 8:30 a.m., twenty minutes before the start of school. It was 9:50 before I was able to see the principal. In the interim, I observed the aftermath of three physical fights between a number of students, an altercation between a student and a bus driver, and a frenzy when it was discovered that a classroom did not have a teacher present.

The office area remained filled with students because at Blackbird Middle School, students had the right to fill out an "Incident Report." Therefore, any student who witnessed the fights or who were friendly with those involved in the fight and might have some background information, were allowed to leave class and come to the office to fill out their version of the "incident." At one point, there were so many students in the office that chairs were pulled in, students sat on the floor, and overflowed in to the hallway.

Once the principal, Mrs. Daigle, dealt with the problems and cleared the office, she agreed to see me. When I entered her office, she stood at the doorway but did not invite me to sit. She informed me that this was a busy time of year and I had five minutes to explain what I wanted. I referred her to the fax sent the previous week, outlining the study. The fax was on her desk, along with a printed copy of a follow up email and phone message from me. After asking me how other principals in Northside Parish handled my study, she agreed to let me continue if I would be willing to write personal letters to each new teacher explaining the study and setting up appointments for interviews and observations directly with them. Mrs. Daigle offered to give me the teacher's class schedules and pointed me to the teacher's mailboxes. Other than that, she

said she had too much to handle just then to be of any more help. She once again expounded on my poor timing, then began to cry, explaining how overwhelmed she was. With promises to be unobtrusive, I was given permission by Mrs. Daigle to conduct the study.

Beginning Teachers at Mir Middle School. Three of the four beginning teachers at Blackbird agreed to be interviewed. One teacher agreed to complete the survey instruments but was not willing to be interviewed or observed. Table 6.6 outlines the beginning teachers at Blackbird, along with pertinent information regarding their teaching experience.

**Table 6.6. Teachers at Blackbird Who Volunteered for Interview.**

Teacher	Subject	Position Selection	University	Degree	Experience*	Certified
Diana Deshotel	Special Ed.	Job was available	University of Louisiana, Lafayette	B. S.	1 year	Yes
Danielle Dillard	Science	Job was available	University of Louisiana, Lafayette	B.A.	1.5 years	Yes
Darcy Dixon	P. E.	Job was available	University of Louisiana, Lafayette	B.S.	2 years	Yes
Teacher		Position				
Debra Daigle		Principal				
Dorothy Danover		Mentor				

\* Experiences includes current year

**Assistance.** All three teachers who agreed to be interviewed reported they attended an induction held by the Northside Parish School System. This one day meeting primarily addressed LaTAAP information. Blackbird's induction was a one day meeting the day before the regular beginning of the year inservice, covering rules and policies of the school. Miss Dillard, a beginning science teacher, noted that her "real" induction came from the "open door policy" of the administration who are "there to help you."

***Mentor Support.*** Dorothy Danover is a special education teacher at Blackbird who also serves as mentor. She views her role as mentor in limited parameters. In the area of professional support, Mrs. Danover goes no further than extending awareness of programs and available resources. Once information is disseminated, then the new teacher can pursue what she feels is necessary. Mrs. Danover offers social support to the new teacher by introducing them to other faculty. No help is given in the area of resources. Mrs. Danover's duties as Lead Teacher in Special Education and as Yearbook Advisor limit the time she is able to spend with the beginning teachers.

All three teachers who were interviewed agreed that the mentor program at Blackbird is an informal process, meeting only once or twice a semester, unless questions or problems arise. The main function of the mentor, according to the teachers, is to help with LaTAAP paperwork. Miss Dixon, a new teacher assigned to coach and teach P. E., also commented that Mrs. Danover helped her with school level paperwork such as cumulative folders.

While Mrs. Deshotel, a beginning special education teacher, mentioned relying on the mentor, Mrs. Danover, if she had classroom problems, neither Miss Dixon nor Miss Dillard mentioned the mentor as a source of support. They reported soliciting support from faculty or, in the case of Miss Dixon, “whoever was around.” None of the new teachers stated that social support was received unsolicited. All three new teachers also noted that Mrs. Danover was no help in providing resources. Miss Dixon was aided by the other coaches at the school. Unable to rely on Mrs. Danover, a special education teacher, for resources, Miss Dillard researched the state science benchmarks, then searched out resources herself. After she attended the summer workshop on the new science program being piloted, Miss Dillard had telephone and on-line support from that program’s operators (see section entitled *Instruction at Blackbird*). Mrs. Deshotel said, “I just have to do the best I can on my own.”

*Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program.* All three beginning teachers reported minimal contact with the mentor, commenting that observations were limited to one formal and one informal visit each semester. Minimal feedback from the observations was received.

Mrs. Danover admitted that the classroom observations were “more informal than for evaluation purposes” and that feedback was only given “if the new teachers come to me – my door is always open.” Mrs. Danover felt that the overall program for LaTAAP was a useful one, particularly as implemented at Blackbird.

Miss Dillard believed that the assessment program was useful. She admitted that the process was stressful but stated that “everyone can be stressed out for one day a

year. You can have a perfect class for one day a year.” Miss Dillard’s view of a class for the assessment which is unlike others during the year supported Mrs. Deshotel’s view that LaTAAP, as implemented at Blackbird, was simply “going through hoops for the state.” Mrs. Deshotel found no use in the program and felt all it did was require her to fill out additional paperwork and teach a lesson unlike the norm. She said,

For that outside assessor, it’s that one little snapshot of your class for the whole year. Out of 180 days, they get to see one 50 minute period. They don’t see what goes on in your classroom the whole year.

Miss Dixon was more frank in her assessment of LaTAAP. She felt the first year was overwhelming enough without adding on the stress and paperwork required of the state assessment program.

It’s a bunch of waste. It’s a waste of time for a lot of people. You do more paperwork and then adding that on to your first year here. You have enough paperwork to do. Then they want you to do more paperwork. So you’re getting bombarded two ways – school and then the assessment stuff. The paperwork is too much.

Monitoring. Mrs. Daigle, the principal, called the teacher selection process a “crap shoot.” While she interviewed every teacher that the Northside Central Office sent to her, she said that “you don’t see the real person in an interview.” In her experience, she found that interviewees “talk the talk but, once they get here, don’t walk the walk.” Education is “a balance of business and teaching and too many new teachers don’t realize what they are getting in to,” according to Mrs. Daigle. When asked if recommendations of supervising teachers play a part in selection, Mrs. Daigle replied that “success in student teaching does not necessarily translate to good teaching.” Never

knowing if a teacher will make a successful transition to Blackbird, Mrs. Daigle reported that she is always recruiting.

*Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program.* Mrs. Daigle supported the view of Mrs. Deshotel and Miss Dixon that LaTAAP is “a dog and pony show for the outside assessor.” The principal felt that the biased nature of the program may be found in a lack of consistency in the training for the outside assessors. Moreover, Mrs. Daigle had a problem with the scripting method, stating that there is “no assurance that everything is written down or that what is written is not filtered through the assessor.” A far better and more objective instrument, according to her, would be videotape. In that way, both the assessor, the principal, and the new teacher could watch the video tape at a follow up meeting and discuss strengths and weaknesses of the instruction. Finally, Mrs. Daigle, like Mrs. Deshotel and Miss Dixon, felt an undue burden from the paperwork that accompanies the program. The principal commented that the paperwork was so overwhelming as to be detrimental to the processes of her office.

All three beginning teachers reported that Mrs. Daigle visits their classroom, both informal “pop ins” and formal observations for LaTAAP. Normally, feedback is only given on the mandated forms for the formal observations. However, if something has gone wrong during the observation, immediate feedback is received.

Mrs. Daigle stated that she is required to do both formal and informal observations. Because it is required, she does it. Mrs. Daigle made no mention of any usefulness attached to the observations nor her role in the implementation of effective teaching at Blackbird. Her comments supported the view that observations were an

obligation that she had to fulfill for the state. She did note, however, that she often felt “more like a counselor than a principal.”

**Team Building.** Miss Dixon relied on the other coaches for support during her initial year at Blackbird. Both Miss Dillard and Mrs. Deshotel counted on the faculty as a whole for informal mentoring. Miss Dillard, in particular, had a close relationship to Mrs. Daigle, one that was initiated when they traveled to Alabama together for the workshop on the pilot program in science. Miss Dillard often turned to the principal for support.

Miss Dillard also credited the faculty as a whole for her current position. She related the story that at the beginning of the year, because of decreases in enrollment, she was informed she might be assigned to another school after the first three weeks of school. When the principal informed her of the possibility, Mrs. Daigle also gave her a list of the names and phone numbers of the parents of her students. Miss Dillard spent the next several days calling parents to tell them about the pilot science program and the loss to their children if she was transferred. Miss Dillard explained to the parents about the difficulties for children associated with changing teachers once the school year had started. She also was vocal in the teacher’s lounge about the possibility that some of them, who were non-science teachers, would have to pick up her classes. The following week at the school board meeting where personnel transfers were decided, Miss Dillard was overwhelmed by the number of parents and other faculty who attended the meeting in her support. Miss Dillard saw this as an indication of support for her as a teacher and colleague.

While Miss Dillard received instructional help from the science program operators and Miss Dixon turned to the other coaches, Mrs. Deshotel found help with the school's librarian, particularly for resources in language arts.

*School Culture and Colleagues.* When asked whether the new teachers observed veterans teaching, once again, Miss Dillard's perception of "the way things are done" differed greatly from that of Miss Dixon and Mrs. Deshotel. Miss Dillard reported that she observes other teachers all of the time and is encouraged to do so by the administration. Both Mrs. Deshotel and Miss Dixon stated that they had never observed other teachers and did not know anyone who had.

Intent to Stay. *Challenges of the New Teacher.* Mrs. Daigle, along with Mrs. Danover and Miss Dillard, agreed that the overwhelming amount of paperwork was the greatest challenge for new teachers. Mrs. Danover added to that the state's demand for accountability from the teachers. Mrs. Daigle also felt that acclimating to the guidelines of the state, the parish, and the school was difficult for most new teachers. According to the principal, the pressure from all sides was suffocating for the new teachers and for herself, somewhat like wearing a pressure suit as they worked.

Once again, viewing the first year experience differently from Miss Dillard, Mrs. Deshotel and Miss Dixon felt that mere survival was the greatest challenge. Miss Dixon commented that she felt grossly unprepared for the reality of teaching. Therefore, even if a situation was not normally stressful, it caused stress for her since she felt ill equipped for anything beyond the boundaries of her student teaching experience.



Mrs. Deshotel indicated that her struggles to survive the first year caused her frustration, anger, and, at times, a re-evaluation of her career choice. She said,

You spend four years of your life to come out and be treated horribly –by the students, by the parents and to get paid peanuts for it...When you're in college, you have all of these great views of how you are going to affect these children and make them say, you're the greatest teacher I ever had. You come out and you realize that some of them could care less about what you are teaching...And then you go home and look at that paycheck and think, what am I doing all of this for?

Mrs. Deshotel's frustration was fueled by disillusionment of what she believed teaching would be and the reality of the classroom. She commented that the lack of support for misbehaving children extended beyond the school to a general apathy and lack of support from the parents as well. While money was not the motivating factor for her, she stated that if salaries were increased, she might be able to accept the realities of what she daily faces.

*Beginning Successes.* Miss Dillard named the science pilot program as her greatest success. Mrs. Deshotel noted that after working diligently with two students she had helped them move from a resource setting to a regular education setting. Miss Dixon claimed that the key to success was discipline but could not articulate any successes that she, personally, had experienced during the past year.

From an administrator's standpoint, Mrs. Daigle believed that the key to success for a new teacher came from the nurturing environment of the whole school community. This belief might explain the climate of Blackbird. The beginning teachers at Blackbird seemed comfortable with each other and with the administrators. However, there was

no evidence of academic press nor was any conversation regarding instructional strategies overheard, other than Miss Dillard's discussion of the science program.

*The View of the Profession.* All three teachers who were interviewed stated that they enjoyed teaching and viewed themselves as professionals. However, they all stated different rationales for this view. Mrs. Deshotel believed she is a professional by virtue of her college degree. Miss Dixon commented that she is a professional because she is "teaching kids stuff they wouldn't learn at their house." Miss Dillard indicated that the control and autonomy that she possesses in the workplace makes her a professional.

*Holding Power.* All three teachers, despite their concerns about paperwork and unsupportive parents, believed they would still be teaching in five years. All three felt that the desire to teach was intrinsic. As Miss Dixon said, "If you have it in your heart, you'll stay."

School Processes. *A Climate for Learning.* Throughout the semester, as the data collection at Blackbird progressed, it was difficult to shake the uncertainty about who was actually in charge of the school. cursory observations through classroom doors indicated that instruction was taking place. However, students often walked freely in the hallways and, at times, groups of students were observed loitering in the doorways while the teacher was inside the classroom. Students who entered the administrative area did not carry hall passes or permission slips and often made demands to use the phone or to see the counselor.

The community members of Blackbird were not friendly. I was rarely greeted as I made my way through the school. At times, when I waited in the office area to meet

with teachers, both faculty and clerical staff wore expressions of exasperation as they went about their routine. The receptionist who greeted guests frequently experienced problems with her computer and often left her desk to seek help from the technology teacher. At these times, another secretary replaced her, an older woman with a gruff exterior who never offered a smile.

The principal and assistant principal often rushed in and out of the office, reminding me of a previous observation of Mrs. Daigle's that schools were as much about business as they were about teaching. As parents and visitors entered and left the office, the principal was never observed engaging in friendly, informal conversation with any of them. Mrs. Daigle was always in a hurry to be off to address an emergency situation or meet with someone. The anxious feeling of an impending crisis or an inability to complete tasks pervaded the atmosphere.

Nonetheless, the school days appeared to run routinely. There was never a sense that the air of anxiety had been replaced by chaos. The overriding conclusion was that this was a school precariously teetering the edges between the two.

*Instruction at Blackbird Middle School.* Anxious to see the science classes after the enthusiastic endorsement of Miss Dillard, a sixth and a seventh grade science class were observed. Since Mrs. Deshotel taught special education classes, which I had been asked not to observe, I, instead, observed Miss Dixon's seventh and eighth grade physical education classes.

The science program that is being piloted throughout Northside Parish is based at the University of Alabama. This integrated program introduces middle school students

to a cross section of scientific fields, including, but not limited to, archaeology, paleontology, biology, environmental science and earth science. There are four thematic units to the course, covering clues , machines, cycles, and biodiversity. The teacher is provided with videotapes, worksheets, activities, and tests for each unit. The packet includes an overall outline of the year, as well as the weeks during which each unit should be covered.

Each lesson begins with a telecast, a “readiness” video that explains what students will learn. Students are given a worksheet to complete as they watch the video. Web sites are provided. However, the only computer in the room was behind the teacher’s desk. Therefore, it was difficult to ascertain if the students utilized this portion of the teaching plan.

There are no textbooks but students are given a three ring binder of readings which they keep at home. After the introductory telecast, the students take a homework sheet to complete from their readings at home. Activities are a part of each unit. Assessment is done through standardized quizzes.

As with any pre-packaged instructional program, the success or failure stems from the presentation of materials. With materials included, teachers can prepare the instruction or can merely distribute worksheets and let the children self-teach. Perhaps unaware that she had done so, Miss Dillard chose the latter. As Miss Dillard pointed out, “It gives me time. I don’t have to worry about planning or getting information...So I get the fun part...All I do is make copies.”

During two class visits, Miss Dillard had minimal interaction with the students. The seventh grade class began with a quiz which completed the previous unit of study. Miss Dillard orally reviewed with the class, using the quiz to call out questions. After a student gave the answer, Miss Dillard repeated it for emphasis. During the review a student walked in tardy with no explanation and Miss Dillard asked for none. Students were observed drinking soft drinks and eating candy during the instruction.

During the quiz, Miss Dillard stapled worksheets she had previously duplicated. As she was preoccupied with this task, students were observed cheating on the quiz. As they turned in the quiz, they picked up a worksheet. However, many students were observed off task during this activity. A group of students looked at pictures. Another student left to go to the restroom. Other groups whispered.

At the completion of the quiz, a student turned on the television and VCR so that the class could view the first telecast of the new lesson. Some students were on task while others worked on homework for other classes. Two girls were observed drawing pictures on each other's hands. One student approached the teacher's desk, grabbed a pair of scissors, and began to cut up plastic bags. All the while, Miss Dillard sorted and stapled worksheets.

The second class observed, a sixth grade class, was working on the design and construction of a biome. Students were given a handout of the parameters of the project then were put in to groups and told to begin. At various times, students worked intermittently on the project, either at the computer behind the teacher's desk or watching a telecast of a biome. However, students were easily led off track by each

other. During the course of the class, students were observed whistling, talking, and arguing. One student informed Miss Dillard that he did not want to do this project. She replied, "Fine. Go get your math book." Another student made repeated requests to change his group, each request refused by Miss Dillard.

At one point, there was an altercation between two students, one yelling, the other accusing the first of hitting him. Miss Dillard asked the students to step outside. They did so, after stomping across the room and slamming the door. Miss Dillard spoke to the students, left them in the hall, then returned to survey their group's opinion of what happened during the altercation.

Both teachers observed at Blackbird (two P. E. classes were also observed, in addition to Miss Dillard's classes) appeared to have a good relationship with their students. However, neither teacher was observed pressing the students to participate. Whether this attitude was one of low expectations or of a resignation to apathy, the end result was merely "going through the motions." The teachers seemed intent on doing what they were minimally required to do so that they could move on to the next task that must be completed. The students, perhaps sensing this, exhibited a clear lack of enthusiasm for the lesson of the day.

Metaphorical Synopsis. Blackbird, in this case, is more than the name of the school. This metaphor describes both the physical and emotional spirit of the school. The structure of the school itself is towering, as are the mighty oak trees that surround the school. This huge looking edifice, however, encompasses a relatively small interior,

far smaller than might be thought at first glance. The school, like the Blackbird spy plane, is not what it seems to be at first glance.

As with the physical structure, the climate of the school does not resemble the expectations, given the context of the school. The student population at Blackbird has a low percentage of minority students (16.7%), a low rate of poverty (36.7%), and a small percentage of special education students (10%), with a faculty, almost half of whom have advanced degrees. Nonetheless, the administration and the new teachers struggle through the year. In every conversation with members of the school community, I heard the words “overwhelming,” “survival,” and “keeping our heads above water.” The principal appeared to be valiantly “holding up and holding on” more so than the beginning teachers. The principal advocated social support in a nurturing atmosphere, which might also explain why any events out of the ordinary caused members of the school community to become emotionally overpowered.

The mentor at Blackbird, Mrs. Danover, played a minimal support role for the new teachers. The teachers interviewed reported scant contact with the mentor and, therefore, had to find professional, social, and resource support on their own. Given the pressure of the tasks facing the principal and the mentor, the novices had to take on the responsibility of their own induction. Much like the imposing size of the Blackbird, the principal and teachers at Blackbird believed their daily work was imposing, faced in a pressurized atmosphere of speed, leading to burnout.

Though Blackbird had the highest SEI of the ineffective schools in this study, the administration and faculty demonstrated the greatest propensity for external locus of

control. The tasks of paperwork, discipline, coping with unsupportive parents all seemed to be too large, too fast, and too much for the members of this school community. Moreover, from the office of Mrs. Daigle to the ever optimistic Miss Dillard, they all expressed a helplessness to deal with the overwhelming nature of it all. The pilots of the Blackbird aircraft wore pressure suits to prevent blackouts and to help insure their survival. Observations of the members of the Blackbird Middle School community made it easy to imagine that they were all wearing pressure suits as they raced through the school day. The teachers, led by a principal, lost in the day to day reconnaissance which burned too much energy, were unable to focus on the instruction required to increase student's knowledge. The walls of this historic school enclosed a school culture far less healthy than at first glance. Overpowered and overwhelmed, the goals of student achievement became secondary to the goal of survival.

#### A Comparison of Polar Flight and Blackbird Middle Schools

Leadership is the key difference in the two middle schools located in Northside Parish. The strong and disciplined leadership of Mr. Clinton, the principal at Polar Flight, is far different from the overwhelmed Mrs. Daigle at Blackbird. Taking an active role in the school community, Mr. Clinton, as well as the assistant principals, were visible in the hallways and in the classrooms. Mrs. Daigle, on the other hand, rarely was seen outside of her office and when she was, this principal was either rushing off to a meeting or on her way to solve a crisis.

Polar Flight's positive reputation in the community allowed for choice in teacher selection. Potential applicants left resumes with Mr. Clinton which allowed him to peruse



candidates before the central office sent them to him for interviews. Moreover, the principal actively recruited teachers which he felt might positively impact students, as in the case of Mrs. Cassidy and Mrs. Coussan.

Mrs. Daigle approached teacher selection as a “crap shoot” rather than a process over which she had control. She viewed applicants with suspicion, not certain the potential teacher was being candid during the interview. As such, she stated that she was always recruiting since few new teachers “worked out.”

Organizational routine was another area where the two leaders differed. Polar Flight was an efficient organization which ran like clockwork. This was evident in the attitudes of the entire staff, from the front office secretaries to the children in the classrooms. Though Mr. Clinton rarely smiled and was businesslike in his demeanor, the school was an efficacious system.

Blackbird, while operating routinely, did not appear to operate efficiently. Observations of new teacher’s instruction as well as cursory observations through classroom doorways, showed disorder and a lack of student engagement. As the time neared for the end of class bell, students were frequently seen loitering in the doorway, talking and waiting to exit.









The resulting school climate, however, rather than the style of leadership itself, led to the quality of the socialization experience for the new teachers at Polar Flight and at Blackbird. All four teachers at Polar Flight used the word “love” in expressing their feelings toward teaching. Three of the four teachers reported they would stay in teaching because of the school where their first experience took place. They cited

teachers who inspire, the well run school, and the belief that Polar Flight is “all about kids” as reasons for their positive socialization experience.




Beginning teachers at Blackbird used the word “enjoy” when referring to their work. Emphasizing the difficulties with unsupportive parents and the enormous demands of paperwork, all three new teachers at Blackbird stated they will continue to teach. However, their reasoning was the belief that teaching was intrinsic to them.

The mentors at both Polar Flight and Blackbird were ineffective, as reported by the beginning teachers. The Polar Flight mentor was so involved in other activities, particularly as the union representative for the area, that little time was available for the new teachers. As the special education lead teacher and yearbook sponsor, the Blackbird mentor’s time was limited. Faculty collegiality at both schools was adequate, according to the new teachers. Table 6.7 documents the differences in these general a priori elements in the Pair 2 schools (see section Comparison of Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools for explanation of table components).

Table 6.7. General A Priori Themes at Polar Flight and Blackbird Middle.

School	Mentoring Assistance	Administrative Monitoring	Collegial Team Building	Effective Instruction
Polar Flight (ME)*				
Blackbird (LE)*				

\* ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Legend: Effective:  Ineffective:  Holding Steady: 

Observation data found that beginning teachers at Polar Flight were more likely to demonstrate effective teaching than were teachers at Blackbird. Classroom

management problems, low expectations, and a lack of academic press characterized instruction at Blackbird.

Specific a priori themes, as documented in Table 6.8, outlines particular challenges faced by the new teachers and the sources of success for the new teacher by frequency of mentions. Interdisciplinary teaming had not been implemented at Polar Flight or Blackbird. Therefore, this area was deleted by shading these cells in Table 6.8. Teacher intent to stay or leave is indicated by number.

Teachers at Polar Flight were divided over whether discipline or paperwork presented the greatest challenge. Teachers at both schools reported paperwork as a challenge but teachers at Blackbird also reported survival as a challenge.

Table 6.8. Specific A Priori Themes at Polar Flight and Blackbird Middle.

School	Greatest Challenge		Greatest Success		Interdisciplinary Teaming		Intent to stay		
	Discipline	Other	Student Success	Other	Professional and collegial support	Structural concept	Intend to Stay	Intend to Leave	Intend to Stay but not at present school
Polar Flight (ME)*	2	2	1	3			4	0	0
Blackbird (LE)*	1	2	1	1			3	0	0

\*ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Success for the new teachers came in many forms and appeared unrelated to the level of effectiveness of the school. Teachers at Polar Flight reported surviving the assessment while the pilot science program was considered a success at Blackbird. One

teacher at each school reported the children's success as their own. One teacher at Blackbird said she did not have any successes to report.

There was little difference found in the specific a priori themes in the Pair 2 schools. Moreover, overall support from the mentor was found lacking in both schools and thus, new teachers turned to colleagues for needed social support. The difference in effectiveness for these two schools clearly lay in the leadership. The goals, vision, and overall instructional leadership skills of the principal steered their novice crews on a flight path to a more effective or a less effective middle school.

### **Pair 3: Two Schools in Rural Communities**

#### **Cargo Middle School**

**Introduction.** Cargo planes provide a lifeline in both war and peace time. While not as flamboyant as fighter planes, they are, nonetheless, a vital part of any military mission. Whether carrying forces into battle or keeping troops supplied with fuel and ammunition, cargo planes diligently and reliably complete their assigned tasks. Able to carry anything, anywhere, cargo planes drop off supplies and take on wounded in both war time and in international peacekeeping efforts (Lopez, 1995). In a mutually supportive role, cargo planes service communities in life saving efforts and the communities, in turn, provide whatever is necessary to maintain the continued service and success of the cargo planes.

**Background Information.** Located along the Gulf Coast, Eastside Parish is a potpourri of cultures. Home to the Indian Museum, an aviation museum and the Oil Rig Museum, Eastside Parish caters to visitors from all walks of life. The local tourist

industry offers excursions to historical plantation homes, along with swamp tours.

Despite the eclectic nature of the area, the majority of the population earn their living by fishing and shrimping or in the offshore oil industry.

The small town of Granger, Louisiana is located at the northwest end of Eastside Parish. The residents are predominantly French Acadians, or Cajuns; however, a small pocket of first generation Sicilians came to the area in the early 1900s, choosing the area because it was similar in climate to southern Italy (Taylor, 2001). The issues of concern to the people of Granger are much like those of other small US towns – taxes. The community, during the spring of 2001, were particularly concerned about increased taxes from the town's need to comply with the Federal Clean Water Act and the local Mosquito Abatement Program (Taylor, 2001).

Granger has one elementary school, one middle school and one high school in the town. Community support for “their” school is wide, so much so that the mission statement of Cargo Middle School begins with the realization of “the high aspirations our community has for its children.” The Eastside Parish mission statement concludes with the goal of all schools in the parish working with a “community where education comes first.”

Cargo Middle School is an LDE School of Academic Achievement. With a School Performance School (SPS) (SY 1998-99) of 101.9, the middle school is the pride of everyone connected with it. Many conversations were prefaced by the fact that the school had achieved this SPS and continued to work to excel. This score, coupled with a predicted score of 88.5, gave Cargo a residual score of +1.79 SD, designating it as the

more effective school in Pair 3. SY 1999-2000 saw very little change in Cargo's SPS as they attained a score of 101.4. There are 400 students at Cargo, 86% in regular education and 14% in special education. Over half of the students are in classes with 21-26 students while only 12% of the student body are in classes that average over 27 children. The minority population at the school is small (14%), but almost half of the student body (42%) live in poverty. The attendance rate of the school (93.8%) is lower than that of the state (94.6%) while the dropout rate at Cargo (1%) is much lower than the state's dropout rate (2.3%). The percentage of faculty holding masters' degrees at Cargo (34%) is lower than the average school in the state (37%). Housing grades 6-8, Cargo is faced with a challenging student population with which to work and, according to the data gathered for this study, rises to the challenge admirably.

Beginning Teachers at Cargo Middle School. Cargo Middle School is one of two middle schools in the sample with the smallest number of beginning teachers, both of whom actively sought employment both in Eastside Parish and at Cargo Middle, as can be seen in Table 6.9. According to the assistant principal of the school, teacher turnover is light and faculty stability is high. As a result, the school rarely has teachers who are uncertified or teaching out of area. The school also has the luxury of hiring faculty who express an intention to remain at the school. This stability, in the opinion of the administrators, is an element in the success of their efforts to keep student achievement at a high level. Both of the beginning teachers at Cargo were certified and for both, their initial teaching experience was at Cargo. Mrs. Guidry began employment with the

beginning of the school year while Mr. Graham, a fall semester graduate, began his teaching career in January, replacing a teacher who resigned.

**Table 6.9. Teachers at Cargo Middle Who Volunteered for Interview.**

Teacher	Subject	Position Selection	University	Degree	Experience*	Certified
Gil Graham	Social Studies	Actively sought assignment to Cargo	Nicholls	B. A.	1 year	Yes
Grace Guidry	P. E.	Actively sought assignment to Cargo	University of Louisiana, Lafayette	B. S.	1 year	Yes
Teacher		Position				
Greg Gardner		Assistant Principal				
Genevieve Garrison		Mentor				

\*Experience includes current year

**Assistance.** Though orientation for new teachers at Cargo was minimal, held at the beginning of school, along with other faculty, the district's induction program was more encompassing. Eastside Parish had a three day induction which consisted of an overview of district policy and benefits as well as a workshop on the state's assessment system, LaTAAP. One of the beginning teachers at Cargo, Grace Guidry, was particularly appreciative of the support she felt from the employees of the Eastside Parish Central Office.

During the school system's induction workshop, time was set aside for the new teachers to tour the central office and meet with the employees there. At each office, the employee explained to the new teachers the expectations of their particular section and

offered help to the new teacher during the year. Mrs. Guidry stated that this was reassuring, put faces to names that appeared on Central Office memos, and felt that this “helped you prepare yourself and helped you know what you were going in to” before the school year actually began.

Like most school systems, those teachers who begin in January do not receive any school induction and only have a one day induction regarding the state assessment for new teachers. Gil Graham, a fall graduate of a nearby university, was one such teacher at Cargo. His only formal induction was a meeting with the teacher he was replacing. Thus, he placed a great deal of stock in the support given to him by the mentor at Cargo, Genevieve Garrison.

*Mentor Support.* Both Mrs. Guidry and Mr. Graham reported that their contact with Mrs. Garrison was frequent. Mrs. Guidry noted that, while she had regular meetings with her mentor each week, she probably saw her more often because she had so many questions, particularly about the state assessment. Mr. Graham, too, stated that he relied a great deal on Mrs. Garrison for help with LaTAAP, and said the formal meetings were only one part of the relationship. Frequently, there were informal meetings in the hallways. Mrs. Garrison set up weekly meetings with both of them, stating that regularity is important.

Basically, the state mandates that they understand the process and the steps and all the components of assessment and things like that...It goes beyond the components because you want to make sure that they understand the little things here and there, like when it's time to do report cards. So you understand the *why* and the *how*. Just the little things that get overlooked when you are a first year teacher and you don't always think to ask or you're not comfortable asking.



Mrs. Garrison sees the duties of the mentor as extending beyond the scope of the state assistance/assessment program. While the outside assessment is the culmination of the first year, Mrs. Garrison strongly felt that comfort with all aspects of the beginning teacher's first year were important to the success of that first year.

There's extra things you can do. The state sends a form of what we have to do. But I keep a folder on my own of certain things, like a management list of things to check off. Before parent conference, we might meet together to talk about how to proceed. Some of the things I've pulled in they might have already done during student teaching..like management. A lot of times it might take you the routine to get used to for the classroom management. Some of the things are not in there but there might be some things they are concerned about so the first thing, I would give them the needs to check off.

Beyond professional support, Mrs. Garrison admits that she surreptitiously questions the new teachers to find out how they are fitting in to the routine of the school. Though not a part of the guidelines for her duties as a mentor, Mrs. Garrison believes that providing social support is an important aspect of her job as a mentor. Noting that the "whole school environment" impacts the daily life of the new teacher, experience has shown her that if the new teacher is not happy with her/his position, then that teacher will not perform as well as s/he can. Thus, if Mrs. Garrison can identify a concern with the new teacher beyond curriculum, she addresses it as part of her mentoring role.

Availability of resources was not a concern of the beginning teachers at Cargo. Both Mr. Graham and Mrs. Guidry reported that there was no need to ask because everything they needed was already available to them. Thus, the role of providing resources was not one addressed with their mentor.

Both Mr. Graham and Mrs. Guidry received formal and informal visits from their mentor, receiving “quick and helpful feedback.” Mrs. Garrison offered feedback no matter what stage of assessment the new teacher was in, even in those stages in which she had no involvement. When the new teacher was preparing for the interview or for observations from other assessors, if the new teacher requested it, Mrs. Garrison looked at their paperwork and gave them feedback.

My job is to make sure I’m preparing them so it doesn’t matter who’s walking in the classroom...I’ll look it [the lesson plan] over and tell them what I think is missing... It’s like I’m in there. We discuss the feedback regardless. How did it go? Do you feel comfortable with it? Did everything go OK? That kind of stuff.

*Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program.* Both new teachers and the mentor at Cargo believed LaTAAP was a good program. Mr. Graham had no misgivings about the assessment because he felt so well prepared by his undergraduate college work. Stating that he felt like he had “done it all before,” the transition from college classroom to his own classroom was fairly simple. Mr. Graham’s view was that LaTAAP is “definitely a good thing” because it promoted the need to plan, helped him organize, and enabled him to present material in a proper manner.

Mrs. Guidry, on the other hand, felt LaTAAP was useful but was uncomfortable with the outside assessor. Feeling that the assessment should be limited to school personnel, she said that if the principal and the mentor believe the new teacher is doing a good job, then the outside assessor is unnecessary. In Mrs. Guidry’s opinion, the outside person was only good for adding stress to the novice.

Mrs. Garrison was a strong advocate of LaTAAP. Though she realizes it would cause controversy, her belief is that the Components of Effective Teaching should be used as an annual assessment for all teachers, veterans included. The cost of training additional people, she also realizes, would make this idea impossible in the state at this time.

Monitoring. According to the Assistant Principal at Cargo, Mr. Gardner, the school was in a good position for recruiting teachers. Because of the school's reputation for high expectations, high student achievement, and satisfied employees, candidates are anxious to interview for positions at Cargo. Noting that Granger is a "small place and if a job opens up, people know about it," Mr. Gardner said that in addition to candidates referred from the central office, it was not uncommon for people to walk in or call and drop off resumes.

The ability to choose faculty from a pool of applicants allows the administration at Cargo to look for characteristics that they believe will positively add to their faculty. The strength and reputation of the undergraduate teacher preparation program is a major factor for Mr. Gardner. In addition to that, however, Mr. Gardner stated that an important consideration was stability. He and the principal, Mr. Gray, wanted new faculty who were committed to the middle school, with no plans to move to elementary or secondary, and who were committed to the area, with no plans to leave Eastside School System. Mr. Gardner believes commitment and loyalty contribute to the "buy in" of the school's mission and to the community (see Davis & Thomas, 1989).

Stability is obviously a part of the school organization, evidenced by Cargo, as one of two schools, having the smallest number of new teachers (two).

Teachers working on temporary certificates or those teachers labeled 665s (a temporary employee, hired under the LDE Interim Emergency Policy on a one year basis, degreed but with no Praxis scores) were not an issue in Eastside Parish. Mr. Gardner reported that one of the parishes goals a few years ago was to reduce the number of uncertified teachers. Today, he believes uncertified teachers are almost completely eliminated from the parish. Competitive pay and treating employees well contribute to the parish's ability to achieve this goal, according to Mr. Gardner.

*Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program.* Both Mr. Graham and Mrs. Guidry reported that their classes were often visited by both administrators and by the mentor. However, they termed the visits informal, emphasizing the comfort level they felt with their leadership. Mr. Gardner stated that they were "in there all of the time. Observing and helping...If not, they'll stop us in the hall or we'll go in and ask if they have any questions. We do that daily." Mrs. Guidry confirmed that Mr. Gardner "pops in" the gym almost daily. In a number of visits to the school, I observed that Mr. Gardner did not exaggerate his hands on style of management. Like his rapid, staccato speech, he was observed quickly moving down the hallways, stopping in classrooms to observe, or simply looking in doorways. A man of obvious energy, I rarely saw him sitting behind his desk on those days I was a guest at Cargo.

Mr. Gardner stated that formal written feedback is given for those observations required by the state. However, frequent verbal feedback is given for the informal visits.

Mr. Graham said that Mr. Gardner is the “go to guy” and is appreciative of the feedback he receives.

He gives me feedback on things. Like he came in, observed a few things, a few little activities that I was doing and one of them, he just said, ‘Look, I’ve noticed this in another classroom, you know, it might make things run a little smoother.’ He explained it to me and it did.

Mr. Graham and Mrs. Guidry also reported that they felt supported in their work by the administration, both in the work of teaching and with classroom management decisions. Mr. Graham said,

Pretty much, I like Mr. Gray (the principal) because he – if you need anything, you can go talk to him, definitely. And he backs you 100% with the kids. As far as if you have a problem. And the assistant principal, Mr. Gardner, does the same thing, too. Like they back you 100% and there’s no questions asked. If you have a problem, there’s no questions asked. Which I like that.

Team Building. Though both new teachers rely on Mrs. Garrison, their mentor, there were times when informal mentors were important to them. Informal mentors were turned to “for convenience” or “on the spur of the moment” when an immediate answer was needed or for “a quick dose of encouragement.” Mrs. Guidry worked closely with another female coach in the gym, though, at times, particularly in the area of health education, she turned to the teacher whom she replaced. That teacher was a full time classroom teacher but Mrs. Guidry stated that she is very knowledgeable in the field of health, more so than the other coaches in the gym.

Mr. Graham developed a collegial relationship with the social studies teacher next door to his classroom. He stated that exchange of ideas and advice often takes place during the transition time between classes.

*School Culture and Colleagues.* Both new teachers at Cargo noted that observing other teachers during class time is encouraged, yet, neither had taken advantage of it. In addition to teaching, Mrs. Guidry coached sports after school and any free time was spent preparing for class or preparing for games. Mr. Graham admitted he was still trying to “get everything straight” and hoped that next year, after a summer of preparation, would provide more time for observing other faculty.

Mr. Graham and Mrs. Guidry also agreed that “teacher talk” is common at Cargo. The professionalism and collegiality at Cargo was obvious to them immediately. Mrs. Guidry stated that fitting in with the faculty was easy because “everybody kind of comes together here and it’s really like a team” while Mr. Graham said that he never feels “alone in his classroom.”

The comfort level of the new teachers extends to asking questions and giving opinions. The new faculty feel that as a part of the school community, their opinion is valued. Mr. Gray, the principal, models this in various ways. Mr. Graham said that he feels free to give his opinion because he sees how the principal reacts to other faculty who have given their input.

I noticed, you know, lots of times, people email him. And a lot of teachers. New teachers, too, will email him and he’ll forward it to everybody else, saying, ‘Look, this was brought to my attention. You know, you might would like to do this or something.’...He definitely takes things into consideration.

*Intent to Stay. Challenges of the New Teacher.* Three of the four individuals interviewed at Cargo stated challenges of the new teacher in more general terms than did Mr. Graham. While Mrs. Guidry saw understanding student differences as her greatest

challenge, Mr. Graham articulated the everyday challenges of discipline and paperwork as most difficult for him. The amount of paperwork that he has faced has been somewhat overwhelming for Mr. Graham. Grade books, grading papers, report cards, and faculty committee paperwork have all been eye-opening experiences. Mr. Graham stated that he was surprised by the fact that his job is not just teaching.

Mr. Graham discovered during this first semester as a teacher that classroom management is more than just stating a policy and keeping children in their desks and quiet. Classroom management involves routines and consistency. Ironically, he noted that in his instructional strategies he must vary activities and different learning styles but in his classroom management, he strives to keep everything the same.

Mr. Gardner agreed that classroom management is a challenge for young teachers. However, he sees that as a branch of the more important challenge of increasing student achievement. Without discipline, student achievement is not possible, according to this assistant principal, and achievement is the most important aspect of a teacher's job.

I would think the biggest challenge of a new teacher is to get those students to achieve the best they can achieve. Present material in an environment that is most conducive to their learning. I think the biggest challenge is for those kids to achieve at the highest level that they can achieve. Whether they're at a high level or at a low level, the greatest challenge is for them to get the most out of those kids.

Along that same line of thinking, Mrs. Garrison thought new teachers have the most difficulty "finding their niche." In other words, she believes that the teacher must find their path to optimum effectiveness. According to the Cargo mentor, this involves

where you decide what you want to teach, how you are going to teach it, how you are going to present it, how you are going to talk to the kids so they can grasp it. Finding what works best between you and the kids. Because once you find something that the kids can grab and understand and it's a thing that you can do well, that's the way.

*Beginning Successes.* Like most new teachers, Mr. Graham and Mrs. Guidry viewed student success as a reflection of their success. Seeing a failing student, who has difficulty reading, motivated to try has been rewarding for Mr. Graham. He has also appreciated the other members of his class as they have worked with this classmate in cooperative groups to support the student in her attempts to participate. Mrs. Guidry states that her greatest achievement has been survival.

Mr. Gardner and Mrs. Garrison offered their views on the key to a successful year for the new teacher. Mrs. Garrison believed that discouragement was the cause of failure; therefore, not giving in to this discouragement leads to success. She called it "keeping the push not to give up." Along those same lines, Mr. Gardner felt the key to success was intrinsic. According to Mr. Gardner, the successful teacher is the one who inherently want to be a teacher. Success comes from the heart of a teacher.

*The View of the Profession.* Both Mr. Graham and Mrs. Guidry liked their work. Mr. Graham enjoyed working with minds, rather than working as a laborer, though he admits he probably will like teaching more next year when he feels he is better prepared. Mrs. Guidry loves children and believes she is a professional because the work she does is important.

*Holding Power.* Though Mrs. Guidry wants to continue to teach, this year has convinced her she will be more effective at the elementary school level. Therefore, she



will stay in education but hopes one day to move to lower grade levels. Mr. Graham, on the other hand, hopes to continue his career as a teacher at Cargo. When asked what holds him to this particular middle school, he answered,

It definitely has a lot to do with the administration. I want to stay here. I like it. I like the principal. I like the assistant principal. If they were to move to another school, I would probably follow, if I could.

School Processes. Entering Cargo Middle School, one is immediately struck by the emphasis placed on student achievement. The mission of the school is at eye level on the front door to the school. Right away, the visitor knows that faculty and staff at Cargo “expect all students to achieve their full potential” and that the school is “committed to equipping students with knowledge.” Walking the hallways of the school affirms that the mission is being lived.

During instructional time, the hallways are silent. The office is quiet. There are no children loitering in the administrative area and only rarely is a student checking in or out of school. Bulletin boards throughout the school announce Beta Club activities, rather than social events. The teacher’s lounge is filled with “treats” sent by parents in appreciation for their work with the children of the community.

The Assistant Principal acts as the disciplinarian of the school. There is a side room to his office which houses six desks. This is the area where children wait for him, rather than waiting in the hallway or in the front office. During frequent visits to the school, I never observed more than two students in this disciplinary waiting area and both students were sitting quietly in the desks as they waited.

Mr. Gray informed me that every teacher was required to have a “starter” at the beginning of each class, one of the recommendations by Wong (1998) (see section First Year Procedures Advocated by Harry Wong). This “starter” was an activity, a math problem, a vocabulary exercise, or some sort of brain teaser to get the students in the mind set for learning during that class period. During transition time between classes, as the teacher stood in the hallway to monitor and greet students, students began to work on the “starter” before the bell rang. When the tardy bell rang and the teacher entered the classroom, the students were in their desks, with paper and writing utensils ready, prepared to go over the “starter”. Prior to March, most “starters” were prepared with standardized testing in mind. These “starters” were not optional activities but were a requirement for every teacher during every class. Mr. Gray and Mr. Gardner look for the “starter” on the board when they entered a classroom. Mr. Gardner said the “starter” was “standard operating procedure to get the kids in the right frame of mind to get them started to learn.”

*Instruction at Cargo Middle School.* Instruction at Cargo was characterized by routine. In Mrs. Guidry’s sixth grade physical education class, students did not enter the girls’ dressing room before Mrs. Guidry entered the gym to escort them. Once dressed, students lined up and waited for Mrs. Guidry to exit the gym and go to the softball field. When it was time to return to the gym for the next class, students waited for Mrs. Guidry before they crossed the parking lot to enter the school.

Routine was also a part of Mr. Graham’s sixth grade World History class. The “starter” for the day was a review for the quiz. The board in front of the class had a list

of vocabulary words for the next unit. After students completed the quiz and turned it in, they immediately set to work defining their vocabulary words. No instructions were needed and no questions were asked. The routines of the classes helped establish discipline in the students and conveyed the expectations of the teachers for their behavior as well as their learning.

Expectations for behavior were also conveyed in Mrs. Guidry's seventh grade physical education class. Three females in her class chose not to dress out in their P.E. uniforms and so could not participate in the kickball game. Rather than allow the students to sit in the bleachers while the other students played ball, the three girls were still required to exert some physical activity. While the class played in the kickball game, these girls walked the perimeter of the field for the remainder of the period.

Connections to the students' lives were a part of the instruction at Cargo. Safety and strategies were part of the physical education in Mrs. Guidry's class. Mr. Graham's class included a discussion of the Industrial Revolution. During the discussion, Mr. Graham encouraged the students to explain to him the meaning of a revolution and how a revolution can change a person's life. This led to an exchange in which the students debated how their lives have been influenced by machines and industry. Mr. Graham concluded the lesson by examining the concept of crop rotation. This prompted some of the students, whose parents were sugar cane farmers, to explain to the class why their fathers planted soy beans in the off season. These connections not only kept the discussion alive but held the interest of the students as they saw the impact of the Industrial Revolution in their homes and to their parents' livelihood.

**Metaphorical Synopsis.** Cargo Middle School is one where everyone is devoted to student achievement. Decidedly not Utopia, Cargo has its share of discipline problems and unsupportive parents. However, with each person I spoke to and in observations of the classroom instruction, the education and well-being of the children of the community came first. Realizing the importance of standardized testing in March, parents made it a priority to get their children to school on time and well rested. The Assistant Principal at Cargo informed me that during the week of state testing in March, a total of three students were absent, all with documented medical reasons. The faculty and administrators at Cargo looked at this as a message from the parents that they accepted their part in the “high stakes testing” phenomenon.

Cargo planes provide lifelines to communities, albeit in many forms. In return, the communities aided by the cargo planes support and defend their work. The community of Granger lived by this philosophy. As the newest members of this community, the beginning teachers at Cargo were made to feel, and believed they were, a vital part of the crew. The new teachers faced the same problems as other teachers regarding paperwork, discipline, and failing students. However, both teachers felt supported by the administration, the other faculty, and the community at large, thus, empowering them to concentrate on increasing student achievement. Mr. Graham commented that he “never felt alone in his classroom.” As a member of the crew with a flight plan geared to achievement, Mr. Graham believed responsibility for the education of the children of Granger rested with all members of the community. This belief

removed the aura of isolation for the beginning teacher and opened the way for a successful initial year of teaching.

### **Kamikaze Middle School**

**Introduction.** Japan launched a series of kamikaze (“divine wind”) attacks against United States aircraft carriers in World War II in a last ditch effort to regain control. The planes that these kamikaze pilots flew were loaded with explosives and the missions were deadly for the pilots. None survived (Lopez, 1995). Using every ounce of skill, the pilots fought the battle with valor. Fiercely loyal to their country and to each other, the kamikaze pilots knew that, while they served well and contributed to the Japanese war efforts, ultimately, the mission’s conclusion would be their demise, as well. Nonetheless, these warriors took pride in their task, believing, as one pilot wrote in a final note to his parents, that “I have been given a splendid opportunity to die” (Time-Life, 1999, p. 114).

**Background Information.** True to the mystique that is deep South Louisiana, Westside Parish, as it winds down to the Gulf of Mexico, is dotted with small Cajun villages, one after another. Bayou Napoleon, known as “The Longest Street in the World,” follows the main state highway until it ends at the Gulf. Cajun hospitality, plantation homes, antique shops, swamp tours, charter fishing, festivals, and Mardi Gras celebrations are all a part of the culture that defines Westside Parish (lapage, 2000). In the southernmost section of Westside Parish is Haute Cuisine, one of many rural villages located along the bayou.

Traveling south on the main highway toward the town of Haute Cuisine, small towns are on the right and the quarter mile wide bayou is on the left. The bayou is filled with shrimp and crab boats, as well as barges. Shops advertising “everything for all your shrimping needs” are as frequent as the many Catholic Churches with signs in front proclaiming, “Our Lady of Prompt Succor, protect us from hurricanes.” Haute Cuisine is the locale of Kamikaze Middle School, which sits on the main highway, just across from Bayou Napoleon.

While some citizens of Haute Cuisine are landowners, mostly sugar cane farmers, the majority of the people are employed by the water, according to the principal of Kamikaze. Mr. Hank Humphrey informed me that most of the parents were fishermen, “either shrimpers or crabbers.” Thus, income from year to year varied with the whims of Mother Nature. This accounted for the poverty rate of 49.8% in the school. There were few minority students, only totaling 12.8%. The predicted School Performance Score (SPS) for Kamikaze was 87.7. Therefore, with an actual SPS of 64.8, Kamikaze had an SEI of -1.65 SD, designating it the less effective school of Pair 3. Significantly, the Kamikaze SPS in SY 1999-2000 increased to 84.3, though still less than the predicted score for the school. With a total of 458 students, 88% were in regular education and 12% were designated as special education students. Classes were, overall, large with 44% over 27 students (38% had 21-26 students; 18% had under 20). The attendance rate at Kamikaze (93.1%) was somewhat below the state average (94.6%). However, the dropout rate (0.3%) was far better than that of the state (2.3%). State faculties averaged 37% with master’s degrees but Kamikaze’s faculty only had 19% with master’s

degrees. With eight beginning teachers, only Tupelov and Tailspin Middle Schools, in Southside Parish had a greater number of novices in the sample of schools in this study.

The entry to the school opened to an auditorium-like area filled with church pews which faced a stage. At the rear of the stage was the faculty restroom and lounge. I was informed by the secretary that faculty restrooms had been installed that year and they were quite proud of them. However, to reach the bathroom involved a climb up the stairs to the stage and then a walk behind the stage curtains to get to the door. To reach the faculty lounge required another four steps up. No handicapped access to either the restroom or the faculty lounge was readily observable.

The floors in the main area were a dark polished oak and a walkway around the top of this large area led to one upstairs classroom, directly across from the stage. The administrative area was in a small hallway to the left. The waiting area appeared to have previously been a classroom. Three desks for secretaries were placed around the room, along with two couches for visitors. Small offices on each side of the waiting area housed the principal and the assistant principal. When I arrived, the principal was in conference with a family; however, I did not wait for any length of time. A family of four exited the principal's office and I was invited in, along with the school nurse.

Mr. Humphrey introduced himself but asked me not to sit until a wooden chair could be brought in for me. As we waited, the school nurse began to spray the carpets and the cloth furniture with disinfectant. The principal explained that the family, which had just left, all had a serious infestation of lice and he did not want me to chance

catching it by sitting on any of the cloth furniture where they sat. I expressed my appreciation.

Much like everyone I met at Kamikaze, Mr. Humphrey was kind and gracious. He provided access to whatever I needed but also, like other faculty, he was quite casual in his approach to his work day. I was informed that this was a “laid back school” and we “go with the flow.” Therefore, he was not able to set up an appointment with me for an interview because he was never sure where he would be on campus or who might drop by. He asked that I just check in every once in a while to see if he was free. In the meantime, he gave me the counselor’s office because she was absent for the day and would not mind.

Beginning Teachers at Kamikaze Middle School. There were eight beginning teachers at Kamikaze, of whom seven agreed to be interviewed, as seen in Table 6.10. Three teachers accepted the position at Kamikaze because the job was available in August and two because the position was available in January. One teacher was hired after working at Kamikaze as a sabbatical replacement. Only one teacher was solicited for an open position, Mr. Harrington, because his wife, his brother, and his brother-in-law all worked at Kamikaze and recommended him to the principal.

Assistance. The beginning teachers at Kamikaze reported that the district induction consisted of a one day presentation at the central office explaining district policies, insurance, and basic rules. Mr. Hawthorne called it a “big review of everything” while Mrs. Hathaway stated that it “pumped me up” but “it wasn’t reality.”



Table 6.10. Teachers at Kamikaze Middle Who Volunteered for Interview.

Teacher	Subject	Position Selection	University	Degree	Experience*	Certified
Hilary Habersham	Lang. Arts	Job was available in January	University of Louisiana, Lafayette	B.A.	1.5 years	Yes
Hester Hadley	Math	Job was available in January	Louisiana State University	B.S.	½ year	No
Heath Halston	Social Studies	Sabbatical replacement, then hired	University of Louisiana, Lafayette	B.A.	1.5 years	Yes
Henry Harrington	Science	Recommended by family on faculty	Nicholls State University	B.S.	2 years	No
Heather Hathaway	Home Ec	Job was available	Nicholls State University	B.S.	1 year	Yes
Hugh Hawkins	Band	Job was available	University of Louisiana, Lafayette	B.A.	1.5 years	Yes
Herman Hawthorn	Special Ed.	Job was available	Nicholls State University	B.A.	1.5 years	No
Teacher		Position				
Hank Humphrey		Principal				
Hannah Hilton		Mentor				
Harriet Hurst		Mentor				

\* Experience includes current year

When Mrs. Hathaway actually entered the classroom, she said it was nothing like what had been presented to her at the university or from the district.

For me, they painted a cute little picture of what it would be like. They painted a pretty little picture...A lot of the things were positive ways to handle it and that's O.K. but I never realized that I would get confronted with a fifteen year old in my face saying, "this class sucks" and "f-you." And somebody bigger than me in my face. But they painted a pretty little picture.

One of the mentors, Hannah Hilton, agreed that the Westside Parish School System presents an unrealistic picture for the new teachers. Mrs. Hilton said they "gild the lily" and then the mentors have to undo what the central office has told them, particularly in the area of handling discipline problems. At the new teacher induction, novices are told that when there is a problem the teacher should pull the offending student out of class and quietly discuss the behavior in private. Mrs. Hilton disagreed with this method.

If you pull them out of this classroom and you have three like that in this classroom, to speak to you about the psychology of why you should be behaving, I have lost this classroom...In the Central Office, they love to gild the lily this way and Harriet (Harriet Hurst, the other Kamikaze mentor) and I try to prevent that before it happens.

Induction for beginning teachers at the school is handled by the two mentors. Mrs. Hurst, one of the mentors, explained that the mentors meet with the new teachers on the first day of school and it is up to them to induct the new teachers. They let the beginners know "the basics of how the school runs, this is how things go."

*Mentor Support.* Unlike most schools where one mentor is assigned to a new teacher, at Kamikaze both mentors share all beginners. For paperwork purposes, one mentor is officially assigned to each teacher. However, in reality, mentees are "shared" and the novice can go to either for help and support. In this way the new person can

gravitate to the mentor with whom they are most comfortable. Mrs. Hurst explains the advantage to this.

The other mentor on this campus (Mrs. Hilton) and I are two totally different people. We have different discipline policies, we teach in different styles, we have different attitudes when it comes to children. Instead of each one of us taking one or two (new teachers) we put them together because we feel like if they see something in one of us that they identify with more, they might tend to be more open about asking questions that they might be having problems with.

Mrs. Hilton further explains that this allows the new teachers to “be able to see which avenue works best for them.”

The novices liked the two mentor concept. Hillary Habersham noted that having two mentors offered convenience, as well as options, to the new teachers.

Oftentimes, I could not get to the particular person assigned to me. So with the way that she and the other lady worked, If I asked the other lady, it was just as if I was talking to the first one. So I had actually two people, one with 30 years experience and the other with 10 or 12...So they were a good balance for each other.

Mrs. Hathaway also appreciated the ability to get two views.

The mentors – one is a veteran teacher that I could talk to and one is a younger teacher – so I could see both sides...I could go to any of them I wanted at any time. At the beginning when I was struggling through discipline, one of them came in and said this is what you can do.

Not all new teachers turned to the mentors for professional help. Mr. Harrington stated that support from the curriculum coordinator offered more benefits for him. Miss Hadley was not assigned a mentor and did not know why. Mr. Halston, though he began teaching in August, had still not received an assigned mentor by January. When he approached the principal, Mr. Humphrey, about it, he was informed it was a mistake.

I explained to the principal when we talked about it that I didn't have a mentor. He said, 'Well, it was an oversight. We forgot to give you a mentor teacher. We never assigned you one.' But I understood because this was my, I mean, I know it's important, but this is my assistance

semester. I'm more worried about what the kids are doing on the LEAP and preparing the kids for the LEAP than I really was about my assistance semester.

Mr. Halston was assigned a mentor in mid-March and immediately began to prepare for assessment.

*Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program.* Everyone interviewed, including the mentors, agreed that the main role of the mentor was to prepare the new teachers to successfully complete the LaTAAP assessment. Mentor observations are limited to what is required by the state program. Feedback is always positive, never negative. Mrs. Hurst said the mentors do not "pop in." Other than what is required by LaTAAP, mentors only observe by invitation from the teacher.

Opinions regarding LaTAAP were generally negative at Kamikaze. Mrs. Hurst commented that the requirements for the new teacher are unrealistic.

It's become a show. Putting it in for that day. Because it's not feasible to do all of those things in one 50 minute period...But it's hard to hit every type style learner, every type of activity in 50 minutes...But to do every activity, hitting several different kinds of learners in one 50 minute period, I don't think is feasible.

Mr. Halston agreed that some teachers "perform" for the assessors and, thus, the program ends up certifying teachers who, perhaps, should not be.

It comes down to a dog and pony show. You can get ready for it. Anyone can get ready for it with the right amount of coaching and the right amount of preparation time. We've even had teachers to do a lesson that another teacher did at a different grade...The thing is, if you're going to give me a list and tell me everything I need to meet and you're going to tell me what day you're going to come, I'm going to go out of my way to bend over backwards to hit every point.

Mr. Harrington admitted that he was one of the teachers who performed for the assessors. He stated that he did not and could not teach as required by the assessment every day.

We're given the time the person is going to show up, we're given the dates they're going to show up, we're given what you have to do, and if you can put on a perfect show, you're good. I did a tap dance show in there that I don't do every day in my classroom. I could not physically teach the way I did every single day in that classroom... Mentally, I'd be exhausted every single day to the point that after a few months, I'd just be physically wore out.

Kamikaze teachers who were interviewed felt that the LaTAAP assessment was a performance and that anyone, with the right coaching, can pass. Moreover, the program does not, according to those interviewed, "weed out" the poor performing teachers. These factors caused frustration and resentment in Mrs. Habersham. She stated that she taught for the assessment as she does every day and thinks there is a tacit injustice in the certification of teachers who put on a performance.

Because every single day of the year, you have a teacher who sits behind a desk and teaches from behind a desk. The day the assessor comes in, it's this big dog and pony show. And the mentor says, don't do this lesson. Do this lesson because this is the one that would be the best dog and pony show...But how I got ready for assessment, come in to my classroom and 95% of the time that's how I'm teaching and that's how my kids are working.

The beginning teachers and the mentors all agreed that LaTAAP was a program that must be dealt with in order to achieve certification. However, those interviewed did not cite any benefits derived from having completed the program.

Monitoring. Teacher selection at Kamikaze is taken out of the hands of the school. According to the principal, Mr. Humphrey, while he is allowed to interview applicants, decisions are made by the Central Office. Mr. Humphrey states,

I really do not have much say as to the hiring of teachers. Mr. Habin, the personnel supervisor, asks for my opinion...however, the final decision is his..in an ideal world, team members would have some say-so in to who would be working with them. However, very seldom do we have more than one applicant for a position.

This situation, according to Mr. Humphrey, does not open itself to selection, rather, he is filling positions.

*Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program.* Like the mentors, the principal normally only observes teachers twice a year; that is, the number of times required by LaTAAP. Feedback is given when a problem is observed. When the assistant principal observed Mr. Halston and did not give any feedback, the new teacher had to ask for it. The assistant principal told him “well, you didn’t do anything wrong” so he didn’t see the necessity to meet on the observation. Mr. Halston explained that they only receive feedback on something that’s “drastically wrong.” He also stated, however, that if the new teacher pursued the administrator, they were willing to discuss the observation.

Mr. Humphrey stated that LaTAAP was useful and somewhat practical but felt teachers should have a full year of assistance, with assessment during the second year.

Team Building. Most of the new teachers are local products so, even though the mentors limited their roles to assistance with LaTAAP, social support was readily available for the new teachers.

Mr. Harrington had several family members on campus. His wife, his brother, and his brother-in-law were all members of the Kamikaze faculty. Therefore, information and social support were easy to come by for him. Mr. Hawthorne went to school at Kamikaze so he knew many of the faculty members from his days as a student. Mr. Hawkins’ parents were both educators in Westside Parish, though not at Kamikaze, so he turned to them for social support.

*School Culture and Colleagues.* The female teachers at Kamikaze had what they called “Ladies Night Suppers.” These social gatherings included all females on campus

and, according to Mrs. Hurst, these once a month meetings provide collegial support for everyone.

There's a lot of venting. The new teachers ask all of us questions...We encourage new teachers to go because it's a camaraderie, too. We definitely gel at these little suppers. They also see that other teachers, even teachers that have been around for a while, have some of the same problems that they are having and it makes them feel a little better.

Though the mentors reported that the faculty was "close," Mr. Harrington shared that if a new teacher chooses not to participate in the social activities or prefers autonomy to sharing, then that teacher may find him/herself alone. Mr. Harrington gave a recent example.

There's a couple of them who are here that kind of came in with their guns loaded as if they were expert teachers. Advice given to them was kind of not taken. Not that anybody ever give them advice and expect it to be used but they fell on their face a few times by not taking advice. People treat them nice and all of that, but nobody goes out of their way any more.

In a situation like this where people are not fitting in, either by choice or by circumstance, Mr. Harrington was asked who addresses this. He replied,

Nobody....It was like, OK, this is a waste of time for me because this person just don't want to listen to advice...So they are not going to go like they did with me – the extra mile to help me out – because I was happy to get it.

In the close knit community of Kamikaze, social support comes to those who, according to Mr. Harrington, "don't rock the boat."

Intent to Stay. Challenges of the New Teacher. Like many new teachers interviewed in this study, Mr. Hawthorn, Mrs. Hathaway, and Mr. Hawkins cited discipline as the greatest challenge of new teachers. Mrs. Hathaway said that, initially, she believed discipline would not be a problem for her because of her age. At 37 with

two children she believed teaching would not be difficult. She stated, “And I thought, I can do this. And then, after the first week, I thought, oh, my God, I can’t do it.”

Mr. Hawkins’ battle with discipline was because, as the music teacher, he taught a number of electives. Often, with electives, students do not see the value in the course. Calling discipline a “constant battle,” Mr. Hawkins explained,

The kids say, ‘Why are we listening to this boring stuff? Why is this going to help us out?’... And to get that common ground, to get that happy medium is hard. I mean, you can’t listen to Master P in the music appreciation class!

Conversely, Mr. Harrington said discipline was no problem at all for him because of the way he structured his science class.

I have such a free class in the sense that the kids are free to spread their opinion, whether it’s good or bad. The language they use, sometimes I take it like that. If they are passionate about it, they get it out what ever way they have to get it out. I’m game for it...They don’t raise their hand in my class. They got a question, they blurt it out...I don’t like them feeling like they are in the military in my classroom.

Mr. Harrington said his greatest challenge has been not treating the students as his equal. Treating them like little adults causes him problems occasionally because “sometimes they try to use their friendship toward their advantage.”

Other problems cited by those interviewed include a sense of commitment from the new teachers (Mrs. Hilton), competing with the media (Mrs. Hurst), facing the reality of the classroom (Mr. Humphrey), and finding the avenue that works best and growing from there (Mr. Halston).

*Beginning Successes.* Like the challenges of the new teachers, there were many opinions on what was the key to success for the beginning teacher. Mrs. Hurst believed new teachers will succeed if they don’t give up. Mrs. Hilton, stated that if the new



teacher is prepared for what s/he will face, s/he can succeed. Mrs. Hilton explained that new teachers “have to be ready to not be pleasant.”

Rapport was stated as a sign of success by the new teachers. Mr. Hawthorne said that the rapport includes “getting the kids going in the right direction. The key to motivating them is just to ask them. Just talking to them.” Mr. Harrington agreed that if a teacher has rapport with the students, then learning will follow. He commented that he would like to be known as a “teacher the kids like.” He said,

I would hate to be the teacher that I hear my kids come to my room and talk to each other and say, oh, God that’s so stupid...if they don’t like me, they are not going to learn. There’s no doubt about it.

*The View of the Profession.* All of the new teachers interviewed stated that they liked teaching but not all agreed they were yet professionals, using terms such as a “professional in training” (Mr. Hawkins) and an “educator, not a professional” (Mr. Halston). Mrs. Hathaway stated that she was not yet a professional because “professionals come with experience and advanced degrees.”

Mrs. Habersham stated that she is a professional but many of her colleagues were not “because I have seen people here who say they are professionals and I don’t see that they are acting professionally.”

Mr. Harrington was the most outspoken regarding professionalism in Westside Parish. In his opinion, teachers in Westside Parish are not treated with respect but “treated like peasant workers.” So while he enjoys teaching, he “hates the BS that goes along with it. The school board crap.” Mr. Harrington stated that political infighting and political favors degrade any attempts to gain professionalism on the part of teachers.

Now the respect, I think, parents are starting to get the vibes that we have a hell of a job on our hands. So we get it from the public but I don’t think we get it from our higher ups...In most jobs you work a while, you move up and all of that...Here, it all boils down to politics. In this

situation everybody's related to the boss or the principal or the assistant principal...because you have 700 hierarchies that are above the teachers. So if you just know any one of those, you've got a ticket. But you can't fix it. Not in a small town.

This viewpoint was somewhat ironic because Mr. Harrington noted earlier in the interview that he was assigned to Kamikaze Middle because of recommendations of other faculty which included his wife, his brother, and his brother-in-law.

*Holding Power.* Only Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Hawthorne stated that they hoped to still be teaching at Kamikaze Middle in five years. Mrs. Hathaway and Mr. Halston believed they would still be teaching in five years, but hoped to be assigned to a high school.

Mrs. Habersham was uncertain where she would be in five years. She stated that the lack of professionalism at Kamikaze was driving her away from the field and that "it's not because I don't enjoy how I can attract students. It is totally because of the extreme lack of professionalism here."

Mr. Harrington was fairly certain he would not be teaching in five years. With a degree in environmental science, he had the option to work as an environmental consultant with an offshore company. His reason was his frustration with the system.

I hate to say it but if the system doesn't change, I won't be back. It's not the work. It's the system, in my opinion...I think this parish has a problem with having problems. They do everything they can not to make a problem. You have to be a constant pain in the rear to get them to listen. They would rather just stick it with band aids.

School Processes. Three main elements of the school climate were observed at Kamikaze including a close, tight knit community, a casual, relaxed style of management, and low expectations for the students. The first two elements were both a blessing and a curse.

The close community of Kamikaze resulted from many of the employees being life long residents of Haute Cuisine. Many of the faculty had known each other and their families, as well as the families of the students, for many years. This produces a fierce loyalty for the school, as well as a strong desire to support each other. The “Ladies Night Suppers” and the informal, after school venting sessions held in the pews in the main area of the school, offer opportunities for the beginner to “fit in.” However, teachers who challenge the norm or who choose not to participate in the social activities are quickly, but surreptitiously, ostracized, as evidenced in the anecdote of the new teachers who chose not to take the veterans’ advice.

The casual atmosphere allowed the teachers to move at their own pace with little oversight, other than that required by the state. There are no bells on campus and Mr. Halston reported that if his students needed extra time on a project or a test, then all teachers on his team just held their classes for a longer period. He repaid the time the next day by letting the other teachers have his students for extra time. Mr. Harrington explained that

It would be nothing for a teacher to stay on with his class if he’s doing something that he’s really in to. If a student is not in to it in my class, I say, have him. Take him. We work with each other like that. When I have them back and they’re interested in something in science you say, I need them. I say, I got them now. Don’t let me lose them. We work good with each other.

Conversely, this casual atmosphere can be frustrating for those new teachers seeking a professional atmosphere. Mrs. Habersham said that “things slip by and are not addressed by the administration.” She was particularly frustrated by those who perform only for the assessment.

The administration doesn’t do anything because it goes back to the laid back atmosphere, I think. I think because of this community, just the natural culture down here. I think there is a gap. I think we tend to procrastinate and not address things...It’s the laid back atmosphere that

really gets to me sometimes. Because you should not be doing certain things as a professional... There are some things that are brought up here that would be inappropriate in any professional setting.

Low expectations were demonstrated repeatedly in classroom observations. Teachers who had adequate classroom management and good rapport with the students demonstrated a low expectation for the student's achievement in their instructional strategies. Examples of this can be found in the following section.

*Instruction at Kamikaze Middle School.* Class observations at Kamikaze included science and social studies. Mr. Halston's social studies class illustrated average instruction found at Kamikaze.

Mr. Halston invited me to observe his eighth grade Louisiana History class. Since there are no bells in the school, class began when the teacher was ready to begin teaching; thus, it was difficult to tell who was tardy and who got to class on time. As the Louisiana History class began, all students were at their desk with their books and notebooks out. The lecture for the day was on the effects of World War II on Louisiana. Several local examples were given to the class throughout the class period. For example, many of the students' parents worked in some capacity with ships or boats. Mr. Halston told the class that many ships used during the war were built in the shipyards of their town. A German POW camp was located in the next town, dropped off by ships traveling through the local ship channels. Most of the students were familiar with Chennault Air Base but did not know that the LSU Tigers were named for the Chennault Flying Tigers.

The students appeared interested in the examples but disengaged with the methodology used to convey the information. The class period was devoted to lecture and discussion, though most of the discussion emanated from the teacher. The lecture consisted of Mr. Halston reading a sentence verbatim, including punctuation, and the

students diligently copying word for word, punctuation mark by punctuation mark, what the teacher said. Students intermittently asked questions, which Mr. Halston answered with explanation. The students appeared comfortable with the teacher. However, there was little interaction between teacher and student, other than the occasional question, and the discussion did not extend beyond knowledge or comprehension. Higher order thinking skills were not addressed. Overall, the students were well behaved but as the hour wore on, more than half of the students were disengaged.

Students in the eighth grade science class were prepared for presentations. In groups of two the students researched a planet, then presented information about the planet to the class. Students utilized technology in Power Point presentations, posters, and drew diagrams on the chalk board. Students were given the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters.

Though visual aids were utilized, information was limited to factual knowledge. At the end of the presentations, the teacher ask questions targeting recall of facts. No comprehension, analysis, or synthesis questions were asked. Students appeared to pay attention, with only two students actively disengaged (slept through the presentations). During the presentations, there were two intercom interruptions, one student interrupted the class to deliver a folder to the teachers, and the teacher received an email from the office. Since the classroom computer was hooked up to the classroom television for the Power Point presentations, the email was visible to the students during a presentation on Venus. The teacher stopped the presentation to read, then delete the email. At the conclusion of the presentations, the teacher ended class with ten minutes left, allowing the students to talk or go to their lockers.

Attempts were made to observe other classes. However, on the appointed days, I arrived to discover that one teacher was showing his classes a movie to treat them for

behaving well, another teacher left on a field trip, and a third teacher decided to give her students a study period, rather than teach.

**Metaphorical Synopsis.** Just as the Kamikaze pilots of World War II sacrificed themselves for love of country, the beginning teachers at Kamikaze demonstrated a fierce loyalty to the school. Strong collegiality with each other, for the most part, was evidenced in the interviews and the stories of “Ladies Night Supper.” While they worked with valor to instruct the children of Kamikaze, they also voiced frustration at the hopelessness of the task, a symptom of instruction geared to low expectations of students. The novices viewed the system as a failing one but continued to plod on, hoping to touch students whom they viewed did not care about learning while also disheartened by a principal who failed to address unprofessional faculty behavior. The kamikaze pilots took pride in what they did, just as these beginners did. Knowing that they served their country well, the kamikaze pilots also knew they were being defeated by the very tasks they undertook. The beginning teachers at Kamikaze cited a politicized school board, a lack of professionalism, poorly disciplined students, and an all too casual administration as contributing to their feelings of defeat. However, they continue to diligently toil, hoping that, unlike the kamikaze pilots of history, their labors will not destroy them.

### **A Comparison of Cargo and Kamikaze Middle Schools**

As rural schools in isolated communities, the two middle schools in Pair 3 were removed from many of the influences which plagued the schools on the fringe of urban areas and mid-sized cities. Faculty members at both schools were often life long residents of the community. Principals at both Cargo and Kamikaze referred to an interview question of applicants which centered around the applicant’s commitment to

the community. Thus, support became a prominent issue for the novices at Cargo and Kamikaze, support from colleagues, administration, parents, and community.

Cargo Middle School was the pride of Granger, Louisiana. Residents of the area spoke with pride about the school. Moreover, they expressed appreciation for the work of the teachers and respect for the administration. The school was referred to in terms of personal possession ("our school" and "my teachers"). This element of ownership reinforced the support.

In addition to the verbal affirmations, small tokens such as homemade cookies and cakes, as well as pot luck lunches for faculty, could be found in the teacher's lounge of the school. While the beginning teachers and the administration did not cite unconditional support from the parents as a positive trait of the school, they did refer to support in times of need from all parents. Mr. Gardner noted that during the week of standardized testing a total of four students were absent during the entire week, pointing out that this evidenced the importance the parents placed on the school's accountability to the state.

Community support for Kamikaze was the antithesis of that at Cargo. Beginning teachers were frustrated by political infighting at the district level and in the community. Several of the new teachers agreed that support from parents was rare. Visits from parents to the school were infrequent unless a complaint was being made. One new teacher stated that the school's faculty was treated like "peasant workers," though he believed parents were beginning to respect the work of the teachers. Part of the problem, according to another teacher, was the culture of the area, which placed little emphasis on education.

This lack of respect accorded by the community, the district, and the parents, in the opinion of one of the novices at Kamikaze, was the source of the lack of

professionalism perceived in the faculty. Three of the beginning teachers were concerned about the lack of professionalism on the campus and attributed it to the “laid back” administration and a small faction of veterans who “ruled” the campus.

The mentors were proponents of the “Ladies Night Suppers” held at Kamikaze, stating collegiality was cemented and novices were allowed to vent with the veterans. After school each day, a group of 10-12 teachers gathered in the pews in the central area of the school. Mrs. Hilton, one of the mentors, called them “Miller Times” because after the teachers vented their complaints from the day, most stated that “they could use a beer about now.” These gatherings bonded the teachers in friendship and helped the new teacher become a part of the faculty.

Collegiality also existed at Cargo, albeit in a different manner. The faculty at Cargo fostered collegiality through their profession. Encouragement, advice, and teaching strategies were the methods used to bring the new teachers into the faculty at Cargo. The friendly, open atmosphere allowed the beginners a level of comfort to listen to veterans and exchange ideas.









While both schools were managed by principals who were well liked by their faculties, the method of support was very different. Cargo’s principal, Mr. Gray, visited classrooms often. He and his tireless assistant, Mr. Granger (who was never observed without his clipboard), walked the hallways of the school, patting children on the back and peeking in doorways. Their presence was constant and their enthusiasm for the efforts of their teachers was contagious. Mr. Gray made frequent use of email, soliciting ideas and input from his teachers and passing them on to the rest of the faculty. Feedback was not always positive but in the view of the new teachers was always constructive. If problems arose, the new teachers stated that the administration “backed us 100%.”



Likeable and friendly, Mr. Humphrey ran a casual and slow paced school. During the after school “Miller Times,” he was sometimes in the pews chiming in on the teacher’s conversations. During the school day, he was never observed outside of the office area. He observed classes as required by LaTAAP but did not offer feedback unless there was a problem to be addressed. Though he expressed the importance of mentoring for the beginning teachers, he overlooked filling out the necessary paperwork for one of the new teachers to receive a mentor. As a result, one of the beginning teachers was not assigned a mentor until mid-March. This relaxed style of management resulted in what one novice called “an extreme lack of professionalism” which filtered into the classroom, manifesting in low expectations and a climate not conducive to learning.

The differences in assistance, monitoring, and team building were stark in the two rural schools in Pair 3, as seen in Table 6.11 (see section Comparison of Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools for explanation of table components). The mentor at Cargo embraced all facets of mentoring, while the mentors at Kamikaze stressed the importance of faculty friendship, as second only to LaTAAP. As discussed above, the monitoring aspect of the initial years were polar opposites in the two schools, which resulted in instruction also at diverse ends.

Table 6.11. General A Priori Themes for Cargo and Kamikaze Middle.

School	Mentoring Assistance	Administrative Monitoring	Collegial Team Building	Effective Instruction
Cargo (ME)*				
Kamikaze (LE)*				

Legend: Effective:  Ineffective:  Holding Steady: 

\*ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

The specific a priori themes of challenges, successes, and intent to stay reveal similarities in the perceptions of challenges but differences in the perceptions of success as seen in Table 6.12. With only two teachers at Cargo, responses were evenly divided with one citing discipline and the other citing understanding the student's needs as challenging. Discipline was also reported as the greatest challenge at Kamikaze, along with adequately preparing for class, finding one's true teaching self, and finding professionalism in the workplace.

Survival and student success were the two areas where teachers at Cargo perceived their success. Teachers at Kamikaze held several views of success, including being a teacher the students like, establishing a rapport with the students, and seeing the culmination of their work. Views concerning successes and challenges are indicated by frequency of mentions in Table 6.12.

**Table 6.12. Specific A Priori Themes at Cargo and Kamikaze Middle.**

School	Greatest Challenge		Greatest Success		Interdisciplinary Teaming		Support			Intent to Stay		
	Discipline	Other	Student Success	Other	Professional and	Structural concept	Overall support	Some support	No support	Intend to stay	Intend to Leave	Intend to stay but not at Present school
Cargo (ME)*	1	1	1	1			X			2	0	0
Kamikaze (LE)*	3	4		7		X			X	2	2	2

\* ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Both of the teachers at Cargo stated their desire to continue teaching. One third of the teachers at Kamikaze said they would continue to teach while one third believed they would leave education. One third said they would stay in teaching but would

choose not to continue at Kamikaze Middle. Only Kamikaze incorporated interdisciplinary teaming, with new teachers perceiving teaming as a structural concept. Comparisons were made with Cargo by focusing on overall support in the perception of the beginning teachers, including community, parents, administration, and colleagues.

### **Multiple Schools Qualitative Analysis**

Analysis of all schools in the sample took place in two cycles. Interviews of principals, mentors, and beginning teachers were first unitized and categorized (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) with a priori themes by school context. General a priori themes included: mentoring assistance, administrative monitoring, collegial team building, and effective instruction. More specific a priori themes included: challenges facing the new teacher, successes of the new teacher (or key to success from interviews with administrators and mentors), teacher intent to stay, and, in those schools which implement teaming, the perception of interdisciplinary teaming.

Through the process of analysis additional themes emerged that were manifested across cases and contexts. These themes provide insight in to the overall socialization experiences of beginning teachers. The emerging themes deal with the role played by various aspects of the socialization experience. These include: the role of the principal, the role of the assigned mentor, the role of the Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program (LaTAAP), and the role of the university preparation program.

#### **General A Priori Themes**

**Mentoring Assistance.** Schools across contexts in Louisiana are required to assign official state trained mentors to beginning teachers. While all schools in the sample adhered to this requirement, the level of mentoring assistance and the vigor with which mentoring was provided differed greatly by school context.

Official mentors in less effective schools were more likely to view their role as one limited to LaTAAP paperwork and observations. Of those mentors in less effective schools who ventured beyond the minimum duties of the program, that role was a passive one, restricting themselves to introducing the new teachers to the rest of the faculty or to disseminating information to the novices about workshops or programs which the beginner had the option to investigate, if interested.

The two less effective schools in Southside Parish had the least effective schoolwide mentoring programs. Only one of the eight new teachers at Tupelov was assigned an official mentor and he stated that he would approach the principal for questions or concerns before he would go to his mentor. Only one of five new teachers at Tailspin was assigned an official mentor. Seven months after school began, this new teacher reported that her only contact with the mentor was an introduction. The four new teachers at Tailspin who were not assigned a mentor also were not familiar with the LaTAAP program.

Four of the five more effective schools had a proactive, vigorous mentoring program at their schools. Polar Flight was the exception to this. The other four schools, however, had programs designed to address the whole person of the new teacher. Mentors at the more effective schools were more likely to offer moral support, counseling, and serve as a “sounding board” to the new teachers. More frequent meetings with mentees, particularly in the first few months of school, were more common at more effective schools than at less effective schools. Mentors at more effective schools were also more likely to address issues beyond the scope of the state assessment, such as conduct during a parent/teacher conference, how to set up a roll book, and classroom management.

**Monitoring.** Like official mentors, administrators, most often the principal, are also required to monitor instruction of the beginning teachers. All schools reported fulfilling this expectation. However, like the mentoring aspect, the quality of the monitoring varied by school context.

Principals in less effective schools were more likely to carry out the minimum number of required observations for the district and state. Observations at the less effective schools were more likely to fulfill state requirements rather than to facilitate instructional effectiveness. Two other aspects of monitoring, quality of feedback and attitude toward the state assessment program, were manifested in the study.

Three of the five principals in less effective schools only gave positive feedback, as reported by the new teachers. Observations were followed by encouraging words, rather than a critique. Some feedback from observations came in the form of pep talks. One principal did not provide feedback at all. His view was that if something needed to be addressed he would do so immediately. He monitored by “no news is good news.”

Monitoring from more effective schools included frequent visits to teacher’s classrooms, both formal and informal. Principals in more effective schools were more likely to advocate “walk through” visits, also called “pop ins” or “popcorns.” These visits lasted from one minute to ten minutes, with a cursory but thorough look at lesson plans and student engagement. Feedback was immediate and, likely, in writing. New teachers, often intimidated initially, grew comfortable with these visits. Beginners at more effective schools reported inviting the principal to visit their classes and students anticipated “showing off” for the principal. Feedback from one administrator took the form of reflection, a method the new teachers appreciated as one which motivated them to objectively view their instruction.

Principals at more effective schools were also more likely to be viewed as open to new ideas and new instructional techniques. One principal utilized school wide faculty email to both solicit and share ideas from teachers. Another principal operated through shared decision making, a policy which empowered the new teachers to view themselves as professionals as well as instilling them with confidence in their abilities.

**Team Building.** New teachers across school contexts reported some type of collegial team building. However, the form of the team building varied.

New teachers at less effective schools which incorporated teaming (Mir and Tupelov) depended on team members for support, while new teachers at Tailspin relied on themselves, feeling free to ask other faculty for help but receiving nothing from them voluntarily. Team building at Kamikaze was more social (Ladies Night Suppers); however, the social support was limited to those who “fit in.” New teachers reported that those who did not take the advice of veterans were ostracized and some veterans viewed the novices as incompetent. Blackbird was the exception for the less effective schools. New teachers perceived a strong level of team building there, believing that the faculty, as a whole, takes care of the novices.









































More effective schools were more likely to have supportive and friendly faculties. One new teacher at Concorde reported that the faculty was the reason she chose to stay at Concorde. Informal mentors were numerous and readily provided resources as well as social support.

**Effective Instruction.** Teachers in more effective schools were more likely to demonstrate the components of effective teaching in their instruction than were teachers in less effective schools, as seen in Table 6.13 (see section Comparison of Barnstorming and Mir Middle Schools for explanation of table components). Teachers in more effective schools were more likely to incorporate elements of higher order thinking skills

and to encourage student participation. Transitions were more expeditious and higher expectations were established for those teachers in more effective schools.

Teachers in less effective schools, overall, demonstrated the ability to effectively communicate with their students but were less likely to involve the students in class participation. Teachers in less effective schools were more likely to hold low expectations for their students and rely on knowledge and comprehension questions. Teachers in both more effective and less effective schools faced challenges in monitoring techniques.

Table 6.13 General A Priori Themes for Multiple Schools.

Pair	School	Status*	Mentoring Assistance	Administrative Monitoring	Collegial Team Building	Effective Instruction
1	Barnstorming	ME				
	Mir	LE				
2	Polar Flight	ME				
	Blackbird	LE				
3	Cargo	ME				
	Kamikaze	LE				
4	Concorde	ME				
	Tupelov	LE				
5	Stealth	ME				
	Tailspin	LE				

\* ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

Legend: Effective:  Ineffective:  Holding Steady: 

Effective:  Ineffective:  Holding Steady:

#### Specific A Priori Themes

Table 6.14 illustrates the differences in the specific a priori themes found from all schools in the study. This table outlines frequency of mentions by teacher for the

Table 6.14. Specific A Priori Themes for Multiple Schools.

Pair	School	Status *	Support			Greatest Challenge		Greatest Success		Interdisciplinary Teams		Intent to stay		
			Overall support	Some support	No support	Discipline	Other	Student Success	Other	Profess/collegial	Structural concept	Intend to Stay	Intend to Leave	Intend to Stay but not at present school
1	Barn-storming	M E	X			2	2	3	1	X		4	0	0
	Mir	LE		X		3	1	3	1		X	2	2	0
2	Polar Flight	M E		X		2	2	1	3			4	0	0
	Blackbird	LE		X		2	2	1	1			3	0	0
3	Cargo	M E	X			1	1	1	1			2	0	0
	Kamikaze	LE		X		3	4	0	4		X	3	2	2
4	Concorde	M E	X			1	1	1	1	X		2	0	0
	Tupelov	LE		X		6	2	2	6		X	5	3	0
5	Stealth	M E		X		1	3	0	4			3	1	0
	Tailspin	LE			X	2	3	0	5			3	2	1
All Schools														
All Schools: ME			3	2	0	7	9	6	10	2	0	15	1	0
All Schools: LE			0	4	1	16	12	6	17	0	3	15	8	4

\*ME= More Effective; LE= Less Effective

challenges and successes at all schools in the study. Teacher intent to stay is indicated by number of teachers. Not all teachers responded to all items. Interdisciplinary teaming and level of support are indicated by the general view of all new teachers at each school



who were interviewed for this study. Those schools which do not implement interdisciplinary teaming are shaded.

**Intent to Stay.** Collegial social support (as stated in Chapter Five) was a variable predicting a new teacher's intent to stay in education. This, along with overall school processes as perceived by the new teacher, led to the novice expressing an intention to continue in the field of education. New teachers at more effective schools were more likely to express an intention to remain in teaching (93.7%) than were teachers at less effective schools (62.9%). Reasons reported for an intention to leave included money, a lack of professionalism, and a view that teaching was temporary until a better opportunity presented itself.

**Support for the New Teacher.** Overall support which includes colleagues, mentor, administration, parents, and the community at large was rare in the ten schools under study. Only three schools in the study could claim overall support.

New teachers at six of the ten schools perceived there was some form of support. Teachers at Kamikaze, and Tupelov perceived that support from their colleagues. Teachers at Mir, Polar Flight, and Blackbird received support from both their colleagues and their principal. Along with colleagues and the principal, teachers at Stealth also turned to their mentor. However, they perceived very little support from the parents and the community at large. Beginning teachers at Tailspin did not perceive any measure of support from any of these areas.

**Challenges of the Beginning Teacher.** School context was not related to perceptions of the beginning teachers regarding first year challenges. Across contexts, classroom management was more often reported as the greatest challenge facing new teachers. Thirteen of twenty seven (48%) of beginning teachers in less effective schools named discipline as a challenge as did seven of sixteen (44%) of teachers in more

effective schools. Moreover, three administrators in less effective schools and one administrator in a more effective school also stated classroom management as a challenge for new teachers. Other challenges mentioned more than once were paperwork, survival, and establishing a rapport with students.

**Success.** First year successes were also reported across contexts. Viewing success in their students was listed most often as a yardstick for the new teacher's personal success (seven teachers in less effective schools, or 27%, and five teachers in more effective schools, or 31%). Also reported as an indication of success was establishing a rapport with students. Rapport was mentioned more often in less effective urban fringe schools while student success was mentioned more often in more effective urban fringe schools.

**Interdisciplinary Teaming.** Five of the ten schools in the sample implemented the middle school concept of interdisciplinary teaming. Of the five schools, three were less effective (Kamikaze, Tupelov, and Mir) and two were more effective (Barnstorming and Concorde). The contrasts between the two lay in the perception of teaming as a structural concept (less effective) or as a means to professional development and effective instruction (more effective).

The less effective schools viewed teaming as a block schedule format. As part of this organizational schedule, teachers were grouped with other core teachers, all with the same group of students. Kamikaze eliminated school bells and allowed the teams to decide when to change classes. While the school had a general guideline for class times, the teachers had the option to hold the students longer or release them from class earlier, determined by teacher need. This convenience in the lengthening or shortening of class periods to allow students to finish tests or projects was an added benefit of the schedule, according to the teachers. Teachers at Mir and Kamikaze credited the team with their

induction and relied on the teams for social support. Drawbacks to teaming were found at Tupelov where new teachers complained of poor treatment by other team members and the long class periods associated with teaming.

Teachers at more effective schools held a different perception of teaming. Though scheduling was a part of the teaming effort, the main benefit, according to the teachers at Barnstorming, was an opportunity for professional development and research. Learning teams gave the new teachers insights into instructional strategies and the ability to gather data from these strategies. Teachers at Concorde credited the teams with help in classroom management, implementing higher order thinking skills into their lesson plans, and social support.

### Emerging Themes

The general themes of assistance, monitoring, and team building, along with the specific themes of intent to stay, challenges, successes, and interdisciplinary teaming produced results which delineated differences between more effective and less effective schools. However, data analysis produced additional themes, not initially sought. Themes which emerged as a result of data analysis focus on the various roles played by parts of the school organization as they impact the socialization experiences of beginning teachers. These include: the role of the principal, the role of the mentor, the role of LaTAAP, and the role of the university preparation program.

The Role of the Principal. Analysis of the role of the principal in the socialization experience resulted in a clear delineation between more effective and less effective schools. Those principals in the more effective schools are *focused*. Those in the less effective schools are either *frenzied, fractured, or floaters*.

Across school contexts, principals in more effective schools rarely sit behind their desks. These principals move down the hallways, into classrooms, and out on to the

playground. Their focus is on every aspect of the school, ensuring that every member of the school community is also focused on the mission of increasing student achievement in an orderly atmosphere. During transition time between classes, these administrators are in the hallways monitoring and greeting, while, at the same time, ensuring that students are moving rapidly to their next learning experience.

Principals in effective schools are focused on bringing together a committed faculty through recruiting or through interview techniques geared to this selection. Input from other faculty ensures that a common vision for potential faculty exists. Once employed, principals in more effective schools go beyond the minimal instructional monitoring required by the state. Their monitoring is frequent, often unannounced, and invariably followed by thought-provoking feedback for the novice.

Beginning teachers in effective schools clearly understand the emphasis placed on effective instruction by their principals. New and creative instructional strategies are encouraged, as long as the end result is focused on an increase in student achievement. Beginning teachers understand that they are a valued part of the school community because their input and ideas are accepted and often shared with other faculty. Support from these principals includes, but often extends beyond, social support. Teachers in effective schools are supported in their decisions regarding classroom management and challenges from the public.

The focus on excellence in the classroom permeates throughout the schools and in to the surrounding community. Beginning teachers in these schools enlarge their efforts as they, too, focus on the vision of the principal for their students. As the novice teachers are socialized into a school culture of excellence in education, they, like their principal, are “all about the kids,” with a focus on achievement.

Principals in less effective schools fell in to three categories: the *floater*, the *frenzied*, and the *fractured*. As they fell, so did their beginning teachers.

The *floater* in this study was a friendly administrator, easy going and well liked. The *floater* “goes with the flow” and, according to the novices, is a “laid back” manager. Freely admitting that he has no say in the hiring of teachers, he accepts the faculty that the school district sends to him without question. The school somewhat operates itself, with no bells and a very powerful mentor, one who, according to one new teacher, handles the incorrigible students that the principal can not handle. The other *floater* principal drifted in to school in the morning with no explanation, greeting everyone and in no hurry to begin the work day.

The majority of the faculty appear to personally like the *floater* but few view him/her as a leader. Facets of the socialization experience which are normally viewed as important are overlooked by this principal, such as forgetting to assign a mentor to a new teacher or limiting classroom visits to once a semester, often with no follow up feedback. Frequently seen at the after school “Miller Time” in the commons area of the school, one of these principals is observed telling stories and laughing at the end of the school day, rather than monitoring students in the bus area. Another *floater* had a matronly air and the beginners turned to her, rather than the mentor, for social support. Novices felt comfortable working for her.

For those beginning teachers who desire an instructional leader, the *floater* is a source of frustration. Searching out instruction and management advice from colleagues, some novices diligently work while observing that other novices teach only for the state assessment, spending the remainder of their class periods “behind their desk counting out money for their fundraiser.” These beginners believe their principal “lets things slip by” and therefore, conversations and behavior unbecoming to a professional

educator become the norm. For some of the new teachers, their frustration quickly grows into resentment. Other new teachers become a part of the culture of drifting and begin to float through the year as well.

The *frenzied* principal has a diametrically opposed work style. In a constant state of upheaval, she is always behind, always in crisis, always on edge. The rigid posture and clenched jaw are physical manifestations of the pressurized atmosphere in which this principal perceives she works.

Managing with an external locus of control, the *frenzied* principal calls teacher selection a “crap shoot” and is never certain whether a teacher will continue in employment, once hired. Suspicious of the applicants, she accepts that the truth will be stretched during the selection interview. Induction of novices is delegated to the mentor, a teacher overwhelmed by yearbook advising and special education lead teacher duties.

Beginning teachers either like or fear the *frenzied* administrator but the atmosphere of pressure and suffocating duties transfer to the new teacher. The novices who work in this atmosphere become acculturated to living in a pressure suit and, likewise, are thrown in to frenzies by paperwork and events out of the norm. Under the guidance of the *frenzied* principal, the school community becomes one which is acted upon, rather than acting.

A third type of principal which emerged from this study was the *fractured* administrator. Both of the fractured principals were employed by the same school district, a district which has experienced several breaks in the recent past, including but not limited to, white flight, superintendent turnover, teacher dissatisfaction, and dismal local funding. These problems in a fractured district may have filtered down to the office of the principals, who also appeared broken by problems in their schools.

The schools which were led by *fractured* principals were characterized by little discipline; therefore, time which the principals spent disciplining students was time taken away from monitoring and supporting beginning teachers. Classrooms in these schools had little or no instruction taking place and in those classes where teachers were attempting instruction, students were often observed disengaged or off task.

Schools managed by the *fractured* principals had the largest numbers of new teachers in the study. These new teachers reported little support from administrators or from colleagues. Communication was poor between the teachers and the administrators with teachers often discovering that they were uninformed about deadlines or upcoming events. Moreover, the viewpoint of the teachers and the *fractured* administrator were inconsistent; thus, little data triangulation was found in these schools. Many of these new teachers were teaching out of their area of expertise and more uncertified teachers were found at these schools than at any other.

**Role of the Mentor.** All schools across contexts had at least one faculty member trained by the state's Department of Education and assigned as the official mentor. Beginning teachers in all schools also turned to other faculty for professional and social support who were willing to serve as unofficial mentors. While informal mentors played a role in the socialization of new teachers across school contexts, this discussion centers on the officially trained and assigned mentors.

The Louisiana Assistance and Assessment Program Mentor Training Manual (LaTAAP, 1997) outlines three basic roles of the mentor, along with the responsibilities of each of these roles. A generalized summary of the roles is as follows:

- Coach
  - analyzes new teacher's instructional process and performance
  - expands and applies repertoire of instruction and management

- conducts advisory interviews and observations with feedback for the assessment program
- **Model**
  - models effective instruction
  - guides management of professional responsibilities
  - provides encouragement and support
- **Professional Development Specialist**
  - helps new teacher analyze and resolve problems
  - directs new teacher to resources
  - helps formulate Professional Development Plan for new teacher
  - assists new teacher in analyzing student performance data and student records to plan instruction

Analysis of data regarding beginning teacher's perceptions of their mentoring experiences revealed that, while the job description was identical across contexts, the mentors themselves held differing attitudes toward what they believed was required of them and what they perceived the novices needed from them. While the source of the attitude or perception differed by school, generally the official mentors fell into three categories. Four of the five more effective schools had mentors who offered *maximum* support to the novices (Barnstorming, Cargo, Concorde, and Stealth). Three of the five less effective schools and one more effective school had mentors who offered *minimum* support to the novices (Mir, Blackbird, Kamikaze, and Polar Flight). The two less effective schools in Southside Parish (Tupelov and Tailspin) had mentors who were missing in action (*MIA*) for the beginning teachers. There were commonalities in each group.



With the exception of Polar Flight, mentors in the more effective schools generally addressed all areas (coach, model, professional development specialist), viewing their role as one of *maximum* support. Mentors at the more effective schools saw their responsibilities beyond preparing the new teacher for the assessment at the conclusion of their second semester. They viewed their duties as addressing the whole person of the beginner. This overall approach to mentoring was a “hands on” approach which targeted instruction, classroom management, resources, and general encouragement. These mentors did not wait for the novice to approach them but sought out the new teacher and offered help and resources.

Contact with the new teacher was frequent and interactive. The mentors targeted upcoming events such as report cards or parent teacher conferences, helping to prepare the beginner through dissemination of information or through role playing. This was a proactive approach to induction; that is, rather than solving problems after they occur, the mentor addressed upcoming responsibilities of the new teacher and attempted to educate the novice to situations prior to the development of problems.

Mentors in more effective schools were more likely to take on the role of social support. One of the responsibilities listed under the role of “Model” was that of encouragement and support. The LaTAAP Mentor Training Manual states that “the mentor must be a confidant and friend as well as a resource and developer” (p.3). This role was not observed as a common one at the less effective schools. The task of nurturing the new teacher was more often undertaken by those mentors in effective schools. One teacher reported that two years after her assessment, she still turned to the school’s mentor for counseling and advice. This data triangulates with the quantitative findings that social support is important to new teachers and will more likely predict their intent to stay in teaching.

Mentors at more effective schools took on all three roles of mentoring, the coach, the model and the professional development specialist. In doing so, the beginning teacher received moral support, resources, assistance in the formulation of a Professional Development Plan, as well as coaching in preparation for the final assessment. This approach is a *maximized* approach to mentoring and was found in more effective schools, regardless of whether interdisciplinary teaming was implemented at the school.

Mentors at less effective schools were more likely to limit their role to that of “coach”; that is, these mentors were more likely to singularly address the role of assessment preparation. The LaTAAP Mentor Training Manual warns against taking this narrow approach by stating that

The mentor is not responsible for the new teacher’s performance in the assessment process. The mentor can and should help the new teacher prepare for that process, but the mentor’s responsibility is to help him/her become a competent, confident teacher (p.6).

Beginning teachers at the less effective schools whose mentors took this *minimum* approach to their role were forced to seek informal mentors. The informal mentors were sometimes found on grade level teams (Kamikaze, Mir) or, in the case of those schools which did not incorporate teaming (Polar Flight and Blackbird) to department coordinators or veteran teachers who were in close proximity. The veteran teachers who were tagged as the informal mentors were perceived by the new teachers as willing to answer questions, provide information, or point out resources. However, new teachers also reported that information was rarely volunteered; it had to be sought out by the beginner.

Beginning teachers reported that the “hands off” approach resulted in minimal contact with the mentor, often only for LaTAAP observations or to complete the paperwork required for the assessment. New teachers who found themselves with a

*minimum* mentor, overall, did not perceive the situation in negative terms, but instead credited conflicting schedules, differing certifications between mentor and mentee, or the additional duties assigned to the mentor which made interaction with the new teacher difficult. Moreover, the importance of successfully completing the assessment loomed large for the new teachers; thus, limiting the mentor's role to assessment preparation was not viewed in a negative light by the novices.

A third category of mentors are those which are "missing in action" (*MIA*). Two of the less effective schools, Tailspin and Tupelov, both located in Southside Parish, had official mentors but who, according to the statements of the new teachers, were not assigned to mentor them. Only one of the eight new teachers at Tupelov was assigned an official mentor and he stated that his comfort level with the mentor was minimal. He reported going to the principal for needed support and information, rather than the mentor. Only one new teacher at Tailspin of the five novices had been assigned a mentor and was going through the assistance/assessment process. Other new teachers at Tailspin did not know who the school's mentor was, when asked.

Beginning teachers at Tupelov and Tailspin could not articulate what LaTAAP was but reported that they had been observed by the principal (Tupelov) and assistant principal (Tailspin). Mentors at both schools stated that assigned obligations prevented them from optimally fulfilling their duties as mentors. Information regarding the responsibility for the failure to assign a mentor to the new teachers was vague. Thus, beginners at two of the less effective schools completed their first year with mentors who were *MIA*.

Role of LaTAAP. For many of the new teachers, a greater part of their initial teaching experience was consumed by the processes of LaTAAP. In interviews across school contexts, teachers, principals, and mentors all had strong opinions regarding this

program. Designed to produce competent and confident new teachers in Louisiana, the culmination of successfully completing the program is permanent certification in teaching. If implemented as designed, LaTAAP can produce professional educators who are proficient in the components of effective teaching. However, as observed for this study and as articulated by beginning teachers, the program as implemented at the school level does not always meet this goal.

Only two of the ten schools in the sample (Cargo and Barnstorming) viewed LaTAAP in a positive light. Beginning teachers at Cargo stated that the program helped them organize and promoted the need to plan. The Cargo mentor stated that she had such respect for the program that she would recommend it be implemented for veteran teachers to renew their certification every three years. New teachers at Barnstorming viewed the components of effective teaching as extremely helpful. Calling the program useful, however, they also commented that it was stressful.

Across school contexts in the remaining eight schools, principals, mentors, and new teachers generally viewed LaTAAP negatively. In evaluating the assessment portion of the program, there was a refrain of like terms: “a performance,” “a dog and pony show,” “jumping through hoops,” and “scripted.” These views of the assessment were perceived because of the narrow parameters of the assessment.

After a semester of assistance, new teachers begin a semester of assessment. During that semester, the beginner writes a lesson plan, intended to be taught for the state assessment. The mentor “grades” this lesson plan, advising changes and/or additions to the lesson. The goal is to write a lesson that focuses on those areas which the outside assessor will target. Many mentors are also trained to be assessors for other schools and therefore, have knowledge of those key areas. As one beginning teacher noted,

**You say these words, these specific keys, that let them know what they have been trained to hear and to pick up on specific sound cues. If you do it a different way, you may not get as good a score so you have to learn the script or you have to modify your own script with theirs.**

**The beginning teacher practices the script and then performs it for the mentor. The lesson is critiqued. When the time comes for the actual assessment, the new teacher is informed of the day and the time that the assessor will appear. This gives the teacher the opportunity to practice the lesson with the class which will be taught during the assessment. Therefore, when the outside assessor actually evaluates the instruction, the lesson has been edited and practiced many times.**

**Beyond the performance factor, there were several criticisms of the LaTAAP assessment as a valid instrument for certification. Beginning teachers, mentors, and principals generally agreed that the program does not “weed out” poor teachers. Because the time and date of the assessment is announced and because the teachers have an opportunity to practice the scripted instruction, new teachers who do not normally practice effective teaching can still be certified through their performance during one lesson. Conversely, teachers who are normally effective teachers can have a poor performance which results in denial of certification with the option to repeat the assistance/assessment again the following year.**

**New teachers who consistently strive to incorporate the components of effective teaching in to their daily lessons reported feelings of resentment for those teachers who perform for one day. One teacher reported beginning teachers who all taught the same lesson for assessment and all passed. Overall, because of the problems associated with the perceived performance, beginning teachers felt that the assistance part of the program was more beneficial than the assessment part. At those schools where the mentor played no role at all in the initial year, the beginning teachers either did not know**

enough about LaTAAP to offer an opinion or stated that the program was not useful at all.

Several principals expressed a negative opinion about LaTAAP, most centering on the paperwork that accompanied the program. Calling the paperwork “burdensome” and “time consuming,” many principals believed induction, assessment, and recommendation for certification should be left up to the schools. The time required for each new teacher to complete the program was compounded by the requirement to assist and assess temporary employees, hired on a one year basis, such as Teach for America and 665 employees (both temporary, one year, uncertified teachers). A final criticism levied by one principal was that, for every observation, two positive and two negative comments had to be made. The narrow guidelines left no room for individuality in assessment.

Role of the University Preparation Program. Interviews with principals, mentors, and beginning teachers found dissatisfaction with teacher education preparation programs. Across school contexts there was agreement that universities do not prepare students for what will greet them in the “real world” of teaching. Only one school from the ten in the sample (Cargo) expressed satisfaction with the preparation program of the new teachers on staff.

Three problems with university preparation programs surfaced during data analysis, though all concerns are interrelated. One problem focused on the training the pre-service teachers receive in classroom management. Though one university offers a one hour course in discipline methods, in general, students do not receive practical experience. Another university was faulted because the impetus of the curriculum and instruction courses was on creativity and fun in instruction. Beginning teachers reported that they quickly discovered that fun in instruction translated into chaos until a firm

classroom management plan was in place. One new teacher noted that the content of the classroom management course was as much about bulletin boards and how to set up a classroom as it was about discipline.

A second concern of those interviewed centered around student teaching. Related to the concerns about being unprepared to discipline students, fault was found with the experience of student teaching itself. Students are normally placed in schools with student populations much unlike the student populations to which first year teachers are assigned. If there is a discipline problem in the classroom during student teaching, the supervising teacher in the back of the room quickly addresses it. There was general agreement that the student teaching experience was too controlled. According to one principal, university professors “teach as if all students come from good homes with good values” and therefore, new teachers don’t know how to deal with students who don’t care. One mentor expressed concerns about the selection of supervising teachers. She noted that the same supervising teachers are chosen year after year and not all are effective teachers, particularly, “as they look at retirement.”

A final concern, related to the previous discussion, is that universities do not prepare education majors for “the real world.” One assistant principal stated that “universities teach techniques and theory and in schools you get behavior problems with social and emotional issues.” Incorporating theory with classroom practices should be addressed at the pre-service level, not at a two day workshop given by the school district at the start of the initial year of teaching. In addition, several beginning teachers stated they were unprepared for the time that teaching involved, time beyond the classroom, which included grading papers, preparing for class, attending meetings and workshops, filling out district and state paperwork, and sponsoring activities assigned by the principal.

As can be seen from Table 6.15, the emerging themes outline some commonalities. More effective schools are more likely to have an effective principal and mentor, a team whose vision for the school incorporates successful socialization with student achievement. Less effective schools, on the other hand, are more likely to have an ineffective or missing mentor who, teamed with an “out of focus” principal, provide a less than smooth socialization experience for their new teachers.

**Table 6.15. Emerging Themes for Multiple Schools.**

<b>P r</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Status*</b>	<b>Role of Principal</b>	<b>Role of Mentor</b>	<b>Role of LaTAAP</b>	<b>Role of Prep Program</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Barnstorming</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Useful</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>
	<b>Mir</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>Floater</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Polar Flight</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>
	<b>Blackbird</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>Frenzied</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Cargo</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Useful</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>
	<b>Kamikaze</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>Floater</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Concorde</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>
	<b>Tupelov</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>Fractured</b>	<b>MIA</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Stealth</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>
	<b>Tailspin</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>Fractured</b>	<b>MIA</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>

\*ME = More Effective; LE = Less Effective

School personnel who agreed to be interviewed expressed the hope that universities will address these concerns, stating that doing so might mean that challenges faced by new teachers might be solved before the initial year begins. Those principals and teachers familiar with the Holmes programs enthusiastically endorsed it, noting that teachers who graduated from that program were more self-confident and better prepared to deal with the real world of teaching.



### Results from Multiple Schools

Analysis of qualitative data found patterns both by and across contexts.

Organizational processes and roles of the members of the school community reveal a picture of a negative socialization experience and a positive one. Summary results of analysis can be found in Table 6.16. Contextual variables in the organizational processes of the schools are outlined by their presences in more effective, less effective, or, in some cases, in both more and less effective schools. Table 6.16 allows comparison across contexts of those findings from this study.

Table 6.16. Comparisons of Variables across Contexts.

Variable	More Effective	Less Effective	Both More and Less Effective
Official mentors	Proactive and vigorous in their mentoring	Passive in their mentoring	
	Mentors the "whole person" of the new teacher, providing professional, resource, and social support	Views their role as one limited to LaTAAP paperwork and observations	
Principals	Frequently visits teacher's classrooms, both formally and informally	Carries out the minimum number of required observations for district and state compliance	
	Provides written feedback targeting both strengths and weaknesses, and often, in the form of reflection	Provides either no feedback or feedback which is limited to positive comments	

(table 6.16 continued)

Variable	More Effective	Less Effective	Both More and Less Effective
Principals	Views role as an instructional leader, open to new ideas and new instructional techniques, with the goal of student achievement	Either takes a passive role in school operations or is so burdened by school pressures that external locus of control is the deciding factor in decision making	
	Focus is on the mission of increasing student achievement in an orderly atmosphere	Focus is on management or, in some cases, has no articulated mission	
	Selects new teachers who are committed to the vision of the principal and the mission of the school	Selects new teachers based on who is sent from the central office to fill a position	
Interdisciplinary teaming	If no teaming, depended on official mentors or informal mentors for social support	If no teaming, depended on themselves or informal mentors for social support	If incorporated teaming, depended on team members for social support
	If incorporated, viewed as a means to professional development and effective instruction	If incorporated, viewed as a structural or scheduling concept	
Intent to stay	More likely to express an intention to remain in teaching	Less likely to express an intention to remain in teaching	

(table 6.16 continued)

Variable	More Effective	Less Effective	Both More and Less Effective
Components of instruction	New teachers demonstrated components of effective teaching in their instruction, particularly higher order thinking skills, high expectations for students, and expeditious transition times	New teachers, in their instruction, held low expectations for their students, were less likely to involve students in class participation, and relied on recall or comprehension type questions	
Challenges			New teachers more often reported classroom management
Successes			New teachers more often reported student successes as their own
View of the Profession			New teachers viewed themselves as professionals
LaTAAP			Viewed the program negatively
			Perceived the new teacher assessment as a performance for the outside assessor

(table 6.16 continued)

Variable	More Effective	Less Effective	Both More and Less Effective
LaTAAP			Perceived that LaTAAP does not certify only competent teachers
			Perceived LaTAAP paperwork as burdensome
University Teacher Preparation Programs			Programs fail to adequately prepare new teachers to successfully manage classrooms
			Programs fail to prepare new teachers for the "real world" of teaching
			Student teaching is not a profitable experience

### Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth look at the socialization experiences of beginning teachers in a sample of more effective and less effective middle schools. Three pairs of schools, on more effective and one less effective school in each pair, detailed perceptions of principals, mentors, and beginning teachers regarding this experience. Cross case analysis of each pair targeted a specific aspect of the socialization experience. Two schools on the fringe of a major urban area looked at the concept of interdisciplinary teaming as part of the new teacher experience. Two schools on the

fringe of a mid-sized city focused on the role of leadership in the socialization experience. Two rural schools focused on overall support for the school and its employees, illustrating the positive impact this can have on members of the school community.

Qualitative data analysis found several themes, both a priori and emerging. General a priori themes included the level and quality of mentoring assistance, administrative monitoring, collegial team building and effective instruction. Specific a priori themes included the new teacher's intent to stay in education, level of support, specific challenges of the new teacher, specific successes of the new teacher, and new teacher perception of interdisciplinary teaming at those schools which have incorporated the middle school concept. Emerging themes which resulted from qualitative data analysis included themes which focused on the roles played by elements of the new teacher experience. These include the role of the principal, the role of the mentor, the role of LaTAAP, and the role of the new teacher's university preparation program.

Results of data analysis provided a representation of those organizational processes in more effective and less effective middle schools which make for a positive or negative socialization experience for the new teacher. Chapter Seven gives an overview of the study, conclusions that can be drawn from the study and recommendations for further research in the area of new teacher socialization.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Overview of the Study**

The preceding chapters have documented this study which examines the socialization experiences of beginning teachers within the context of differentially effective schools. Chapter One introduced the problem of the declining numbers of teachers and the need for districts to implement induction programs geared to professional development and increasing new teacher's intent to stay in education. Chapter Two offered a theoretical base for the study. A review of school effectiveness literature as well as literature in the areas of mentoring assistance, administrative monitoring, collegial social support, and teacher intent to stay laid a framework upon which to build this study.

The methodology of the study was documented in Chapter Three. The six phases of data collection and the research questions which guided the data collection were outlined. Results from the pilot study were discussed in Chapter Four. Quantitative data results in Chapter Five and qualitative data results in Chapter Six presented the findings gleaned from analysis collected during Phases Two through Six.

This research was designed to answer the question: are there differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at differentially effective middle schools? The results of this study indicate that there are differences in the socialization experiences of beginning teachers at more effective schools and at less effective schools. However, results also indicate that these differences are not due to school performance score or to school level factors such as the socioeconomic status of the students or the

number of minority or special education students in the school. Moreover, simply assigning a mentor or monitoring by an administrator does not guarantee a positive socialization experience nor an intent by the new teacher to continue in the field of education. In fact, this study indicates that processes in the school play a larger role in the quality of the beginning experience than do the individual elements of assistance, monitoring, and team building.

This final chapter will begin with an overview of the findings from this study, along with the conclusions drawn from these findings. Recommendations for research, policy, and practice will follow.

### **Findings**

This study, in an attempt to address the impact of school effects and teacher effects on student achievement, brought together research on school processes and classroom processes. The conclusions from these two levels indicate that a successful beginning teacher socialization experience is the result of the processes of the school, rather than the individual elements of assistance, monitoring, and team building.

### **Organizational Components**

The requirements imposed on all Louisiana schools from the state LaTAAP program make certain that every school will have some measure of administrative monitoring and mentoring assistance. However, overall processes, that is, the school's culture and the climate of learning, ensure whether the socialization experience is a positive or negative one. The common aspects of socialization examined in this study were the new teacher's social skills, as s/he becomes a part of the organization; the new

teacher's professional skills, as s/he learns appropriate classroom management and instructional strategies; and the new teacher's organizational skills, as s/he learns and accepts the school's missions, goals, and culture.

Zeichener's (1980) found that new teachers are existentially related to the community in which they live and work and, eventually, either accept or reject the culture of their workplace. Qualitative data in this study found that what the new teacher learns from these aspects of the organization may socialize the beginner into the school but may not serve to socialize the beginner into an effective teacher. Learning the social, professional and organizational skills as part of the processes of an ineffective school will either promulgate ineffective practices or will produce an internal conflict in the novice, thus, leading to frustration, burn out, or, likely, an intent to leave the profession. Choosing to stay in education may then lead the new teacher to continue poor practice, drawing in the novices that follow. Thus, ineffective schools continue to remain ineffective as the process of socializing teachers into "diseased" cultures becomes cyclical. Until the members of the ineffective school communities are willing to be immunized, the sickness will continue to grow.

Conversely, teachers socialized into effective schools identify with a school community geared to high expectations for students and a belief that all students can achieve. Yee (1990) notes that teachers who are socialized into this type of school environment will take on the same goals and missions as the school, leading to a loyalty to their workplace. This research found that schools whose principals advocated this type of school environment molded new teachers who believed that teaching was "all



about the kids” and were anxious to demonstrate that belief to the principal. Interviews with teachers in these schools found an intense loyalty as new teachers voiced that their desire to remain in teaching lay, in large part, to the influence of the school culture where their first experience in teaching took place.

The process variable of assistance as examined in this study is the extent to which the new teacher receives support in the work of teaching. The key to effective assistance lay in the *extent* of the support. Merely providing support in order to successfully complete the LaTAAP assessment proved to be the norm at the less effective schools in this study. This research found that this level of assistance was insufficient for the beginning teacher, though this form of assistance helped in completing the assessment and thus, gaining certification.

As outlined in the training of mentors for Louisiana, and as confirmed by research (Peterson & Williams, 1998; Zimpher and Rieger, 1988; Hawkey, 1997, Huffman & Leak, 1986), the role of a mentor should not be a limited one. Facilitation in professional guidance, as well as a nurturing role is imperative to the transition of the new teacher from novice to veteran. This study found that new teachers in less effective schools were forced to seek out informal mentors for guidance in procedures regarding day to day activities, classroom management, and knowledge regarding planning, paperwork, and curriculum. Moreover, new teachers in less effective schools labored to find their own resources as few or none were voluntarily provided to them. The goal of the mentors in less effective schools was largely to check, edit, and re-check the lesson

plan which would be performed for the state assessor, then to observe and critique the lesson prior to the state assessor's visit.

Effective schools in this study promoted mentoring from a whole person viewpoint. Mentors in effective schools were proactive. The mentor took the lead in disseminating information prior to due dates and worked with the new teacher as an aide in completing necessary paperwork. Mentors role-played with novices prior to parent-teacher conferences or in situations where disciplinary measures might be necessary. Mentors in effective schools met frequently with the new teachers and generally sought out the new teachers, rather than waiting for the new teacher to approach them. Principal expectations for the mentor were that their role was a vital one, focused on the assimilation of the beginner into the school culture.

Observations and interviews from this study revealed possible reasons why there were differences in the mentors' roles at more effective and less effective schools. Mentors at less effective schools were more likely to express concerns over duties which pulled them away from their duties as a mentor. Yearbook advisor duties, union representative duties (at a more effective school), and full time teaching loads at schools where general discipline was a concern placed overall support of the new teacher at lower priority. In addition, at all less effective schools administrative expectations for the mentor were merely to ensure certification of the new teacher. Anything beyond that was beyond expectation.

Brock and Grady (1998) identified the principal as a crucial component in the initial experience of new teachers. From teacher selection to the promotion of effective

instructional strategies, the principal is key in the socialization process. This study affirmed that conclusion.

An integral part of the process is the initial selection of the teacher. Principals in this study who believed in the mission of educating all children to their fullest potential chose teachers also committed to this vision, a belief confirmed by previous research (Westbrook, 1998). Principals in less effective schools often felt removed from the process of selection by accepting those teachers, both certified and uncertified, who were sent by the district's central office. Though not cited as part of a formal induction program, principals at more effective schools had frequent and productive interaction with the new teacher. This interaction included formal and informal class visits, reflective feedback, discussion of the practice of teaching, and assistance in professional and personal growth, all elements which follow research findings by Hope (1999). Administrators in this study whose priorities rested with school wide discipline problems, paperwork, or promulgating a culture of isolation helped to maximize the new teacher's fears and sense of inadequacy, both which translated to their instruction and thus, to the students. As Schein notes (1992) principals convey their priorities by what they pay attention to. This study found through observations that less effective schools had more instructional time interruptions, less emphasis on higher order thinking skills, more discipline problems, and lower expectations for student learning. The new teachers in these schools received the message from the principal and the overall school organization that student learning and the work of teaching were not priorities.

Team building was found in eight of the ten schools in this study. However, this study also found that the team building is not necessarily a positive element in the socialization process. Collegial team building, also called esteem support, need affiliation, or social support, is a concept which identifies the relationship between the new teacher and the system as a whole (Halford, 1998). If the form of the support is not psychologically healthy, however, collegial team building can advocate “sickness in the system.” This study found that some of the less effective schools promoted a support system of collegiality in the midst of complaints. While an argument can be made for the necessity of venting frustrations, when the venting becomes a daily or weekly ritual, conducted en masse with colleagues, a cycle of negativity ensues. This study found like situations in more than one less effective school.

This study also found that support in the form of that advocated by House (1981) which includes help in dealing with crises and life transitions, promoting emotional mastery, offering guidance in problem solving, and feedback about behavior, not only increases self-worth and personal accomplishments in the new teachers but also increases the quality of collegiality in the school organization. This study found such support in all of the more effective schools.

Team building was particularly evident in those schools which adopted interdisciplinary teams as a professional component to the school, rather than as a structural concept in the school. Schools which incorporated teaming as a means to professional development and teacher empowerment were found to have beginners who

were more self-confident and whose classroom instruction exhibited components of effective teaching.

Quantitative data from the study found no difference in teachers' perceptions of assistance, monitoring, and team building in more effective schools and less effective schools. Analyzing these findings, along with the qualitative findings previously discussed, may be explained by the state requirements mandated by LaTAAP. This assistance/assessment program charges each school with providing every new teacher a mentor (though this study also found three of the five less effective schools failed to do so), monitoring from the principal or designee and the mentor for every new teacher, and completion of the assessment program. As a result of these requirements, teachers across contexts agreed that these elements had been a part of their socialization experience. Only as a result of the qualitative data collected did it become clear that the extent and quality of the elements of the socialization experience greatly differed.

Blair-Larsen (1998) notes that the more problems new teachers encounter, the more likely they will leave the education profession. This study noted those same findings. Quantitative data from the study revealed that collegial social support, when combined with assistance, monitoring, and team building, predicted intent to stay in new teachers. However, overall findings from schools across contexts indicate that beginning teachers in more effective schools are more likely to stay. Organizational processes, as perceived by beginning teachers, were found to increase job satisfaction and thereby, increase the beginning teacher's intention to continue to teach. Qualitative data from this study affirm findings from previous research (Seashore Louis, 1998; Gonzalez,

1995; Billingsley, 1993) that new teachers will more likely continue in the field if they perceive support from all levels of the school community (administrative, collegial, and parental), if feedback is frequent and useful, and if novices are, at least in part, involved in decision making.

### University Component

This study found that, overall, schools are dissatisfied with the preparation that new teachers receive from university College of Education programs. Principals, mentors, and new teachers agree that beginners are rarely prepared to confront the realities of classrooms such as those found in today's public school systems. New teachers feel woefully unprepared for classroom management, including every day discipline problems as well as the legal issues surrounding the disciplining of students. The study also found a gap between university theoretical instruction and the practical aspects of teaching and an inability to bridge that gap when placed in schools.

Findings from this study conclude that the student teaching experience provided by universities is one which is too controlled and which often takes place in schools much unlike many of the schools to which beginners are assigned. Other findings specifically regarding the student teaching experience include a concern about the quality of the supervising teachers at the school sites and concerns regarding the limited amount of teaching afforded during the experience.

The exception to the dissatisfaction with teacher preparation programs centered on the fifth year masters' program offered at two of the state's universities. This research found that both principals and new teachers were satisfied and enthusiastic

about the training received from these programs. Principals and the fifth year masters' program teachers were of the opinion that they were better prepared than those novice teachers in the traditional four year teacher preparation programs. It is unclear from the data whether better students opt for the five year programs or whether the program provides better preparation.

### LaTAAP Component

The Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program played a large role in the socialization experience of every new teacher in this study, as well as in the roles of the principals and mentors. In general, this study found the program viewed in a negative light.

Findings indicate that the program's goals are reasonable, if not admirable. However, the program as implemented at the school level, across contexts, fails in many aspects. Implemented as a means of support and professional development for beginning teachers toward certification at its conclusion, LaTAAP has become a program of ponderous paperwork. School personnel also generally agreed that LaTAAP does not halt the certification of poor performing teachers.

This study found that the program has garnered resentment from all levels of school personnel. Principals resent the demands placed on their office, not only from the paperwork but from the time involved in pre-and post-observation meetings, counseling, as well as the time involved in helping new teacher's implement a professional development plan. This is compounded by the requirement that schools complete this

process for temporary, emergency personnel, that is, those non-certified teachers hired for one year due to shortage of available teachers.

Mentors in less effective schools were found to limit themselves to the final stage of the program, that is, the assessment. Other duties assigned to them in addition to full time teaching duties hinder their ability to mentor beyond preparation for the assessment. The study also found that mentors viewed the expectations of the assessment unreasonable for one teaching period.

New teachers who diligently worked to become an effective teacher were found to resent the need to perform for outside assessors during the final stages of the program. They were particularly resentful of those new teachers who taught only for the assessment while failing to actively or effectively teach at other times. Those beginning teachers who worked in an effective environment also viewed the assessment as a performance and resented the time taken away from their students as they prepared for the assessment.

Those principals, mentors, and teachers who appreciated the positive aspects of LaTAAP, particularly the instrument which emphasizes the components of effective teaching, nonetheless, were found to view the program as time consuming, ponderous, and overall, as nothing more than steps that had to be completed, only because they were mandated to do so by the state.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this study. The first conclusion is that four year pre-service university programs are not adequately preparing



student teachers for the realities of today's classrooms. Inadequate classroom management preparation leaves the new teacher struggling to survive the "real world" of teaching and learning. The gap between theory and practice is not adequately bridged by university professors or student teaching programs with the result that a new teacher is well versed in theories of learning but unable to translate these theories into effective classroom practice. In those schools which provide professional, instructional, and social support, members of the school community state that if novices were adequately prepared, the time and resources of the school could be used for other aspects of teacher socialization.

A second conclusion is that the assistance/assessment year for new teachers as mandated by LaTAAP and as implemented at the school level, is ineffective. Excessive paperwork and the practice of teachers performing for state assessors in order to receive certification has distorted the otherwise lofty goals of LaTAAP. Moreover, the mandate that temporary, non-certified teachers also must follow the requirements of LaTAAP (the state program of procedures that awards certification) taxes personnel whose efforts could be targeted to the beginners teachers who are degreed in education and hired as potential permanent employees as they work toward certification.

An additional conclusion from the study is that interdisciplinary teaming, if implemented to increase professional and collegial development, can substantially aid new teachers during the socialization process. If interdisciplinary teaming is viewed as a structural concept, new teachers, nonetheless, can benefit from the collegial support which is provided through teams. However, professional support and development,

unlikely, will result from such a view. An extension of this conclusion is that schools across contexts which implemented teaming received some benefit, regardless of how the concept was viewed.

A final conclusion drawn from the study is that effective teacher socialization is the result of the processes within the school, rather than the result of its individual components. In other words, the effective individual elements of assistance, monitoring, and team building are insufficient in providing effective socialization. Studies (Chapman, 1984; NCES, 1997; Shann, 1998) point out that initial experiences in teaching and the conditions under which a new teacher works impact decision making on whether to commit to the profession. A positive socialization experience brought about from effective assistance, monitoring, and team building in an effective organization will likely increase a novice's desire to remain a teacher.

#### **A Model of Effective Teacher Socialization**

This study provides a lens through which an overall model of effective teacher socialization can be constructed. As previously stated, merely providing a mentor and cursory observations from the principal do little to afford new teachers a productive initial year. The four elements from this study found vital for a positive socialization experience include effective mentoring assistance, effective administrative support, effective university preparation, and effective collegial team building, all offered within an effective school culture. Figure 7.1 illustrates the model derived from this study. As this is a generic model, elements specific to individual schools or to Louisiana, where the study took place, are not included. Therefore, the model does not reference pertinent

aspects of the study such as LaTAAP and interdisciplinary teaming as a middle school concept.

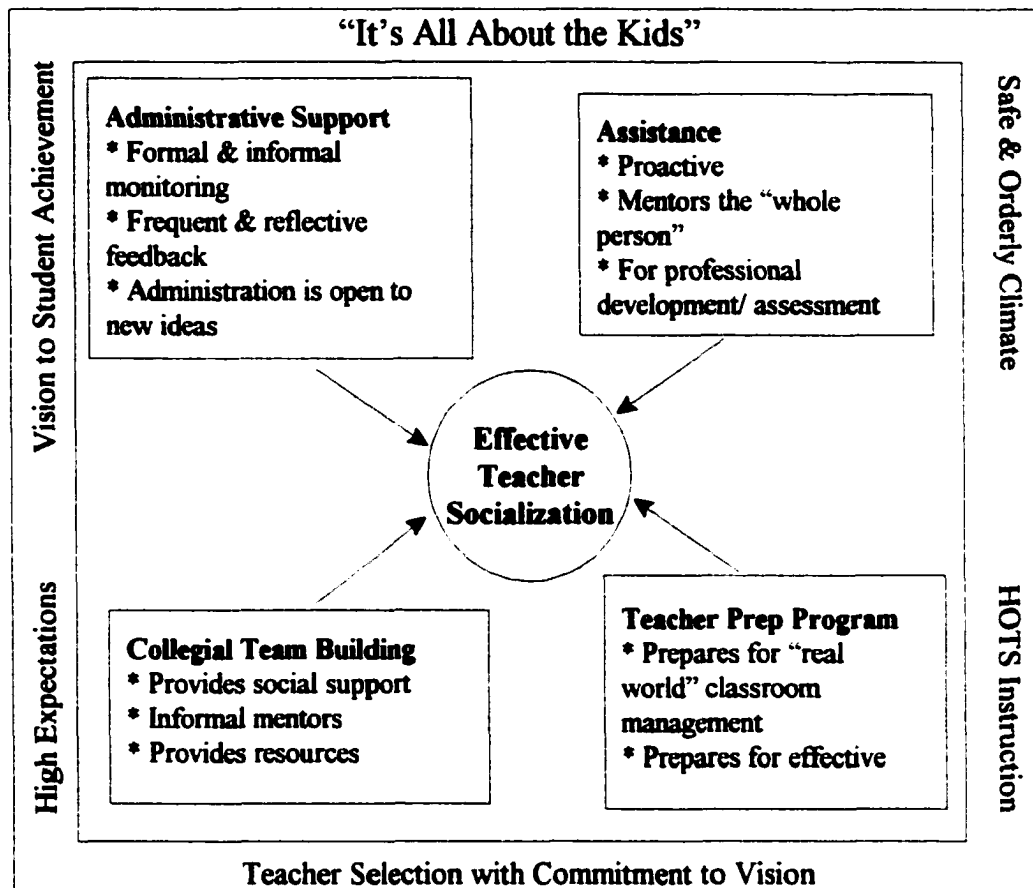


Figure 7.1. A Model for Effective Beginning Teacher Socialization

At the center of the socialization process is the beginning teacher. The four main elements of the process, the administrative support, the mentoring assistance, the collegial team building, and the teacher preparation program, all work to provide their individual expertise to the new teacher as s/he assimilates in to the school culture. The administrative support which comes from the principal or the principal's designee, provides assistance that is both formal and informal. The principal may meet with the

new teacher for the purpose of discussions perhaps concerning instructional strategies, personal teaching philosophy, or innovation ideas and programs. Principal/teacher conferences convey to the new teacher what is important in the school's culture and communicate the priorities of the principal. Communicating that new ideas and new instructional strategies geared to increased student achievement are welcome encourages the new teacher to take risks in order to improve. Formal observations may include scripting an entire teaching period. Informal assistance may include cursory discussions in between classes or after school, while informal observations may include "walk throughs" or "popcorn" visits. Feedback from both formal and informal visits are immediate, frequent, and take the form of reflection. Reflective feedback allows the novice to vocalize what occurred during the teaching process and self-examine strengths and weaknesses. Beginning teachers who receive administrative support feel empowered, understand the importance of effective teaching and learning, and rarely feel isolated in their autonomy, realizing that the administration will stand behind them as they work through the socialization process.

Mentoring assistance for effective socialization is a proactive effort. This mentor is not content to wait for the beginning teacher to approach him/her with questions but works under the premise that the novice may not be informed enough to ask questions. The effective mentor supports the "whole person" of the new teacher; that is, the beginner is mentored in the professional, instructional, emotional, and collegial aspects of teaching. Training geared toward assessment and certification is an important, albeit a

singular, part of the mentoring process. In addition, the new teacher is given opportunities to develop as an effective, professional educator.

Collegial team building includes the administration, the mentor, and the other faculty who work to provide the new teacher with encouragement and confidence through the initial year of teaching. Team building is found in the informal mentors, veteran teachers willing to provide time, advice, and resources to any novice in need. Collegial team building helps the new teacher garner self-confidence and trust in him/herself as well as trust in the system, developing that “holding power” (Morris, 1986) which can motivate the beginner to continue in the field of education.

The university preparation program can do much to prepare the new teacher for the world of education. Adequately bridging the gap between textbook theory and the utilization of this theory in actual instructional practice allows for greater instructional competence for the beginning teacher. A greater commitment to “real world” practice in the area of discipline will build confidence in the novice, remove the burden from school systems for implementing this practice, and allow for a smoother transition into the school regime for the new teacher.

These individual elements of the socialization process can produce effective teachers only if implemented in an effective organization. The processes surrounding these elements must focus on effective school factors. The socialization must take place in an environment that is safe and orderly. This type of school climate allows the new teacher to focus on an effective classroom, rather than on discipline matters and the safety of self and the children.

As part of the effective instruction, the school culture demands that teachers hold high expectations for their students and encourage students to master higher order thinking skills such as analysis and synthesis of information. Teachers selected by the administration to work in these schools must be focused on the vision of student achievement, utilizing the instructional components of effective teaching. Beginning teachers who buy in to this vision are committed, along with the faculty and administration, to the mission that their work is “all about the kids.

### **Recommendations**

Data analysis from this study, along with the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, lead to the recommendations presented here. Recommendations are categorized by recommendations for research, recommendations for policy, and recommendations for practice.

#### **Recommendations for Research**

Future research should consider the following:

- States which implement a state wide beginning teacher assistance/assessment program should find an instrument other than the Beginning Teacher Questionnaire (Kirby, 1992). Measuring the presence of assistance, monitoring, and team building rather than the extent of these elements is more beneficial for studies in school systems without such programs already in place.

- **Additional research at the middle school level is warranted to confirm or disconfirm the findings from this study. Studies which replicate this research or extend this research will add to the field of SER at the middle school level.**
- **Additional research at schools which implement interdisciplinary teaming is called for to further expand the findings from this study. Since only five schools in this study implemented interdisciplinary teaming, a study which includes a larger sample of schools incorporating this concept may yield more definitive results. Moreover, interdisciplinary teaming emerged from this study and was not initially a focus of the research. A study which is designed to primarily examine teaming will expand the field of research regarding the effectiveness of teaming as a middle school concept.**
- **Additional research in teacher socialization at the elementary and secondary levels is needed to broaden this area of school effectiveness research. As this study was limited to schools at the middle level, generalizations to the secondary or elementary level should be used cautiously. Research specifically targeting the secondary or elementary school level will yield teacher socialization research across a broader spectrum of SER.**
- **Additional research should be conducted on student teaching programs to determine the types of placements and experiences that best prepare student teachers to assume the responsibilities of being a teacher.**

**Recommendations for Policy**

Future policy mandates should consider the following:

- **State mandated assistance/assessment programs should be frequently monitored by state departments to ensure the program is being implemented as originally intended. Specifically, overseers of these programs should be certain that mentors are providing all types of assistance as covered in the mentor training manual and as recommended by research, rather than targeting only one aspect of mentoring, which is, in most cases, the final assessment.**
- **State mandated assistance/assessment programs should minimize paperwork associated with the programs so that the components of the program intended to support new teachers remain the priority. An audit of the required paperwork might reveal some extraneous demands which could be eliminated or merged with existing forms.**
- **Specifically, Louisiana's Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program should be evaluated regarding the ability of new teachers to "perform" for outside assessors. LaTAAP might consider unannounced and frequent observation visits, rather than a planned, announced one time visit to the new teacher's classroom. Giving outside assessors the freedom to make these unannounced visits will ensure that the instruction that is observed is a truer measure of the norm.**



- **LaTAAP should consider frequent and unannounced videotaping of new teacher instruction. Additional time, free of other duties, might allow mentors to utilize this media to capture an all encompassing view of the new teacher's instruction. Videotapes can be viewed by all personnel involved in teacher assessment, including the new teacher, to target strengths and weaknesses. Several such videotapes can eliminate the need for planned and announced classroom assessment.**
- **LaTAAP should re-consider the mandate to assist and assess temporary, emergency, non-certified employees. The time and paperwork required to complete the assistance/assessment program for temporary employees is time taken away from those new teachers hired for permanent positions.**
- **District school systems should insure that new teacher inductions are extensive and profitable for the beginners. Districts might conduct follow up evaluations with new teachers to determine the needs for future inductions. These inductions might include more emphasis on professional development as well as the day to day routines of teaching, rather than singularly emphasizing assessment. Moreover, districts should implement an additional program to induct new teachers who begin employment after the first month of school. One new teacher induction per year is insufficient for the needs of teachers who are hired throughout the year.**

**Recommendations for Practice**

Future school practice should consider the following:

- **Principals should take an active role in the induction of new teachers, including frequent discussion, monitoring, and feedback regarding professional practice. Fulfilling the minimum requirements as mandated by the state will result in a minimally proficient staff. Principals who take seriously their role as instructional leader can do much to shape an effective teaching staff in a school climate geared to learning.**
- **Principals should refrain from relegating all aspects of new teacher induction to the mentor. Principals are a vital part of the socialization experience and should not remove themselves from the process. Brock and Grady (1998) point out that principal expectations of the new teacher is a vital component of the socialization process. Frequent and meaningful contact with the beginner will enable the principal to help the novice become a productive part of the school organization.**
- **When possible and/or notwithstanding a shortage of teachers in the area, principals should assign mentors to new teachers based on like subject matter and provide mutual time for the mentor and new teacher to meet. By doing so, mentors will have a closer working relationship with the novice throughout the initial year.**

- Principals should refrain from assigning outside duties to mentors in order that the new teacher can become the priority for the mentor. Limiting outside duties will allow the mentor time which can be devoted to the new teacher.
- Mentors should provide assistance to the “whole person” of the new teacher; that is, professional, instructional, emotional, and collegial assistance. Targeting only the instructional components measured for the state assessment is insufficient in supporting the new teacher to the necessary growth and development as a teacher.
- Colleges of Education should examine their teacher preparation programs to ensure that students are receiving adequate preparation in instruction and classroom management to prepare them for the realities of the classroom and the needs of students.
- Colleges of Education should consider expanding the student teaching experience to one year, with the second semester to include a “real world” experience. A possible experience might be work as a school substitute for college credit. This will provide experience for the teacher/intern and provide budget relief for systems who pay for substitutes.

### **Summary**

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, a school which is more effective or less effective breeds itself. Principals, mentors, and the naive beginning teachers did not set out to poorly lead, poorly mentor, or poorly teach. The abilities of the children and the academics in the classroom played only a minuscule role in the overall effectiveness

of the middle schools in this study. The health or illness of the school culture in which they found themselves transferred that health or illness to the members of the community who work there. In the cases of the schools in this study, the healthy atmosphere or the sick building syndrome had a direct impact on the socialization experiences of these beginning teachers.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**PERMISSION TO ENTER SCHOOLS**  
**Superintendent's Letter**

Date

Superintendent  
School District  
City, State

Dear Superintendent,

I am a graduate student in the Ph.D. program at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. I am interested in researching the socialization experiences of beginning teachers. I will study and visit middle schools in eight parishes in Louisiana. As part of my dissertation, I would like to visit \_\_\_\_ middle schools in \_\_\_\_ Parish, specifically, \_\_\_\_\_. This letter is written to provide you with an overview of my study and to seek permission to enter these \_\_\_\_\_ Parish Schools.

My study will examine the socialization experiences of beginning teachers and attempt to find out if the processes in the school at large relate to the experience. I will also examine whether the socialization experience of the novice is related to the new teacher's intention to stay in the field of education as a long term career. In conducting the study, I would like permission for the following:

- Interview with the principal to find out about how the school helps the new teacher become a part of the school community.
- Interview with the new teacher's mentor to find out the specifics of what the mentor does at the particular school visited.
- Interview with the new teacher to find out the successes, challenges, and needs of a new teacher.
- Administer a survey instrument to the new teacher.
- Observe the new teacher during class, at a mutually agreeable time, to observe students interacting with the new teacher.

The school visit will take place \_\_\_\_\_. 2001. If given permission by you for my research, I will contact the principals of the schools the week prior to the visit to insure a time that is conducive to the school's schedule. I am also sensitive to the time during March when standardized tests will be given to the students and would not visit any schools during this time.

I am available to you if you have questions regarding the study and, of course, upon completion of the study will provide a summary of the findings to you, if you desire.

Thank you for your help as I complete my studies.  
Sincerely,

Pam Angelle

### **Principal's Letter**

**Date**

**Principal**

**School**

**School Address**

**City, State**

**Dear Principal,**

I am a graduate student in the Ph.D. program at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. I am interested in researching the socialization experiences of beginning teachers. I will study and visit \_\_ middle schools in eight parishes in Louisiana. I have received permission to visit your school from \_\_\_\_\_ at the \_\_\_\_\_ Parish Central Office. This letter is written to provide you with an overview of my study and to seek permission to visit \_\_ on \_\_\_\_.

My study will look at the socialization experiences of beginning teachers and examine whether the socialization experience of the novice is related to the new teacher's intention to stay in the field of education as a long term career. In conducting the study, I would like to:

- Interview the principal to find out about how the school helps the new teacher become a part of the school community.
- Interview the new teacher's mentor to find out the specifics of what the mentor does as part of the induction process.
- Interview the new teacher to find out the successes, challenges, and needs of a new teacher, in that teacher's opinion.
- Administer a survey instrument to each new teacher.
- Observe each new teacher during class, at a mutually agreeable time, to observe students interacting with the new teacher.

I look forward to meeting you on \_\_\_\_\_. My major professor at LSU is Dr. Dianne Taylor. If you would like to contact her regarding the legitimacy of the study, she can be reached at 578-2192.

Thank you for your help as I complete my studies.

**Pam Angelle**

**119 Rue du Jardin**

**Lafayette, LA 70507**

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**APPENDIX B**  
**INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS**  
**Principal Interview Guide**

I appreciate your agreeing to an interview. I am going to ask you some questions regarding the socialization experience of your new teachers. What you have to say is very valuable, and there are no right or wrong answers. I want to know about your experiences and your opinions.

- **Teacher Selection Procedures**
  - Thinking of your new teachers this year, please tell me which ones you selected and why you selected those teachers.
  - Of those you did not select, through what means were they sent to you?
  - What problems do you encounter in teacher selection in this parish?
- **Teacher induction**
  - Is there a formal induction program in this district before school begins?
  - Is there a formal induction program here at your school?
  - What type of induction program is there for new teachers who begin after the school year starts?
  - How does this school socialize the new teacher into the role from student to teacher?
- **Teacher monitoring**
  - How often do you visit the classes of the new teachers?
  - Are the visits informal or only for evaluation purposes?
  - What kind of feedback do you give the beginning teachers? Is it only on classroom performance or do you give feedback in other areas such as classroom management and generally “fitting in” with the faculty?
- **State Assessment Program**
  - In your opinion, is the state’s new teacher assistance program, as implemented in your school, useful to your new teachers?
  - As implemented in your school, does the mentor provide useful assistance to the new teachers?
- **Challenges of the New Teacher**
  - What do you see as some of the challenges facing beginning teachers?
  - How do you help your new teachers to face and/or overcome these challenges?
- **Successes of the New Teacher**
  - What, in your opinion, is the key to a successful first year for teachers?

## **Mentor Interview Guide**

I appreciate your agreeing to an interview. I am going to ask you some questions regarding the socialization experience of your new teachers. What you have to say is very valuable, and there are no right or wrong answers. I want to know about your experiences and your opinions.

- **Mentor Selection Procedures**
  - How were chosen to be a mentor? What type of training did you have?
  - What are your duties here as a mentor? How many new teachers are you responsible for?
  - Do you have any other duties within the school not related to new teachers?
- **Teacher mentoring**
  - Is the mentoring program at this school more formal or informal? How so?
  - What type of professional support do you give the new teachers?
  - What type of social support do you give the new teachers?
  - What type of mentoring program is there for new teachers who begin after the school year starts?
  - How does this school socialize the new teacher into the role from student to teacher?
- **Teacher monitoring**
  - How often do you visit the classes of the new teachers?
  - Are the visits informal or only for evaluation purposes?
  - What kind of feedback do you give the new teachers? Is the feedback only on classroom performance or do you give feedback in other areas such as classroom management and generally “fitting in” with the faculty?
- **State Assessment Program**
  - In your opinion, is the state’s new teacher assistance program, as implemented in your school, useful to your new teachers?
  - As implemented in your school, does the mentor provide useful assistance to the new teachers?
- **Challenges of the New Teacher**
  - What do you see as some of the challenges facing beginning teachers?
  - How do you help the new teachers to face and/or overcome these challenges?
- **Successes of the New Teacher**
  - What, in your opinion, is the key to a successful first year for teachers?

## **Beginning Teacher Interview Guide**

I appreciate your agreeing to an interview. I am going to ask you some questions regarding the socialization experience of your new teachers. What you have to say is very valuable, and there are no right or wrong answers. I want to know about your experiences and your opinions.

- **School Selection Procedures**
  - What is your background? Are you a Louisiana certified teacher?
  - How did you decide to teach at this school? When were you informed you would teach here?
  - What type of induction program did the district provide for you before school started? What type of induction program did the school provide for you before school started?
- **Teacher mentoring**
  - Is the mentoring program at this school more formal or informal? How so?
  - What type of professional support do you get from the mentor? From the faculty?
  - What type of social support do you get from the mentor? From the faculty?
  - Does your mentor provide you with resources? With answers to questions?
- **Teacher monitoring**
  - How often are your classes visited by the mentor? By the principal?
  - Are the visits informal or only for evaluation purposes?
  - What kind of feedback do you get from the mentor? From the principal? How timely is the feedback? Is the feedback only on classroom performance or do you give feedback in other areas such as classroom management and generally “fitting in” with the faculty?
  - Do you feel comfortable giving your opinion to the principal or the mentor? Do you feel comfortable giving your opinion at faculty meetings?
  - Do you feel comfortable asking questions of the principal, the mentor, the staff, the other faculty?
- **State Assessment Program**
  - In your opinion, is the state’s new teacher assistance program, as implemented in your school, useful to your new teachers?
  - As implemented in your school, does the mentor provide useful assistance to the new teachers?

- **Colleagues of the New Teacher**
  - Do you ever observe other teachers as they teach? Why or why not?
  - Do other teachers – apart from the mentor – provide you with resources? Assistance? Answers to questions?
  - Do you ever talk about teaching with the other faculty outside of the classroom setting (such as the lounge or the cafeteria)?
  - Do you feel like you “fit in” at this school? In what way or why not?
- **Challenges of the New Teacher**
  - What do you see as some of the challenges facing beginning teachers?
  - How do you face and/or overcome these challenges?
- **Successes of the New Teacher**
  - What, in your opinion, is the key to a successful first year for teachers?
  - What successes have you had during your first year?
- **Intent to Stay**
  - Do you enjoy teaching? Why or why not?
  - Do you view yourself as a professional? Why or why not?
  - What do you see yourself doing in five years?
  - Does this school, this principal, your colleagues have anything to do with your decision to stay or leave teaching?

## APPENDIX C

### SURVEY INSTRUMENT: BEGINNING TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Number of years you have taught in this school counting this school year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of years you have taught altogether counting this school year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Highest degree obtained \_\_\_\_\_ Are you a Louisiana certified school teacher? \_\_\_\_\_  
 College or university from which degree obtained \_\_\_\_\_

Respond to the items by circling your response. Responses will be kept strictly confidential.  
 SCALE: 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD); 2 = Disagree (D); 3 = Agree (A); 4 = Strongly Agree (SA)

<u>Statement</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>
1. I know how my principal feels about the quality of my teaching.	1	2	3	4
2. My principal visits my classes frequently.	1	2	3	4
3. My principal often discusses my teaching performance with me.	1	2	3	4
4. Feedback from my principal regarding my performance is constructive and helpful.	1	2	3	4
5. One or more of the more experienced teachers in this school have made special efforts to assist in my professional growth.	1	2	3	4
6. I have been assigned a mentor teacher (someone to go to when I need help).	1	2	3	4
7. I feel that I "fit in" at this school.	1	2	3	4
8. I have people at this school who are willing and able to help when I have student discipline problems.	1	2	3	4
9. My principal provides me with professional support.	1	2	3	4
10. My colleagues provide me with professional support.	1	2	3	4
11. The faculty of this school work together as a team.	1	2	3	4
12. I have been assigned to teach some of the most difficult classes in this school.	1	2	3	4
13. I have input in setting school goals.	1	2	3	4
14. This school has a good plan to assist beginning teachers.	1	2	3	4

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## APPENDIX D

### SURVEY INSTRUMENT: COLLEGIAL SOCIAL SUPPORT INVENTORY

**Directions:** This inventory asks about your perceptions of the social support you receive in the workplace. Read a statement, then use the scale below to select the scale point that best reflects your personal degree of agreement with the statement. Next, circle the appropriate number provided to the right of each statement. Be certain to circle only one number for each statement. You do not need to include your name on the inventory or to identify yourself in any way. Thank you for your time and assistance in this research project.

**SCALE:** 1= Strongly Disagree (SD); 2= Disagree (D); 3= Agree (A); 4= Strongly Agree (SA)

<u>Statements</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>
1. Teachers should not question the teaching methods of other teachers.	1	2	3	4
2. My work is worthwhile.	1	2	3	4
3. I find it easy to start conversations with my colleagues.	1	2	3	4
4. The other teachers know how I am feeling.	1	2	3	4
5. When I do something for others, I expect something in return.	1	2	3	4
6. Other teachers offer me help when I need it.	1	2	3	4
7. The other teachers sometimes take unfair advantage of me.	1	2	3	4
8. I genuinely enjoy my profession.	1	2	3	4
9. It is important to the other teachers on staff that I am successful in my classroom.	1	2	3	4
10. The other teachers just want to do their job and be left alone.	1	2	3	4
11. I am satisfied that I am using my abilities effectively.	1	2	3	4
12. My work is intolerably difficult.	1	2	3	4
13. The teachers at this school are very tolerant of other ideas, even if the ideas are different from their own.	1	2	3	4

<u>Statements</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>
14. I receive timely and informative feedback about my performance in the classroom.	1	2	3	4
15. I do not ask other teachers for assistance because I will be considered incompetent if I do.	1	2	3	4
16. I feel I am making an effective contribution to this school.	1	2	3	4
17. I have the freedom to discuss teaching episodes honestly and critically with other teachers at this school.	1	2	3	4
18. I feel comfortable observing my colleagues teaching.	1	2	3	4
19. There is a tradition of isolation at this school.	1	2	3	4
20. There are teachers at this school I can turn to for guidance and moral support.	1	2	3	4
21. I am encouraged to be creative in my classroom.	1	2	3	4
22. I know there are people available to help me here if I need it.	1	2	3	4
23. I have a different approach toward teaching and discipline than my colleagues.	1	2	3	4
24. I believe there is a network of communication here.	1	2	3	4
25. I feel my job takes too much energy.	1	2	3	4
26. I prefer using technical skills in my job rather than personal skills.	1	2	3	4
27. Teachers should protect the rights of those who don't speak for themselves.	1	2	3	4
28. I feel I am treated as a professional in this job.	1	2	3	4
29. I feel comfortable cooperatively participating in decisions regarding school policy.	1	2	3	4
30. I am a good teacher.	1	2	3	4

## APPENDIX E

### SURVEY INSTRUMENT: TEACHER INTENT TO STAY MEASURE

Directions: This inventory asks about your attitudes toward staying in the field of education. Read a statement, then use the scale below to select the scale point that best reflects your personal degree of agreement with the statement. Next, circle the appropriate number provided to the right of each statement. Be certain to circle only one number for each statement. You do not need to include your name on the inventory or to identify yourself in any way.

SCALE: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD); 2= Disagree (D); 3= Agree (A); 4= Strongly Agree (SA)

<u>Statements</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>
1. My long-range plans include remaining in the teaching profession.	1	2	3	4
2. I am determined to be a successful teacher.	1	2	3	4
3. My immediate objective is to find another job.	1	2	3	4
4. My students know I care about them.	1	2	3	4
5. My goals include continued work in the field of education.	1	2	3	4
6. I am eager for next school year to begin.	1	2	3	4
7. I believe teaching is the only occupation I will ever be satisfied with.	1	2	3	4
8. My work is worthwhile.	1	2	3	4
9. I don't find teaching much of a challenge.	1	2	3	4
10. I believe I have made a difference in the lives of some of my students.	1	2	3	4
11. I can't imagine enjoying any profession as much as teaching.	1	2	3	4
12. I am ready to take on the challenges of teaching next year.	1	2	3	4
13. Most days I don't look forward to going to work.	1	2	3	4
14. I consider myself a professional.	1	2	3	4
15. Five years from now I will probably still be a teacher.	1	2	3	4



## **VITA**

**Pamela Sanders Angelle was born in Elk City, Oklahoma where she spent most of her childhood. Following a family work transfer to New Orleans, she graduated from St. Mary's Dominican High School. She then attended University of Louisiana, Lafayette (then University of Southwestern Louisiana) where she was a member of Phi Mu sorority. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in Education in 1974 and began her teaching career in the Lafayette Parish Public School system as a social studies and English teacher. She was awarded the Master of Education degree from University of Louisiana, Lafayette in 1991 and served as a counselor at St. Thomas More High School in Lafayette.**

**Pam is married to Wayne Bernard Angelle and has two children, Melissa Dawn and Chad David. She is presently Effective Schools Coordinator for the Region IV Service Center of the Louisiana Department of Education.**

# DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

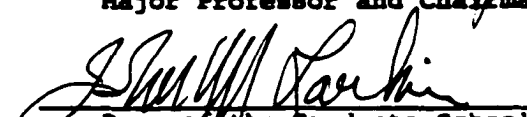
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**Major Field:** Educational Leadership & Research

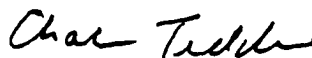
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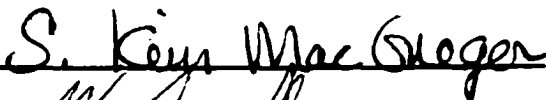
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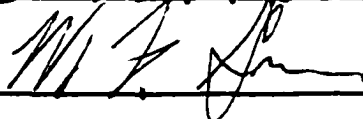
  
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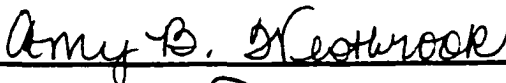
  
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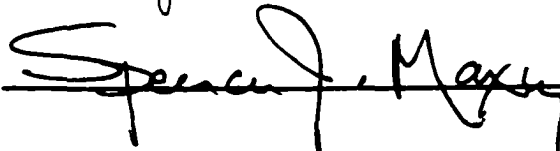
## EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

  
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**Date of Examination:**

October 24, 2001