Perception of first-year teachers concerning the extent to which a mentoring program helps to establish efficacy with regards to organizational skills, effective classroom management skills, creative instructional strategies and strategies for retention intentions

Winnie Anderson
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ABSTRACT

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PERCEPTION OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS CONCERNING THE EXTENT TO WHICH A MENTORING PROGRAM HELPS TO ESTABLISH EFFICACY WITH REGARDS TO ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS, EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SKILLS, CREATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES, AND STRATEGIES FOR RETENTION INTENTIONS

Advisor: Dr. Moses C. Norman

Dissertation dated May 2009

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the impact of an effective mentoring program upon first-year teachers to acquire efficacy in the areas of organizational skills, effective classroom management skills, creative instructional strategies and strategies for retention intentions. A Mentor Teacher Survey Instrument was administered to new teachers in six middle schools and 27 respondents provided completed surveys. The data were computed using Cronbach coefficient alpha and correlations using version 16.0 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Cronbach’s alpha coefficients
computations for each subscale were as follows: .883, organizational skills subscale, .796, classroom management subscale, and .910 instructional strategies subscale. The one-sample t tests were performed to compare the mean responses of the non-demographic survey items with the neutral test value of 3.0. A bivariate correlation was used to determine the relationship between first-year teachers' sense of efficacy for organizational skills, classroom management, instructional strategies and retention intentions. The statistical significance was established at the .05 level of probability. The SPSS 16.0 bivariate correlation procedure computed Pearson's product-moment coefficient (r) and Spearman's rho (ρ), to measure the strength of the correlation. A point-biserial application of the Pearson correlation was used because one of the variables was dichotomous and the second variable was measured on an interval or ratio scale. An alpha level of .05 was set a priori was used to determine if significant differences/relationships existed between variables of interest. The SPSS data revealed a null hypothesis thus indicating that the respondents expressed a neutral attitude concerning their mentoring experience.

The respondent's responses revealed 314 negative responses out of a total of 460 positive responses. These 314 responses were computed as the lowest scores assigned by the Likert Scale. A comprehensive study was conducted in 2001 and the researcher made recommendations to the school district to revamp their induction/mentoring program and the system ignored the recommendation; therefore, this researcher supports the 2001 study and confirms that the local school district needs to make significant modification to their induction/mentoring program.
PERCEPTION OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS CONCERNING THE EXTENT TO WHICH A MENTORING PROGRAM HELPS TO ESTABLISH EFFICACY WITH REGARDS TO ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS, EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SKILLS, CREATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND STRATEGIES FOR RETENTION INTENTIONS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

WINNIE ANDERSON

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 2009
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This dissertation is dedicated to my wonderful parents, Rev. & Mrs. McKinley Philpot, Sr. These nurturing parents of eleven children, motivated us, encouraged us, and challenged us to be brilliant in every endeavor.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A concept that addresses the difficult challenges that first-teachers experience is mentoring. The term mentoring is a fundamental form of human development wherein one person invests time, energy and personal know-how to assist the growth and ability of another person (Shea, 1997). Mentoring is a process that facilitates instructional improvement wherein educators with years of classroom experience share quality time working with a novice teacher or working with a teacher with fewer years of experience to establish efficacy with regards to organizational skills, classroom management, creative instructional strategies, and retention. In present day terms, mentors are more influential people who significantly help first-year teachers reach their major life's goals. Mentors have the power (through whom or by what they know) to promote the beginning teacher's welfare, training or career (Phillips-Jones, 2001). The term mentoring has its origins in the tale of Homer's Odysseus. When Odysseus, King of Ithaca went to fight in the Trojan War, the care and trust of his household was given to Mentor. Mentor was the teacher and overseer of Odysseus' son, Telemachus. Traditionally, the responsibility and authority for setting professional development priorities was the sole responsibility of the building administrator (Neuman & Simmons, 2000). Educational leaders today must build strong cultures that foster collegiality, support experimentation, provide feedback and encourage reflection. Educational leaders are also being required to take on varied
responsibilities. The school systems expect educational leaders to work to develop and keep the system’s vision, articulate and model core values as well as ensure the inclusion of all voices and develop collaborative learning experiences (Neuman & Simmons, 2000).

Mentors believe that they have the ability to motivate, encourage, influence, and enhance the retention of first-year teachers to become adept to the rigorous requirements of a classroom teacher more easily than they would without the mentoring program. The belief, desire or the conviction to produce a desired effect or desired goal is efficacy. Research reveals that teacher efficacy is the belief that teachers hold regarding their ability to influence students to learn. Teacher efficacy has proven to be powerfully related to many meaningful educational outcomes such as teachers’ persistence, enthusiasm and instructions, as well as student outcomes such as achievement, motivation and self-efficacy beliefs (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Policies and practices for establishing a mentoring program for first-year teachers is a means to improve teaching and learning because it is based upon three critical assumptions about the impact of mentoring. First, providing induction and support will help new teachers adjust to the demands of teaching and become sociable to the school organization (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995). Second, mentoring will support the pedagogical development of new teachers (Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, & Yusko, 2000). Third, mentoring will encourage the retention of, first-year teachers in the profession (Huling, 1998). The research states that in an effort to increase retention of new teachers, many school districts throughout the United States are now offering such
incentives as gym memberships, child care assistance, zero-interest home loans, and monetary incentives; however, the best incentive of all, according to the National Education Association, is mentoring. To improve the teacher retention rate in 2004, 65 teaching coaches were employed in the Philadelphia School System; therefore, Philadelphia’s new teacher retention rate increased by 13%. One study showed that about 40% of teachers with no support quit after one year, while the rate fell to 17% of teachers who had mentors. An estimate for a good mentoring program can cost about $3,000 each year and an estimate for the cost of a teacher who quits after one year is $13,500 thereby resulting in the lost in recruitment and training. The implementation of strategies such as teaching coaches, monthly professional development sessions and a new standard curriculum are all receiving recognition as the reasons why Philadelphia is winning the retention war (Useem, Offenberg, & Farley, 2007).

Research from numerous studies determines that first-year teachers who participate in a supportive mentoring program during the first year of their career remain with the profession more than three to five years. When school systems provide supportive mentoring programs for new teachers at the beginning of the school year, the school system acquires stability. Therefore, school systems with a stable staff do not spend additional funds or spend countless hours on enticement strategies for the employment of new teachers annually.

In discussions regarding the 2001 research, the local school district engaged a researcher to conduct a comprehensive study about the school district. The school district’s mentoring program reveals that the support that is being given by the mentor
teacher improves both teacher effectiveness and retention. The comprehensive study indicates that the school district's mentoring program is an extremely well written plan; however, the written plan and the day to day implemented actions of the plan are different. Therefore, the researcher recommended the revamping of the entire induction program from one that requires new teachers at the beginning of the school year to spend an entire week learning about the reporting/operating requirements of the school system to one which really helps first-year teachers deal with the reality they will face the first few days in the classroom (Coburn, 2001). The researcher also indicated that the teacher's first few days on the job often set the tone for his/her relationship with the employer. During a focus group seminar, absolute silence and strange expressions were seen on the faces of the participants when the comment was made that the system already has an effective mentoring program. The teachers who spoke favorably about the mentoring program revealed that the school district has nothing to do with the support and mentoring of first-year teachers, but it was the dedication and support to the profession of veteran teachers working with new teachers (Coburn, 2001). The implementation of the mentoring program at each school is delayed considerably at the beginning of the school year because the district's mentoring program is funded with Title I funds. The mentors do not receive contracts until November and the mentors begin working in December with the disbursement of funds in December. Since the disbursement of funds does not occur until December, new teachers spend the entire first semester without the school district's authorized mentoring assistance. By the end of the
first semester, a new teacher could be in serious trouble with his/her administrative staff or the district assigned mentor (Coburn, 2001).

Description of the Local Metropolitan First-Year Mentoring Program

According to this school district, the mission of the Retired Teacher Mentor Program is to recruit, develop and retain quality staff and to improve student achievement. The focus of the program is to provide students with a new group of teachers who will work to raise levels of achievement and help prepare students for academic success. The mentors participate in meetings for the purpose of writing records and providing feedback as documentation during their training to ensure that the engagement of the mentor and the new teacher is consistent with the district’s expectations for teacher performance. The school district’s written mentoring plan states that the teacher mentor is required to conduct regular classroom observations of the first-year teacher.

Also, according to the school district’s written plan, the Retired Teacher Mentor Program will train and provide ongoing support to new teachers. The vision of the program enables veteran teachers who have excellent skills to actively and consistently work with new teachers during the first two years of their development so that new teachers will have a constant role model in order to become effective teachers. The selection process of a Retired Teacher Mentor depends upon their willingness to stay abreast of the best practices in teaching and learning (Teacher Mentor Handbook, 2005).
A retired teacher aspiring to become a teacher mentor must attend an orientation workshop before he or she earns the title of mentor. After the teacher attends the orientation, sometimes during the latter part of November or December, the mentor must conduct a meeting with the novice teacher as soon as possible to discuss school procedures, classroom routines and procedures, the learning environment, and lesson plans. Also during the initial meeting, the mentor and the new teacher will complete the Novice Teacher Weekly Schedule and provide copies of the weekly schedule for the Mentor Liaison Specialist. The Teacher Mentor will complete the Danielson Classroom Observation Form during the fall semester and again during the spring semester to determine the growth. The teacher mentor must work at least 15 hours weekly unless the mentor has less than five protégées. At the weekly schedule of meetings or team planning meetings, the teacher mentor may provide an analysis of student work and/or provide reflections about the Lesson Plan Analysis Worksheet. A weekly observation by the mentor teacher occurs with the teacher and her students during the regular school day. However, the schedule does not allow the mentor teacher and the beginning teacher to converse immediately after the observation. Therefore, the inability of the mentor to provide immediate feedback to enhance the teacher's growth and development does not occur quickly because the feedback does not occur immediately. The lapse of time between the observation of the new teacher and the conference may be detrimental to the new teacher's success. If a problem was seen during the observation by the teacher mentor and nothing is done, the problem will not go away and since the new teacher was not informed about the area of weakness, the teacher may continue to practice the same
negative strategy. Unfortunately for the new teacher, the Mentor Liaison Specialist is not notified unless the first-year teacher experiences significant difficulty.

According to the local school district’s documentation, during the classroom observation period, the teacher mentor will assist with the following: (a) development of lesson plans, procedures and strategies, (b) adjusting and differentiating instruction, (c) establishing and maintaining positive relationships with parents and co-workers, (d) securing necessary resources, (e) maintaining an appropriate learning environment, and (f) managing all other responsibilities of a classroom teacher. The teacher mentor must maintain and submit the following documentation to the Mentor Liaison Specialist by the fifth of each month: Weekly Retired Teacher Mentor Log for each novice teacher, Monthly Retired Teacher Mentor Log, and a Teacher Mentor Invoice Form. The mentor teacher must provide assistance with the coordination and facilitation of the Monthly New Teacher Meetings as well as attending the Mentor Liaison Specialist’s Monthly Meeting. An induction/mentoring plan is an area where a relatively minor investment in a supportive induction/mentoring program can pay huge dividends in the long run (Teacher Mentor Handbook, 2005). An abundance of research is in place for veteran teachers to serve as mentors; however, using new teachers as mentors who were recently mentored within the last couple of years could help to build a sense of belonging and teamwork because educators who recently experienced the same challenges are more inclined to reciprocate in the process of educating children and helping one another.

Nationally, school districts are arranging for teachers with substantial experience to serve as mentors for beginners (called protégées). Therefore, the purpose of a
mentoring program is to improve the induction program for first-year teachers as well as to provide leadership opportunities for career teachers. Providing mentors to work with beginning teachers is a procedure that provides the potential benefit of transitioning beginning teachers into the classroom in which they will work (Little, 1990). These arrangements promise to make teaching more efficacious, both for mentor teachers and also for their protégées, because of “teacher efficacy,” mentor teachers believe that they have the capacity to produce academic success.

Research reveals that the characteristics of good mentors and protégées are individuals who have the training, tolerate ambiguity, prefer abstract concepts, value their company, work and have the respect of their subordinates (Clawson, 1979). Of the different types of supervision programs, the purpose of developmental supervision and mentoring, as with teacher education or other professional development experiences, is to promote the growth and learning of teachers as persons and professionals. In professional development courses, teachers are learning to become adept in a broad range of instructional strategies including building positive relationships with students and parents, conducting assessments, lesson planning, managing classrooms and discipline, instructional presentation and evaluation. As new teachers become more knowledgeable, they become more tolerant of ambiguity; more humane in their interactions with students, parents and professional colleagues; they utilize more principles when facing ethical problems and they are more capable and flexible in their capacity to solve complex human-helping problems (Reiman & Thies-Sprintoshall, 1998). Successful mentors are confident, secure, flexible, altruistic, warm and caring, sensitive to the protégé’s needs,
and the mentor must trust their protégés (Alleman, 1982). A longer history of success exist using mentors, began approximately 3,500 years ago and the concept continues to the present (Gray & Gray, 1985). Research further reveals that successful mentors fulfill life career functions (expose protégés to new opportunities, coach and sponsor them, protect and challenge them) as well as the four psychological function indicates (role-model, counsel, accept-confirm, and befriend them) as the mentor-protégé relationship is developing (Kram, 1980).

The University of Sidney is participating in a partnership to conduct research to better understand the crisis in retention rates among beginning and early career teachers. This longitudinal study provides data using surveys, interviews and narrative writings of beginning and early career teachers. Researchers indicate that communications from beginning or early career teachers occur in the following categories: teachers who are committing to a long-term career in teaching, teachers who are considering leaving the profession, or teachers who have already left teaching, temporarily or permanently. In addition, other teachers want to participate by anonymity and confidentiality (Williams, Gore, & Cooper, 2005).

According to the 2001 data concerning this metropolitan school district, the supply of new teachers needed from 2001 until 2006 is approximately 3,300. This would represent 85% of the teaching staff. The report indicates that retirement of veteran teachers and the attrition rates for new teachers exceeds 37% within the first two years of employment (Coburn, 2001).
According to Reginald Weaver (2008), President of the National Education Association, "It's not brain surgery! Nobody enters the teaching profession for the money . . . We are called to teach by our love of children, our reverence for knowledge, and our desire to make a difference" (p. 9). Weaver further stated:

Money is not the main reason cited by most that leave the profession, either. The majority of teachers who quit do so because they are frustrated and unhappy with their working conditions . . . It doesn't have to be this way. All new teachers are bound to encounter some disappointment, but if they are treated with respect and given the tools they need to do their jobs, they can retain their dedication and passion for teaching. (p. 9)

A pilot study to investigate possible congruence between university teacher education and schools was recently conducted. In this study, groups of students receive strong grounding in "productive pedagogy" in their teacher education training during their first year of employment as teachers. Also during the same period of time, New South Wales Public Schools was conducting a version of productive pedagogy as a long-term strategic priority. Decades of research indicates that the effects of teacher education are diminishing in the first year of teaching in part because of the powerful effects of the school culture (Gore, Williams, & Ladwig, 2006).

Research indicates that there are continuous problems with early career resignations and problematic professional mentoring structures with the transition occurring from student teacher to self-managing professional and lastly to a master
teacher. However, strategies to improve the workplace conditions for beginning teachers will enhance their efficacy (Gore, Williams, & Ladwig, 2006).

There are three critical assumptions about the impact of mentoring as a means to make improvement in teaching and learning; therefore, there is a need to establish policies and practices for mentoring programs for first-year teachers. First, providing induction and support helps new teachers adjust to the demands of teaching as they become familiar with the school organization (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995). Second, mentoring provides support for the pedagogical development of new teachers (Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, & Yusko, 1999). Third, mentoring encourages the retention of beginning teachers (Huling, 1998).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which a mentoring program enhanced the efficacy beliefs of first year middle-level classroom teachers. Specifically, teacher efficacy beliefs in the areas of organizational skills, classroom management skills, and creative instructional strategies in relation to retention were explored in four school divisions/school reform teams. The literature confirms that first-year teachers face difficult challenges nationwide (Moir, 1990).

New teachers often express limitations in their repertoire of instructional strategies. A new teacher (Evans, 1992) stated:

The first day I faced my students, I was jerked into the reality of the situation and all of a sudden, I was the adult. Approximately 30 little faces looked up at me each class period, waiting for instructions, so I fell
promptly into the role. I started explaining the rules and procedures as I’d been told to do in the workshops. I’d been told not to smile until Christmas—I blew that the first day. Looking at my own school experience, I came to this job with certain expectations. Very quickly, I soon found what a different world I have come to. (p. 83)

Minimizing or confronting difficult challenges that are not known is the purpose of most mentoring programs. Teaching is not about what you must do; it’s about finding your comfort zone. Working closely with a teacher with years of experience alleviates some of the uneasiness of a new teacher. The assistance of a mentor enables teachers to explore things themselves in a safe atmosphere to see what works. Mentoring programs enable new teachers to receive immediate feedback from veteran teachers and peers. Some districts sponsor programs to allow the mentor and mentee to be learners and teachers (Middleton, 2000). Research demonstrates that mentoring enhances the new teacher’s attainment of efficacy as the teacher becomes a skillful change agent for children.

Background of the Problem

Many new teachers do not understand the complexity of working with students to meet their potential; they generally struggle with curriculum issues, classroom management and the different demands of the district, parents and colleagues (Moir & Baron, 2002). Good classroom management is critical for new teachers because when a class has poor management, disorder and chaos prevents learning from taking place. Poor management leads to student discipline problems. Sustained student misbehavior
often inhibits teachers from using the engaging, interactive instructional approaches that foster student achievement and active learning including cooperative grouping, learning centers, projects, experiments, and the use of manipulatives (Brophy, 1999; Cohen, 1994; Freiberg, Connell, & Lorentz, 2001).

The training that new teachers receive prior to beginning his or her professional career is student teaching; however, student teaching is conducted very closely under the supervision of a veteran teacher. During this training, the student teacher will only experience the same stress or pressure as in an undergraduate or graduate academic class setting. The supervising teacher knows that the student teacher will only be responsible for the entire class for a short period of time that has been established by the university. During student teaching, the supervising teacher is generally in the room at all times. The accessibility of the mentor teacher in the classroom on a daily basis facilitates immediate constructive feedback. The utilization of the mentor teacher every day for the entire first semester allows the mentor teacher to model a broader range of experiences such as setting and establishing a daily routine for effective classroom management, transitioning quickly and smoothly from one activity or subject to another subject, recording the attendance on the computer, conducting parent conferences, preparing progress reports, and preparing end of semester report cards. This daily interaction with the first-year teacher enables the mentor teacher to help to establish a sense of teacher efficacy thereby transforming the first-year teacher to have high expectations, creating a spirit of love for children, the profession and enhancing retention intentions.
Research reveals that there should be a procedure in place in order for first-year teachers to transition from the university to the classroom. The first year of teaching is traumatic for many first-year teachers. As they move from teacher-in-training to teacher-in-charge, the profound impact of the painful experience causes a period of reality shock. The term “culture shock” does not adequately describe the arduous and perplexing challenges that a first-year teacher experience “daily” since the term appears to infer a very short shock (Rogers & Babinski, 1999). This cultural shock resembles the shock that a swimmer experiences in order to become acclimatized to cold water. The alignment of good instructional practices is at the center of improving student achievement with an ongoing, measurable, and rigorous accountability system. New teachers experience a kind of culture shock that can express itself as nervousness and anxiety. This “cultural shock” can affect beginning teachers in such a manner that they are not able to make decisions about even small matters (Delgado, 1999).

Research indicates that principals play an important role in facilitating support for the mentor program. First-year teachers receive evaluations that are based on an ongoing, measurable and rigorous accountability system. The frequency of interactions between the mentor and the new teacher is essential to the development of overall efficacy. While new teacher mentor programs vary from district to district, a common feature is enhancing new teacher accessibility to the knowledge and experience of veteran teachers.

The Missouri School District Beginning Teacher Network (BTN) provides new teachers with new ideas and strategies for success. Chris Guinther, curriculum and
instruction facilitator for the Francis Howell School District reported that new teachers reveal that the isolation of their job is so demoralizing, especially when new teachers need a support system that is ongoing, a place where they can talk confidentially with other new teachers (National Education Association, 2008).

In 1995, Baltimore County Public Schools put into place a Teacher Mentor Program to (a) maximize student achievement by improving teacher effectiveness and daily instruction, and (b) retain capable new teachers by increasing satisfaction with their teaching experience (Clark, 2001).

According to the literature, providing a mentor teacher for a first-year teacher on a daily basis for an entire semester promotes teachers who are innovative, have good organizational skills and have the ability to manage a classroom effectively (Neuman & Simmons, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

This research is being presented to provide the numerous challenges that beginning teachers encounter during their first year of teaching. Although an abundance of research reveals that first-year teachers feel inadequate to perform their duties and responsibilities effectively, a lack of support from administrators and a mentor continues to be prevalent. Many school systems do not appear to be aware of some of the innovative strategies being proposed; however, research reveals that the implementation of an effective mentoring program is the most beneficial strategy to enhance efficacious teachers. The mentoring program of the local metropolitan school district involved in this study represents an example of a well written effective mentoring program that
basically does not work. Teacher mentors do not begin working with first-year teachers each year until almost the end of the first semester because the program is funded with Title I funds and those funds are not dispersed until December. Therefore, many first-year teachers become despondent and sometimes leave the profession because they are frustrated with the varied challenges coupled with the isolation of their own class. Prior to this first teaching experience, first-year teachers felt safe and secure in their nurturing university environment.

Not only is the first year of teaching stressful, but the first years of teaching are especially stressful. The effort required for a new teacher to plan every lesson from scratch, teach with unfamiliar materials, and often, teach at an unfamiliar grade level drains even the most energetic teacher. Compounding all of this, along with the inherent isolation in the individual classrooms, adds to the dilemma of new teachers (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002).

Research indicates that between 1987 and 1991, more people began the teaching profession than those leaving. However, over the past decade, those leaving and those entering have grown enormously wider apart. In 1999-2000, approximately 50,000 more people left teaching than entering the profession. During 2000-2001, about 15% of public school teachers left the district: about one half went to another school, and about one half left the profession. Research also indicates that about 13% left the area where they were working or left a low-poverty area, and about 20% left the area or left their high-poverty area. Each fall, in high-poverty areas, on average, one-fifth of the entire teaching staff will change schools. High turnover rates create a lack of continuity, a lack
of stability for students, difficulty in building a successful school team, and difficulty in sustaining a culture of success and improvement over time. The data indicate that turnover problems strongly reflect school working conditions and salary rather than the characteristics of the student population. Success for teachers include collaboration amongst teachers, a supportive environment in which teachers can get help from their peers and administrators in teaching strategies, assessment strategies and classroom management (Feature/Profession, 2002).

When school systems must continue to replace teachers because they are leaving the profession, the entire system suffers. When the school must replace staff each year, the school does not become viably strong and stable. A large percentage of new teachers leave the profession within three to five years, according to recent reports. Between 1996 and 2008, the U.S. student enrollment in Grades K-12 will grow to 2.7 million (Feature Story, 2001).

The absence of support/mentoring is one of the determining factors that affect a teacher’s decision to stay or to leave the profession. Different lawmakers, administrators, and union personnel have made proposals regarding rewards and incentives to improve teacher retention. While the intentions of those officials are good, their ideas are generally made because of guesswork or at best, they propose strategies that appear to be working in other locales. Increasing teacher salaries is often thought to be a panacea to promote retention, yet it is clear that good teachers enter the field for reasons other than money (Nobscot Corporation, 2002).
Research determines that efficacy provides first-year teachers good instructional practices with an on-going measurable and rigorous accountability system. Many argue that unless a significant mentoring program is in place the on first day of teaching, a first-year teacher could have become overwhelmed and traumatized and decide to leave the profession if too much time lapses before the mentor teacher comes for a visit. This study indicates that all teachers report that teaching is very stressful; however, teaching is especially stressful for all first-year teachers. Teaching is even more stressful for first-year teachers who do not participate in rigorous on-going mentoring programs. Teachers express frustration managing the numerous challenges of difficult students as well as a lack of assistance with troubled children, classroom and school paperwork, parent conferences, a lack of parental support and school improvement plans. Phillip Bigler (1998), a teacher of the year award recipient, stated:

An old proverb asserts that 'Civilization begins anew with each child.' As an educator, I have found this statement to be both a vision of optimism as well as a dire warning. On one hand, our students are the intellectual heirs to Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Newton; the inheritors of a rich legacy of human progress traversing three millennia. Conversely, if we fail to successfully teach and educate our young people, we are just one generation removed from barbarism. I have always seen my role as a teacher to facilitate student learning in what will be a lifelong quest for knowledge, to help ignite in them a spark of enlightenment, to motivate their interest, and to cultivate their minds... My former principal once
told me that to be a teacher is to forever remain an optimist. My educational philosophy is based upon this crucial fact and is grounded in the belief that all students can and should learn. I also have come to believe in an education system where excellence is expected and quality is the norm. (p. 1)

The lack of collaboration among teachers and a supportive environment in which teachers can get help from peers and administrators in teaching strategies, assessment strategies and classroom management is detrimental to a school’s success. Many school systems have used rewards and increasing salaries as incentives to motivate teachers to remain with a system; however, many teachers enter the teaching field for many reasons such as their dedication and love for children. The writer strongly proposes that when central office staff members realize that the absence of a strong support system and a significant mentoring program denotes unstable schools and an unstable school system, more emphasis will be put in place.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

RQ1: Does a mentoring program strengthen the first-year teacher’s efficacy in the area of organizational skills?

RQ2: Does a mentoring program strengthen the first-year teacher’s efficacy in the area of classroom management?

RQ3: Does a mentoring program strengthen the first-year teacher’s efficacy in the area of creative instructional strategies?
RQ4: Is there a relationship between first-year teachers’ sense of efficacy and retention?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because school systems, university professors and legislators must realize that although teaching has always been challenging, teaching is even more challenging with the demanding needs of the children and the school systems that educators are serving. Younger parents are having children and because these parents are as young as they are, their parenting skills may not be established; therefore, parents, do not send their best children to school, they send their children. Adding to this scenario, the demands from the school district, the additional paperwork and the nation makes teaching a very difficult task for veteran teachers and more so for first-year teachers. The study is also significant for the establishment of efficacy in the areas of organizational skills, creative innovative strategies, classroom management, and retention intentions of beginning teachers with the assistance of a mentor teacher.

This study is also significant because the local school district does not have an effective mentoring program in place because the program does not begin until the end of November or the first part of December. The researcher who conducted the comprehensive study in 2001 advised the local school district to revamp its induction program and according to the survey responses of the beginning teachers who participated in this study, that recommendation has not been honored. Instead of the school district spending the entire week providing information about the operation of the school system, that time should be spent more effectively by mentor teacher working
with the new teachers in their classroom. The dedication and support of many veteran teachers volunteer to help first-year teachers to become efficacious because the school district do not provide mentor teachers within a reasonable time frame.

This study is even more significant because the literature emphasizes that an effective mentoring program contributes to more classroom management and a greater retention of first-year teachers, thus facilitating more order and structure to increase the academic performance of the students. A strong mentoring program will enhance the school district's stability thus eliminating the need for the recruitment of numerous replacement teachers each year. An effective mentoring program is not only especially significant for first-year teachers but it is also significant for principals because principals may not realize the frustrations that new teachers experience all alone in their classrooms. The research reports that the response of an elementary principal as a product of an Elementary Internship Program that Michigan State University offered during the 1960s; the concept of a strong support system for an extended period during actual classroom experience is an excellent one. Our district provides that same level of support during the first year of teaching and indeed most districts go far beyond the new laws requiring intensive in-service and mentoring during the three probationary years. The greater the quality experiences in the classroom prior to “flying on their own” results in greater chances for success (Michigan State University, 1997). Further comments indicate that the role of the principal over the past 10 years has gone from being the “boss” to becoming the nurturer and facilitator. The principal must voraciously explore options, provide training and be the emotional support for new programs. Building leaders today
need increasing communication skills, creative exploration skills and strategic planning skills to be the moral boosters and rapport makers. As the compass of the school, the leader must find the talents of the individuals within the school setting and nurture those talents through mentoring programs and/or other programs that will benefit the school (Michigan State University, 1997).

Summary

The information in this chapter determines that there is a profound need for first-year teachers to be actively engaged with a mentor teacher on the first day of school. The readily availability of a mentor “daily,” during the first semester ensures that the proven strategies will be implemented effectively. The mentor teacher is extremely beneficial because they have already utilized trial and error strategies to establish the best practices and those practices will be transferred to the first-year teacher. Since first-year teachers do not have prior classroom experiences because they have been guided by university professors; therefore, they are fearful, skeptical and very apprehensive. The support provided by the mentor teacher will be more succinctly manifested through creative instructional strategies, organizational skills, classroom management skills, enhancing retention intentions and thereby creating efficacious teachers. School systems are more structured and stable when they do not need to reemploy new teachers each year because the new teachers will want to remain in their teaching position.

In conclusion, the foundation has been established that in order for first-year teachers to successfully establish the strategies necessary for a productive first year teaching experience, a mentor teacher must be assigned to work with each new teacher
the first day of school. All school districts must not only have a well written effective mentoring program, but the plan must be readily available to be implemented the first day of school, unlike the contradictory information revealed about the local school district's induction/mentoring program. The mentor teacher is crucial for new teachers to establish teacher efficacy. The Review of the Literature is the next chapter and in that chapter, additional research is presented that further establishes the need for an effective mentoring program.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

The review of the literature provides various viewpoints concerning first year teachers and mentoring new teachers and the effectiveness of the mentoring program to establish efficacy in the local school district. There are eight sections in this chapter. The sections are entitled, The Overview, The Significance of Teaching, Transitioning from Theory to Practicing Concepts, Strategies for Classroom Management Skills, Organizational Skills, Instructional Strategies, Strategies for Retention, and the Summary for the Review of the Literature.

During the review of the literature, the researcher encountered some very old dates indicating that mentoring is a landmark subject. McCann and Radford (1993) reported that:

Mentoring provides teachers sharper observational skills, improves classroom management skills, increases the ability to help students become active learners, improve questioning skills, improve group techniques, increase the use of technological devices such as computers, and enhances a positive change in student/teacher relations. (p. 2)
The support and encouragement of a mentor empowers beginning teachers to become more effective earlier in their professional career and new teachers are able to demonstrate their fresh ideas and energy with students and the mentor teacher. Teachers who teach do it because they have known the magic of teaching, the attraction to the spirit, to say nothing of the ego, and have known as students the lengths to which some teachers will go to help others, like themselves, to learn. They know that to convey to others the knowledge of any subject and to do so effectively are two of life's greatest joys (Banner & Cannon, 1997).

Providing a mentor teacher for first-year teachers on a daily basis for an entire semester will promote teachers who are innovative, organized and have the ability to manage a classroom effectively (Neuman & Simmons, 2000). Mentors serve as change agents for new teachers. Satisfaction on the job is the affective adjustment of an individual toward the role that he or she is presently occupying (Vroom, 1960, 120). Efficacy is the power or capacity to bring about successful results. Therefore, as new teachers become more skilled in their craft, job satisfaction also increases. From day one, the mentor’s strategies and plan of action moves teacher from the category of a teacher who may not have known better than to have low or mediocre expectations for the students to an effective teacher who is highly efficacious with high expectations for the students. A teacher who has low or mediocre expectation is a low-efficacious teacher and is a deterrent to student achievement and student success. The establishment of efficacy also facilitates stability, the mastery of the subject matter and longevity. The variety of strategies in place by school systems help with the establishment of a
consistently strong cadre of dependable teachers. The principal is able to be proactive in his or her assessment of the strategies currently in use as a means to measure the tone of the staff. Strategies are seldom used to provide support and encouragement before new teachers begin thinking about leaving or completely leave the education profession.

Teacher efficacy demonstrates a significant difference in the abilities of low achievers and high achievers. Highly efficacious teachers are successfully moving students from their academic and behavioral position in August to be completely higher order thinking students by the end of the school year. These highly efficacious teachers set high standards for the entire class and challenge them to become higher order thinking students on a daily basis and their students earn higher achievement scores. These teachers also have higher expectations for low achieving students. Highly efficacious teachers do not tolerate any contrary working ability, they do not feel angry nor do they allow negativity by misbehaving students. Furthermore, highly efficacious teachers communicate clearly their expectations about assignments, homework, class work and they seldom overlook infractions. The procedure for the enforcement of rules for an infraction is already in place from the first day of school. Therefore, the teacher utilizes this procedure very calmly and quietly to keep the teacher and students on task. The low efficacious teachers have low performance scores because they tend to group their students more by their ability and the low-achieving students are not given additional assistance to enable these students to make sufficient gains during the school year. Unfortunately, the attention and affection in the low efficacious teacher’s class is relegated to the high-achieving students. Therefore, instead of low-efficacious teachers
working to ensure that the low-achieving students perform well and have excellent behavior, these students are the ones who are a potential threat to the orderliness of the classroom (McEwan, 2002).

Frequently, we read the statement that every student can learn; however, with the constant supervision of a mentor teacher and the new teacher, students will be encouraged to believe and acts positively for success. Research reveals that there is a strong relationship between teachers’ efficacy and student achievement (Armor et al., 1976; Aston & Webb, 1986; Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977).

The literature shows that many schools are beginning their professional development programs before the school year begins to prevent new teachers from getting into trouble (Feaster, 2002). Research indicates that the best way to support, develop, and cultivate an attitude of lifelong learning in first-year teachers is through an induction program that focuses on training, support and retention of teachers (Wong, 2002). The focus of new teachers during the beginning months and beginning years is on survival instead of student achievement because of their lack of experience. Many schools participate in school-improvement programs; however, since most beginning teachers are trying to adjust to their new responsibilities, they are not able to participate in the school’s improvement program without the impact of an effective mentoring program (Feaster/Professional, 2002).

A mentor teacher provides the ABC’s of Good Teaching. A good teacher is someone who teaches not only with the mind but also with the heart. A good teacher is an effective communicator who makes it comfortable for students to ask questions. A
good teacher is someone who can learn from students. A good teacher enjoys teaching, a
good teacher is patient, respects the students, loves the subject he or she is teaching and
wants to communicate that love to the students (Armstrong, 2007). Many school systems
are putting forth effort to employ good teachers and do what they need to do to retain
them. Just as mentors tell new teachers to listen to their students, central office personnel
and school administrators need to listen to their teachers. Many school systems do not
retain 42% of the teachers they employ within the first five years. Unfortunately, studies
show that the poorer schools seem to have the worst teachers. Therefore, some school
systems are learning how to employ teachers who fit their schools. Some principals are
receiving staff development training in order to become more sensitive to new teachers
and to keep their interest in the school because teachers need a supportive atmosphere.
To become more effective, mentoring programs need expanding. Good teachers need to
have regular celebrations and above all, principals need to listen to the teacher's needs in
order to try to prevent teacher burnout and weed out the teachers who neglect their
responsibilities (Armstrong, 2007).

Teachers encounter various challenges; nevertheless, emphasis should be put in
place to create and orchestrate learning. Varying the learning experiences will motivate
children and ultimately, they will become lifelong learners. Since the new teacher's
focus and concentration is on survival, their lack of experience impacts student
achievement. Since survival is indicative of their need to accommodate themselves to
their new responsibilities, very little time is left for them to participate in school-wide
improvement programs. Feaster (200) reveals:
My first days in the classroom were horrible. I didn’t know how to get the student’s attention, much less keep it. The students passed notes and dropped pencils on the floor so they could crawl and disturb each other. My mentor informed me repeatedly that I am the one who creates the magic in the classroom, so without my mentor, I couldn’t have made it. (p. 3)

A large percentage of first-year teachers come to their new classroom with some knowledge, explicit and implicit beliefs about teaching, learning, as well as a lot of anxiety (Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998). In 1999, the data from Lafourche Parish Public Schools Officials indicate that after many years of implementing their mentoring/induction program, the attrition rate went down from 51% to 15%. In 2002, the attrition rate was 7% thereby representing an overall decrease of 80% reduction (Wong, 2002). Mentoring and induction programs are implemented as recruitment tools to improve retention rates. New teachers are more likely to choose a school district that offers a mentoring program with assistance (Feaster, 2002).

Research shows that the characteristics of good mentors and protégées are people, who are able to fit in, tolerate ambiguity, prefer abstract concepts, value their company’s, work and have the respect of their subordinates (Clawson, 1979). Of the different types of supervision programs, the purpose of developmental supervision and mentoring, as with teacher education or other professional development experiences promotes the growth and learning of teachers as persons and professionals. Teachers, who are demonstrating teacher efficacy, are learning to become adept in a broad range of instructional strategies including building positive relationships with students and
parents, conducting assessment, lesson planning, classroom management discipline, instructional presentation and evaluation. As teachers grow, they are more tolerant of ambiguity; more humane in their interactions with students, parents, professional colleagues; have more principles when facing ethical dilemmas; more capable and flexible in their capacity to solve complex human-helping problems (Thies-Sprinthall, 1997). Successful mentors are confident, secure, flexible, altruistic, warm and caring, sensitive to the protégée’s needs, and the protégée must trust their protégées (Alleman, 1982). Mentoring has a long history of success, beginning some 3,500 years ago and continuing to the present (Gray & Gray, 1985). Research shows that successful mentors fulfill life career goals (expose protégés to new opportunities, coach and sponsor them, protect and challenge them) as well as the four-psychosocial functions states (role-model, counsel, accept-confirm, and befriend them) as the mentor-protégé relationship is being developed (Kram, 1980). The dissatisfaction of the teaching job causes many new teachers to leave the classroom during their first, second or third year of teaching. Beginning teachers express that they are not able to adhere to the numerous demands of the school system in addition to being alone in the classroom with children. A mentoring program helps to elevate feelings of desperation.

According to The Missouri School District Beginning Teacher Network (BTN), the description of the program for first year teachers indicates that the Network provides new teachers with new ideas and strategies for success. The isolation of being all alone in the classroom is very demoralizing. New teachers need a support system that is on-
going. They need a place where they can talk confidentially with other new teachers (The Fape Site, 2002).

Significance of Teaching

Research indicates that in 1993, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) provided estimations that the nation would need approximately 2.1 million new teachers in the coming decade and approximately 10 years later, the prediction appeared to have been correct. The prediction also stated that the school teaching force would grow from 1.7 million to 2.7 million in 2008. Each year, 150,000 public school teachers are hired to meet the ongoing demands of replacing teachers who retire or who have left the profession and to fill new positions is growing school districts or to address special needs or meet new requirements. The burden of replacing large numbers of retiring teachers comes at a particularly challenging time, as enrollment in elementary and secondary schools are projected to set records each year (Hussar, 1997).

Linda Darling-Hammond, Executive Director of the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future at Columbia University’s Teacher College made predictions of a shortage of teacher in this country because she believes that we are creating more teachers than we are hiring (Darling-Hammond, 1999). However, some researchers believe that the problem is not the fact more teachers are being produced, but the distribution of teachers is the problem. Numerous strategies are being put into place around the country to facilitate good teachers who have the qualifications to teach children. Although Nevada and Colorado have a great need for teachers, Connecticut and Maine have a surplus of teachers. The more affluent suburban districts select the best
teachers and the urban districts with the lower pay scales and tougher working conditions get the remainder of the teachers.

Many school systems believe very strongly that high salaries will encourage teachers to pursue employment in their school system; however, the large metropolitan school district in this study has one of the highest salaries in this metropolitan area and yet numerous beginning and veteran teachers are leaving this system for a more suitable working environment. Since there is a considerably large influx of teachers who are dissatisfied in the school district, the employees were informed that a monetary penalty of $500 would be imposed if a teacher broke a contract early. A monetary penalty $1,000 would be assessed for administrators. However, that strategy was not successful because the teachers and administrators paid the fee to leave anyway. The school system felt that the price was too low; therefore, the teacher cost went up to $1,000 and the cost for an administrator to leave went up to $1,500 and yet this fee was not a deterrent. Presently, this system is implementing a more drastic strategy to hold on to their teachers and administrators. This system is requesting that the Professional Practices Department take away the professional certification of anyone who breaches the terms of their contract before the contract ends.

School districts with more money are able to coerce the more promising teachers from the staffs of the less-affluent districts. A problem encountered by school systems is the fact that too many teachers are going into other areas other than math and science. School systems are directing students to leave physical education and go into special education. Research provides that the salary is a major barrier to entering the teaching
profession. At some job fairs, some school systems are able to offer more money for starting salaries and signing bonuses; therefore, they select the best teachers. The Texas School System uses signing bonuses to recruit hard-to-find teachers in math and bilingual education. The Baltimore School System provides new teachers with $5,000.00 housing subsidies. The New York City School System is recruiting some of their math teachers from Austria. Approximately 40 states offer alternative certification for people in other careers who want to teach. Some districts are paying tuition to enable teacher aides or paraprofessional to become teachers because many of them have a lot to offer. Fortunately for many communities, when some of their good candidates receive their teacher training, return to their local communities to teach. Some magnet schools are emphasizing to the nation to grow their own teachers as a strategy to prevent a shortage in their community. Schools across the nation are establishing ties with local universities by sometimes offering teaching positions to promising student teachers before their internship expires. Some districts are establishing connections with local community colleges as a strategy to obtain teachers. To maintain their resource of teachers, many states are restructuring and expanding their mentoring programs to help new teachers to feel more welcome, secure and connected with veteran teachers who will use their skills to nurture the next generation of professionals (Hardy, 1998).

The literature reveals that many negative factors affect the local school district’s ability to obtain the best teachers. Some crucial factors preventing this district from selecting the best teachers are as follows: extremely late teacher fairs, recruitment staff do not have the ability to employ potential candidates on the spot, months of extremely slow
responses from Department of Human Resource to potential applicants and sometimes applicants obtain employment in another school system, the school district waits late in the school year to learn the intentions of the current staff. The voluntary transfer period from one school to the next occurs before the teacher fairs occur. However, as a result of these ill-conceived procedures, surrounding metropolitan systems conduct teacher fairs in December and the best teachers receive contracts early and many teachers receive contracts at the teacher fair. The researcher for the comprehensive study for the system made recommendations for the Department of Human Resources to obtain the intentions of the current staff in October and allow voluntary transfers to occur in December thereby enabling the system to become more selective and proactive in their recruiting ability (Coburn, 2001).

Research further provides some predictions made in 1999 concerning a shortage of teachers reveal evidence that the once seemingly endless supply of bright young women to fill the need for teachers in classrooms is dwindling. The school of education at many colleges and universities are not going to include teacher education programs in their August ranks of academia because they are taking the position that they are unworthy of the position. The abolishment of the small education department at the prestigious Yale University as well as at many other institutions of higher learning has educators very concerned. Therefore, those departments struggle with little support because they are often separated from either the leadership of the university and the other schools/departments (Owens, 2001). The perception exists and continues to exist that there will not have better schools without better teachers and we will also not have better
teachers without better schools in which teachers can learn, practice, and develop their skills (Goodlad, 1999).

A historical perspective reveals that teaching is an important profession from the standpoint of human welfare because we realize that this profession is one of the most technical and difficult. The teacher is not merely a person who assigns lessons to pupils and then checks to see whether the student knows the lesson; but the teacher is a builder of human lives and a trustee of the cultural heritage that exist with each generation to the next (Ragan, 1966). Teaching is the act, practice, occupation, or profession of a teacher (The American Heritage College Dictionary, 2000). A significant view applies to the role of the teacher as a person who occupies a particular position in a social system or in an organization. Therefore, the concept concerning the role of the teacher provides a natural basis upon which to view teaching behavior. Teaching is task-oriented and it is function-oriented. Teaching is behavior-oriented not in a general sense but in terms of the job to be done. Teaching is concerned with behavior relevant to the desired effects (Gross, Ward, Mason, & McEachern, 1958 as cited in Ragan, 1966). Research indicates that teaching is a wonderful tool in the hands of teachers and students of teachers (Rose, 1973, as cited in Ragan, 1966). A teacher is thought to be effective if they are successful at making greater demands of students, demonstrating more teaching skills, more knowledge of the subject matter and also demonstrating better discipline and this has been the premise for years (Kratz, 1896, as cited in McEwan, 2002).

The establishment of a Teacher Mentor Program in 1995 by the Baltimore County Publish Schools is to: (a) maximize student achievement by improving teacher
effectiveness and daily instruction, and (b) retain capable new teachers by increasing satisfaction with their teaching experience (Clark & May, 2001).

Some people believe that teaching is a concept that you can discuss like religion or philosophy, but not something that you can study like biology or astronomy. Some people believe that teaching is a moral endeavor, so the perception is, if you want to study it, you need to use philosophy to determine what a best practice is. There are also some people who believe that good teachers are born, not made, you either have it or you do not; therefore teacher training is a waste of time. However, since both beliefs seem to lack merit because the study of teaching can be done scientifically, through education and training, dramatic changes in teacher behavior is occurring yet the belief still exist that teaching is a moral calling (Gross, Ward, Mason, & McEachern 1958, as cited in Ragan, 1966). Research indicates that teaching is a wonderful tool in the hands of teachers and students of teachers (Rose, 1973, as cited in Ragan, 1966). A teacher is thought to be effective if they are successful at making greater demands of students (Useem, Offenberg, & Farley, 2007).

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Transitioning from Theory to Practicing Concepts

Gore, Cooper, and Williams (2006) state that a pilot study by several researchers to investigate a possible congruence between university teacher education programs and
the school system is currently in process. In this study, a group of students who have strong grounding in ‘productive pedagogy’ during their teacher education training, are receiving mentoring during their first year of employment as teachers and during the same period of time, New South Wales Public Schools is conducting a version of productive pedagogy as a long term strategic priority. Decades of research indicate that the effects of teacher education is diminishing in the first year of teaching in part because of the more powerful effects of the school culture.

New South Wales (NSW), Australia research reveals that in spite of the increase in the success to attract quality graduates into teacher education programs because of the growing support for the induction and mentoring of first-year teachers, new teachers experience the same alarming trend concerning teacher resignation or burnout during the first few years of teaching and the attrition trend is the same as in the Western world and Australian States. A study concerning the “Ambitions of Youth” determines that exploring the issues of retention, attrition of the early career teacher’s experience, ongoing problems with early career resignations and problematic professional mentoring structures still exists. Identifying strategies are being put in place to assist with the challenges of improving workplace conditions for beginning teachers to be effective and remain in the school system. Ongoing problems occur during the transition from student teacher to self-managing professional to master teacher (Research and References, 2006).

The Boston County Public Schools Teacher Mentoring Program is a different and unique program because of their program supports, teachers with five or fewer years of experience report to schools suffering from low student achievement and high teacher
turnover rates. These teachers receive daily contact with full time mentors; therefore, overwhelming feelings of being alone in a classroom is almost none existence. When mentors share their knowledge and offer feedback, new teachers are able to realize success earlier thereby benefiting both the students and the new teacher. According to The New Teacher Induction/Teacher Mentoring Guidelines, Section 1526 requires all new teachers in the first 3 years of classroom teaching experience to have a mentor by one or more master teachers and 15 days of intensive professional development. The Michigan State Board of Education Position Statement for their mentoring/induction of new teachers believes that the New Induction/Teacher Mentoring process is a cooperative arrangement between peers in which new members of the teaching profession receive ongoing assistance and support by one or more veteran teachers. This relationship may be collegial in nature, and all experiences toward the development, refinement of the knowledge, skills and dispositions are necessary for effective learning. The expectancy of this process is to be mutually beneficial to improve instructional practices and professional performance (Michigan Legislation: PA 335 1993 and amended by PA 289 1995 Section 1526).

The facilitation of a discussion about the concerns of new teachers is the catalyst for the writing of a book entitled *A Better Beginning Supporting and Mentoring New Teachers*, because this is a book that veteran teachers and administrators may use. The mentoring program includes the series of essays written by educators to describe the steps to set up a successful mentoring program. Information is available for setting up a classroom, making the most of the mentoring relationship as well as how to listen to
one's peers is also in the program. The lack of support from colleges to the real world of work is a concern for beginning teachers because it represents too much of a quantum leap for them. Research from the National Center for Educational Statistics in 2000 shows that 20% of new teachers make their exit within the first three years, in urban districts, the attrition rate is around 30% to 50% in the first year. In rural areas, the percentage is even higher for new teachers to exit the classroom within the first year (Feaster, 2002). The Departments of Education will need to provide the necessary prerequisites for teachers to adhere to the innumerable needs of the diverse learners in today's classrooms. Therefore, if teachers are to become true professionals, they will need the support by a dynamic, reciprocal connection between educational theory and practice, one that is made stronger through the work of other professionals in the field. Schools of education have a critical role to play to prepare teachers to become a recognizable profession, furthermore, teachers need a model of preparation that is in line with the demands and realities of teaching. Schools of education are in the best position to guide the progress of inservice of practicing teachers as they move along the continuum of professional growth from novice to master teacher (Holm & Horn, 2002). A consortium of the following educational organizations: The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) are establishing the alignment of standards through the establishment of a powerful framework for this professional model (Holms & Horn, 2002). The NCATE standards require schools of education to demonstrate how they are
incorporating new knowledge about the subject matter, teaching strategies, learning styles, and student diversity into their teaching preparation programs. The INTASC standards outline the skills and knowledge that new teachers need to receive an initial license. The standards of the NBPTS define the characteristics and practices of successful master teachers. Together, the standards are set up for preparation, initial licensing and advanced certification to create a solid continuum of teacher development (Holm & Horn, 2002). Holm and Horn state:

Building on these efforts, schools of education are weaving these standards into the fabric of their programs to help teachers understand the expectations and realities of the teaching profession. They create a context for learning that starts their students on the journey towards expertise and prepares them for the challenges of today’s schools. The essence of the knowledge, skills and understanding that beginning teachers need to successfully traverse this continuum is encapsulated in the core propositions of the NBPTS. (pp. 376-380)

This set of beliefs captures current thinking in the field of education and provides a blueprint for meeting the myriad needs of the diverse learners in today’s classrooms. Schools of education that incorporate these standards into their preparation programs equip teachers with the following:

• Knowledge and skills that will help them know and understand who their students are and how they learn;
• Knowledge and understanding of the content of the disciplines and of the instructional strategies that can be used to create powerful learning experiences;
• An understanding of the role of assessment and how to design assessments that will inform practice and guide student learning, habits of reflection
• A collaborative approach to their work with colleagues, families, and communities. (Holm & Horn, 2002, pp. 376-380)

Mentoring provides the opportunity to improve student learning throughout school systems by reducing teaching attrition and engaging teachers in structured avenues for exemplary teaching practices (McCann & Radford, 1993). Engagement in a mentoring relationship can help new teachers overcome those first-year obstacles and enable them to more quickly focus upon whole-school issues such as school improvement and increasing student achievement.

Strategies for Classroom Management

Evertson (1980) indicates:

During the 1960s, classroom management began with Jacob Kounin’s (1970) research in order to learn about the way teachers keep order and maintain the attention of their students. The research concerning classroom management dates to the early 1970s and also during the late 1970s, teacher-training materials were developed. (p. 4)

During the early 1980s researcher, Evertson and colleagues successfully field-tested the materials. The researchers learned that good classroom managers prevent most
management problems from occurring by keeping a close eye on the students to prevent problems from starting. When a problem begins, the good manager is available to prevent the problem from escalating out of control. The good classroom manager ensures that the rules, rewards and consequences are displayed around the room on the first day of school and the teachers emphasizes those strategies daily to ensure that the students remain orderly. In addition to having the strategies available for the students to read and see daily, the room arrangement allows the teacher to have the facial attention of the students at all times. Student seats are set up differently for lectures and cooperative group assignments; however, the teacher is always able to view the faces of all of the students at all times. The arrangement of the room also enables the teacher to have easy access to teaching materials and student supplies. The good classroom manager states the routine on the first day and the procedure continues each day to ensure that time on task is effectively in place when the rules and procedures are made clear to them.

McEwan (200) acknowledged that “The highly effective teacher/mentor demonstrates a state of being of top of, tuned into, being aware of, and is in complete control with management and organization of the classroom, engages students effectively and uses time wisely” (p. 12). Early research revealed that good classroom managers prevent most management problems from occurring by keeping events from escalating out of control. The teacher arranges the room to ensure that all students are able to see and hear instructional demonstrations and displays.

On the first day of school, mentors stress the importance of becoming proficient classroom managers, to explain the rules for the class, the hall, going to the restroom,
changing classes, attending assembly programs as well as stating the appropriate behavior in the cafeteria. The class expectations are displayed on the around the room as rules, consequences and rewards, thereby empowering students to participate in the management of their behavior as well as serving as a constant reminder of the appropriate behavior. The efficient classroom manager will review the procedures for the classroom daily for the first couple of weeks and remind them occasionally to maintain the constancy of the appropriate behavior. Better classroom managers carry out their instructions differently. Students will know the dates when things are due, the level of neatness for assignments, the procedure when students are absent, and the amount of work for each assignment. Accurate record-keeping is in place to monitor more closely the progress that the students will need concerning instructional tasks. When assignments are turned in, immediate feedback is given by the teacher to keep students aware of the performance requirements and when assignments are given to the teacher that do not adhere to the standard, that assignment is given back until the assignment is conducive to the standard. “The ability to organize and manage a classroom should be the cornerstone of any College of Education curriculum” (Palfenier, 1998, p. 49).

Organizational Skills

Teachers and especially first-year teachers need the assistance of a mentor to establish a daily routine from the first day of school and continue that routine everyday. On the first day of school, the successful classroom manager must become very organized to ensure that all house-keeping procedures are taken care of. The research provides a study wherein three math teachers at a middle-school and junior-high level
participated in videotaping of their opening strategies for each day’s routine about their student achievement and assessment gains. Of the three math teachers participating in the videotaping, two of the teachers participating are a second-year teacher and a 32-year veteran teacher with management problems. The third teacher participating in the videotaping had five years experience but the teacher did not have any management difficulties. The analysis of the data shows that the teacher who calls the roll quickly, actively transitions to involve the students in instructions from the beginning of class to the end, does not really experience behavioral difficulties. The veteran teacher took five times as long to call the roll and establish the class procedures; therefore, the delay in the daily routine negatively impacts the time for instructions and thus the students' academic achievement may not improve very much or the student academic achievement may decrease significantly. One can surmise from the research that some successful classroom managers begin lessons and other kinds of instructional activities differently. The more successful lesson openings pertain to routines, or a script for behavior, that is virtually automatic. Berliner and Casanova (1993) state:

Automaticity of routines is very effective because daily practicing keeps the routine functioning; it leaves a teacher’s mind to be free to focus on more instructional issues. The effective lesson openings typically will include a quick call to order of the class in a businesslike tone of voice, fast-paced roll-taking and the teacher stating the opening remarks that include behavioral and academic expectations for the students, an apparent anticipation of areas of confusion in the explanations given, and a call for questions. (p. 17)
When the students were asked about the three math teachers, the student said, "The more efficient math teacher was more organized, more prepared, more friendly, less punitive, more consistent, more predictable, more likely to admit mistakes and value the feelings of students" (p. 18).

Creative Instructional Strategies

Mentoring provides more structure for the new teacher because time on task is crucial for student achievement, on teacher made test and the student's performance at the end of the school year. Instructional strategy is a concept that addresses the manner or the way that a teacher presents a lesson or an activity to the students. The choice that a teacher makes to present the strategy is reflective of the teacher's own values and philosophical orientations. The presentation of the material, both the real and the perception of the material reflects both individual and collective characteristics of the students (Berliner & Casanova, 1993). If the choice for the presentation of the lesson is a lecture, then the strategy choice reinforces the hierarchical relationship between the teacher and the student, a relationship in which the teacher "holds" the knowledge and information that the students need to "absorb." When the instructional strategy is a lecture, the students need to be passive recipients of knowledge rather than being active participant in their own learning. The choice of a strategy tells the students what the teacher values. A teacher's strategy is in part by the content that the teacher presents. Some strategies require the presentation to be based on drill and practice such as naming the land and location of water masses in geography.
Another aspect to consider in choosing instructional strategies involves the real versus the perception of the characteristics of the learners. The age, skill level, and other pertinent individual characteristics are important to use when choosing a strategy for instructions. A lecture is not beneficial at all for a kindergarten class. Nor would a lecture probably be beneficial for a small group within a classroom. The teacher’s perception of their students guides their decision about the presentation of the instructions. If the students are thought to be slow learners, then the teacher will begin the developmental process with drill and rote learning activities. Whereas, when the students are more competent in their ability, more time is given for higher order thinking discussions. Unfortunately, a teacher’s choice of instructional strategy has limitations such as space, resources and time. Therefore, an effective teacher’s actions and decisions are made because of what they know about the students as well as time, space and resources as they select the appropriate instructional strategy. Although there are numerous strategies for presenting instructions, the ultimate decision rest with the teacher to decide the best strategy for the students. Certainly, there is the belief that classrooms are places for children to learn together and to learn from each other.

The presentation of a study for elementary and secondary schools concerning the amount of time that is set aside for different subjects and the research indicates that different teachers do not allow the same amount of time for each subject area. The amount of time spent during the entire year affects student achievement and this is reflective in the student performance at the end of the school year. Research reveals that there is a considerable amount of wasted time for transitioning from one subject to
another or from one class to another. The amount of time off task also indicates that the reason that the performance of the students in the United States is behind other countries is because time management is not consistent from class to class and from school to school. The United States reflects that the solution to the problem of wasted time off task is the extension of the school year. However, efficiency and achievement of goals within the time available means that schools should make better use of the time that we already have. There is a mandate concerning the amount of time to be spent on each subject by the local boards in addition to close monitoring within each school. The mentor expects to spend considerable amount of time with the beginning teacher for the establishment of "prompt" starting time with the morning routine and continue throughout the remainder of the day to ensure that children have benefiting fully every day (Berliner, 1979, as cited in McEwan, 2002).

Strategies for Retention

“Retention is the capacity to maintain a position without displacement under stress. A mentor is defined as a synonym, and much more” (Answers.com, 2008, p. 1). Many authors maintain that in order to solve the teacher shortage problem, the concern should be on retaining teachers who have the qualifications rather than implementing alternative routes to certification (Cochran-Smith, 2004, as cited in Yost, 2004).

According to Darling-Hammond (2003, as cited in Yost, 2008), “Growing evidence also suggests that teachers who lack adequate preparation to become teachers are more likely to leave the profession” (p. 1). Studies reveal that teachers are both resilient and persistent. Many teachers remain in the teaching profession despite confrontation with the
same challenges and obstacles of those who leave. Research indicates on teacher resilience, there are five primary factors responsible for teachers remaining in the field despite the challenges they face: (a) relationships (mentoring programs, administrative and parental support); (b) career competence and skills; (c) personal ownership of careers (ability to solve problems, set goals, and help students); (d) sense of accomplishment (experiencing success); (e) sense of humor (Bobeck, 2002, as cited in Yost, 2008, p. 1).

Concerning teacher efficacy-resiliency and persistence, research reveals that the higher the sense of efficacy, the greater the effort, persistency and resistance (Pajares, 1996). Thus teacher resiliency and persistence are strongly related to teacher efficacy. Personal as opposed to collective self-efficacy has to do with the amount of confidence individuals have in their ability to complete tasks successfully; therefore; judgments of efficacy forecast how much effort one expends and how long he or she persists on a task (Bandura, 1982, as cited in Yost, 2008). Therefore it is not enough to merely increase feelings of worth or of competence; instead the focus should be on raising competence and confidence primarily through successful authentic mastery experiences (Pajares, 1996, as cited in Yost, 2008).

The more successful experience a teacher candidate has working with diverse groups of students, the higher the confidence level of the teacher, which in turn positively influences self efficacy. Thus, if the environment is conducive to positive growth and provides the novice teacher with opportunities for success, then the likelihood is that his/her self-efficacy will increase. On the other hand, if the new teacher experiences little success early while student teaching, judgments
of low efficacy may determine how long the teacher will persist in developing a strong teaching repertoire. (Yost, 2008, p. 1)

The Oregon School Board (2008), during their study of their mentoring program, refers to the Three R’s as retirement, recruitment, and retention because of the tidal wave of retirements, the procedures for recruitment and the implementation of strategies for retention. Customer satisfaction is the key in the third R is retention in the mentoring program. Research shows that new teachers who participate in a mentoring program are more likely to clear the five-year hurdle and remain in the profession. Governor Kitzhaber and the state professional associations felt that the mentoring program is the quickest means we have on the slate to address retention with the unanimous passing of SB 250 by the Senate on March 5, 2001 to provide $3,000 to mentor each new teacher. The Oregon Education Association (OEA), the Governor’s Office and the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA) during the 2001 Legislative Session felt that the reinstatement of the mentoring program is successful for the Oregon teachers and administrators. Studies also show new teachers need extra support from administrators, additional classroom management skills and opportunities to teach in the area of their strength. Job satisfaction surveys repeatedly emphasize the importance of working conditions and morale over compensation. The school district is investing up to $5,000 to recruit, hire and orient new teacher. Efforts to recruit and retain the best—along with a renewed statewide commitment to teacher training—will create the environment that keeps a good teacher in every Oregon classroom (Oregon School Boards Associations, 2008).
Summary

The literature reveals that beginning teachers encounter many problems during their first year. The literature reveals basically the same information about feeling insecure, unable to perform their responsibilities properly and they are all alone in the classroom because prior to having their own classroom, support was readily available from the college professors. The support that was once readily available may not be in existence unless the school system realizes that first-year teachers must have a strong support system. During the initial stages of the school year, sometimes decisions are made to stay or leave the profession.

As new teachers move from the university setting to his or her first classroom, the transition occurs easier with the assistance of a mentor on the first day on the job as a teacher and continuing daily for an extended period of time especially the first semester. The mentor is a crucial factor for their success because first-year teachers exhibit some or all of the same problems.

Since a mentor is a master teacher, the skills that he or she will provide for a beginning teacher will have a significant impact upon a new teacher to demonstrate efficacy. Thus teacher efficacy exhibits the teacher's ability to establish high expectations for all students regardless of their ability to provide their best for students to earn excellent grades. When low-achieving students realize that the teacher is putting forth additional effort to ensure their success, they will become motivated students to achieve successfully as well. Unless beginning teachers feel nurture and support, they
will not be able to participate in school improvement programs because they will focus upon their own survival.

The mentor empowers the new teacher to have structure with the expectations for class work and homework. The students are told the expectations about their behavior in the class, hall, cafeteria and assembly programs. The rules, rewards and consequences will be put up on the walls as a constant reminder of the class organizational skills.

The more successfully experienced a teacher candidate has working with diverse groups of students, the higher the confidence level of the teacher, which in turn positively influences self-efficacy. Thus, if the environment is conducive to positive growth and provides the new teacher with opportunities for success, then the likelihood that self-efficacy will increase. On the other hand, if the new teacher experiences little success early or while student teaching, judgments of low efficacy may determine how long the teacher will persist in developing a strong teaching repertoire (Yost, 2008).

In the local school district, mentors begin working with a beginner teacher very late during the first semester or when the new teachers are in trouble with the administrator or the school. Some school systems are attempting to be more proactive in their endeavor to provide support earlier in the school year instead of being reactive and having to invest additional funds to employ new teachers each year. Many school systems are implementing mentoring /induction programs, signing bonuses, housing subsidies, the promise of a particular grade, grade level or a particular school are strategies to coerce the employment of first-year teachers to work in their system. Although each school system may have its own training program for new teachers, that
program must reflect and emphasize a variety of strategies to ensure the success of the teacher and student achievement.
CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter describes the procedure conducted by the researcher. The chapter also includes the procedure for the distribution of a survey instrument to collect and analyze the data derived from the new teachers in six of the 16 middle schools within the local metropolitan school district. The researcher provided the relationship between the variables represented, the definitions of the variables and the limitations of the study.

Presentation and Definition of Variables

A variable is a measurable factor, phenomenon, characteristic, or attribute of an individual or a school district; it is also something that might be expected to vary over time or between individuals (Wikipedia, 2008). Variables are considered the conditions or characteristics to be manipulated or controlled by the experimenter.

Dependent Variables

This variable represents the condition or characteristic that occurs or does not occur as the experimenter manipulates the dependent variable and introduces, removes, or changes the independent variable.
Classroom Management Skills: The extent to which the first-year teacher is able to implement and demonstrate the strategies proposed by the mentor teacher to establish and maintain a well structured classroom.

Organizational Skills: The actions demonstrated by the new teacher to perform the duties and responsibilities within the time frame established by the district. Optimized used of time to provide quality learning experiences within a quality learning environment. The arrangement of the class reflects rules, rewards, consequences and the teacher’s expectations.

Creative Instructional Strategies: The ability of the first-year teacher to incorporate innovative procedures and best instructional practices into the learning environment to challenge children to become higher order thinking students.

Retention: The state or act of being retained in a position within an organization or school system.

Independent Variable

This variable represents the condition or characteristic that the experimenter manipulates or controls in an attempt to determine their relationship to the observed phenomena.

Mentoring: A concept designed to help first year teachers to develop competencies, self-esteem, and professionalism. The mentor teacher serves as a catalyst to coach, tutor, encourage and provide support for the beginning teacher to progress through the induction process. This program is also designed to help to alleviate the feelings of anxiety expressed by all new teachers.
**Moderator Variables**

*Teacher's Gender:* Male or female

*Teacher's Race (Ethnicity):* Black, white, Hispanic (not black) and other.

*Teacher's Educational Level:* Highest level of education accomplished

*Teacher's Experience:* The teacher's years of teaching experience

Relationship among the Variables

This section is presented to provide the interaction of the variables being investigated based upon theory and research concerning mentoring. The four dependent variables are the classroom management skills, organizational skills, creative instructional strategies, and retention intentions. The independent variable is mentoring. The analysis and investigation of these variables are manipulated in conjunction with the moderator variables as demographic data—teacher certification, teacher education level, experience, gender, and race. This demographic data enables the reader to establish a clear profile of the new teachers involved in the study.

The management of the classroom is crucial because learning occurs best in an organized/structured environment. Teachers cannot allow students to have control of the classroom; furthermore, a teacher is considered a good teacher if the class is well managed. When the class is calm and orderly, the environment is conducive for learning. A well managed class signifies that the behavior modification plan is working effectively to monitor the discipline of students. There must be a daily routine in place on the first day of school and the routine requires reemphasizing throughout the school year to ensure that the class remains peaceful, focused and consistently on task. From the
beginning of the school year until the end of the school year, the classroom must be clutter free and stress free. The teacher implements varied innovative activities and creative instructional strategies in a setting that is organized and properly managed. Mentor teachers provide the support, guidance and direction for beginning teachers to establish a well organized class that is structured, thereby enabling the teacher to teach very creatively innovative lessons, in a warm and conducive environment. Figure 1 illustrates the interaction of the independent and dependent variables and their impact upon each other.

There are numerous variables associated with teachers and the working conditions pertaining to teachers. The researcher emphasized several issues that are meaningfully significant to the school overall; however, those issues are not as crucial to the new teacher as surviving in the classroom each day. Prior to their first assignment as a teacher, the only foundational preparation was theoretical under the close supervision of university professors. New teachers have continued to experience the same struggles as new teachers in the past; unfortunately, the distressful dilemma continues to be a challenge. Landmark dates signify that numerous studies have been ongoing to address the difficulties expressed by new teachers. Research reveals that many strategies have been attempted by school systems yet none have the profound positive impact as a closely supervised mentoring program for new teachers.
Figure 1. Theoretical Framework
A teacher is regarded as a person who imparts information or knowledge and to receive the credentials to teach, a person must acquire a teaching certificate. Wikipedia (2008) states that teacher certification is the process by which a teacher becomes recognized by a state as an expert teacher, implying that a teacher has mastered the complex art of teaching. Although a person may complete the requirements to become a teacher, the licensure grants the teacher the permission to teach. However, during the course of each school year, teachers must participate in additional professional development seminars to stay abreast of any changes in the curriculum or mandated requirements by the state departments. In this state as in many states, every teacher must participate in an accredited program to meet the renewal requirements. In addition to the coursework stipulations, attaining a required performance score on the teacher standardized test is necessary to maintain the teaching licensure and teachers must participate in an observation process by the school administrators yearly. Individuals who do not earn a satisfactory rating are placed on a professional development program with close supervision as a perquisite to continue their position for the remainder of that year.

Limitations of the Study

1. This study is limited to the willingness of first-year teachers to complete the survey cooperatively and return it immediately.

2. This study is limited to the principal’s support by allowing the surveys to be completed by first-year teachers.
3. The third limitation of the study is concerned with principals responding honestly about their school and returning the document.

4. The fourth limitation of the study is concerning the system employing the required number of mentor teachers needed to implement the program on the first day of school.

5. The fifth limitation of the study is concerned with the small population of first year teachers responding to the survey; therefore, the reader is cautioned that the findings and conclusions may not be generalizable to populations beyond the ones studied in this research.

6. This study is limited to released time being provided during the school day for conferences between the mentor teacher and the first-year teacher.

7. The seventh limitation of the study is concerned with the first-year teacher’s efficacy being established to demonstrate effective classroom management, organizational skills, creative innovative skills and retention intentions.

Summary

This chapter reveals that a relationship does exist between an effective mentoring program to enhance a new teacher’s creative instructional strategies, organizational skills, effective classroom management and retention is possible when the teacher experiences support and stability. The mentor teacher provides the support and encouragement needed to enable the new teacher to establish confidence and a calm attitude during the transitioning from the nurturing environment from the university to the actual classroom.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which the independent variable, mentoring enhanced the efficacy beliefs and actions of new teachers in the areas of organizational skills, classroom management, creative instructional strategies and retention. The purpose of the study was also to determine the self-reported efficacy beliefs of first-year middle-level classroom teachers within four school divisions. This chapter described the research design, the population, the sample that was selected and surveyed as well as the instrumentation used. The data collection, administrative procedures, and data analysis procedures are concluded in the chapter.

Research Design

The study utilized both a descriptive survey and descriptive correlational research design. Descriptive research asks questions about the nature, incidence, or distribution of variables, and is primarily concerned with identifying the characteristics of a population (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002).

Survey research utilizes instruments such as questionnaires to gather information from groups of respondents and is usually based upon data obtained from participant observation. Surveys also allow the summarization of the characteristics of different
groups and measure their attitudes and opinions toward some issue (Ary et al., 2002). Authorities are not in agreement, however, as to what constitutes “descriptive research.” Often researchers embrace a broad interpretation of the term to include all forms of research except historical and experimental. The term “survey studies” is sometimes used instead of descriptive research (Isaac & Michael, 1995). Correlational research designs are used in determining the presence of relationships between variables (Salkind, 2003). Correlational research refers to the observation of two variables and investigates whether there is a relationship between variables through the use of correlation statistics (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004).

Description of the Setting

This study was conducted in a large metropolitan urban school district in Georgia. The school district has an active enrollment of 49,392 students attending a total of 99 traditional schools: 59 elementary (Grades K-5), three of which operate on a year-round calendar; 16 middle (Grades 6-8); and 14 high schools (Grades 9-12). The school system also operates 2 nontraditional programs, 7 charter schools, and 1 adult learning center (APS Fast Facts, 2006-2007).

The ethnic distribution of students is as follows: 85.98% African-American; 8.37% Caucasian; 4.10% Hispanic; 4.10% Multiracial; .93% Asian; and .59% American Indian/Alaskan Native. Approximately 76.14% of students were eligible for free and reduced priced meals based on income and household size (APS Fast Facts, 2006-2007).

The selected school district is organized into five School Reform Teams (SRTs). Each SRT has an executive director, support staff and a link to every department in the
school system, all with the responsibility of meeting the needs of the schools in their cluster. This organizational structure is expected to provide faster service and greater accountability to the schools and to parents. SRTs 1-4 are comprised of geographically aligned elementary and middle schools. SRT 5 addresses the needs of the high schools, non-traditional schools, evening high school programs and adult learning center (School Reform Teams, 2006-2007).

Sampling Procedures

Within the district, six middle schools in SRTs 1-4 participated in the study; however, eight schools were selected to participate. The researcher hand delivered the envelope containing 10 Mentor Teacher Surveys to eight of the 16 middle schools within the district. The selection process was based on similar characteristics within each reform team, accessibility, expediency and close proximity to the researcher’s middle school for inclusion of teachers to participate in the study. Of the eight schools selected, two principals chose not to participate. Five of the middle schools selected were within close proximity to the researcher’s middle school. First-year teachers generated the sample and the researcher received completed responses from \( n = 27 \). All of the participants had 0-5 years of experience (except one teacher who was new to the school district), were highly qualified, and came from all teaching domains. Historical data indicated those teachers who leave the profession early in their career most often fall within 0-5 years of experience (NCES, 2003-2004). The individuals in the research study were willing, met the criteria for the study, and were available to participate in the research (Creswell, 2002). The building principal was asked to identify the possible
candidates for the study based on the selection parameters disclosed in the letter of introduction.

Working with Human Subjects

The study involved no danger or risks to the participants in that no deceptive tactics were employed. Participation in the study was strictly voluntary. All potential subjects had the right to withdraw or refuse to participate at any time. Confidentiality of participants was maintained, and no names were attached to the Mentor Teacher Survey. Access to the current data file was limited to only the people who needed the data. All data are used in the aggregate and there is no identifying data included in the questionnaire. After three years, the data will be shredded and destroyed. Until that time, the data will be stored in a locked metal cabinet located in Tyrone, Georgia. Permission to conduct this study was acquired from the Clark Atlanta University Educational Leadership Department. Permission was obtained from the Department of Research, Planning and Accountability within the selected school district to conduct research within the school system.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for this research study was the researcher-developed Mentor Teacher Survey (see Appendix A). The instrument consists of six items using a dichotomous (Yes/No) scale, 16 items using a five-point Likert type scale, and a demographic section. The survey was designed based on a literature review concerning the extent to which teacher efficacy will have upon the mentoring of first-year teachers in the areas of organizational skills, classroom management skills, instructional strategy,
teacher retention, and input from content experts. In designing the survey, the researcher was guided by Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996). Their research guidelines include (a) defining the research objective, (b) designing the questionnaire format, (c) field-testing the questionnaire, (d) writing a cover letter, (e) distributing the questionnaire, and (f) analyzing the questionnaire data.

Validity and Reliability

According to Litwin (1995), face validity can be addressed by a cursory review of items by untrained judges; content validity requires a set of reviewers who have knowledge of the subject matter. A professor of education and statistics reviewed the literature review and survey instrument. The survey instrument was determined to answer the research questions as well as reflect common themes in the literature, such as what a novice teacher experiences with support and benefit of a mentoring program. The professor's responses were reviewed for consistency with the researcher's intentions for the question. The professor determined that the survey questions illustrated qualities of validity, as they would successfully elicit true responses to the information desired.

Accompanying the survey was a “Criteria for Validation of Instrument” document to establish validity-based evidence (Appendix B). The purpose of the Criteria for Validation of Instrument was to determine if the questions were clear, the length of the survey was appropriate, and to check if the survey format was correct.

The internal consistency of the instrument was evaluated by computing a Cronbach alpha coefficient using results from the surveys. Coefficient alpha and correlations between items and scales were computed using version 16.0 of the Statistical...
Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, computed for each subscale, were as follows: .883, Organizational Skills subscale; .796, Classroom Management subscale; and .910, Instructional Strategies subscale. Overall, the Mentor Teacher Survey has adequate internal consistency. Content validity has been established. The instrument is believed to be adequate for providing information about the mentoring of new teachers.

Data Collection Procedures

Permission to survey middle school beginning teachers was requested and obtained from the Department of Research, Planning and Accountability. The data for the current quantitative descriptive/correlational research study were collected using the Mentor Teacher Survey and a demographic profile. Data were collected by the researcher from the participating school sites. According to Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004), data collection is one of the most important steps in research studies, and surveys constitute one of the most important data collection tools available in evaluations. The three easy to administer surveys are telephone interviews, face-to-face, and paper-and-pencil format. This study consisted of administering a survey using a paper-and-pencil. The survey data were collected by the investigator after being returned to a designated area located in the school. The site administrator was asked to identify the possible candidates for the study based on the selection parameters disclosed in the letter of introduction.
Administrative Procedures

Letters of introduction, confidentiality statements, and the nature of the study were sent to the selected school principals by post or hand delivered requesting permission to conduct research on the proposed study. First-year teacher surveys were given directly to them for completion. The surveys were collected along with permission from school principals and instructions for completing the surveys. The Department of Research, Planning and Accountability sent a cover letter to inform the six principals that the researcher received permission to circulate the surveys and instructions for completing the survey (see Appendix C). The written documents with information pertaining to the participants are under lock and key in the researcher’s office. Once participants agreed to be members of the study, pseudonyms were assigned to protect their confidentiality. The surveys were sealed in a manila envelope and picked up by the researcher. The principal at each school was responsible for assigning a volunteer to distribute, collect, and return the surveys to the principal. Each school’s set of survey questionnaires were kept separate from one another in manila envelopes and labeled with school name. The survey results were then analyzed.

Statistical Applications

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 16.0 for Windows) was used to analyze data for this study. An alpha level of .05 was used in determining statistical significance. As an initial step in the data analysis, the internal consistency of the instrument was evaluated by computing a Cronbach’s coefficient alpha. Preliminary analysis of data included reviewing key variables using a histogram;
the normality of the histogram was evaluated to discern the sample distribution. One-sample \( t \) tests were performed to compare the mean responses of the non-demographic survey items with the neutral test value of 2.5. A bivariate correlation was used to determine the relationships between new teachers' sense of efficacy for organizational skills, classroom management, and instructional strategies and retention intentions. This correlation measures how variables or rank orders are related. The SPSS 16.0 bivariate correlations procedure computes Pearson's product-moment coefficient \( (r) \) and Spearman's rho \( (\rho) \), which measures the strength of the correlations. Point-biserial correlations are special applications of the Pearson correlation and were used when one variable is dichotomous and the second variable is measured on an interval or ratio scale (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004). An alpha level of .05 was set \textit{a priori} used to determine if significant differences/relationships existed between variables of interest.

**Delimitations**

1. The study was limited to first-year teachers employed within the local metropolitan school district during the 2006-2007 school year.

2. Efficacy beliefs and retention behavioral intentions were measured by the \textit{Mentor Teacher Survey}.

3. The scope of the study focused on six of the sixteen middle schools within the local metropolitan school district.

**Summary**

This chapter provided specific information on the research design, description of the setting, sampling procedures, working with human subjects, instrumentation, and data
collection procedures, administrative procedure, statistical applications, and delimitations. The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which a mentoring program self-reported efficacy beliefs of first year middle-level classroom teachers in relation to their retention behavioral intentions. The sample consisted of 27 beginning teachers from six urban middle schools. Each participant completed a valid and reliable survey to include demographic or background variables. Descriptive statistics, one-sample t tests, and Pearson correlations were used to analyze the data. Data analysis, including tables and supporting narratives, are presented in Chapter V. A summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations are presented in Chapter VI.
CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which a mentoring program enhances the efficacy beliefs and actions in the areas of organizational skills, classroom management skills, creative instructional strategies and retention intentions of first year middle-level classroom teachers. The statistical analyses were based on the responses of 27 first-year classroom teachers from an urban Georgia school district to a four-part survey. The independent variable was mentoring and the dependent variables were classroom management, creative instructional strategies, organizational skills, and retentions intentions. The moderator variables were: (a) teacher’s gender, (b) race, (c) highest degree, (d) age, and (e) whether the respondents were assigned to work with a mentor. In this chapter, the study data which were collected through surveys are reported. The first section provides demographic information about the respondents, the second section presents the findings related to each research question, and the third section provides a chapter summary.

Demographic Characteristics of First-Year Middle-Level Classroom Teachers

School principals were responsible for selecting the first year middle-level classroom teachers in eight of the sixteen middle schools within the local school district.
Eighty surveys were hand delivered to the identified schools and the schools were the only person who communicated with the beginning teachers. Of the eight schools that received surveys, six middle schools actually provided completed surveys to the researcher. Twenty-seven first year middle-level classroom teachers within the school district participated in this research study. Table 1 contains a summary of demographic characteristics. Of the 27 first year middle level classroom teacher respondents, women outnumbered men (18 to 9), and of this group, 20 (74.1%) were African-American, 6 (22.2%) were Caucasians, and 1 (3.7%) was other racial designation. Nineteen respondents (79.2%) listed their highest level of education as the bachelor’s degree. Five respondents (20.8%) obtained graduate degrees. Ten respondents (43.5%) fell into the 20 to 29 age bracket; 10 respondents (43.5%) fell into the 30 to 39 age bracket. One respondent (4.3%) fell into the 40 to 49 age bracket and 2 respondents (8.7%) fell into the 50 plus years of age bracket.

Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of First Year Classroom Teacher Respondents in Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Degree Earned</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29 years of age</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39 years of age</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49 years of age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+ years of age</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Three teachers did not report their highest degree; four teachers did not report their age.
Response Analysis of the First-Year Teacher Survey

Assistance from Mentor

Respondents were asked if they were assigned to work with a mentor. Twenty respondents (83.3%) reported they were assigned to work with a mentor, while four respondents (16.7%) reported they were not assigned to work with a mentor. Three first-year teachers did not respond to this item (see Table 2).

Table 2

Were you assigned to work with a mentor?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were asked if a mentor assisted them on the first day in their classroom. One-third of the respondents (33.3%) indicated “No” and two thirds of the respondents (66.7%) indicated “Yes” (see Table 3).

When asked if they participated in student teaching, slightly more than 6 out of every 10 respondents (62.5%) responded affirmatively and slightly more than 3 out of every 10 respondents (37.5%) indicated “No” (see Table 4).
Table 3

*Did a mentor assist you on your first day in the classroom?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

*Did you participate in student teaching?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost half of the responding teachers (45.8%) received an alternative teaching certificate and more than one half (54.2%) of beginning teachers received a regular or traditional teaching certificate (see Table 5).
Table 5

*Did you receive an alternative teaching certificate?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Retention*

Of the 22 teachers responding to the mentoring related questions, slightly more than 6 out of every 10 respondents (59.1%) reported their mentoring experience encouraged them to remain in the teaching profession (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Did your mentoring experience encourage you to remain in the teaching profession?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slightly more than 8 out of every 10 beginning teachers (81.8%) reported they would remain a teacher without the assistance of a mentor, while almost 2 out of every 10
beginning teachers (18.2%) reported they would not remain a teacher without the assistance of a mentor (see Table 7).

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response Analysis of the Mentor Teacher Survey

Means and standard deviations were calculated for the three factors of the Mentor Teacher Survey. The highest mean was for Instructional Strategies at 2.72 (SD = 1.11). The lowest mean was for Organizational Skills at 2.64 (SD = 1.12). The data are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Standard deviations</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Skills</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organizational Skills

In the survey, first-year teachers were asked to respond to six items and indicate the degree to which mentor training enhanced self-efficacy for organizational skills. Ratings were on a continuum from 1 to 5 (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always). Percentage frequencies for first-year teacher responses to Factor 1, Organizational Skills, are shown in Table 9. Percentage frequencies for first-year teacher responses to Factor 2, Classroom Management, are shown in Table 10.

Table 9
First-Year Teachers' Responses to Dependent Variable: Organizational Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to set room up</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for the next day</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn in paperwork on time</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the computer to perform tasks such as taking student attendance and grade reporting</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence to perform duties and responsibilities the entire day</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 9 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Demonstrate skills to earn a rating of “meets or exceeds</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expectations on Georgia Teacher Observation evaluations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 10

*First-Year Teachers’ Responses to Dependent Variable: Classroom Management*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to smoothly transition from one task to another</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Confidence to effectively conduct parent conferences.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Classroom procedures performed in a structured classroom.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Students are able to demonstrate the daily routine.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage frequencies for first-year teacher responses to Factor 3, Instructional Strategies, are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

First-Year Teachers’ Responses to the Dependent Variable: Instructional Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mentoring training strengthened ability to differentiate instruction.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to teach students in a creative manner in an environment conducive for learning.</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Questions and Hypotheses

Results of the analysis to answer the research questions developed for this study and test their associated hypotheses are presented in this section.

H_01: Mentoring does not support first-year teachers concerning the extent to establish efficacy with regards to organizational skills, effective classroom management skills, creative instructional strategies and retention intentions.

H_02: Mentoring does support first-year teachers concerning the extent to establish efficacy with regards to organizational skills, effective classroom management skills, creative instructional strategies and retention intentions. All decisions on the statistical significance of the findings were made using an alpha level of .05.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asks, “Does a mentoring program strengthen the first-year teacher’s sense of efficacy in the area of organizational skills?”

Research Question 1 was addressed by testing the following null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis:

H_01: The mean Organizational Skills score equals 3.0.

H_A1: The mean Organizational Skills score does not equal 3.0.

Since we are testing a sample mean against a hypothesized value, a one-sample t test was used. The mean score of 2.64 (SD = 1.12) for the frequency to which beginning teachers exhibited a sense of efficacy beliefs in organizational skills was compared to the
test value 3.0 using a one-sample $t$ test. The resultant $t$-value of -1.644 was not statistically significant at an alpha level of .05 with 25 degrees of freedom. The result indicated that Organizational Skills and efficacy beliefs were sometimes evident. Based on this finding, $H_01$ was accepted.

**Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 poses, “Does a mentoring program strengthen the first-year teacher’s sense of efficacy in the area of classroom management skills?”

Research Question 2 was answered by testing the following null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis:

$H_{02}$: The mean Classroom Management Skills score equals 3.0.

$H_{A2}$: The mean Classroom Management Skills score does not equal 3.0.

Since we are testing a sample mean against a hypothesized value, a one-sample $t$ test was used. The mean score of 2.72 ($SD = .97$) for the frequency to which beginning teachers manifested classroom management skills was compared to the test value 3.0 using a one-sample $t$ test. The resultant $t$-value of -1.486 was not statistically significant at an alpha level of .05 with 25 degrees of freedom. Based on this finding, $H_{02}$ was accepted.

**Research Question 3**

Research Question 3 asks, “Does a mentoring program strengthen the first-year teacher’s sense of efficacy in the area of creative instructional strategies?”

Research Question 3 was addressed by testing the following null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis:
H₀₃: The mean Instructional Strategies score equals 3.0.

Hₐ₃: The mean Instructional Strategies score does not equal 3.0.

Since we are testing a sample mean against a hypothesized value, a one-sample \( t \) test was used. The mean score of 2.72 (\( SD = 1.11 \)) for the frequency to which new teachers practiced or manifested instructional strategies was compared to test value of 3.0 using a one-sample \( t \) test. The resultant \( t \)-value of -1.194 was not statistically significant at an alpha level of .05 with 22 degrees of freedom. Based on this finding, \( H₀₃ \) was accepted.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 poses, "Is there a relationship between first-year teachers’ sense of efficacy and retention?"

For the second research question, there are three types of efficacy included as predictors of retention intention: sense of efficacy for organizational skills, sense of efficacy for classroom management, and sense of efficacy for instructional strategies. Therefore, there are three null and alternative hypotheses related to this research question.

To answer Research Question 4, a point-biserial correlation (\( r_{pb} \)) was used to determine if significant correlations existed between beginning teachers’ sense of efficacy scores and retention intention. Analysis of the data indicated no significant correlation between the sense of efficacy scores and retention intention.

H₀₄: First-year teachers’ retention intention cannot be predicted by sense of efficacy for organizational skills.
$H_A4$: First-year teachers' retention intention can be predicted by sense of efficacy for organizational skills.

$H_05$: First-year teachers' retention intention cannot be predicted by sense of efficacy for classroom management.

$H_A5$: First-year teachers' retention intention can be predicted by sense of efficacy for classroom management.

$H_06$: First-year teachers' retention intention cannot be predicted by sense of efficacy for instructional strategies.

$H_06$: First-year teachers' retention intention can be predicted by sense of efficacy for instructional strategies.

Table 12 presents the relationship between first-year teachers' sense of efficacy scores and retention intentions. Based on these findings, $H_01$ through $H_06$ were accepted.

Table 12

*Relationship between First-Year Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scores and Retention Intentions ($N = 26$)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retention Intentions</th>
<th>$r_{pb}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Skills</td>
<td>.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>.221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$p < .05$. 
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations. The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which an effective mentoring program enhanced the efficacy beliefs and actions of beginner teachers in the areas of organizational skills, creative instructional strategies, classroom management and retentions intentions. The purpose of the study was also to determine the efficacy beliefs of first year middle-level classroom teachers in four school divisions/school reform teams.

The research was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: Does a mentoring program strengthen the first-year teacher’s sense of efficacy in the area of organizational skills?

RQ2: Does a mentoring program strengthen the first-year teacher’s sense of efficacy in the area of classroom management skills?

RQ3: Does a mentoring program strengthen the first-year teacher’s sense of efficacy in the area of creative instructional strategies?

RQ4: Is there a relationship between first-year teachers’ sense of efficacy and retention?
The target population consisted of 27 first-year teachers employed in six middle schools in an urban school district in Georgia.

The study utilized the researcher-developed Mentor Teacher Survey to determine teachers’ efficacy for organization skills, classroom management and instructional strategies and retention intentions. The statistical procedures utilized included Cronbach’s alpha, one-sample t tests, and bivariate correlations (point-biserial correlations). One-sample t tests were performed to compare the mean responses of non-demographic survey items with the neutral test value of 3.0. A bivariate correlation was used to determine the relationships between first-year teachers’ sense of efficacy for organizational skills, classroom management, and instructional strategies and retention intentions. Statistical significance was established at the .05 level of probability.

Findings

Most of the teachers in the study were between 21 and 40 years of age, female and African-American. All were first-year teachers. To determine the extent to which teachers manifested self-efficacy beliefs, the mean scores for each of the three subscales were compared to the test value (neutral point) using one-sample t tests. Results of these analyses were not statistically significant, with the mean scores for each of the subscales at the test value of 3.0, indicating first-year teachers manifested self-efficacy beliefs “sometimes.”
Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked “Does a mentoring program strengthen the first-year teachers’ sense of efficacy in the area of organizational skills?” Research Question 1 was addressed by testing the following null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis:

\( H_01: \) The mean Organizational Skills score equals 3.0.

\( H_{A1}: \) The mean Organizational Skills score does not equal 3.0.

The majority of participants expressed a neutral attitude toward their sense of efficacy for organizational skills as determined in the descriptive statistics of the organizational skills subset of items (1-6). This question was also answered through the use of one-sample \( t \) test. The null hypothesis was retained. Based on the data analysis, the conclusion can be drawn that there was very little difference between the mean Organizational Skills score (2.64) and the test value of 3.0.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked “Does a mentoring program strengthen the first-year teachers’ sense of efficacy in the area of classroom management skills?” Research Question 2 was answered by testing the following null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis:

\( H_02: \) The mean Classroom Management Skills score equals 3.0.

\( H_{A2}: \) The mean Classroom Management Skills score does not equal 3.0.

The null hypothesis was retained. Based on the data analysis, the conclusion can be drawn that there was little difference in the mean Classroom Management Skills score (3.72) and the test value of 3.0.
Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, “Does a mentoring program strengthen the first-year teachers’ sense of efficacy in the area of creative instructional strategies?” Research Question 3 was addressed by testing the following null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis:

\[ H_0^3: \text{The mean Instructional Strategies score equals } 3.0. \]

\[ H_A^3: \text{The mean Instructional Strategies score does not equal } 3.0. \]

The null hypothesis was retained. The data analysis showed there was little difference in the mean Instructional Strategies subscale score (3.72) and the test value of 3.0.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked, “Is there a relationship between first-year teachers’ sense of efficacy and retention?” Research Question 4 was answered by testing the following null and alternative hypotheses:

\[ H_0^4: \text{First-year teachers’ retention intention cannot be predicted by sense of efficacy for organizational skills.} \]

\[ H_A^4: \text{First-year teachers’ retention intention can be predicted by sense of efficacy for organizational skills.} \]

\[ H_0^5: \text{First-year teachers’ retention intention cannot be predicted by sense of efficacy for classroom management.} \]

\[ H_A^5: \text{First-year teachers’ retention intention can be predicted by sense of efficacy for classroom management.} \]
H₀₆: First-year teachers’ retention intention cannot be predicted by sense of efficacy for instructional strategies.

Hₐ₆: First-year teachers’ retention intention can be predicted by sense of efficacy for instructional strategies.

The null hypotheses (4-6) were retained. Based on the data analysis, the conclusion can be drawn that there was no statistically significant relationship between teachers’ retention intentions and their perceived self-efficacy beliefs.

An analysis of the Mentor Teacher Raw data must be provided for the six middle-level schools. Although the SPSS data revealed null hypotheses; however several teachers rated their mentoring experience very negatively (with the three of the five lowest rating on the Likert Scale ranging as follows: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, and 5 = always. The analysis of the six Mentor Teacher Surveys is provided to show that the first-year teachers were not indifferent with their responses. These 27 brave first-year teachers overwhelming determined that they were not going to endure the frustrating year and keep it to themselves. There were 314 negative responses provided out of 460 total points indicating a serious problem exists with the school districts Mentor Teacher Program.

*Mentor Teacher Survey Raw Data for School One*

All six of the new teachers at school one provided completed surveys and the data revealed the following:
• All teachers were assigned to work with a teacher mentor except teacher two and only teacher number one received mentoring assistance the first day of school.

• Teachers one, three, and four did not participate in student teaching and all of the teachers participated in a regular certification program.

• Teacher two provided a “N/A” that mentoring encourages teachers to remain in the teaching profession. Teachers one, two, and three will remain in the teaching profession without mentoring assistance.

• Teacher two responded “never” 14 times out of 16 concerning the organizational skills, classroom management and instructional strategies. The only two positive answers were pertaining to attending student teaching and that the classroom was structured.

• Teacher five responded “never” five times, “rarely” four times, and “sometimes” six times.

• Teacher six provided 15 low scores and the only positive score of “often” was for the classroom being structured.

• Teacher one provided nine scores of “often” and “always;” and seven very low scores ranging from “never” to “sometimes.”

*The Mentor Teacher Survey Raw Data for School Two*

• Three teachers were assigned a mentor teacher and teacher two did not receive mentoring assistance the first day of school; no one participated in student teaching.
• Teachers one and two participated in an alternative certification program.

• The teachers indicated that they were encouraged to remain in the teaching profession without the assistance of a mentor teacher.

• Teacher two provided 13 of the lowest scores because the mentor helped to set up the room, prepare for the next day and taught how to use the computer for the attendance of reporting grades.

• "Rarely" and "Sometimes" were given for classroom management and instructional strategies.

The Mentor Teacher Survey Raw Data for School Three

The analysis of the raw data for school three was provided for the four first-year teachers.

• Teachers two, three, and four were assigned a mentor and teacher one was not; on the first day of school, teachers two and four received mentoring assistance.

• All four of the teachers participated in student teaching, and teachers two and three participated in an alternative certification program.

• Teacher one responded "never" (11), "rarely" (4), and "always" (5) for having a structured classroom for a total of 15 negative points; teacher two responded "never" (5), "rarely" (3), and "sometimes" (3) for a total of 11 negative points; teacher three responded "never" (6), "rarely" (5), "sometimes" (5) for a total of 16 negative points; and teacher four responded "never" (7), "rarely" (3), and "sometimes" (2) for a total of 12 negative points.
The analysis of the data for school four reveals the responses of the seven new teachers.

- All of the teachers except teacher two were assigned a mentor teacher; however, only teacher six had mentor teacher assistance the first day of school.
- All seven of the teachers earned regular teaching certificates, and teachers one, two, five, and six participated in student teaching.
- Teachers two, three, five and six were encouraged to remain in the teaching profession and all of the teachers will remain teachers without the assistance of a mentor teacher.
- Teacher two responded “never” (15) and teacher four responded “never” (10) for a total of 15 negative points.

The analysis of the data is presented for five first-year teachers.

- Teachers one, two, three and five were assigned a mentor teacher; however, teachers one, two, and three, received mentor assistance on the first day of school.
- Teachers one, three, and five participated in student teaching and teachers one and five participated in a regular certification program and the other teachers participated in an alternative certification program.
• Teacher four provided the lowest ratings (never) for all of the 16 questions on the survey. Teacher two was assigned a mentor teacher and the teacher received assistance the first day of school; however, the 16 responses to the questions were the lowest ratings (never, rarely and sometimes).

• Teachers one, three and five provided the higher ratings.

• Teacher one’s responses ranged from “sometimes” to “often.” Teacher three provided some higher scores, but 11 of the 16 points were the lowest ratings on the Likert Scale.

• Teacher five also indicated that the mentoring produced ten of the 16 points to reflect the lowest ratings also.

The Mentor Teacher Survey Raw Data for School Six

The Raw Data for School Six is provided for three beginner teachers.

• Three teachers were assigned a mentor teacher; but teacher three was the only teacher to receive assistance the first day of school.

• All three of the teachers participated in student teaching.

• Teacher one placed question marks in the space instead of responding yes as to whether she will remain a teacher or not.

• Teachers two and three provided more positive points than teacher one. However, both gave ratings of “never” indicating that they were not provided a variety of teaching methods resulting from their mentoring training and they will not strengthen their areas of weaknesses by staying abreast of the teaching best practices with professional coursework.
• Teacher one (who indicated one to three years of teaching experience), responded “never” 13 times. The principal required teacher one to participate in a mentoring program because the criteria was met for the beginning teacher category.

• The positive points assigned by teachers two and three reveal that they had a different mentoring experience than teacher one.

This study also suggested that there is no correlation between teachers’ retention intentions and their perceived self-efficacy for organizational skills, classroom management, and instructional strategies.

Conclusions

1. This study shows that the majority of participants have personal positive attitudes towards their own self-efficacy in regards to organizational skills, classroom management, creative instructional strategies, and retention intentions.

2. The SPSS analysis of the data revealed null hypotheses because the responses were neither negative nor positive but they responded basically in the middle range close to the mean score of 3.0.

3. While no survey study can be totally free of bias and account for all possible factors that affect data from human participants, some conclusions can be drawn from this study of teachers’ sense of efficacy and retention intentions.
4. The raw data for the Mentor Teacher Survey for the six teachers at school one provided 74 negative responses (never, rarely, and sometimes), and 96 positive responses (often and always).

5. The raw data for the Mentor Teacher Survey for the three teachers at school two reveal the 16 responses were the three lowest out of a total of 48 responses.

6. The raw data for the Mentor Teacher Survey for the four teachers at school three reveals 54 of the lowest points out of a total of 64 responses.

7. The raw data for the Mentor Teacher Survey for the seven teachers at school four reveal that 87 negative points were the lowest points out of a total of 114. In the area of organizational skills, 36 negative points were assigned out of 42 points; in the area of classroom management, 24 negative points were assigned out of 28 points and in the area of instructional strategies, 34 negative points were assigned out of 42 responses.

8. The raw data for the Mentor Teacher Survey for five teachers at school five reveals that 59 negative points were assigned out of 90 responses.

9. The raw data for the Mentor Teacher Survey for three teachers at school six reveal 24 negative points assigned out of a total of 48 responses.

10. The overall analysis of the raw data reveals that the first-year teachers provided an overwhelming 314 negative responses out of a total of 460 responses indicating that a serious problem does exist with the mentoring program in the local school district.
Implications

As a result of this research study, there are some implications that are noteworthy.

1. It was found that the teachers' sense of efficacy for organizational skills, classroom management and instructional strategies scores were in the "sometimes" (3.0) range on a five-point continuum.

2. Although there were only a few teachers at the participating schools who were first-year teachers; however, those teachers were determined to provide the negative result of their mentoring experience.

3. Initially, eight schools were provided Mentor Teacher Surveys; however, two principals did not respond to the survey possibly indicating that an effective mentoring program is not in place at their school.

4. One of the principals who did not respond appeared to have completely ignored personal visits, telephone calls and emails by the researcher to obtain the completed data.

5. The second principal chose not to participate because an email was sent to the researcher that the school would not participate (although several attempts had been made by the researcher to obtain the data).

6. The SPSS statistical analysis revealed that the respondent’s responses were neutral.

7. A contradiction between the SPSS analysis of the data for the perceptions of the first-year teachers and the descriptive analysis of the raw data of the
Mentor Teacher Survey; therefore, the evidence indicates a genuine need to alter the Mentoring Program.

8. Providing the Mentoring Teacher Survey to a different school system would provide a larger sample and possibly allow respondents to be more willing to respond honestly according to the SPSS result.

9. The school district should have adhered to the recommendations as stated in the Starfish Report conducted in 2001 by Coburn; therefore the researcher would not be providing the same negative data.

Recommendations

An analysis of the findings and conclusions formed the basis for the following recommendations:

1. The researcher recommends that the school district engages a director and a proper staff to monitor mentor teachers for the system.

2. The mentoring staff should ensure that the mentor teachers will have appropriate time to properly supervise first-year teachers instead of being required to spend countless hours completing paperwork.

3. The local school district should make numerous revisions to the mentoring program to reflect the procedures included in the well written Retired Mentor Teacher Handbook.

4. The researcher recommends that the school system provide surveys to all of the teachers and administrators to ascertain the needs of the employees. That
data should be used to assist with the immediate and necessary revisions to the mentoring program.

5. The school district should provide ongoing professional development relevant to organizational skills, classroom management and creative instructional strategies.

6. The researcher recommends that the local school board immediately revise the policies to improve the poor mentoring program in all of the schools.

7. The system should develop an exit survey to learn the reasons that teachers leave the school district. A letter of recommendation could be provided in exchange for their survey.

8. The local school system’s budget should reflect appropriate funding to have an effectively functioning mentoring program.

9. The local school system should allocate funds to employ teacher mentors the first day of school and continue with the assistance the first semester.

10. After this district has made the necessary modifications to their mentoring program, then this study should be replicated using urban school districts in the state of Georgia in order to compare the differences among urban, suburban, and rural schools.

11. This study should also be replicated on a larger scale in order to provide a more representative sample and comparison among urban, suburban, and rural school districts.
12. Future studies should focus on other possible variables that influence the actual retention of new teachers.

13. Studies using both quantitative and qualitative studies should be conducted to provide more precise information about the factors related to teacher retention. Since this study is restricted to the analysis of data taken from a survey instrument, a qualitative study employing interviews, case studies, and focus groups could acquire additional understanding about teachers' sense of self-efficacy and retention intentions.

14. Studies could be utilized regarding teacher attrition, especially during the first five years of a teacher's career, could offer information to state policymakers and local school boards that may help deter the high teacher attrition rates in Georgia.
Dear Teacher:

My name is Winnie Anderson and I am a graduate student at Clark Atlanta University. I am pursuing a doctoral degree in Administration and Supervision and I would like your assistance. My dissertation topic is Perceptions of First-year Teachers in Regarding the Extent to Which a Mentoring Program Helped Them with Organizational Skills, Classroom Management and Innovative Strategies. The study will provide system administrators and principals with current data with the utilization of mentors for more stability and the retention of beginning teachers.

The information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used as a part of my dissertation. This questionnaire will only take 5 to 10 minutes to complete. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. After you have completed the questionnaire, please return it to your Liaison specialist. Your support, time and cooperation is greatly appreciated.
SECTION I

PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (*Please check one*)

Gender:  ___ Male   ___ Female

Ethnicity:  ___ Black   ___ White   ___ Hispanic
            ___ Other (Please specify) _________________________________

Age:  ___ 17 – 21   ___ 22 – 26   ___ 27 – 31   ___ 32-36
      ___ 37 – 41   ___ 42 – 46   ___ 47 – 51   ___ Over 52

Years of Teaching Experience (Check One)

      ___ 1 – 3   ___ 4 – 7   ___ 8 – 11   ___ 12 – 15
      ___ 16 - 20   ___ 21 – 25   ___ 26 – 31   ___ Over 31

Educational Level (Check one)

      ___ Bachelors   ___ Masters   ___ Specialist   ___ Doctorate

Grade Level you teach _________________________________

SECTION II

Directions: Please provide your response honestly concerning the assistance that you received as a new teacher from a mentor.

As a beginning teacher, indicate your response to the following questions.

1. Were you assigned to work with a mentor?   ___ Yes   ___ No

2. Did a mentor assist you on your first day in the classroom?   ___ Yes   ___ No
Appendix A (continued)

3. Did you participate in student teaching?  ___ Yes  ___ No
4. Did you receive an alternative teaching certificate?  ___ Yes  ___ No
5. Did your mentoring experience encourage you to remain in the teaching profession?  ___ Yes  ___ No
6. Will you remain a teacher without the assistance of mentor?  ___ Yes  ___ No

SECTION III

Please use the following scale to indicate your responses and please be honest with your responses.

1 - Never  2 - Rarely  3 - Sometimes  4 - Often  5 - Always

Organizational Skills

7. Did the mentoring training enhance your ability to set your room up?  1 2 3 4 5
8. Did the mentoring training teach you to prepare for the next day by placing your board work on the board before leaving each day?  1 2 3 4 5
9. Did your mentoring experience enhance your ability to turn in paper work on time?  1 2 3 4 5
10. Were you taught to use the computer to perform tasks such as taking the student attendance and reporting academic grades within the allotted time on the?  1 2 3 4 5
11. As a result of the mentoring training, do you feel more confident to perform all duties and responsibilities the entire day especially during your classroom observations?  1 2 3 4 5
12. Are you able to demonstrate your innovative skills to earn a rating of “meets or exceeds expectations” on your Georgia Teaching Observation evaluations as a result of your mentoring training?  1 2 3 4 5
Appendix A (continued)

Classroom Management

13. Did your mentoring training enhance your ability to transition from one task to another task smoothly? 1 2 3 4 5

14. Did your mentoring training provide you with the confidence needed to conduct parent conferences effectively? 1 2 3 4 5

15. Are your classroom procedures performed in a structured classroom? 1 2 3 4 5

16. Are your students able to demonstrate the daily routine because of your mentoring training? 1 2 3 4 5

Instructional Strategies

17. Did your mentoring training strengthen your ability to differentiate instructions? 1 2 3 4 5

18. Are you able to teach your students in a creative manner in an environment that is conducive for learning as result of your mentoring training? 1 2 3 4 5

19. Were you provided positive constructive feedback by your principal and mentor teacher after your informal and formal observations as a result of your mentoring training? 1 2 3 4 5

20. Are you able to demonstrate a variety of teaching methods as a result of your mentoring training? 1 2 3 4 5

21. Will you strengthen your areas of weaknesses and stay abreast of the best teaching practices by participating in professional coursework as a result of your mentoring experience? 1 2 3 4 5

22. Will you enhance your innovative teaching ability to provide the best teaching practices with professional coursework because of your mentoring experience? 1 2 3 4 5
INSTRUCTIONS: Please evaluate each item on the questionnaire using the criteria below. Space has been provided following for you to provide additional responses.

1. Were the questions relevant? _____________________________

2. Were the questions clear and unambiguous? _____________________________

3. Were the questions presented in a logical sequence? _____________________________

4. Was the rating scale appropriate? (Five Level Likert-Type Scale) _____________________________

5. Were there any questions that should have been discarded? _____________________________

6. Were the questions exhaustive? _____________________________

7. Should additional questions have been included? _____________________________

COMMENTS: You may provide additional responses.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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APPENDIX C

Letter Granting Permission to Conduct Research

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 11, 2005

Ms. Winnie Anderson
100 Fair Lake Drive
Tyrone, Georgia 30290-2545

Dear Ms. Anderson:

Your request to conduct research within the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) was reviewed by the Research Screening Committee in accordance with the guidelines. Your research study entitled "Perceptions of First-Year Teachers on the Extent to Which a Mentoring Program Helps Establish Efficacy with Regards to Organizational Skills, Effective Classroom Management, and Creative Instructional Strategies" was approved under the following conditions:

1. Your study is confined in APS to eight middle schools (Young, Bunche, Price, Long, Coan, Walden, Harper/Archer, Sutton). You must obtain the approvals of the principals of the selected schools prior to beginning your research study. Principals have the final approval on whether research studies are conducted in their schools. If any of the principals do not approve of your study or believe that it is not in the best interest of their schools to participate, you must drop those schools from your sample without replacement.

2. Your research design involves a survey for first-year teachers regarding their perceptions of the effectiveness of mentoring on classroom management skills and instructional strategies.

3. No students will be directly involved in your research study.

4. Activities related to your research study must not interfere with the ongoing instructional program or with the state and local testing programs. Your survey for teacher should be completed during noninstructional hours.

5. The confidentiality of students, teachers, other APS staff members, the schools, and the school system must be ensured in all research studies. Pseudonyms for people and the schools, as well as references to APS as "a large urban school system," are required in the title and text of your final report before publication or presentation outside of APS.

6. Teachers and other APS staff members can participate in or assist with your research study only on a voluntary basis.

7. The data collection phase of your research study must be completed by the end of the 2005-2006 school year.

8. If changes are made in the research design or in the instruments used, you must notify the Department of Research, Planning, and Accountability prior to beginning your study.

This letter serves as official notification of the approval of your proposed research study, pending the above conditions. Remember that a copy of the results of your completed study must be submitted to the Department of Research, Planning, and Accountability. Please contact me at (404) 802-2708 or nemmons@atlanta.k12.ga.us if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Nancy J. Emmons, Ph.D.
Research Associate

xc: Mr. Lester McKee
Principals (8 Selected Middle Schools)
APPENDIX D

Letter Requesting Permission to Conduct Research

CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

October 3, 2005

Nancy J. Emmons
Atlanta Public Schools
Department of Research, Planning and Accountability
130 Trinity Avenue, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Dr. Emmons:

I am writing as the chairperson of the Department of Educational Leadership requesting that you allow Ms. Winnie Anders to conduct dissertation research in the Atlanta Public Schools. Ms. Anderson is at the dissertation stage in the doctoral program in Educational Leadership. The title of her study is "Perceptions of First-year Teachers on the Extent to Which a Mentoring Program Helps Establish Efficacy with regards to Organizational Skills, Effective Classroom Management and Creative Instructional Strategies." I believe that Ms. Anderson study will be a significant contribution to the knowledge base and the world of school practice.

Ms. Anderson's dissertation advisor has worked closely with her in the development of her topic and in the preparation of her research instruments. I feel certain that she is ready to proceed with data gathering during this phase of her research.

If you need additional information, please do not hesitate to call me (404) 880-8503.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Sincerely,

Melanie Carter, Ph. D.
Chair, Educational Leadership

MC/bc
REFERENCES


Feature/Profession. (June, 2001). *Filling the gap can better recruitment, orientation, and benefits programs help beat the teacher shortage?* New York: Teachers Talk, Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association, College Recruitment Retirement Equities Fund.


