

THE PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF A
BEGINNING TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAM
IN CENTRAL VIRGINIA

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Abstract

This descriptive study examined the perceived effectiveness of a beginning teacher mentoring program in a public school district in Central Virginia. A total of 87 participants, including beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators were surveyed about the perceived effectiveness of the teacher mentoring program and general demographic information. In addition, 17 of the survey respondents were interviewed as a follow-up to the study. A 5-point scaled survey questionnaire based on Virginia's guidelines for teacher mentoring programs was the primary means of assessment. Results from the study indicated that the teachers and administrators surveyed had overall positive perceptions of the effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program in their school district. On a 5-point scale where a mean of 3.00 or higher was considered positive, 95% of the 20 items related to perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program had means of 3.00 or greater. The lowest overall mean on any survey questionnaire item was 2.92 (S.D = 1.33), which addressed whether mentor teachers provided feedback to their mentees on a regular basis. Suggestions for program improvement from the interview participants included developing ways in which mentor teachers and their mentees could have more adequate observation and feedback time; providing in-service training for mentor teachers that would more fully equip mentor teachers for the mentoring task; and developing a system of ongoing program assessment that would effectively insure that the goals of the mentoring program are being fulfilled.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This dissertation, a descriptive study of a beginning teacher mentoring program in a public school district in Central Virginia, examined the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program in its support of beginning and new-to-district teachers, based on the input of beginning, new-to-district, mentor teachers, and administrators involved in the program. The first chapter of the dissertation presents the background of the study, specifies the problem of the study, describes its significance, and presents an overview of the methodology used. The chapter concludes by noting the delimitations of the study, defines specific terms used, and describes the organization of the study.

Background of the Study

Learning how to manage a classroom, teach and evaluate a diverse group of students with varied needs and abilities, develop paperwork strategies related to teaching, and effectively deal with parents, takes time. One strategy that can help beginning teachers transition into their profession is a well designed and well supported beginning teacher mentoring program. The number of state and local school districts that have implemented formal beginning teacher induction programs that include mentoring has grown significantly since the early 1980s (Sclan & Darling-Hammond, 1992). Gradually, school districts across the United States have implemented beginning teacher mentoring programs that pair beginning teachers with skilled mentor teachers who are able to provide beginning teachers with the support and direction they need to become successful educators.

Historically, research has shown that beginning teachers leave the profession within a relatively short period of time. Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1996) reported that 50% of beginning teachers left the profession after five years. In 1997 the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that 20% of beginning teachers left the field of education after the first three years and 9% left after their first year. When a similar study was repeated by NCES in 2001 it was found that 33% of beginning teachers left the profession within their first three years, and almost 50% left after five years (NCES, 2001). Although several complex factors may be responsible for teacher shortages, Ingersoll and Smith (2003) suggested that one important reason may be that beginning teachers are leaving the profession because of early disillusionment and dissatisfaction. They contend that the challenge of retaining highly qualified, promising new teachers does not necessarily lie in the number of beginning teachers available, but in keeping the ones that are hired. Research performed by NCES in 2000 linking beginning teacher induction and mentoring with beginning teacher attrition reported that beginning teachers involved in a beginning teacher program of induction left the field at a rate of 15%, while beginning teachers that did not have any type of induction support left education at a rate of 26% (NCES, 2001).

Since research has begun to reveal the importance of beginning teacher induction and mentoring, programs have begun to be more commonplace in school districts across the United States. As a result, it has become necessary to implement ongoing systems of induction and mentoring program assessment. Several studies have addressed program assessment; (Andrews, 2002; Campbell & Campbell, 2000;

Duron, 2000; Edwards, 2002; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Lancaster, 2002; Lopez, et al., 2004; Maddex, 1993; Shields, et al., 2003; Singleton, 1999; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Villani, 2002; Vlahos, 2001; Wong, 2002); however, ongoing evaluation will continue to provide the necessary insight needed to implement changes that will produce teacher induction and mentoring programs of excellence.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study evaluated the perceived effectiveness of a beginning teacher mentoring program in the support of both beginning teachers as they made the transition from pre-service to classroom teacher, and new-to-district teachers as they made the transition into a new school district.

Research Question

What is the perceived effectiveness of a beginning teacher mentoring program in the support of beginning and new-to-district teachers in a public school district in Central Virginia as measured by the input of beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators involved in the program?

Significance of the Study

Assigning a mentor is perhaps one of the most significant and meaningful methods of beginning teacher induction (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Halford, 1998; Hope, 1999; Huling-Austin, 1992; Johnson, 2001; Weiss & Weiss, 1999). Mentoring arrangements in which beginning teachers are provided support and consultation from more experienced teachers have been seen as a way to reform teaching and teacher education and to retain talented new teachers (Little, 1990). Schools can significantly enhance the benefits of strong initial teacher preparation with solid induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers. Mentoring

in the early years of teaching is an investment that pays high long-term dividends for school districts. It is more cost-effective to provide beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs that reduce teacher attrition than to continue funding recruitment and hiring initiatives to replace large numbers of teachers leaving the profession.

Effective mentoring programs are well organized and well supported; however, haphazard, informal ones have been associated with high rates of attrition and low levels of teacher effectiveness (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). It is important that they not become just another program, or worse yet, a way for administrators to relinquish their responsibilities to beginning teachers. At best, mentors can provide beginning teachers with valuable support that can answer their questions, share lesson plans, observe their classes, provide encouragement, and help transition them into the school community (Johnson et al., 2004). However, simply assigning a mentor in the hope that this will decrease the likelihood that the beginning teacher will become discouraged and leave the profession does not solve the problem (North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission, 1995; Wong, 2002). Some consultants who professionally train mentor teachers contend that it is better for a school to have no mentoring program at all than to have a bad mentoring program (McCann, Johannessen, & Ricca, 2005). To guard against the possibility of having an ineffective mentoring program, it is important that beginning teacher mentoring programs that are in place in school districts be evaluated by the participants in the program in order to determine if the program is indeed meeting the needs of beginning and new-to-district teachers.

Overview of the Methodology

This descriptive research study involved elementary, middle school, and high school teachers and administrators who had been involved at any time in the beginning teacher mentoring program throughout its 5-year history and were retained for the 2004-2005 school year by a public school district in Central Virginia. It examined the perceived effectiveness of the chosen district's beginning teacher mentoring program quantitatively through use of a survey questionnaire created by the researcher, as well as qualitatively by interviewing 17 of the survey questionnaire respondents.

The survey questionnaire addressed the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program regarding the support that beginning teachers received in transitioning into the field of education and the support new-to-district teachers received in transitioning into a new school district. The questionnaire used a five-part scaled format ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The first 20 questions of the survey questionnaire addressed the perceived effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program in the chosen district, and the last 6 questions addressed general demographic information about the survey participants. Questions about the perceived effectiveness of the teacher mentoring program were based on current research from the literature on beginning teacher mentoring programs and on the guidelines for beginning teacher mentoring programs developed by the Virginia Department of Education in 1999. The survey questionnaire was developed by the researcher in three separate versions; one version for beginning and new-to-district teachers, one for mentor teachers, and one version for administrators. Each version

used the same questions; however slightly different wording was used, based on the role of the respondent. The demographic items for the administrators' version did not include items related to teacher preparation or teaching experience.

The survey questionnaire data were collected and organized, and then descriptive statistics were computed using the 11.0 version of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program in order to obtain frequency counts for 6 demographic items and 20 items related to perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program. Means and standard deviations were computed using SPSS for the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program for the first 20 survey items. A cross-tabulation procedure of role in the program with the six demographic items was performed. In order to determine if any of the demographics may have influenced the results of the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was performed using SPSS for each of the six survey items that addressed demographics.

The follow-up qualitative portion of the study consisted of 17 confidential, volunteer interviews (16 teachers and 1 administrator) conducted by the researcher. The interview process allowed participants to expand on the perceived effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program in their school district. The interview protocol was written by the researcher and questions were semi-structured, open-ended, and based on the survey questionnaire. Interview sessions were conducted individually and on-site at each participant's school. Interviews were audio taped with written permission, and then transcribed by the researcher. A list of themes, each theme based on the interview questions, was developed and then two separate inter-

reliability checks were performed by the researcher and a colleague, using a standard content analysis approach as described by Carey, Morgan, and Oxtoby (1996). Sub-categories within the themes were developed, and then frequencies of sub-category occurrence were determined.

Definition of Terms

Beginning Teacher: In the chosen school district, a beginning teacher is a teacher who has had 0-2 years of teaching experience.

New Teacher: In the chosen school district, a new teacher, also referred to in this study as a new-to-district teacher, is one who has moved from another school district and is new to the chosen district. This teacher has had three or more years of teaching experience.

Mentor Teacher: In the chosen school district, a mentor teacher is an experienced teacher who has agreed, with the recommendation of the building administrator, to mentor a beginning or new-to-district teacher.

Administrator: The instructional leader of the school (also known as the principal or assistant principal) who has been trained in the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values necessary to effectively carry out this role.

Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program: A beginning teacher mentoring program is a formal program of mentoring that pairs a beginning or new-to-district teacher with a mentor teacher in order to facilitate the smooth transition of the beginning teacher from student teacher to classroom teacher or to transition the new teacher into a new school district. In this research study the chosen school district requires mentoring for all beginning and new-to-district teachers for a period of one year.

Thrive Mentoring Program: In the chosen school district, the Thrive Mentoring Program is a site-based beginning teacher mentoring program developed by the building administrator of the middle school, and is uniquely targeted toward the needs of middle school teachers. Teachers and administrators in the middle school participate in this program as well as in the district-wide beginning teacher mentoring program.

Beginning Teacher Induction Program: A beginning teacher induction program aids in the transition of beginning teachers from students to professionals by providing supervision and support as they adjust to their new roles. It socializes beginning teachers into the teaching profession, acclimates them to the procedures and mores of the school district and their individual school, as well as aids in the development of effective instructional and classroom management skills. A beginning teacher mentoring program is a part of the overall plan of beginning teacher induction.

Organization of the Study

This research study was organized into five chapters:

- Chapter 1 introduced the reader to the research problem and importance of the research. It identified the research question, key terms, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, and provided an overview of the methodology and organization of the study.
- Chapter 2 presented a literature review of the needs of beginning teachers and beginning teacher mentoring programs. It included a summary of the challenges that beginning teachers face, the problems of beginning teacher attrition and teacher migration, the importance of quality beginning teacher

induction, a discussion of the effective components of beginning teacher mentoring programs, a discussion of mentoring and induction program evaluation, and a summary of several exemplary programs of mentoring and induction found in the United States.

- Chapter 3 described the methodology that was used in this research study, which included both quantitative and qualitative aspects using a survey questionnaire and interview protocol. Both instruments were developed by the researcher and were based on current research on teacher mentoring programs and on the guidelines for teacher mentoring programs as recommended by the Virginia Department of Education.
- Chapter 4 presented the results of the survey questionnaire and interview analysis.
- Chapter 5 presented a summary of the study, including the purpose, research question, instrumentation, and methodology. In addition, it discussed the findings as related to the current literature, presented conclusions from the study, and discussed implications for further research.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

A large body of literature on effective beginning teacher mentoring programs and the unique challenges of beginning teachers provides a basis for this study. This chapter will present a systematic review of related literature in regard to the challenges of beginning teachers, beginning teacher mentoring and induction programs, beginning teacher attrition and migration concerns, and evaluation of beginning teacher mentoring programs.

Beginning Teacher Challenges

Making the transition. The beginning years of a teacher's career are an exceptionally challenging and crucial time (Gold, 1996; Huling-Austin, 1990; Walsdorf & Lynn, 2002). Although several researchers have developed a list of the challenges that beginning teachers face, each list varies in length and is presented in a slightly different rank order. Veenman (1984), in a comprehensive review of 83 studies on the needs and challenges of beginning teachers, cited the top 10 challenges of beginning teachers as: classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies, dealing with problems of individual students, heavy teaching loads resulting in insufficient teacher preparation time, and relations with colleagues. Odell's list (1989) included ideas about instruction, personal and emotional support, resources and materials for teaching, information about school policy and procedures, and techniques for classroom discipline. Gordon and Maxey (2000) cited managing the classroom, acquiring information about the school system, obtaining instructional resources and materials, planning organizing, and managing instruction, assessing and

evaluating student progress, motivating students, using effective teaching methods, dealing with individual students' needs, communicating with colleagues, communicating with parents, adjusting to the teaching environment, and receiving emotional support. In 2003, Renard studied the major concerns of beginning teachers, and found them to be classroom management, student motivation, meeting individual students' needs, assessment and evaluation, and successfully communicating with parents.

When hired, beginning teachers are faced with the same responsibilities and duties as their seasoned colleagues. They are no longer student teachers in someone else's classroom, yet are still learning how to teach. Often, beginning teachers are considered finished projects that simply need fine-tuning, when in fact they have legitimate learning needs. Feiman-Nemser (2003) stated that three or four years are required to reach competency in the teaching profession, and several more to reach proficiency. Unfortunately, the first year of teaching historically has been, and often continues to be, considered a rite of passage into the profession (Rogers & Babinski, 2002). Halford (1998) stated that when compared with other professions such as medicine and law, which recognize the needs of their beginning professionals, the field of education has been dubbed "the profession that eats its young" (p. 33).

Renard (2003) stated that most seasoned veterans can relate some type of horror story about their first years of teaching, and view surviving these first few years as a badge of honor. As a result, some veteran teachers may not feel compelled to assist beginning teachers, and expect them to endure the same painful process that they endured in order to become properly initiated into the profession. Brock and

Grady (2001) stated that beginning teachers typically like the school environment, have been successful as students, and have entered the career of teaching because they enjoyed learning. School has been a comfortable place for them. When they enter this once familiar world in the new role as teacher, they often experience reality shock, and their bubble of idealism soon bursts. Veenman (1984) defined “reality shock” as “the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of classroom life” (p. 143). Beginning teachers walk into the classroom with enthusiasm and confidence; however, once they sit behind the other side of the desk for a few months, their perspective changes. They often regard typical first-year teacher problems as personal failures and quickly become discouraged (Brock & Grady, 2001).

The transition from being a preservice teacher in a veteran teacher’s classroom to a beginning teacher with one’s own classroom can be unsettling and overwhelming to many beginning teachers. During their preservice program, teachers-in-training typically acquired subject matter knowledge, studied learning styles, became acquainted with various methods of classroom management, and assessment, wrote lesson plans and developed bulletin board ideas. They began to acquire a repertoire of various approaches to planning, instruction, and assessment (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). While in college, most were surrounded by a community of good friends and supportive professors to whom they could turn for help and moral support. When beginning teachers start their careers they leave the familiar and comforting confines of the college campus and enter a school community where they must find their niche. Their behavior, lifestyle habits, financial decisions, and even

dress must change as they establish and become comfortable with their new identity as teacher instead of student (Brock & Grady, 2001). Gordon and Maxey (2000) referred to this condition of uncertainty that beginning teachers experience as role conflict. Most are still young adults, yet they must quickly learn to become “the teacher,” with all of the responsibilities and persona that this new role entails.

Although beginners have a certain degree of experience and knowledge regarding the art of teaching, when they are hired they are not finished products that simply need a few finishing touches. Teacher education programs provide opportunities for a broad range of field experiences, including the student teaching practicum; however, the first year of teaching is quite different from field experiences. Beginning teachers must learn to develop a professional identity and navigate a new school culture, so may feel frustrated when expectations are not made clear to them (Gordon & Maxey, 2000). Schools have sets of rules, procedures, routines and customs that cannot be learned in the initial orientation sessions at the beginning of the school year. Beginning teachers often suffer from “information overload” and may become confused or will forget important information that is discussed in beginning teacher orientation sessions. There are several unwritten rules, customs and routines of the school that can be learned only through experience and trial and error. To make matters more complicated, different groups of people such as administrators, parents, students, and other teachers have different expectations, leading to what Corcoran called “the condition of not knowing” (1981, p. 20).

Renard (2003) stated that beginning teachers are learning to become experts in their subject matter and therefore are often just one step ahead of their students. In

some instances, beginners are handed the keys to their classroom, a textbook, and a few remaining worksheets from last year, and are then expected to develop their own curriculum, sometimes for several subjects.

The legitimate learning needs that beginning teachers have should not be treated as deficiencies in their teacher preparation program, but rather as needs that can only be addressed in a real classroom situation. The realities of teaching cannot be fully grasped through preservice classes, field observations and student teaching, regardless of the excellence of the education program (Brock & Grady, 2001). Lortie (1975) stated that novice teachers have spent many years in what he refers to as an apprenticeship of observation. Watching what veteran teachers do is not the same as knowing how and why they do it. To be effective, beginning teachers need to be able to articulate the purpose behind their behaviors. They must be able to explain not only why the content they teach is important, but also why the methods they use are appropriate. They must understand the connections between what was taught yesterday, what is taught today, and what will be taught tomorrow so that they can understand how individual lessons fit into the overall curriculum picture. Beginning teachers want veteran teachers and their principals to watch them teach and provide feedback, and then help them develop instructional strategies, model expert teaching behaviors, and share their insights (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). When beginners are left to their own devices in the early years of teaching, they are unlikely to grow. Any early satisfaction with their work, which is unfortunately too often the result of trial and error, has little chance of being sustained (Danielson, 2002).

In the field of education, a gradual transition where one assumes greater job responsibilities as one learns rarely exists. Instead, beginning teachers are assigned full teaching loads from the first day of school, with all of the ensuing tasks and responsibilities that accompany these teaching loads (Johnson et al., 2004). Beginning teachers in secondary settings may be assigned a large number of preparations as well. Because of the need for a large number of coaches, advisors, and sponsors necessary for the many extracurricular activities at the secondary level, beginning teachers, who are usually young, enthusiastic, and good at relating to high school students, may get assigned extracurricular jobs in addition to their regular teaching assignments. They enthusiastically sign on, wanting to make a good impression and desiring to get to know their students better, but do not realize what a great deal of extra time and energy extracurricular activities require (Breeding & Whitworth, 1999; Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Weasmer & Woods, 2000). Weasmer & Woods (2000) cautioned administrators to guard against the temptation to attach too many duties, extracurricular activities, and coaching opportunities to the beginning teacher's contract.

Classroom management. Difficulty with classroom management is a common problem that many first-year teachers face. In a study by Brock and Grady in 2001, classroom management and discipline were identified as the major concerns that beginning teachers have, coupled with their fear of lack of administrative support when faced with discipline and classroom management issues. In urban school districts teachers also have concern for their own personal safety, as well as the safety of their students (Wilson, 1997). Often, beginning teachers do not realize the

importance of the physical arrangement and flow of the classroom itself, as well as the establishment of procedures and guidelines (Brock & Grady, 2001; Wong, 1998). These preventative measures eliminate many disruptive or off-task behaviors before they begin. Charles (1996) categorized five broad types of classroom misbehavior: physical or verbal aggression, immoral acts such as cheating, lying or stealing, defiance of authority, class disruptions, and fooling around. Brock and Grady (2001) identified most student misbehaviors as verbal interruptions, off-task behavior, and disruptive physical movements. Levine and Nolan (2000) found that a common difficulty that beginning teachers have is matching the appropriate disciplinary response with the type of misbehavior. Beginning teachers tend to dwell on, and become preoccupied with, the inappropriate behavior of a small minority of students and overlook the majority who are on task and behaving appropriately (Evertson, Emmer, Clements, & Worsham, 1994).

The teaching environment. Halford (1998) stressed the importance of class assignments and teaching schedules, noting that beginning teachers are often set up for failure when administrators assign them the most difficult students and the heaviest workloads. Several studies have shown that beginners are many times given the most difficult teaching assignments that include at-risk or unmotivated students with chronic behavior, attendance, and learning difficulties (Breeding & Whitworth, 1999; Brock & Grady, 2001; Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Halford, 1998; Johnson et al., 2004). The ability to motivate students from all backgrounds with varied abilities has consistently been one of the top 10 concerns of beginning teachers (Ganser, 1999; Veenman, 1984). When beginning teachers are inappropriately matched with students from diverse backgrounds and go into the

classroom culturally unprepared, the results can be disastrous for both the teacher and the students (Brock & Grady, 2001). In a study in 1997, Norton and Kelly identified problems with administrative routines and excess paperwork, assessment of student performance, student discipline and behavior management, excessive teaching loads and expectations, lack of support and community, and low salaries. Gordon and Maxey (2000) discussed the environmental difficulties that beginning teachers experience. These included challenging teaching assignments, excessive extracurricular duties, large class size, and difficult students. Ingersoll (2001) discussed inadequate administrative support, low salaries, student discipline problems, and limited faculty input into school decision-making.

Isolation and loneliness. Another problem that beginning teachers experience are feelings of isolation and loneliness. When beginning teachers join a close-knit staff where friendships and social groups are already formed and the shared history and norms of the school are unknown to them, it becomes a challenge to become part of the school community (Brock & Grady, 1995, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1995). If the faculty has been together for a long time, it is difficult for the newcomer to feel a part of things. Beginning teachers are initially welcomed and politely spoken to, but not necessarily included or assisted. Johnson et al. (2004) found that in the worst scenarios, veteran teachers hoarded books, materials, or lesson plans; dismissed or ridiculed novices' ideas; sabotaged any efforts to improve; and constantly complained or criticized.

The nature of teaching itself can be lonely, not only for beginning teachers, but for all teachers. Little (1990) referred to the typical school as "a series of individual classrooms connected by a common parking lot" (p. 256). Teachers are physically separated from each other for the majority of the school day, and as a result, beginning teachers in particular feel

alone. Unlike other professions where colleagues and supervisors provide daily feedback, teachers must most often rely on their students to provide them with feedback and acknowledge their small, daily successes (Brock & Grady, 2001). Feiman-Nemser (2003) found that beginning teachers may feel reluctant to share problems or ask for help, believing that no one else is experiencing difficulties; and make the assumption that good teachers figure things out on their own. Walsdorf and Lynn (2002) stated that beginning teachers want to make a good first impression, so when classroom problems do arise they are hesitant to ask their seasoned colleagues for assistance, fearing that seeking help or advice may be perceived as a sign of incompetence, which deepens their feelings of isolation and loneliness as well as creating feelings of inadequacy.

Meeting diverse needs of students. Sanders & Rivers' study in 1996 revealed that the classroom teacher has more impact than class size, ability grouping, school location, or school climate on student achievement. Beginning teachers enter the field of education and teach in a wide variety of contexts and settings: urban, rural, suburban; rich, middle class, poor; many ethnicities, cultures, and languages; supportive and non-supportive families; and students with a wide range of ability levels and learning needs (Bartell, 2005). Not only do teachers have students in their classrooms that come from more diverse backgrounds and with more varied abilities, but because of the No Child Left Behind Act, teachers are also called upon to be highly qualified, and will now be held accountable for results in their classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Since embracing the standards movement, state and national policy makers are now calling for more accountability for teachers, students, and schools (Bartell, 2005). Today's beginning teachers must be well versed

in diverse areas such as portfolio assessment, technology, cooperative learning, and a wide variety of specific instructional strategies in order to meet the needs of all of their students. These new educational conditions, goals, and reforms are compounding for beginning teachers what is already a very complex professional challenge (Inman & Marlow, 2004).

Brock and Grady (1998) suggested that beginning teachers not only need to be surrounded by a supportive network of experienced colleagues, but also need a principal upon whom they can rely and trust. Beginners look to veteran teachers for help and advice, but they also view their principal as a key source of support and guidance. Principals are recognizing the need that new teachers have for advice and help, and are making efforts to provide the necessary support. Induction programs that include beginning teacher mentoring programs are one such form of support, and have been shown to be highly effective in the induction of beginning teachers into the profession, as well as being instrumental in the retention of beginning teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Gold, 1996; Little, 1990).

Beginning Teacher Induction

Blair-Larsen (1998) stated that teacher induction is the period of transition from student to professional when first-year teachers are offered supervision and support as they adjust to their new roles. A good induction program should be reactive to beginning teachers' needs and reflective of positive educational strategies. According to Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (2000), a teacher induction program socializes beginning teachers into the teaching profession, acclimates them to the procedures and mores of the school district and their individual school, as well as aids in the development of effective instructional and

classroom management skills. Induction is a distinct phase in the professional development of a teacher. It extends beyond the first year, and occurs in three stages: survival/discovery, experimentation/consolidation, and mastery/stabilization (Mutchler, 2000). Teacher induction programs generally focus on the survival/discovery stage and provide initial support to beginning teachers by meeting their immediate needs and guiding their transition into the classroom.

Although beginning teacher induction programs vary greatly in their length, breadth, and scope, effective ones share a well-defined set of common goals and method of induction. Effective induction programs must also be oriented to meet the situational needs of beginning teachers (Brock & Grady, 2001). Several studies have shown that goals of an effective induction program can include but are not limited to the following (Brock & Grady, 2001; Gregory, 1998; Fox & Singletary, 1986; Huling-Austin, 1986):

- transitioning beginning teachers into their new environment
- improving teaching performance and skills
- promoting the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers
- helping beginning teachers develop their own self-image, positive attitude, and concern for students
- helping beginning teachers understand their responsibilities as classroom teachers
- building a foundation for continued professional growth
- retaining competent teachers
- satisfying state mandated requirements related to induction programs
- ensuring that the school system receives the benefits of a well-trained employee as quickly as possible

Brock and Grady (2001) have found that successful induction programs use a format that includes a developmental philosophy, a set of goals tailored for a particular school or district, and a structure that provides year-round support. Several studies have shown that exemplary programs share the following characteristics (Bozeman & Serpell, 1999; Brock & Grady, 2001; Mutchler, 2000; National Association of State Boards of Education, 2000; Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 2000):

- supporting beginning teachers from both traditional and alternative preparation programs
- conducting orientation sessions before the school year begins
- assigning trained mentors
- having frequent interactions with the principal
- including beginning teacher in-service courses, seminars, or workshops
- incorporating release time or reduced teaching loads for novices and mentors
- including regular sessions with other beginning teachers
- having a systematic plan for individual professional development that includes both formative and summative assessment
- having ear-marked funding
- basing them on clear standards
- structuring and defining them through the input from beginning and veteran teachers
- having a subject-specific focus
- extending them throughout the school year and beyond the first year of teaching
- providing beginning teachers with optimum working conditions, such as placement in subjects that they are qualified to teach, placement with students who are not known

to be challenging and disruptive, and opportunities to observe and be observed by veteran teachers that enable them to focus on strengthening their teaching skills.

Researchers at The Alliance for Excellent Education (2004) discussed elements of beginning teacher induction that helped to create high-functioning learning communities in schools. These essential elements included strong leadership, high-quality providers, extra support for beginning teachers with limited teacher preparation, incentives for teachers to participate in induction activities, adequate and stable funding for the program, and alignment between the program, classroom needs and professional standards. The Alliance stated that the goal of beginning teacher induction is to develop teachers into high-quality professionals who improve student learning; therefore, teacher induction should be a top priority of school administrators. The induction program should not be an “add-on” program, but must be embedded in the culture of the school. The principal is the key instructional leader who can influence all teachers to make it work. The principal also can ensure that mentor teachers and their mentees are well matched, that their schedules mesh, and that they each are given adequate release time to enable the mentoring partnership to be a success. They can monitor the mentoring partnerships to ensure that the relationships are working, that release time is being used wisely, and that true collaboration toward a common goal of improved student performance is happening. Principals who foster positive, supportive environments for beginning teachers, help them grow into high-quality, knowledgeable professionals who are more likely to stay in the profession for several years. Beginning teacher induction programs should not be “top-down” mandated programs that come from the central office and burden teachers with more tasks and paperwork. Rather, they should be

integral to the life of schools, and be carefully planned, systematically implemented, and routinely evaluated.

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (1999), as of 1990, approximately 50% of all beginning teachers in the United States were participating in a beginning teacher induction program. According to Smith and Ingersoll (2004), 10 years later this figure had increased to 80%. The majority of states mandate beginning teacher induction in some form; however, some induction programs may not be comprehensive, and may consist of as little as a one-day orientation, a casual assignment of a teacher “buddy,” periodic workshops, or instruction in generic classroom management (Gold, 1996; Wayne, Youngs, & Fleischman, 2005). Other programs do not include feedback on teaching, a formal evaluation process, or targeted training (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). Less than 1% of teachers get what the Alliance for Excellent Education (2004) refers to as a “comprehensive” induction package, which would include a reduced number of course preparations, a helpful mentor in the same field, a seminar tailored to the needs of beginning teachers, strong communication with administrators, and time for planning and collaboration with other teachers.

An introductory or orientation program at the start of the school year familiarizes beginning teachers with the culture of the workplace, as well as provides them with an understanding of basic school policies, procedures, expectations, and norms. Beginning teachers want to know what is expected of them as classroom teachers, and have an understanding as to how to meet those expectations (Huling-Austin, 1986; Schlechty, 1985). Several studies have shown that providing instruction

in classroom management during the orientation days at the beginning of the school year is quite effective (Brock & Grady, 1998; Walsdorf & Lynn, 2002; Weasmer & Woods, 2000). The few days of beginning teacher orientation at the start of the school year are important; however, beginning teachers must also have regular contact throughout the school year with other beginning teachers within their school district. These meetings should be designed to discuss relevant classroom issues, provide beginners with a variety of teaching, assessment, grading, and classroom management techniques, as well as provide moral support and socialization (Blair-Larsen, 1998; Breaux & Wong, 2002).

Other studies reveal that classroom visits throughout the school year scheduled by the principal and mentor teacher are other important components of an effective induction program. Frequent classroom visits from principals (Brock & Grady, 1998; Huling-Austin, 1992; Johnson & Kardos, 2002), using both formative and summative evaluation (Brock & Grady, 1998; Weasmer & Woods, 2000) are essential, and it is imperative that administrators talk with and visit the beginning teacher's classes, and then follow up each visit with a conference (Brown, 2002). Not all classroom visits need to be formal observations; beginning teachers appreciate the frequent interaction and support. They want to know that their principals care about them, approve of their teaching, and want to offer their support. Not only is it important that beginning teachers be observed frequently, but they must also be given opportunities to observe master veteran teachers in the classroom. Several studies reveal that purposefully scheduling time for beginning teachers to visit other classrooms and then reflect on the instructional practices they have observed is a key

component of an effective induction program (Brock & Grady, 1998; Brown, 2002; Walsdorf & Lynn, 2002; Weasmer & Woods, 2000). Beginners must also be offered continued professional development opportunities specifically designed for the beginning teacher (Hope, 1999; Walsdorf & Lynn, 2002).

Beginning Teacher Mentoring

Historical framework. Beginning teacher mentoring has become a commonplace practice in the majority of school districts across the United States, but only a few years ago it was not so. Prior to the 1960s, beginning teachers were hired with the expectation that they had learned all that was necessary to teach during their college years. Possession of the college degree validated the beginning teacher's competence to teach, as well as often guaranteeing a lifetime teaching certificate (Lancaster, 2002). The Conant Report in 1963 was one of the first pieces of literature to discuss the need for support of beginning teachers (Huffman and Leak, 1986). As society gradually grew more complex and the individual needs of students increased dramatically, teachers were expected to do more than just teach their subject matter. It was not until the 1980s, as part of a broad movement aimed at improving education, that school districts began to see the need to develop mentoring programs to acclimate beginning teachers to the increasing challenges in the classroom (Gold, 1996).

The number of state and local school districts that have implemented formal beginning teacher induction programs that include mentoring has grown significantly since the early 1980s (Sclan & Darling-Hammond, 1992). In 1980, Florida became the first state to mandate support for beginning teachers, and since that time, the movement for beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs has increased dramatically. By the late 1980s,

over 30 states had either implemented, or were planning to implement, beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs (Huling-Austin, 1990b). In 1990, approximately 50% of all beginning teachers across the United States were involved in some type of induction program or were being mentored in some capacity (Darling-Hammond et al., 1999). By 2000, this percentage had increased to 80% (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). As of 2002, 33 states required school districts to offer beginning teacher induction programs. Twenty-two of these states provide funding for these programs, but not all provide on-site mentors (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Ansell and McCabe (2003) reported that only five states as of 2003 provided funding to pay mentor teachers for their time. State legislatures are now mandating beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs that require all beginning teachers to complete prior to certification. State departments of education are developing regulations that guide the implementation of these mandated programs, and local school districts are incorporating them into their beginning teacher professional development plans.

Although states have induction programs that incorporate mentoring for beginning teachers in place, several are not fully funded for all new teachers in every district. Decisions about program structure and content are left to individual school districts and schools, which enables districts and schools to more fully accommodate the individual needs of their beginning teachers. However, allowing school districts this discretion has led to a large degree of statewide and district-wide variation in the quality of these programs (Curran, 2002).

Quality mentoring defined. Assigning a mentor is one of the most significant and meaningful methods of beginning teacher induction (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Halford, 1998; Hope, 1999; Huling-Austin, 1992; Johnson, 2001; Weiss & Weiss, 1999). Egan's research in

1985, which involved the interviewing of beginning teachers and their informal mentors, allowed him to derive a definition of mentoring:

The mentoring of teachers is an empowering process characterized by availability and approachability on the part of an experienced educator, and receptivity by the neophyte. Through this process, a beginning teacher receives technical assistance, career advice, and psychological support from an experienced person. This assistance and support is transmitted through observations, ongoing discussions, questionings, and planning together in an adult learning mode. During this process, the experienced educator acts as a role model, teacher, and counselor to the beginner. The influence of the experienced person is pervasive and enduring, while still honoring the autonomy of the neophyte teacher. (p. 197)

Mentoring arrangements in which beginning teachers are provided support and consultation from more experienced teachers have been seen as a way to reform teaching and teacher education and to retain talented new teachers (Little, 1990). Odell and Huling (2000) summarized the characteristics of quality mentoring:

- It helps novices learn to teach in accordance with professional standards for teaching and learning
- It is responsive to the evolving needs of individuals and their students
- It views becoming a good teacher as a developmental process
- It views mentoring as a professional practice that must be learned and developed over time
- It is collaboratively planned, implemented, and evaluated by key stake-holders
- It contributes to improving school and district cultures

A study by Hale (1992) revealed that beginning teachers reported that their relationship with a mentor teacher to some degree increased their teaching ability and satisfaction with their job, improved their personal and professional well-being, assisted them with understanding the philosophy and community of the school, and reduced feelings of isolation and anxiety. All beginning teachers in the study stated that having a mentor for the first year was very important.

Davis, Jr. (2001) stated that authentic mentorship must be voluntary, and consist of a mutual relationship of one person to another person that pursues community. He suggested that if both individuals are not committed to the relationship, or if it is one that is mandated by the administration, it is not a true mentorship at all, but merely a supervisory arrangement between a veteran and a novice teacher. Evertson and Smithey, in their study performed in 2000, suggested that mentors must not only provide much needed emotional support to their protégés, but must also be trained and willing to help them in a systematic manner through ongoing dialogue and reflection. They found that protégés of trained mentors showed evidence of developing and sustaining more workable classroom routines, managed instruction more smoothly, and gained student cooperation in academic tasks more effectively than beginning teachers who did not have trained mentors. Feiman-Nemser (2003) stated that mentor teachers must think of beginning teachers as learners, and themselves as their teachers, and not simply wait to offer advice only when novices ask.

Gratch (1998) reported that the sharing of teaching methods and materials was important to beginning teachers, but even more important was the mentor teachers' abilities to impart respect to their mentees, and to help them reflect critically on their own teaching. Danielson (2002) stated that when beginning teachers are taught to critically reflect on their

teaching, they will begin to grow professionally and develop a sense of personal efficacy. Reflective thinking will help beginning teachers recognize the strengths and weaknesses in their teaching, which in turn will provide knowledge that will assist them in improving their teaching processes. Excellent veteran teachers typically have the ability to consider many sources of information in order to make informed decisions.

Rowley (1999) identified six essential qualities of good mentor teachers. They are committed to their role as mentor, accepting of the beginning teacher, skilled at providing instructional support, effective in different interpersonal contexts, continuously learning, and able to communicate hope and optimism. Danielson (2002) discussed important skills that mentor teachers must possess in order to be effective in their mentoring role. Mentor teachers must know what to observe and how to provide feedback to their protégés; understand how to keep open lines of communication; know how to resolve conflicts; be able to reflect on their own teaching and communicate their teaching thought processes; provide appropriate challenges for their protégés, and foster reflective thinking.

Fibkins (2002) discussed the concept of *wisdom* in the mentoring role, and listed several characteristics of wise mentor teachers: They have experienced and thus understand the realities of teaching and daily classroom dynamics. Wise mentors have a sense of the history and community of the school and can impart this on to their protégés. Wise mentor teachers realize that teaching is hard work and that daily self-renewal is not easy, yet essential to their mental, spiritual and physical health. Wise mentors know that all teachers can get bored, frustrated, and experience burnout, and so must continually guard against these negative aspects in the classroom. Wise mentor teachers know how to help their protégés improve their teaching skills, yet also understand that bad days and frustrating

failures will occur. Wise mentors know how to listen and they know how to maintain a healthy sense of humor.

Characteristics of quality mentoring programs. A beginning teacher mentoring program is one important component of an effective induction program that involves the entire school community. A meaningful program should have elements that include the following (Johnson et al., 2004; Saphier, Freedman, & Aschheim, 2001):

- mentors are carefully selected and matched with their mentees
- mentors are given training in effective communication and peer coaching techniques
- attention is given to the concerns of beginning teachers
- special consideration is given to the beginning of the school year when novice teachers will feel initially exhausted and overwhelmed
- regular contacts and meetings between mentors and mentees are scheduled throughout the school year
- assistance in acclimating beginning teachers to the school community is provided

It is important that administrators in charge of mentoring programs consider how the beginning teacher and mentor teacher are matched. Some mentor/mentee matches work exceptionally well, whereas many others fail for various reasons such as personality conflicts, divergent teaching styles, or school structures and schedules that do not support the mentoring relationship. Ideally, mentors and mentees should be paired from the same subject area or grade level, and their classrooms should be in close proximity to each other. Studies suggest that beginning teachers are more likely to continue teaching in the schools in which they originally started teaching when they receive mentoring from teachers in their subject areas (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Johnson et al. (2004) stated that mentors and mentees

should have common release time so that meaningful conversations about teaching can occur and so that mutual classroom observations can take place; mentor teachers must be willing to take on the responsibility of the mentoring relationship; and they must be fully equipped with the necessary training.

Effective mentoring programs are well organized and well supported; however, haphazard, informal ones have been associated with high rates of attrition and low levels of teacher effectiveness (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Johnson et al. (2004) stated that it is important that beginning teacher mentoring programs not become just another add-on program, or a way for administrators to relinquish their responsibilities to beginning teachers. Mentor teachers can provide beginning teachers with valuable support that can answer their questions, share lesson plans, observe their classes, provide encouragement, and help transition them into the school community. However, simply assigning a mentor in the hope that it will decrease the likelihood that the beginning teacher will become discouraged and leave the profession does not solve the problem (North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission, 1995; Wong, 2002). McCann, Johannessen, and Ricca (2005) found that consultants who professionally train mentor teachers stated that it is better for a school to have no mentoring program at all than to have a bad mentoring program.

Evaluation of Induction and Mentoring Programs

Overview. New teacher programs of induction and mentoring must have ongoing systems of evaluation in place in order to assess the program's progress and effectiveness. Participants in the evaluation process may include the leadership of the program, which often include building administrators, the mentor teachers, or the beginning or new-to-district

teachers. Moir & Bloom (2003) suggested that the process of gathering feedback can fulfill two goals. Input from participants in the mentoring or induction program helps to ensure continuous program development, which allows program leaders to respond to the individual needs of the beginning teachers for whom the program is designed. The evaluation process also encourages program participants to become stakeholders. When mentor teachers, beginning teachers, and new-to-district teachers have a voice in shaping the system, they gain a sense of ownership, and become invested in sustaining the mentoring or induction program in the long term.

Assessment of program effectiveness may occur in several ways, including, but not limited to, experimental and quasi-experimental studies, survey research using questionnaires, interviews, or both, journaling, portfolios, case studies, and observations. Experimental and quasi-experimental studies performed on the effectiveness of teacher induction and mentoring programs using a random-assignment design are scarce. In a review of the literature on the effectiveness of new teacher induction and mentoring programs linked to teacher retention or improvement of teacher quality, Lopez, Lash, Schaffner, Shields, and Wagner (2004) reviewed 387 documents and found 3 studies incorporating experimental designs, 41 using quasi-experimental approaches, 22 qualitative studies, 23 reviews of the research on induction and mentoring, and 298 studies that were not empirical or directly related to their topic. The six studies they examined on teacher retention typically used teacher self-reports about their plans to remain in education, but not actual counts. Of the 10 studies reviewed that linked teacher induction and mentoring to teacher quality, the majority relied on classroom observations and one used student achievement as an evaluation of teacher quality.

In 2004, a large-scale U.S. Department of Education-sponsored study was begun by Mathematica Policy Research Inc., and will not be completed until 2008. The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of teacher induction and mentoring on teacher retention and quality using an experimental approach. Twenty elementary schools were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. New teachers at treatment group schools receive a comprehensive induction package as described by the Alliance for Excellent Education (2004), following either one of two exemplary models of induction: the Pathwise program developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), or California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program. Teachers at control group schools receive new teacher induction that is normally provided by that school (ETS, 2005).

Survey research. Survey research has been, and continues to be, an effective and efficient means to investigate a variety of educational problems and issues. In the educational setting, surveys are used to obtain demographic information, assess practices, procedures, or programs in a school district, or reveal attitudes, opinions, and perceptions about such practices or procedures. Survey research takes the form of questionnaires or interviews, and provides the most immediate form of program assessment. Survey questionnaires have several distinct advantages and disadvantages (Babbie, 2001; Dix et al., 1998; Gay & Airasian, 2003):

Advantages

- They can reach a wide subject group
- They take a relatively small amount of time to administer
- They can be rigorously analyzed
- They can be administered throughout the design process

- They give feedback from the point of view of the user (and if based on a trustworthy sample) the result will hold for the total population
- The measures gained are largely independent of the system, users or tasks to which it was applied

Disadvantages

- They are less flexible than interviews because questions are fixed in advance
- They are not as probing as interviews
- They reveal only the respondent's reaction as perceived by the respondent
- The development of a reliable questionnaire is expensive and time consuming
- General purpose questionnaires do not completely fit specific contexts
- Statistical data obtained from questionnaire response needs to be carefully interpreted

Several studies have evaluated various aspects of beginning teacher mentoring or induction programs through the incorporation of survey research using a questionnaire (Andrews, 2002; Cain-Caston, 1999; Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Gilbert, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Mills, Moore, & Keane, 2001; Moir & Bloom, 2003). An example of ongoing program evaluation involving the use of both survey and interview data is the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project, an exemplary program of induction for new teachers first implemented in 1988. The New Teacher Project typically conducts wide-ranging surveys of program participants at mid-year and at the end of the year, collecting data from beginning teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators. The surveys' results are then followed up with interviews of as many participants as possible (Moir & Bloom, 2003).

Survey questionnaire items take on many forms, including scaled items such as those using a Likert-scale format. Ranked items, checklists, and open-ended, free response items

are other options for survey item format (Gay & Airasian, 2003). All of these types of questionnaire formats have been used in the evaluation of mentoring and induction programs. Dillman (2000) discussed the advantages and disadvantages of different types of question formats, and stated that the close-ended scaled response type of question such as that used in this study, is most useful “when the research involves a well-defined concept that is unencumbered by thoughts of alternative or competing ideas” (pp. 43-44). He also added that scaled types of questions “request answers that survey respondents may not have ready-made, and which are therefore subject to considerable measurement error” (p. 44). In spite of this disadvantage, use of scaled questions is practical and efficient, and he stated that “when researchers want to obtain separate survey respondent evaluations of many different concepts and compare preferences across areas, there may be no alternative approach” (p. 44).

Interviews, a qualitative form of survey research, can provide in-depth data about perceptions, opinions, impressions, and attitudes not possible with questionnaires (Dix et al., 1998; Gay & Airasian, 2003). Although semi-structured interviews such as the one conducted in this study have a set protocol; the level of questioning can be varied to suit the context and interesting issues that arise can also be probed more deeply (Dix et al., 1998). Disadvantages of interviews include the introduction of possible bias due to researcher presence, high investment of time on the part of the researcher, unequal articulation of thoughts by the participants, and difficulty in encoding results (Creswell, 2003; Dix et al., 1998). Several studies of induction and mentoring programs involving interviews have been conducted (Andrews, 2002; Blair-Larsen & Bercik, 1992; Fairbanks, Freedman, & Kahn, 2000; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Gratch, 1998; Johnson & Kardos, 2002; Patterson, 2005;

Rowley, 1999), revealing in-depth and rich accounts of the experiences and perceptions of program participants.

Exemplary Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Programs

In her research in 1990, Huling-Austin found that well-designed and well-supported induction and mentoring programs enhanced the beginning teacher's effectiveness as a teacher and increased their retention rates. She suggested that beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs significantly increase the likelihood that teachers will stay in the profession. According to a NCES study performed from 1992-1997, among those beginning teachers who had been involved in an induction program, 15% left the profession within 4 years. However, for those teachers who had not been involved in a program of beginning teacher induction this figure rose to 26%.

California's BTSA program. From 1988-1992, the California Department of Education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing co-sponsored the California New Teacher Project, a pilot study aimed at examining alternative strategies for supporting and assessing beginning teachers. Of those teachers who participated in the program, after 1 year 91% remained in the profession and 96% remained in their same school district; after 2 years 87% remained in teaching and 93% stayed in their original district. The retention rate for participating minority teachers was also significantly higher than for minority teachers in the state of California overall (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing & California Department of Education, 1992).

As a result of this early pilot study, the state of California established the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA), which supports beginning teachers throughout the state. Although the program varies in design and methods from district to

district, they are all guided by state standards. The two-year program encourages local school districts, colleges, and universities to work collaboratively to provide beginning teacher induction and mentoring. It provides mentoring, coaching, summer orientation programs, training workshops, and assessment of professional growth for beginning teachers.

Beginning teachers are able to visit the classrooms of veteran teachers, and mentor teachers are provided with release time to observe their mentees. Beginning teacher retention rates from 1999-2000 showed that 96% of first-year teachers and 94% of second-year teachers have remained in education (Curran, 2002).

Connecticut's BEST program. Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) program, first developed in the 1980s, has since become an exemplary program of induction and mentoring support. Some of its successful components are to connect teacher standards to national standards and the state curriculum, provide intensive mentor support, and require each beginning teacher to complete a portfolio assessment of their first two years of teaching. Beginning teachers must successfully complete the program within three years of their first teaching job in order to move beyond an initial teaching certificate. Beginning teachers are assigned a mentor teacher the first year, and work on fundamental teaching skills such as classroom management, instruction and student assessment. Beginners are encouraged to participate in content-focused support seminars and clinics tailored to their needs. During their second year, beginning teachers focus on developing specific teaching strategies, and must prepare portfolios that document planning, teaching, and student learning during a two-week unit of instruction. Those beginning teachers who pass earn the second level of certification; those beginning teachers who do not

pass are eligible for a third year in the BEST program with another opportunity to submit a portfolio (Curran, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2003).

Colorado's PIE program. The Partners in Education (PIE) beginning teacher induction program in the state of Colorado is another example of an exemplary model of induction that provides support and professional growth needs through three approaches identified by Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1996), Huling-Austin (1992), and The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) (2003). These recommended approaches to induction include intensive mentoring, cohort group networking, and ongoing inquiry into practice. Beginning teachers in the PIE program receive classroom assistance from expert clinical professor mentors a minimum of one half day each week for their first full year. Mentor teachers are fully released from their own teaching duties to concentrate on the needs of their mentees. The goal of cohort group networking is to reduce isolation and foster collaborative growth among beginning teachers. Beginning teachers attend two monthly seminars that link them with other beginning teachers from their district and in their same grade level or subject area. During the induction year PIE teachers also enroll in three off-campus graduate courses that promote self-reflection and thoughtful inquiry about their own teaching. Kelley (2004) reported that the PIE program has shown high success rates, and after 4 years of teaching, has retained 94% of its beginning teachers.

Darling-Hammond (2003) stated that well designed and well supported induction and mentoring programs have been shown to increase retention rates for beginning teachers because they improve their attitudes, feelings of efficacy, and their instructional skills. She found that not only are beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs beneficial to beginners, but exemplary programs also provide ongoing and satisfying learning and

leadership challenges for seasoned teachers who become mentors, thus increasing overall teacher retention rates.

Virginia's Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program

Virginia's efforts to implement a beginning teacher program of induction and mentoring began in the mid-1990s. In 1996, 31 school divisions within the Commonwealth had begun induction and mentoring programs, as well as the establishment of 20 partnerships between school divisions and institutions of higher education by 1998. The following year the Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act was approved, which required a mentor for every beginning teacher. As a result, a set of guidelines was written for the development of beginning teacher mentoring programs in Virginia (Virginia Department of Education, 2000).

The key components of these guidelines include:

- The retention of quality teachers
- The improvement of beginning teachers' skills and performance
- The support of teacher morale, communications, and collegiality
- The development of a sense of professionalism and positive attitude
- The facilitation of a seamless transition into the first year of teaching
- The putting of theory into practice
- The prevention of teacher isolation
- The development of self-reflection

In 2002, the Committee to Enhance the K-12 Teaching Profession in Virginia recommended the implementation of a statewide, high-quality mentoring program for all beginning Virginia teachers. The report called for the development of standards for mentor

teacher training, guidelines for the implementation of mentoring programs, and plans for the effective monitoring and evaluation of these programs. In 2003, Virginia received over \$1 million in grant money to pilot three separate induction and mentoring programs throughout several school districts in the Commonwealth. The support of these pilot induction and mentoring programs came from the \$13.5 million Governor's Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant with funds received from the U.S. Department of Education. These pilot programs have been patterned after three research-based programs with proven records of success, including Great Beginnings, developed by the Fairfax County Public Schools system, Pathwise, developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), and The Santa Cruz New Teacher Project, developed by the University of California, Santa Cruz (Virginia Department of Education, 2003).

The Great Beginnings program is based on several research studies on best practices in teaching and teacher induction (Bullough, 1989; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Huling-Austin, 1992; Odell, 1986; Odell & Huling, 2000). It combines a year-long program of support from mentors, collegial cohort groups, veteran coaches, and professional development tailored for beginning teachers. Survey data from beginning teachers show that 90% of beginning teachers who complete this program of induction have remained in Fairfax County Public Schools (Auton, Berry, Mullen, & Cochran, 2002). Counties in Virginia that participate in pilot induction programs based on Great Beginnings include Martinsville, Montgomery, and Spotsylvania (Virginia Department of Education, 2003).

The Pathwise program, developed by ETS, also incorporates an intensive program of mentoring, monthly study groups, veteran coaching, and professional development sessions for beginning teachers and their mentors throughout the year. The cities of Hopewell,

Newport News, as well as counties that compose the Southside Consortium (Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Greensville, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, and Nottoway), and the Southwest Consortium (Bland, Bristol, Carroll, Galax, Grayson, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe) participate in the pilot program based on Pathwise (Virginia Department of Education, 2003).

The Santa Cruz New Teacher Project, a 16-district consortium led by the University of California, Santa Cruz, was one of the original beginning teacher projects begun by the California Department of Education in the late 1980s. It supports beginning teachers through mentoring programs, cohort meetings, self-assessment, and one-on-one counseling. Teachers who have participated in this program have remained in the profession at a rate of 95% after 12 years (Curran, 2002). The cities of Fredericksburg, and Richmond, as well as the counties of Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, Powhatan, Amherst, Appomattox, Rockbridge, and Nelson in the Commonwealth participate in the Santa Cruz program (Virginia Department of Education, 2003).

The Pathwise and Santa Cruz programs were selected in 2004 to be part of a 5-year national study sponsored by the U.S. Education Department's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) that will examine the effects of intensive programs of induction on the experiences and retention of beginning teachers in elementary schools. These studies will be implemented in 20 school districts across the nation that have high teacher turnover rates. Half of the schools in each district will be randomly assigned to receive the Pathwise or the Santa Cruz program and half will receive the induction support currently offered by their district (ETS, 2005).

Beginning Teacher Attrition

By completion of the first decade of the 21st century, it is expected that 2.2 million teachers will need to be hired (Banicky & Parisella, 2001; Brock & Grady, 2001; Halford, 1998; Hussar, 1999). Although there are surpluses in some areas of the country, there are shortages in others, particularly in the areas of special education, mathematics, the sciences, and bilingual education (Banicky & Parisella, 2001). Several factors contribute to the problem. Student enrollment in PK-12 is growing, due to both an increase in immigration and the emergence of a second baby boom. Retirements are increasing, with an estimated one third of the teacher force expected to retire by 2010 (Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute, 2000). Reduction in class size, which has been a recent trend, also creates a demand for more teachers. High rates of attrition among beginning teachers is also a major contributing factor to the teacher shortages which exist in many areas.

Ingersoll and Smith (2003) suggested that teacher shortages are not so much because of too few college students entering the field of education, but may be due to beginning teachers leaving the profession because of early disillusionment and dissatisfaction. They contend that the challenge of retaining highly qualified, promising new teachers does not necessarily lie in the number of beginning teachers available, but in keeping the ones that are hired. Approximately one third of beginning teachers in public schools leave the profession within the first three years, and almost half leave after five years (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Halford, 1998; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Schools of education are producing highly qualified teachers; however, they are staying in the profession for a short time. Merrow (1999) stated, “The teaching pool keeps losing water because no one is paying attention to the leak. That is, we’re misdiagnosing the problem as ‘recruitment’ when it’s

really retention” (p. 64). According to a NCES study (2000) which tracked 1992-1993 college graduates’ teaching careers through 1997, 25% of teachers left the profession within their first 5 years in order to pursue another profession; 24% left because of dissatisfaction with teaching; 10% left due to dissatisfaction with salaries and benefits; and 8% left because of personal or family reasons. Ingersoll (2001) stated that analysis of national data suggest that inadequate administrative support, low salaries, student discipline problems, and limited input into decision-making contribute to higher attrition rates as well. Feiman-Nemser (2003) reported that three or four years are required to reach competency in the teaching profession, and several more to reach proficiency. When beginning teachers leave the profession before they have gained this experience, any investment in their professional development has been lost. A strong core of experienced teachers who can positively impact student achievement does not have the chance to develop. High turnover rates also create an atmosphere of disjointedness, a lack of community, and reduced collaboration among the faculty.

Darling-Hammond (2003) reported that inadequate teacher preparation is a factor that contributes to beginning teacher attrition, and analyzed several studies which suggested that those teachers who were inadequately prepared to teach were more likely to leave the profession, and the more training prospective teachers received, the more likely they are to stay. Shields et al. (2003) stated that ideally, all teachers enter the classroom fully trained and prepared to teach; however, many begin their teaching careers with widely different levels of preparation and experience, and that this is particularly true in schools that serve the neediest students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, minorities, or have lower performances. A NCES study in 1997 found that 29% of beginning teachers who had not experienced student teaching left the profession within the first 5 years compared with 15%

that left who had completed student teaching. The same study found that 49% of uncertified entrants left within 5 years, compared with 14% of certified entrants.

Other research suggests that the more training prospective teachers receive in their teacher preparation program, the more likely they are to stay in the profession. Teachers who graduate from a 4-year teacher preparation program may not feel as prepared as they would like to be (Andrew & Schwab, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 2000). A national survey administered by Public Agenda in 2000 indicated that of the public school teachers with less than 5 years' teaching experience surveyed, 62% felt that their teacher preparation programs did a "fair" or "poor" job of preparing them for the pressures of the teaching profession and 56% felt that their programs incorporated too much theory and not enough real-world experience.

A longitudinal study by Andrew and Schwab (1995) of 11 teacher preparation programs found that those prospective teachers graduating from 5-year teacher preparation programs enter and stay in teaching at higher rates than do 4-year teacher education graduates from the same institutions. For those prospective teachers who graduated from 4-year programs 70% entered the teaching profession and after 3 years 53% remained, while for those prospective teachers in 5-year programs 90% entered the profession and 84% were still teaching after 3 years. In this same study, 80% of prospective teachers who entered teaching through an alternative certification program entered teaching but only 34% remained after 3 years.

Five-year programs provide a major in a disciplinary field, as well as intensive pedagogical training and long-term student teaching. Darling-Hammond (2003) found that graduates of extended 5-year programs reported higher levels of satisfaction with their

preparation and received higher ratings from principals and colleagues. When all costs are considered, including those incurred by the states, universities, and school districts, the actual cost of preparing a prospective teacher in a 5-year program is less than the cost of preparing one via an alternative certification short-term program. The estimated total costs for each third-year teacher from the longitudinal study cited previously were \$45,900 for those teachers prepared through a short-term alternative certification route, \$43,800 for those from a 4-year program, and \$36,500 for those from a 5-year program (Andrew & Schwab, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Schools can significantly enhance the benefits of strong initial teacher preparation with solid induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers. Mentoring in the early years of teaching is an investment that pays high long-term dividends for school districts. Curran (2002) suggested that it is more cost-effective to provide beginning teacher induction programs that reduce teacher attrition than to continue funding recruitment and hiring initiatives to replace large numbers of teachers leaving the profession. For example, the California New Teacher Project pilot study of 1992 showed that after 1 year, the state saved \$0.31 for each dollar spent, and after 2 years, the savings amounted to \$0.68 per dollar spent, due to the lowered costs of recruitment and hiring and increases in retention rates. As participating teachers continue to remain in education, the state would eventually realize additional savings in future years.

Educators, legislators, and policy makers must begin to realize the importance of focusing attention on the retention of highly qualified and talented beginning teachers. Providing the necessary financial resources and incentives for induction support and ongoing teacher development are imperative if this goal is to be reached. Historically, during periods

of school district budget reductions, NCTAF (1996) reported that beginning teacher induction programs are most likely to be eliminated. When the true costs of replacing teachers such as recruiting expenses and administrators' time commitments for hiring are considered, beginning teacher induction programs are well worth the investment. Induction programs vary widely in scope; however, the average cost for the induction of one teacher in 1990 was \$5,000 (Curran, 2002). In 2003, the state of Texas estimated that its annual statewide turnover costs, which reflect both teacher attrition and migration, were approximately \$329 million (NCTAF, 2003). High levels of teacher attrition are not only expensive for school districts, but they also disrupt school programs and goals, which ultimately affect student achievement (Ingersoll, 2000).

Teacher Migration

One factor that contributes to overall teacher turnover is what Ingersoll (2000) referred to as migration, or the movement of teachers from school to school and district to district. He suggested that this phenomenon accounts for half of the teacher turnover that schools and districts experience; however, for those at the school site, attrition and migration both result in the same effects. Losing a teacher, whether through attrition or migration, means that administrators and teachers must spend precious funds, time, and energy finding a replacement and inducting that teacher into the school's community. School districts in high-poverty communities with less than ideal working conditions are particularly vulnerable to this "revolving-door" effect, and must bear more than their share of the teacher shortage burden (Moore & Birkeland, 2003; Olson, 2000).

NCTAF (2003) estimated that the cost of recruiting, hiring, and training a new teacher is approximately 30% of the teacher's salary, and is a cost that is not recoverable.

The cost of high rates of teacher attrition and migration for school districts across the United States has been conservatively estimated to be \$2.6 billion annually. Many analysts consider this financial burden to actually be much larger, particularly when losses in teacher quality and student achievement are considered (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004).

In her study in 2003, Darling-Hammond found 4 major factors that influence whether teachers migrate or leave the profession entirely: salary, working conditions, preparation, and mentoring in the early years of teaching. Nationwide, the salary gap between teachers and their non-teaching peers is significant, with teacher salaries being approximately 20% lower than other professions with comparable training. In high-poverty schools the gap is wider: about one third less than teacher salaries in low-poverty schools. These districts also typically have fewer resources and poorer working conditions (NCES, 1997). The educational salary structure was originally established in the 1920s with the intent of providing fair and equal treatment for all teachers. It bases pay increases on years of experience and number of education credits and degrees, which effectually disregards excellence in teaching, and does not link salary with performance. Over the years, as many more job opportunities have become available to women in particular, talented and motivated college graduates, who before had a very narrow range of careers available to them, began looking elsewhere. Since the field of education is presently competing with other careers for bright, dedicated graduates, school districts have a responsibility to do the best job possible of not only recruiting strong candidates, but also supporting them as they become highly qualified teachers (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001). Graduates who do pursue education as a career, unlike most other careers, enter a field where compensation is not based on performance; therefore offering little extrinsic motivation for high achievement.

Only in recent years has a career ladder, or system of tenure been initiated in some school districts. Currently, one of the only ways that teachers can move up in many districts is by moving out of the classroom into educational administration (The Teaching Commission, 2004).

Although inadequate salary is a contributing factor to teacher attrition and migration, several studies have shown that poor working conditions is another significant factor (Danielson, 2002; Ingersoll, 2001; Inman & Marlow, 2004). Feiman-Nemser (2003) found that whether beginning or migrating teachers experience their introduction to teaching (or to their new district) as a time of constructive learning or as a period of coping and survival, depends mainly on the working conditions and teaching community they encounter. Lack of administrative support, not being part of the decision making process, as well as inadequate resources all contribute to teachers' decisions about remaining in the profession or relocating to another district (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001). School districts vary greatly in the amount of support that beginning teachers receive based on the funds available. Wealthier school districts have more resources available, smaller class sizes, and smaller pupil loads per teacher (NCES, 1997).

When migrating and beginning teachers do not receive encouragement in their autonomy or leadership, they become discouraged as well (Ingersoll, 2001b; Johnson, 1990). Moore and Birkeland (2003), in their study on teacher migration and attrition, found that teachers migrated to schools that supported good teaching. These schools of choice provided them with balanced and appropriate assignments, good curricula with sufficient resources, colleagues who generously shared their ideas and encouragement, school wide practices that

kept students focused on learning, and fair-minded principals who were actively engaged in the life of the school.

Teacher Attrition and Migration in Virginia

The Commonwealth of Virginia ranked 18th among the states in enrollment growth in 2000. As a result, approximately 800 new teaching positions were added over a 5-year period just to accommodate this growth. As the elementary population of students advances through the grades, it causes a shift in the need for grade level and subject matter certification. The demand for elementary teachers will level off, while the need for subject matter specialists at the secondary level will increase due to this shift in demographics. Coupled with the enrollment growth in 2000 was a decline in the number of prospective graduates completing teacher training programs, with approximately 750 fewer than 4 years prior to that time. Although alternative routes to teacher licensure are beginning to provide new sources for teachers, the number of prospective teachers entering teacher preparation programs still continues to be lower (Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute, 2000).

In 2000, the Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) reported that in Virginia, 42% of the graduates of teacher education programs leave the Commonwealth to teach in other states, while 40% who do begin their teaching career in Virginia leave within their first 3 years. In addition, as of 2000, approximately 33% of Virginia teachers were 50 or older, thus eligible for retirement. In 1999, Virginia implemented an early-retirement package that offered those teachers and administrators who were age 50 or older with 30 years of service early retirement. As of 2000, approximately 25% of Virginia's teachers had 21 or more years of experience, thus it is estimated that approximately 20,000 teachers will retire by 2010. According to Atkinson (2000), Virginia school officials anticipate a severe

shortage in the areas of special education, science (particularly physics and earth science), and mathematics. These shortages mirror national trends. He suggested that the retention of Virginia's teachers may perhaps be the best use of state and local resources in the Commonwealth, and discussed how experienced teachers need to be supported in their profession.

In a major report in 2000 on the quality of education across the nation, *Education Week* rated the Commonwealth of Virginia with a grade of C+ in the area of improving teacher quality. One factor that contributed to this rating was an identified lack of state support and encouragement of time set aside for professional development for Virginia's teachers. Atkinson (2000) reported that implementation and thoroughness of implementation of support programs for beginning teachers is not consistent throughout the Commonwealth. School districts with a broader and wealthier tax base have the best programs and thus attract the best teachers – often from other districts within the Commonwealth. Virginia school divisions have increased their recruiting efforts, offering signing bonuses at job fairs and hiring student teachers into the classroom in on-the-job training while employed. Sharp contrasts exist between school divisions' abilities to attract highly qualified applicants.

Salary is another important component in not only the attraction of, but in the retention of qualified teachers. In 2000, Virginia's average per capita income was \$1,600 above the national level, yet the average teacher salary was \$3,088 below the national average for teachers. In the 2001-2002 school year, 79% of Virginia's school divisions had salaries below \$35,000 for teachers with 10 years of experience (Virginia Department of Education, 2002).

In the 1999-2000 school year, the Virginia Department of Education began a process of biennial data collection and analysis to examine information related to teacher training, licensure, hiring and retention. Data on the specific numbers of teachers in training and their areas of specialization, numbers and types of positions per school district, numbers and estimated timelines for pending retirements, and overall trends among staff turnovers per district was collected and analyzed in this study. In 2002, the committee made several recommendations based on their findings (Virginia Department of Education, 2002):

- Design, implement, and evaluate a high-quality mentoring program that includes the development of standards for training mentor teachers, guidelines for implementing mentoring programs, and plans for effective evaluation and monitoring of programs
- Provide focused professional development that will require an individualized growth plan for teachers and school leaders based on proven professional development practices and identified student needs
- Ensure that teachers' salaries, benefits, and incentives are competitive and are sufficient to retain quality personnel
- Establish a multi-tiered licensure system that reflects stages in the professional development of teachers and promotes their continuing growth and career options as educators
- Develop and implement a comprehensive approach to ensure that all schools have a positive work environment and are led by effective school principals

Summary

Although beginning teachers have a certain degree of experience and knowledge regarding the art of teaching, when they are hired they are not finished products that need a few finishing touches. Feiman-Nemser (2003) stated that three or four years are required to reach competency in the teaching profession, and several more to reach proficiency. Beginning teachers are not simply vessels designed to receive content and pedagogical knowledge, but must be supported in generating their own knowledge about the teaching and learning process. Researchers list several challenges that beginning teachers face when transitioning into the field of education, with the top need most often listed as the development of classroom management strategies. Other challenges mentioned include obtaining instructional resources and materials, planning, organizing instruction, assessing and evaluating student progress, motivating students, using effective teaching methods, meeting the diverse needs of individual students, communicating with parents and with colleagues, and receiving personal and emotional support (Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Odell, 1986; Renard, 2003; Veenman, 1984).

High rates of attrition among beginning teachers is a significant contributing factor to the teacher shortages which exist in many areas of the United States. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) suggested that teacher shortages are not so much because of too few college students entering the field of education, but may be due instead to beginning teachers leaving the profession because of early disillusionment and dissatisfaction. They contend that the challenge of retaining highly qualified, promising new teachers does not necessarily lie in the number of beginning teachers available, but in keeping the ones that are hired. Approximately one third of beginning teachers in public schools leave the profession within

the first three years, and almost half leave after five years (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Halford, 1998; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). When beginning teachers leave the profession before they have gained the experience they need to develop into teachers of excellence, any investment in their professional development has been lost. A strong core of experienced teachers who can positively impact student achievement does not have the chance to develop. High turnover rates also create an atmosphere of disjointedness, a lack of community, and reduced collaboration among the faculty (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

School districts can significantly enhance the quality of the beginning teacher's first year and decrease the incidence of attrition with solid induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers. Mentoring in the early years of teaching is an investment that pays high long-term dividends for school districts. Curran (2002) suggested that it is more cost-effective to provide beginning teacher induction programs that reduce teacher attrition than to continue funding recruitment and hiring initiatives to replace large numbers of teachers leaving the profession. Research supports that well-designed and well-supported induction and mentoring programs increase retention rates for beginning teachers because they improve their attitudes, their feelings of efficacy, and their instructional skills, as well as supporting beginning teachers in their quest for career-long learning (Hessinger, 1998). Assigning a mentor is perhaps one of the most significant and meaningful methods of beginning teacher induction (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Halford, 1998; Hope, 1999; Huling-Austin, 1992; Johnson, 2001; Weiss & Weiss, 1999). Beginning teacher mentoring programs are important components of effective induction programs that involve the entire school community. Not only are beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs beneficial to beginning teachers, but they also provide ongoing and satisfying learning and leadership challenges for

seasoned teachers who become mentors, thus increasing overall teacher retention rates (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

Some of the exemplary beginning teacher induction programs cited in the literature include California's BTSA program, Colorado's PIE program, Connecticut's BEST program, the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project developed by the University of California, Fairfax County, Virginia's Great Beginnings program, and the Pathwise program, developed by ETS (Curran, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Huling-Austin, 1992; NCTAF, 2003; Virginia Department of Education, 2003).

The number of state and local school districts that have implemented formal beginning teacher induction programs that include mentoring has grown significantly since the early 1980s (Sclan & Darling-Hammond, 1992). As of 2002, 33 states required school districts to offer beginning teacher induction programs. Twenty-two of these states provide funding for these programs, but not all provide on-site mentors (Darling-Hammond, 2003). These programs vary widely in scope, with less than 1% of teachers getting what the Alliance for Excellent Education (2004) refers to as a "comprehensive" induction package. A comprehensive induction package would include a reduced number of course preparations, a helpful mentor in the same field, a seminar tailored to the needs of beginning teachers, strong communication with administrators, and time for planning and collaboration with other teachers. State legislatures are now mandating beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs that require all beginning teachers to complete prior to certification. State departments of education are developing regulations that guide the implementation of these mandated induction and mentoring programs, and local school districts are incorporating them into their beginning teacher professional development plans.

Although states have induction programs that incorporate mentoring for beginning teachers in place, several are not fully funded for all new teachers in every district. Decisions about program structure and content are left to individual school districts and schools, which enables districts and schools to more fully accommodate the individual needs of their beginning teachers. However, allowing school districts this discretion has led to a large degree of statewide and district-wide variation in the quality of these programs (Curran, 2002). Ongoing documentation and evaluation of beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs can serve to improve and revitalize mentoring and induction efforts so that beginning teachers are better supported, thus allowing them to remain in the profession and develop into seasoned teachers of excellence.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Mentoring arrangements in which beginning teachers are provided support and consultation from more experienced teachers have been seen as a way to reform teaching and teacher education and to retain talented new teachers (Little, 1990). The purpose of this descriptive study was to examine the perceived effectiveness of a beginning teacher mentoring program located in a public school district in Central Virginia. This mentoring program had not previously been formally evaluated since its inception in 2000. By limiting the study to one school district in Virginia, the researcher did not generalize findings to all teachers and administrators in the Commonwealth, but offered preliminary observations and insights into the perceived effectiveness of beginning teaching mentoring programs throughout Virginia and the nation.

All teachers and administrators retained by the district for the 2004-2005 school year and who had been involved in the mentoring program during any of the program's 5-year history were invited to be surveyed. Teachers and administrators who were no longer retained by the school district were not surveyed, as contact data was unavailable. Participants represented elementary, middle, and high school levels, and were beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators. Teacher participants represented both initially licensed and lateral entry teachers.

The research question, research procedure including the site of study, sampling, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and summary are presented in this chapter.

Research Question

What is the perceived effectiveness of a beginning teacher mentoring program in the support of beginning and new-to-district teachers in a public school district in Central Virginia as measured by the input of beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators involved in the program?

Procedure

Site of study. The research took place in a public school district of approximately 3,000 students located in a small city (population 20,000) in Central Virginia. The largely industrial city has a median household income of \$32,686, with 11.0% of families below the poverty line (Regional Database, 2000). As of the 2000 census, 85% of the city's population was White, 9.8% Black, 3.2% Hispanic, and 2% other (U.S. Government Census Bureau, 2000). The school district is composed of one high school, one middle school, and four elementary schools. Out of the approximately 3,000 students in the district, 42% qualify for the free and reduced lunch program (School Year Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program Eligibility Report, 2003-2004).

Sample. The public school district in Central Virginia is composed of 3,000 students with 250 teachers, housed in 1 high school, 1 middle school, and 4 elementary schools. The school district was selected because the beginning teacher mentoring program is somewhat new (five years), is still in the process of development, and has not been formally evaluated by its beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers or administrators prior to this study.

The beginning teacher mentoring program in the chosen district was first implemented during the 2000-2001 school year, during the time when the state guidelines were undergoing development. The goals of the program are to provide a comfortable and nurturing environment that encourages and facilitates the personal and professional growth of beginning (0-2 years teaching experience) and new-to-district teachers (3+ years teaching experience). By providing this climate of caring, the program hopes to improve the effectiveness of the beginning and new-to-district teacher, assuring quality for students, as well as increasing the retention rate of those teachers with professional promise. Both beginning and new-to-district teachers are assigned mentors and are required to participate in all mentoring and induction activities for their first year in the district. In addition, the middle school also has its own unique teacher mentoring program called the Thrive Program, which is specifically designed to meet the needs of the beginning middle school teacher. Beginning and new-to-district middle school teachers participate in this program as well as in the district mentoring program. All mentor teachers are selected by building administrators based on grade level or subject area assignments, an expressed commitment to provide personal time and attention to the beginning or new-to-district teacher, and evidence of professional dedication and competence. State funds received for the mentoring program are used to provide mentor teachers with a modest yearly stipend. Mentor teachers do not undergo any type of formal training.

The program is designed to acquaint newly hired teachers with the people, policies, and resources of the district in several ways, including a three-day orientation prior to the start of the school year, monthly professional development

seminars held throughout the first year of district employment, and the assignment of a mentor teacher to lend ongoing assistance at the building level. During the three days of orientation, new-to-district and beginning teachers are welcomed with a breakfast and introductions to central office and building administrators, and are given a tour of the city and of their individual school. Throughout the course of the orientation, beginning and new-to-district teachers receive information about district policies and procedures, curricula, special education procedures and programs, proactive classroom management strategies, and are introduced to their mentors. Monthly seminar topics include a wide range of subjects relevant to beginning teachers, such as classroom management strategies, parent/teacher conferences, and student assessment. Both beginning and new-to-district teachers are assigned mentors and are required to participate in all mentoring and induction activities for their first year in the district.

Since the program's inception in the 2000-2001 school year, a total of 169 beginning and new-to-district teachers have been mentored by 100 mentor teachers. In addition, 12 building administrators and 4 central office personnel have been involved in the program since that time, and were retained by the chosen district for the 2004-2005 school year. Central office personnel were not surveyed. Of the 269 teachers who had been involved in the program over the past 5 years, 206 were retained by the chosen district for the 2004-2005 school year, and were invited to participate in the survey. Contact data for the 63 teachers who were no longer retained by the chosen school district was not available; therefore, these teachers did not participate in the study.

Instrumentation. A total of 206 teachers, including beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, and mentor teachers, and 12 administrators who had been involved at any time during the mentoring program's 5-year history and still retained by the school district for the 2004-2005 school year were invited to participate in the survey, using both a questionnaire and interview protocol developed by the researcher. Of the 206 teachers and administrators who were invited to participate, 87 returned the survey questionnaire for a response rate of 40%. Of the 87 questionnaire respondents, 17 respondents were interviewed by the researcher.

Survey questionnaires are typically used in research studies to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences can be drawn about information obtained from the population. Social scientists, educators, policy analysts, and others commonly conduct surveys to learn about beliefs, attitudes, reported behaviors, or experiences prevalent in a population. In the educational setting, surveys are used to obtain demographic information, assess practices, procedures, or programs in a school district, or reveal attitudes, opinions, and perceptions about such practices or procedures. Data is obtained from only a small fraction of the total population in a relatively short amount of time; therefore, survey questionnaires are a wise investment of both time and resources. Additionally, survey questionnaires can be rigorously analyzed (Babbie, 2001; Carey, Morgan, & Oxtoby, 1996; Dillman, 2000; Dix et al., 1998; Gay & Airasian, 2003).

The interview process provided a deeper understanding of the perceptions of 17 of the survey respondents on the effectiveness of the teacher mentoring program. The interview protocol was based on the survey questionnaire, with semi-structured

and open-ended questions similar to the survey questions, but designed to allow interview participants to elaborate more fully on their thoughts and observations of the mentoring program's effectiveness. According to Gay and Airasian (2003), "interviews can produce in-depth data not possible with a questionnaire, and are most appropriate for asking questions that cannot effectively be structured into a multiple-choice format, such as those that require lengthy responses" (pp. 290-291). They further emphasized that "the interviewer can often obtain data that respondents would not give on a questionnaire, which may result in more accurate and honest responses since the interview can explain and clarify both the purpose of the research and individual questions" (p. 291).

After reviewing the literature on beginning teacher mentoring programs, the researcher determined that the evaluation of the chosen district's mentoring program should be performed based on current research findings on beginning teacher mentoring programs and on the guidelines for beginning teacher mentoring programs as suggested by the Virginia Department of Education. After contacting a representative from the Division of Teacher Education and Licensure, the researcher learned that a standard assessment survey instrument for the evaluation of mentoring or induction programs in Virginia had not yet been developed by the Commonwealth. According to the Guidelines for Teacher Mentoring Programs, developed by the Division of Teacher Education and Licensure in 2000, evaluation of mentoring programs in Virginia should be comprehensive and ongoing, and may consist of surveys, portfolios, reflective journals, observations, interviews, focus groups, student performance, or mentor documentation. In addition, the guidelines state that

evaluation of the mentoring program should focus on the program's effectiveness, and target the following goals: retaining quality teachers, improving teacher performance, supporting teacher morale, communication and collegiality, and facilitating a seamless transition in the first year of teaching (Virginia Department of Education, 2000). With these criteria in mind, the researcher initiated the process of developing a survey instrument and interview protocol based on the stated criteria from the Virginia guidelines.

The survey questionnaire was developed by the researcher in three separate versions; one version for beginning and new-to-district teachers, one for mentor teachers, and one version for administrators. Each version used the same questions; however slightly different wording was used, based on the role of the respondent. The questionnaire was addressed to teachers and administrators who had been involved in the teacher mentoring program in the chosen district at any point during the program's five-year history. It focused on their perceptions of the effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program in regard to the support that beginning and new-to-district teachers received during their first year in the district. The questionnaire also asked general demographic data about each participant, including a description of gender, age, level taught, type of teacher preparation, teaching experience, and years of participation in the mentoring program. The role in the mentoring program that each respondent served was determined by the version of the survey questionnaire that each respondent used. The demographic items for the administrators' version of the questionnaire did not include items related to teacher

preparation or teaching experience. The beginning teacher and new-to-district version of the survey questionnaire is presented in Table 1.

The interview protocol addressed the same topics as the questionnaire, but questions were semi-structured and open-ended, which allowed respondents to respond in greater detail and provide an in-depth description of their perceptions of the mentoring program. Demographic data provided by interview respondents included name, school, teaching level, years of teaching experience, and role in the mentoring program (i.e. beginning teacher, new-to-district teacher, mentor teacher, or administrator).

Content validity for the survey was addressed through means of a table of content representativeness developed from the review of literature to substantiate each survey questionnaire and interview item (Appendix K). Content validity, or “the degree to which an instrument measures an intended content area” must have both item validity and sampling validity. Item validity is concerned with whether the items are relevant to the measurement of the intended content area, and sampling validity measures how well the questions sample the total content area being tested (Airasian, 2003, p.136). Development of the table of content representativeness assured a reasonable degree of content validity.

Reasonable assurance of construct validity was addressed with the administration of a pilot study of the survey questionnaire on April 12, 2005, with 20 subjects similar to the study’s population (beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators) from another similar school district in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The researcher asked questions

Table 1

Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program Survey

Beginning Teachers (0-2 Years of Teaching Experience) or New Teachers to the District

Please reflect on the experience you had *when you participated* in the beginning teacher mentoring program in this school district as either a beginning teacher to the teaching profession or a new teacher to the district. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the mentoring program? (Please circle your answer).

1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = undecided
4 = agree
5 = strongly agree

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The beginning teacher mentoring program was a key factor in helping me adjust to the teaching profession (if a beginning teacher), or to this school district (if new to the district). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. My mentor teacher gave me the amount of help I needed with my teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. The mentoring program helped reduce my feelings of isolation as a new or beginning teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The mentoring program helped me develop a positive attitude about teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The mentoring program helped me develop a sense of professionalism about teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. The mentoring program provided opportunities throughout the school year to discuss my classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers in the district. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. My mentor teacher encouraged me to self-reflect on my teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I received feedback about my teaching from my mentor teacher on a regular basis. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. The mentoring program afforded me opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I had clear communication with my mentor teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. The mentoring program did <i>not</i> play a significant role in helping me adjust to my first year as a teacher (or in this district). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I often needed more assistance with my teaching than what my mentor teacher provided. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. The mentoring program did <i>not</i> help me feel less isolated or alone during my first year as a teacher (or in this district). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. The mentoring program did <i>not</i> help me develop a positive attitude about teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. The mentoring program did <i>not</i> help instill in me a sense of professionalism about teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please go to next page

Table 1 continued

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. The mentoring program did <i>not</i> schedule district-wide meetings for new and beginning teachers throughout the school year to get together and discuss their teaching concerns. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. The importance of self-reflection on my teaching was <i>not</i> stressed by my mentor teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. My mentor teacher provided feedback about my teaching only when I asked. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Classroom management strategies were <i>not</i> addressed by the mentoring program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. My mentor teacher and I had difficulty communicating clearly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

21. Please indicate your gender:

- male
 female

22. Please indicate your age *during your most recent participation* in the mentoring program.

- 21-30 years
 31-40 years
 41-50 years
 51-60 years
 61-70 years

23. Please indicate the level you taught *during your most recent participation* in the mentoring program:

- Elementary
 Middle School
 High School

24. Please indicate your type of teacher preparation:

- Teacher Preparation program, 4 year Plus Masters Degree
 Teacher Preparation program, 5 year
 Lateral Entry, alternate program Plus Masters Degree
 Other Please Explain: _____

25. Please indicate your role *during your most recent participation* in the mentoring program:

- Beginning Teacher (0-2 years teaching experience)
 New Teacher to District Number of years of teaching experience

26. Including this year, how many years have you participated in the mentoring program?

- 1 year
 2 years
 3 years
 4 years
 5 years

Thank you for your participation!

Please complete, seal, and return to your principal by Friday, April 29, 2005.

dealing with ambiguous or confusing wording, completion time, clarity of directions, font size, and suggestions for revision.

Once feedback was received from the pilot study, modifications were made in four areas. The first change involved vocabulary choice, where the researcher decided to replace the word *mentee* with the phrase *teacher you mentored*. Rationale for this decision was based on Dillman's (2000) recommendation that vocabulary choice in survey questionnaires should be words that are likely to be understood by the majority of respondents. The researcher felt that the word *mentee*, although commonly used in educational research, was possibly too specialized.

The second change involved the ordering of the 5 scale choices for items 1-20. The order of scale choices for the pilot survey had been 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree, and 5 = undecided. In an experimental study performed by Willits and Janota (1996), the ordering of scaled responses was evaluated with emphasis on where the undecided response choice should be positioned. They found that when the undecided choice was placed in the middle of the scale (i.e. position 3); respondents were consistently more likely to choose that category (for 13 items). When the undecided choice was placed in the last position (i.e. position 5), respondents were more likely to select one of the directional opinion categories (i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree). Based on this research, the researcher decided to arrange the scale choices with the undecided choice at the end. After the pilot study was performed, and after further research on scale choice ordering (Babbie, 2001; Dillman, 2000), the researcher decided to revert to the typical scale choice order, where the undecided choice is found in the middle of

the choices. Rationale for this decision was based on the desire to limit bias and maintain a reasonable degree of reliability and validity in the instrument. The researcher did not want to introduce an experimental aspect into the study that the study was not designed to address.

The third change involved the ordering of questionnaire items 1-20. The questionnaire was designed to have an equal number of positively and negatively worded items in order to reduce the occurrence of response set among respondents. As described by Dillman (2000), response set is a phenomenon that occurs among respondents when they may mindlessly begin checking items on a survey questionnaire without carefully reading the question. Various techniques are used among writers of questionnaires to guard against the occurrence of response set, including the use of different visual cues and the careful wording of questions. After analyzing the input of the pilot study survey respondents, the researcher determined that the ordering of the questionnaire items had produced a distraction to the respondents in that an obvious pattern of positive and negative items was perceived. Dillman (2000) discussed this patterning problem, and stated, “this practice [of a patterned response layout] appears to lead to respondents having to concentrate more on how to respond correctly than on the substance of each question” (p. 129). The original order of the questionnaire items had a positive, negative, positive pattern. As a result of the pilot study input, items 1-10 were reordered as the positively worded items, and items 11-20 were reordered as the negatively worded items that corresponded to items 1-10.

The fourth change involved the addition of one demographic question which the researcher felt would be useful involving the type of teacher preparation that each teacher respondent had experienced.

Reliability, or “the degree to which an instrument consistently measures whatever it measures,” was tested using Cronbach’s alpha reliability analysis in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This analysis checks for “the internal consistency of instruments that are scored with more than 2 choices,” such as the 5 scaled responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree used in the survey questionnaire (Gay & Airasian, 2003, p. 155). One item, item 10, indicated a poor reliability coefficient of less than 0.20, which prompted the researcher to change the word mentee to the phrase teacher you mentored. The overall alpha reliability coefficient for the 20 items was determined to be 0.92.

Data collection. Initial contact with the Assistant Superintendent of the school district was made on October 25, 2004, and written permission to proceed with the research study was granted on April 4, 2005 (Appendix C). A list of all teachers and administrators involved in the mentoring program at any time during its 5-year history and retained by the district for the 2004-2005 school year was created by central office personnel. A meeting was held on April 19, 2005 at the central office, conducted by the assistant superintendent, and attended by the researcher and administrators representing each of the 6 schools in the district. Administrators were given a copy of their individual school list containing the names of all teachers who had been involved in the mentoring program at any time during its five-year history, and still retained by the school district. Administrators also received survey packets

for each of the other administrators in their building and for eligible teachers in their school, which included a cover letter addressed to each administrator (Appendix D) explaining the study and survey distribution procedure.

Administrators who attended the meeting retained one packet for their own use, and then distributed the survey packets to all teachers and other administrators involved in the mentoring program the following day. Each survey packet contained a cover letter addressed to survey participants briefly explaining the research project (Appendix E), the survey questionnaire (Table 1 and Appendix A), a survey return envelope, and a postage paid postcard inviting the respondents to participate in an interview with the researcher, as well as enter a random drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to a local restaurant (Appendix B). The drawing was meant as an incentive to return the survey questionnaire and a way to express thanks for participation. Entering the drawing did not in any way obligate the participant to agree to an interview.

Teachers returned the survey questionnaires to their administrators in the sealed survey return envelope, who in turn submitted all sealed questionnaires to the central administration office. The postcards, which had participants' contact information, were mailed separately by each participant directly to the researcher, and could in no way be linked to the completed survey questionnaire in order to maintain anonymity.

A follow-up reminder letter (Appendix G) was delivered by the researcher to the administrators two weeks later, reminding them and the teachers in their school to complete the survey questionnaire (Appendix H). The researcher then collected all

returned questionnaires from the central office after another two-week period had passed. A final reminder letter was e-mailed to all participating teachers and administrators through the district's e-mail system at that point, and then the researcher collected all remaining survey questionnaires from the central administration office at the end of the school year in June, 2005. All returned questionnaires were numbered for the purpose of counting and tracking.

The researcher conducted 17 separate confidential, audio taped interviews with all survey participants who returned the postcard volunteering to be interviewed. Interviews were conducted by the researcher and took place individually in each participant's classroom or office from May 5, 2005 through May 16, 2005.

Written permission to be audio taped was granted from each participant before each interview began (Appendix I). The 13 interview questions (Appendix J), based on the survey questionnaire, were semi-structured with open-ended questions intended to reveal in more detail the respondents' thoughts and observations regarding their views and opinions of the effectiveness of the district's beginning teacher mentoring program at the time they participated in the program. Two of the interview participants had fulfilled two separate roles in the mentoring program. One teacher had been new to the district during the program's first year (2000-2001 school year) and had also served as a mentor teacher during the 2003-2004 school year. One teacher had been a beginning teacher during the program's first year and had served as a mentor teacher during the 2003-2004 school year as well. These participants provided feedback from the perspective of both roles they fulfilled when they were part of the mentoring program. One other mentor teacher participated, and all three

mentor teachers were asked to describe their mentoring experiences and their perceptions of the effectiveness of the mentoring program. Seven new-to-district teachers and eight beginning teachers were asked to describe their mentoring experiences and perceptions of the mentoring program's effectiveness as well. One administrator was interviewed, and was asked his perceptions of the effectiveness of the mentoring program regarding the support of beginning and new-to-district teachers in his own school and in the district. All respondents were asked to make recommendations for program improvements.

Data analysis. This descriptive study sought to determine the perceived effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program in a public school district in Central Virginia. The subjects involved in the study were from a set population and not randomly selected. They consisted of all elementary, middle school, and high school teachers and administrators who had been involved in the beginning teacher mentoring program at any point in the program's 5-year history, and were retained by the chosen district for the 2004-2005 school year.

The survey questionnaire data were collected and organized, and then descriptive statistics were computed using the 11.0 version of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program in order to obtain frequency counts for 6 demographic items and 20 items related to perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program. Means and standard deviations were computed using SPSS for the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program for the first 20 survey items. A cross-tabulation procedure of role in the program and the six demographic items was performed.

In order to examine the possible effect of how the demographics of the respondents may have influenced the results of the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was performed using SPSS for each of the last six survey items that addressed demographics. The Analysis of Variance statistical procedure is typically used to compare two or more independent group means. The one-way ANOVA addresses one independent variable (Shannon & Davenport, 2001). Although the purpose of this study was not to compare groups, performing the ANOVA test for each demographic item indicated whether results from any of the six demographic items may have influenced the perceived effectiveness of the teacher mentoring program.

Because some of the demographic category choices produced too small of a cell size ($n < 5$) for adequate statistical analysis, some of the categories were combined and collapsed into one. Item 22, which asked the respondent's age, had small cells for the 51-60 years and 61-70 years categories, so these two categories were collapsed into one category entitled 51-70 years. Item 24, which addressed type of teacher preparation, also had two categories that were collapsed into one. The lateral entry choice and the lateral entry plus masters choice were collapsed into one category entitled, lateral entry. Item 26, which asked respondents how long they had participated in the mentoring program, was recoded from five categories (1 year, 2 years, 3 years, 4 years, or 5 years) to three categories (1 year, 2 years, or 3-5 years). Adequate statistical analysis for the ANOVA test was not possible for those respondents serving in the role of administrator ($n = 6$) because of responses in items

1-20 that produced too small of a cell size. Because of this, administrators were not evaluated in this statistical test.

The interview data were transcribed by the researcher and analyzed using a standard content analysis approach as described by Carey, Morgan, and Oxtoby (1996). After each of the 17 interviews was transcribed by the researcher, participant responses were then combined for each question (i.e. all 17 interview responses for question 1 were combined into one document, etc.). From the 13 interview questions, a list of 10 themes was developed. Theme 1 corresponded with interview question 1 on making an effective transition into the field of education (beginning teachers) or into the school district (new-to-district teachers). Theme 2 corresponded with interview question 2, which addressed the improvement of teaching skills. Theme 3 was based on interview question 3, and addressed attitude during the first year. Theme 4 corresponded with interview question 4, which addressed the isolation and loneliness that beginning teachers may experience. Theme 5 corresponded with interview questions 5 and 6, and had to do with new teachers greatest challenges. Theme 6 addressed professional development, and corresponded with interview questions 7 and 8. Theme 7 addressed collegiality, and corresponded with interview question 9. Theme 8 had to do with the feedback that new teachers received, and corresponded with interview question 10. Theme 9 addressed suggestions for mentoring program improvement, and corresponded with interview questions 11 and 13. Theme 10 addressed teacher retention, and corresponded with interview question 12.

Frequency of phrases related to each theme was next determined by first counting the total number of phrases that occurred per interview question that the theme was based upon. This total included each phrase mentioned, including those related to the theme and those not related to the theme. Once this total was determined for each interview question, then frequencies were determined for phrases only related to each theme mentioned for each interview question. This procedure was performed separately by the researcher and a colleague. In order to determine percentage of inter-rater agreement, the phrases related to each theme that both raters agreed upon were counted, as well as the phrases that were not related to each theme were counted. These figures (frequency of agreed theme phrases + frequency of agreed non-theme phrases) were added together, and then divided by the total number of phrases per theme to achieve percent inter-rater agreement. This procedure was repeated, with a mean inter-rater reliability figure of 75% achieved.

From the list of 10 themes, a list of sub-categories for each theme was then developed. The sub-categories addressed the influences that interview participants mentioned that affected their perceptions. Frequencies for each sub-category per theme were then determined based upon the number of occurrence of each sub-category mentioned by interview participants.

Summary

The methodology for this research study including research question, site of study, sample, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis has been detailed in this chapter. The research question focused on the perceived effectiveness of the teacher mentoring program regarding the support that beginning and new-to-district

teachers received. Research procedures included the use of a 26-item questionnaire to survey beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers and administrators who had been involved in the district's beginning teacher mentoring program at any point in its five-year history, as well as a semi-structured open-ended interview protocol. The survey questionnaire was developed and piloted by the researcher, and included 20 scaled items ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Both the survey questionnaire and interview protocol were based on the pertinent research on beginning teacher mentoring programs and on the Commonwealth of Virginia's set of guidelines for beginning teacher mentoring programs. The six demographic items on the questionnaire focused on gender, age, teaching level, type of teacher preparation, number of years of teaching experience, number of years in the mentoring program. Role in the mentoring program was determined based on which version of the questionnaire that respondents used.

In April, 2005, 218 survey questionnaires were distributed to all teachers and administrators who had been involved in the mentoring program and were retained by the district for the 2004-2005 school year. Of the 218 questionnaires distributed, 87 usable surveys were returned for a return rate of 40%. The majority of the respondents who participated in the study were females from the elementary school level who had graduated from a typical 4-year teacher preparation program.

Seventeen interviews were conducted by the researcher and took place individually at each participant's school from May 5, 2005 through May 16, 2005. The 13 interview questions were based on the survey questionnaire, and were designed as semi-structured and open-ended questions in order to reveal a more

detailed and in-depth account of the respondents' input on the perceived effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program. Sixteen teachers and one administrator were interviewed, with two teachers serving the unique role of having participated in the mentoring program as both a new-to-district or beginning teacher and mentor teacher. One other mentor teacher participated, as well as seven new-to-district teachers and eight beginning teachers.

From the survey questionnaire data, frequency counts for the six demographic items were obtained using a cross-tabulation procedure of role in the program with the other demographics (gender, age, level taught, years teaching experience, teacher preparation, and years in mentoring program). A frequency analysis of the 5 scaled choices, means, and standard deviations were obtained for the 20 survey items related to mentoring program perceived effectiveness. A one-way ANOVA test was performed on each demographic item as related to the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program. Because the sample size of administrators was small ($n = 6$), administrators were not included in the ANOVA test. The interview data were transcribed by the researcher and analyzed using a standard content analysis approach as described by Carey, Morgan, and Oxtoby (1996). Themes based on the interview questions were developed and frequencies were presented based on frequency of theme occurrence.

Chapter Four: Results

Overview

The researcher's purpose in conducting this descriptive study was to determine the perceived effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program in a public school district located in Central Virginia. Beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators involved in the mentoring program at any time throughout the program's 5-year history and retained by the school district for the 2004-2005 school year were surveyed. In addition, 17 of the survey participants agreed to be interviewed by the researcher, providing a rich and detailed account of their opinions regarding the perceived effectiveness of the program.

The participants in the study responded to a survey questionnaire developed and piloted by the researcher. The questionnaire was based on the current research on beginning teacher mentoring programs and on the Virginia Department of Education's set of guidelines for beginning teacher mentoring programs. The results of the survey are presented, followed by a summary of the interview results.

The survey questionnaire was distributed to 206 teachers and 12 administrators, identified by central administration school personnel as participants in the beginning teacher mentoring program at any time throughout its 5-year history and retained by the district for the 2004-2005 school year. Teachers and administrators not retained by the school district for the 2004-2005 school year were not surveyed due to unavailability of contact data. Of the 218 surveys distributed, 87 were returned and usable, for a return rate of 40%.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

Survey questionnaire. Survey questionnaire respondents were asked to report demographic data about themselves in the categories of gender, age, level taught, teacher preparation, years of teaching experience, role in the mentoring program, and number of years of participation in the mentoring program. Administrators were not asked about teacher preparation data or years of teaching experience. Of the 87 respondents, 33 (37.9%) were beginning teachers, 25 (28.7%) were new-to-district teachers, 23 (26.4%) were mentor teachers, and 6 (6.9%) were administrators.

Most of the respondents were age 50 or younger (93.1%), with 5.7% in the 51-60 year range, and 1.1% in the 61-70 year range. Over one third of the of teachers who responded (37.9%) had taught for 0-2 years, 18.4% had taught for 3-7 years, 8.0% had 8-12 years of teaching experience, 11.5% had 13-17 years of experience, 9.2% had 18-22 years, and 6.9% had 23 or more years of teaching experience. Administrators were not asked how many years they had taught on their version of the survey questionnaire. Most participants were female (78.2%), and were teaching or administrating at the elementary level (50.6%). Middle school teachers or administrators comprised 27.6% of the respondents, while 21.8% were from the high school level. The majority of respondents (46.0%) had a traditional 4-year teacher education preparation background. Teachers with a 4-year teacher education degree plus a Masters degree comprised 18.4%, while 9.2% had completed a 5-year teacher preparation program. Lateral entry respondents comprised 9.2%, with over half of these having completed a Masters degree as well. Teachers that chose the “other” category comprised 11.5%. Explanations given by the teachers that chose this

category included having a provisional licensure, having an earned Bachelor's degree but currently working on a Master's degree or taking education courses, or having a counseling degree. Administrators were not asked to report teacher preparation demographics. Most of the respondents had participated in the mentoring program for one year (64.4%), followed by 18.4% who had been involved in the program for two years, 3.4% for three years, 8.0% for four years, and 5.7% who had been involved for all five years of the program's existence.

Over 75% of the 33 beginning teachers surveyed were female, and a majority (66.7%), were in the 21-30 years age bracket. Most of the beginning teachers taught at the elementary level (54.5%), and most had graduated from a 4-year teacher preparation program (57.6%). A large percentage had only participated in the mentoring program for 1 year (84.8%); however, there were 3 beginning teachers who had been involved in the program for 2 years, and 2 who had been involved for 3 years. These teachers started as beginning teachers early in the program's history and had been retained by the school district long enough to then become mentor teachers.

Among the 25 new-to-district teachers surveyed, 72% were female, but were generally older than the beginning teachers surveyed. Most were in the 31-40 years age bracket (48.0%), followed by 28.0% in the 51-60 years age bracket. Most new-to-district teachers surveyed were teaching at the high school level (40.0%), followed by 36.0% at the elementary level and 24.0% at the middle school level. Most new-to-district teachers had graduated from a 4-year teacher preparation program (48.0%), and most had taught for 3-7 years (62.5%). Most of this group of teachers had been

involved in the mentoring program for one year; however, seven teachers indicated that they had been involved in the program for two years or more.

A large percentage of the 23 mentor teachers surveyed were female (91.3%), and most were in the 41-50 years age bracket (52.2%), with over half of them (52.2%) having 18 or more years of teaching experience. Most mentor teachers taught at the elementary school level (65.2%), and were evenly distributed between middle school and high school at 17.4% for each of these levels. Most had graduated from a 4-year teacher preparation program, but had also earned a Master's degree (47.8%). Those that had graduated from a 4-year teacher preparation program without earning a Master's degree comprised 39.1% of mentor teachers surveyed. The largest percentage of mentor teachers had participated in the mentoring program for 1 year (39.1%); however this was followed closely by 34.8% who had been involved for 2 years, and 6 mentor teachers indicated that they had been involved in the program for 3 years or more.

A small number of administrators participated in the survey (six); however, each level of teaching (elementary, middle school, and high school) was evenly represented among the administrators. Of the administrators surveyed, four were female. There was a wide range of ages represented, with 1 administrator in the 21-30 years age bracket, 2 in the 31-40 years age bracket, 2 in the 41-50 years age bracket, and 1 in the 51-60 years age bracket. One administrator had served in the teacher mentoring program for one year; one administrator participated in the program for two years; one participated for four years; and three of the administrators surveyed had served in the mentoring program for all five years of the program's existence.

Administrators were not asked to report teacher preparation or years teaching experience demographics. A cross tabulation that summarizes each group that had a role in the mentoring program (beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators) with the demographic characteristics of the teachers and administrators participating in the survey questionnaire is presented in Table 2.

Interview participants. Audio taped interviews were conducted by the researcher and took place from May 5, 2005 through May 16, 2005 at the schools of the participants. A schedule of the interviews can be found in Appendix K. Written permission to be interviewed was obtained from interview participants before each interview occurred (Appendix J). Seventeen of the 87 survey participants volunteered to be interviewed, which included 8 beginning teachers, 7 new-to-district teachers, 3 mentor teachers, and 1 administrator. Two of the mentor teachers had also been mentored as a beginning teacher and a new-to-district teacher several years ago in the chosen district's mentoring program, and so answered the interview questions from the perspectives of the mentor teacher and the beginning or new-to-district teacher. Demographic characteristics of interview participants are summarized in Table 3.

Perceived Effectiveness of Teacher Mentoring Program

Survey questionnaire results. The first part of the survey questionnaire asked participants to respond to 20 statements about the perceived effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program within their school district. The 20 statements were developed by the researcher and were based on current research on beginning teacher mentoring programs and on the Virginia Department of Education's set of

Table 2

Cross-Tabulation of Role in Mentoring Program and Demographic Characteristics of Survey Questionnaire Respondents

Demographic		Beginning Teacher <i>n</i> = 33	New-to District Teacher <i>n</i> = 25	Mentor Teacher <i>n</i> = 23	Administrator <i>n</i> = 6	Totals <i>N</i> = 87
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	<i>f</i>	8	7	2	2	19
	% role	24.2	28.0	8.7	33.3	21.8
	% total	9.2	8.0	2.3	2.3	21.8
Female	<i>f</i>	25	18	21	4	68
	% role	75.8	72.0	91.3	66.7	78.2
	% total	28.7	20.7	24.1	4.6	78.2
<u>Age</u>						
21-30 years	<i>f</i>	22	5	1	1	29
	% role	66.7	20.0	4.3	16.7	33.3
	% total	25.3	5.7	1.1	1.1	33.3
31-40 years	<i>f</i>	6	12	6	2	26
	% role	18.2	48.0	26.1	33.3	29.9
	% total	6.9	13.8	6.9	2.3	29.9
41-50 years	<i>f</i>	5	7	12	2	26
	% role	15.2	28.0	52.2	33.3	29.9
	% total	5.7	8.0	13.8	2.3	29.9
51-60 years	<i>f</i>	0	1	3	1	5
	% role	0.0	4.0	13.0	16.7	5.7
	% total	0.0	1.1	3.3	1.1	5.7
61-70 years	<i>f</i>	0	0	1	0	1
	% role	0.0	0.0	4.4	0.0	1.1
	% total	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.1
<u>Level</u>						
Elementary	<i>f</i>	18	9	15	2	44
	% role	54.5	36.0	65.2	33.3	50.6
	% total	20.7	10.3	17.2	2.3	50.6
Middle School	<i>f</i>	12	6	4	2	24
	% role	36.4	24.0	17.4	33.3	27.6
	% total	13.8	6.9	4.6	2.3	27.6
High School	<i>f</i>	3	10	4	2	19
	% role	9.1	40.0	17.4	33.3	21.8
	% total	3.4	11.5	4.6	2.3	21.8

Table 2 continued

<u>Teacher Preparation^a</u>					
4-year Program	<i>f</i>	19	12	9	40
	% role	57.6	48.0	39.1	46.0
	% total	21.8	13.8	10.3	46.0
4-year + Masters	<i>f</i>	1	4	11	16
	% role	3.0	16.0	47.8	18.4
	% total	1.1	4.6	12.6	18.4
5-year Program	<i>f</i>	2	5	1	8
	% role	6.1	20.0	4.3	9.2
	% total	2.3	5.7	1.1	9.2
Lateral Entry	<i>f</i>	2	1	0	3
	% role	6.1	4.0	0.0	3.4
	% total	2.3	1.1	0.0	3.4
Lateral Entry + Masters	<i>f</i>	2	1	1	4
	% role	6.1	4.0	4.3	4.6
	% total	2.3	1.1	1.1	4.6
Other	<i>f</i>	7	2	1	10
	% role	21.2	8.0	4.3	11.5
	% total	8.0	2.3	1.1	11.5

<u>Teaching Experience^b</u>					
0-2 years	<i>f</i>	33	0	0	33
	% role	100.0	0.0	0.0	38.4
	% total	38.4	0.0	0.0	38.4
3-7 years	<i>f</i>	0	15	1	16
	% role	0.0	62.5	4.3	18.6
	% total	0.0	17.4	1.1	18.6
8-12 years	<i>f</i>	0	4	3	7
	% role	0.0	16.7	13.0	8.1
	% total	0.0	4.7	3.5	8.1
13-17 years	<i>f</i>	0	4	7	11
	% role	0.0	16.0	30.4	12.6
	% total	0.0	4.6	8.1	12.6
18-22 years	<i>f</i>	0	2	6	8
	% role	0.0	8.3	26.1	9.3
	% total	0.0	2.3	7.0	9.3
23+ years	<i>f</i>	0	0	6	6
	% role	0.0	0.0	26.1	7.0
	% total	0.0	0.0	7.0	7.0

Table 2 continued

<u>Years in Mentoring Program</u>						
1	<i>f</i>	28	18	9	1	56
	% role	84.8	72.0	39.1	16.7	64.4
	% total	32.2	20.7	10.3	1.1	64.4
2	<i>f</i>	3	4	8	1	16
	% role	9.1	16.0	34.8	16.7	18.4
	% total	3.4	4.6	9.2	1.1	18.4
3	<i>f</i>	0	1	2	0	3
	% role	0.0	4.0	8.7	0.0	3.4
	% total	0.0	1.1	2.3	0.0	3.4
4	<i>f</i>	2	1	3	1	7
	% role	6.1	4.0	13.0	16.7	8.0
	% total	2.3	1.1	3.4	1.1	8.0
5	<i>f</i>	0	1	1	3	5
	% role	0.0	4.0	4.3	50.0	5.7
	% total	0.0	1.1	1.1	3.4	5.7

Notes.

^aFrequencies and percentages do not add up to 87 and 100% because administrators were not asked number of years of teaching experience on their version of the questionnaire.

^bFrequencies and percentages do not add up to 87 and 100% because administrators were not asked teacher preparation data on their version of the questionnaire.

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants

Variable	<i>f</i> (<i>n</i> = 17) ^a	<i>%</i>
Gender		
Male	5	29.4
Female	12	70.6
Level		
Elementary	6	35.3
Middle School	9	52.9
High School	2	11.8
Years Teaching Experience		
0-2	4	23.5
3-7	4	23.5
8-12	1	5.9
13-17	0	0.0
18-22	2	11.8
23+	0	0.0
Role in Mentoring Program		
Beginning Teacher	8	42.1
New-to-district Teacher	7	36.8
Mentor Teacher	3	15.8
Administrator	1	5.3

^a Because two interview participants served as both a beginning teacher and a mentor teacher and as a new-to-district teacher and a mentor teacher, frequencies for Role in Mentoring Program add up to 19. Percentages for this demographic item were based on *n* = 19.

guidelines for teacher mentoring programs. Appendix M summarizes the survey and interview questions and the mentoring guidelines recommended by the Virginia Department of Education that each item addressed. The survey questionnaire statements used scaled responses ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Items on the survey were worded positively (items 1-10) and negatively (items 11-20) in order to guard against response set in the participants. As described by Dillman (2000), response set is a phenomenon that occurs among respondents when they may mindlessly begin checking items on a survey questionnaire without carefully reading the question. Various techniques are used among writers of questionnaires to guard against the occurrence of response set, including the use of different visual cues and the careful wording of questions. The researcher developed the survey questionnaire so that items 1-10 were positively worded and items 11-20 were negatively worded. Positive and negative items occurred in pairs (i.e. positively worded item 1 corresponded with negatively worded item 11, positively worded item 2 corresponded with negatively worded item 12, etc.). To measure the equivalence between the positive and negative halves of the survey instrument, a split half reliability analysis was performed using SPSS. A reasonable degree of reliability of .90 was attained between the two halves of the instrument. Each half of the instrument produced slightly different reliability coefficients (half 1 = .94; half 2 = .88); therefore the Guttman split half reliability coefficient was reported for the total. According to Shannon and Davenport (2001), the Guttman method of split half reliability is somewhat more conservative and does not assume equivalent reliability

of each half of the instrument. Results of the reliability analysis are summarized in Table 4.

Means and standard deviations for each group were determined using SPSS. The negatively worded items 11-20 were recoded so that a total positively-oriented score was obtained. The per item means of each group (beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators) indicated a positive ranking of 3.00 or greater on most of the 20 items, with the exception of item 8, which had a mean of 2.92 (1.33). This item addressed the amount of feedback that mentees received from their mentor teachers. The highest overall mean was for item 16, which had a mean of 4.25 (1.00). This item asked if the mentoring program provided enough opportunities throughout the school year for new and beginning teachers to meet with other new and beginning teachers to discuss their concerns about teaching.

Administrators and mentor teachers consistently ranked the majority of the items highest in all 4 of the groups, with administrators ranking 12 of the 20 items highest, and mentor teachers ranking 7 of the 20 items highest. Two exceptions were items 12 and 20, which were ranked first and second by beginning teachers. Item 12 addressed the amount of assistance their teaching that beginning teachers received from their mentor teachers, and item 20 asked about difficulty in communication between beginning teachers and mentor teachers. New-to-district teachers consistently ranked all items lowest among all of the other three groups.

Both beginning and new-to-district teachers indicated that they were not receiving enough feedback about their teaching, as indicated by the means for these two groups for items 8 and 18, which were less than 3.00. However, mentor teachers

Table 4

Pairwise Split-Half Reliability Analysis of Survey Questionnaire

Item Pairs	Pair Correlation	Part 1 Alpha	Part 2 Alpha	Total Correlation ^a
1, 11	.59	.94	.88	.90
2, 12	.62			
3, 13	.72			
4, 14	.77			
5, 15	.85			
6, 16	.38			
7, 17	.70			
8, 18	.52			
9, 19	.45			
10, 20	.76			

Note. Item pairs are corresponding positive and negative items, where items 1-10 are positively worded and items 11-20 are negatively worded.

^a Guttman Split-Half Reliability coefficient was reported for the total correlation coefficient due to the unequal alpha coefficients computed for each half.

and administrators indicated that feedback from mentor teachers was adequate, as means for these groups for items 8 and 18 were greater than 3.50.

Per item total frequencies for each group (Appendix N) indicated that the majority of scale responses fell into the agree (scale response #4) or strongly agree (scale response #5) categories for the 20 survey items. Item 8 was a notable exception, which addressed whether beginning and new-to-district teachers received enough feedback from their mentor teachers. Beginning teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement by 48.4% and new-to-district teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed by 64.0%. However, mentor teachers agreed that their feedback was adequate by 78.2% and administrators agreed by 66.7%. Item 4, which addressed whether the mentoring program helped foster a positive attitude about teaching among new-to-district and beginning teachers, revealed a rather high undecided response rate of 27.6% among all groups of teachers, while none of the administrators were undecided about this topic, with 66.7% agreeing and 33.3% strongly agreeing. Summaries of the means, standard deviations, item frequencies and percentages for each of the four groups are summarized in Table 5 and further detailed in Appendix N.

In order to examine the influence that the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents may have had on the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedure was performed using SPSS for each demographic. The Analysis of Variance statistical procedure can be used to compare two or more independent group means, and the one-way ANOVA addresses one independent variable (Shannon & Davenport, 2001). Due to the small

Table 5

Survey Questionnaire Item Means, All Respondents

Item	Participant	<i>M</i> (<i>N</i> = 87)	<i>SD</i>
1. The beginning teacher mentoring program was a key factor in helping me adjust to the teaching profession or to this school district.	Beginning Teacher	3.39	1.32
	New-to-District Teacher	3.00	1.22
	Mentor Teacher	3.96	0.82
	Administrator	4.67	0.52
	All Participants	3.52	1.22
2. My mentor teacher gave me the amount of help I needed with my teaching.	Beginning Teacher	3.55	1.39
	New-to-District Teacher	3.04	1.40
	Mentor Teacher	4.00	0.80
	Administrator	3.83	0.98
	All Participants	3.54	1.27
3. The mentoring program helped reduce my feelings of isolation as a new or beginning teacher.	Beginning Teacher	3.79	1.14
	New-to-District Teacher	3.24	1.23
	Mentor Teacher	4.04	0.47
	Administrator	4.33	0.52
	All Participants	3.74	1.05
4. The mentoring program helped me develop a positive attitude about teaching.	Beginning Teacher	3.52	1.23
	New-to-District Teacher	3.08	0.95
	Mentor Teacher	3.74	0.69
	Administrator	4.33	0.52
	All Participants	3.51	1.03
5. The mentoring program helped me develop a sense of professionalism about teaching.	Beginning Teacher	3.67	1.19
	New-to-District Teacher	3.12	1.36
	Mentor Teacher	3.83	0.65
	Administrator	4.33	0.52
	All Participants	3.60	1.14
6. The mentoring program provided	Beginning Teacher	3.82	1.10

Table 5 continued

opportunities throughout the school year to discuss my classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers in the district.	New-to-District Teacher	3.36	1.19
	Mentor Teacher	4.30	0.56
	Administrator	4.50	0.55
	All Participants	3.86	1.05
7. My mentor teacher encouraged me to self-reflect on my teaching.	Beginning Teacher	3.21	1.41
	New-to-District Teacher	2.60	1.04
	Mentor Teacher	3.91	0.73
	Administrator	3.67	1.03
	All Participants	3.25	1.22
8. I received feedback about my teaching from my mentor teacher on a regular basis.	Beginning Teacher	2.76	1.42
	New-to-District Teacher	2.12	1.30
	Mentor Teacher	3.83	0.78
	Administrator	3.67	1.03
	All Participants	2.92	1.33
9. The mentoring program afforded me opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies.	Beginning Teacher	3.61	1.09
	New-to-District Teacher	3.16	1.18
	Mentor Teacher	3.96	0.64
	Administrator	4.50	0.55
	All Participants	3.63	1.05
10. I had clear communication with my mentor teacher.	Beginning Teacher	3.76	1.35
	New-to-District Teacher	3.28	1.43
	Mentor Teacher	4.39	0.78
	Administrator	4.33	0.82
	All Participants	3.83	1.28
11. The mentoring program did not play a significant role in helping me adjust to my first year as a teacher (or in this district).	Beginning Teacher	3.39	1.46
	New-to-District Teacher	2.92	1.41
	Mentor Teacher	3.87	1.10
	Administrator	4.50	0.55
	All Participants	3.46	1.37

Table 5 continued

12. I often needed more assistance with my teaching than what my mentor teacher provided.	Beginning Teacher	3.88	1.17
	New-to-District Teacher	3.32	1.38
	Mentor Teacher	3.57	1.24
	Administrator	3.50	1.22
	All Participants	3.61	1.25
13. The mentoring program did not help me feel less isolated or alone during my first year as a teacher (or in this district).	Beginning Teacher	3.61	1.27
	New-to-District Teacher	3.56	1.16
	Mentor Teacher	4.22	0.60
	Administrator	4.33	1.21
	All Participants	3.80	1.12
14. The mentoring program did not help me develop a positive attitude about teaching.	Beginning Teacher	3.58	1.15
	New-to-District Teacher	3.08	1.15
	Mentor Teacher	4.09	0.73
	Administrator	4.33	0.52
	All Participants	3.62	1.09
15. The mentoring program did not help instill in me a sense of professionalism about teaching.	Beginning Teacher	3.85	1.06
	New-to-District Teacher	3.00	1.26
	Mentor Teacher	4.00	0.67
	Administrator	4.33	0.52
	All Participants	3.68	1.09
16. The mentoring program did not schedule district-wide meetings for new and beginning teachers throughout the school year to get together and discuss their teaching concerns.	Beginning Teacher	4.21	0.96
	New-to-District Teacher	4.04	1.17
	Mentor Teacher	4.52	0.79
	Administrator	4.33	1.21
	All Participants	4.25	1.00
17. The importance of self-reflection on my teaching was not stressed by my mentor teacher.	Beginning Teacher	3.27	1.23
	New-to-District Teacher	2.44	1.23
	Mentor Teacher	4.04	0.77
	Administrator	4.33	0.52
	All Participants	3.31	1.26

Table 5 continued

18. My mentor teacher provided feedback about my teaching only when I asked.	Beginning Teacher	2.94	1.22
	New-to-District Teacher	2.72	1.28
	Mentor Teacher	3.52	1.12
	Administrator	4.17	0.75
	All Participants	3.12	1.24
19. Classroom management strategies were not addressed by the mentoring program.	Beginning Teacher	3.64	1.11
	New-to-District Teacher	3.36	1.15
	Mentor Teacher	4.13	0.82
	Administrator	4.00	1.10
	All Participants	3.71	1.08
20. My mentor teacher and I had difficulty communicating clearly.	Beginning Teacher	4.03	1.26
	New-to-District Teacher	3.56	1.33
	Mentor Teacher	4.22	0.85
	Administrator	3.83	0.98
	All Participants	3.93	1.18

Note. Negatively worded items 11-20 were recoded positively in order to show consistency between means with positively worded items 1-10.

sample size of participating administrators ($n = 6$), this group was not included in the ANOVA statistical analysis. The demographic information requested on the survey questionnaire corresponded to items 21-26, and included gender, age, level taught, teacher preparation, number of years of teaching experience, and number of years as a participant in the mentoring program. In addition, role in the mentoring program was also analyzed. Because some of the categories within each demographic item produced small cell sizes (see Table 2), some categories were collapsed in order to perform an adequate statistical analysis. Demographic items that had categories with inadequate cell sizes included age, teacher preparation, and years in the mentoring program. In the age demographic item, the last two categories (41-50 years and 51-70 years) were collapsed into one category, 41-70 years. In the teacher preparation demographic item, the first two categories (4 year degree and 4 year degree plus Master's degree) were collapsed into 4 year degree in order to maintain consistency with the other collapsed category; and the two categories of lateral entry and lateral entry plus Master's degree were collapsed into lateral entry. In the years of participation in the mentoring program demographic item the last three categories (3, 4, and 5 years) were collapsed into 3-5 years.

Results of the ANOVA procedure indicated that the demographic item related to role in the mentoring program (beginning teachers, $n = 33$; new-to-district teachers, $n = 25$; mentor teachers, $n = 23$) suggested significance at the $.05\alpha$ level for 12 of the 20 items, including items 1-3, 6-10, 14-15, 17 and 19. Gender (males, $n = 17$; females, $n = 64$), also had over half of the items (11) indicating significance at the $.05\alpha$ level, including items 1-4, 6-10, 13, and 20. The demographic item related to level

taught (elementary, $n = 42$; middle school, $n = 22$; high school, $n = 17$) indicated significance for 2 items at the .05 α level, items 3 and 18. The demographic item that addressed number of years in the mentoring program (1 year, $n = 55$; 2 years, $n = 15$; 3-5 years, $n = 11$) also indicated significance for 2 items at the .05 α level, items 1 and 19. The demographic item that addressed number of years of teaching experience (0-2 years, $n = 33$; 3-7 years, $n = 16$; 8-12 years, $n = 7$; 13-17 years, $n = 10$; 18-22 years, $n = 8$; 23+ years, $n = 6$) indicated significance for 1 item at the .05 α level, item 8. Both the age and the teacher preparation demographic items indicated significance for none of the items. Results of the ANOVA procedure for the 6 demographic items, including a listing of items 1-20, analyzed on the survey questionnaire are summarized in Appendix O.

Interview results. The interview protocol was developed by the researcher and followed a semi-structured format (see Appendix J). The 13 interview questions were based on the survey questionnaire, and were semi-structured and open-ended with the intent to reveal the respondents' in-depth and detailed thoughts and observations regarding their perceptions of the effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program. Interviews were transcribed by the researcher and then compiled into 10 themes based on the 13 interview questions. The themes included the following: (a) transition into the field of education (for beginning teachers) or into the school district (for new-to-district teachers), (b) improvement of teaching skills, (c) fostering a positive attitude, (d) dispelling feelings of isolation, (e) greatest challenges, (f) developing a sense of professionalism, (g) developing collegiality, (h) receiving feedback, (i) suggestions for program improvement, and (j) effects on retention. Each

of the 10 themes was then further sub-divided into categories based on the interview responses given that related to each theme.

The interview data were transcribed by the researcher and analyzed using a standard content analysis approach as described by Carey, Morgan, and Oxtoby (1996). After each of the 17 interviews was transcribed by the researcher, participant responses for each question were then combined for each question (i.e. all 17 interview responses for question 1 were combined into one document, etc.). Frequencies were determined by first counting the total number of phrases that occurred per question. Once the total number of phrases per question was determined, then frequencies were determined for occurrence of each theme mentioned. This procedure was performed separately by the researcher and a colleague.

In order to determine percentage of inter-rater agreement, the phrases attributed to themes that both raters agreed upon were counted, as well as the phrases that were not attributed to themes by both raters. These figures (frequency of agreed theme phrases + frequency of agreed non-theme phrases) were added together, and then divided by the total number of phrases per theme to achieve percent inter-rater agreement. This procedure was repeated, with a mean inter-rater reliability figure of 75% achieved.

The first theme based on interview question 1 related to making the transition into the field of education or into the school district, was divided into seven sub-categories based on factors that contributed to the transition and positive results of the transition. These included the monthly district beginning teacher meetings, the accessibility of the mentor teacher, getting questions answered, effect on lesson

planning or pacing, the middle school Thrive monthly beginning teacher meetings, the reduction of stress, and the district orientation sessions at the start of the school year. The sub-categories referred to most often as being helpful were the district monthly meetings (25.5%) and the accessibility of the mentor teacher (22.3%), followed closely by getting questions answered (21.3%). Kate, a new-to-district teacher, stated about her mentor teacher, “There’s a person right there on your hallway who you can go to. They’re a little bit more accessible than your principal.” Several teachers mentioned how they enjoyed the monthly meetings, and even though a few lamented the fact that another meeting often placed extra demands on their schedules, most agreed that the meetings were valuable. Becky, a beginning teacher this year in the mentoring program, commented on how she enjoyed getting to know the other new teachers by stating, “I’ve really enjoyed those sessions. We took turns meeting in different teachers’ rooms, so we got to see each other’s rooms and get to know each other in that way.” Becky also discussed the topics of the monthly meetings, stating, “They do topics that are really great with periodic demonstrations such as parent conferences, where they role play the difficult parent with the teacher. It was really fun.” Caitlin, a new-to-district teacher who had taught for five years, commented about her mentor teacher, “Just having somebody to talk to was really important. He was always there for that and offered as much advice as I needed.”

The second theme based on interview question 2 related to the improvement of teaching skills was divided into six sub-categories: classroom management, lesson planning/pacing, organization of paperwork, handling of parents, meeting diverse student needs, and self-reflection. The teaching skills that were mentioned most often

that many teachers felt improved as a result of their mentor teacher's or the mentoring program's influence were classroom management skills (35.7%) and lesson planning/pacing skills (31.0%). Eleanor, who was a mentor teacher a year ago and had also been in the mentoring program as a beginning teacher five years ago, stated that she would discuss classroom management strategies with her mentee by having productive conversations about how to handle certain classroom situations. "What could you have done so that [behavior] wouldn't have happened?" I'd say, 'Let's have strategies so you don't lose classroom control when you have a student up in your face.'" Bill, who had been in the mentoring program four years ago as a beginning teacher said, "Going to the monthly meetings helped because there were experienced teachers there as well as first year teachers. I got ideas and feedback about classroom management."

The third theme based on interview question 3 related to fostering a positive attitude was divided into four sub-categories: receiving encouragement, discussing problems, cultivating friendships, and working together as a team. Having a mentor teacher and being part of the mentoring program helped beginning and new-to-district teachers foster a positive attitude mainly by receiving encouragement (50.0%), having a venue for discussing problems (30.6%), and by developing friendships (13.9%). Kate, a new-to-district teacher five years ago and also a mentor teacher last year, remarked, "With a mentor I felt like I had a friend – an immediate friend." She added, "Just to have one person say, 'Good job today!' That first year you just need affirmation that you're okay and that you are doing the right thing, so you're not so lost. For me, that was really important. I wouldn't have stayed here if I hadn't felt

that. I would have left.” Cody, a beginning teacher in the mentoring program five years ago, struggled his first year. He stated, “The meetings helped keep that positive level up by knowing that you’re not alone in this.”

The fourth theme based on interview question 4, was related to dispelling feelings of isolation and loneliness. This theme was divided into five sub-categories: the influence of the mentor teacher, the impact of the monthly district and middle school Thrive meetings, the influence of other veteran teachers, and the influence of building administrators. Several of the teachers interviewed cited their mentor teacher (35.7%), the monthly meetings (23.8%), and other veteran teachers (21.4%) as the main sources of support that kept them from feeling isolated their first year. Only one teacher, Cody, who had been a beginning teacher in the program five years ago, stated that he had felt isolated his first year and that it had been a difficult start. His mentor teacher’s classroom was not near his classroom and she did not teach in his subject area or grade level; therefore, he had limited contact with her. He did gain a certain amount of support from the monthly meetings, but these did not help him on a daily basis, and he felt himself struggling each day simply to survive. Kelly, a beginning teacher who had a much more positive start stated, “She’s [mentor teacher] totally taken me in. She’s sat down with me after school, she’s helped me with my lesson planning, she never leaves me on my own. She’s always there to help. She introduced me to other teachers and helped me get comfortable with the principal.” Becky, another beginning teacher, laughed and said, “We joke about how it’s sort of like a family around here. It’s a friendship thing where we try and touch base with

each other and you know there are other people going through what you're going through."

The fifth theme based on interview questions 5 and 6 related to greatest challenges was divided into 10 sub-categories, including: classroom management, meeting the diverse needs of students, learning the curriculum and meeting Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs), planning and pacing lessons, handling parents, obtaining the necessary resources, organizing paperwork, managing time, grading, and educational philosophy. The greatest challenges for most beginning and new-to-district teachers interviewed included classroom management (32.1%), meeting the diverse needs of their students (21.4%), and learning the curriculum and meeting the Virginia SOLs (16.1%). Eleanor, a beginning teacher lamented, "I thought I could fix everything. I learned that I can make a difference in their lives and love on them, but that I couldn't fix it all." Chuck, a mentor teacher with 20 years of teaching experience, stated that he thought that one of his mentees' greatest challenges was dealing with so many personalities in the classroom. He stated, "It's a little overwhelming when you think you're trying to meet each and every one of their needs." James, an administrator, stated that he felt being overwhelmed with learning the curriculum was one of the greatest challenges that beginning and new-to-district teachers had, as well as meeting all the needs of the different students in their classrooms. Abby, a new-to-district teacher who had taught for three years, stated, "Just managing the classroom is a challenge. To me, all those everyday decisions are just so hard. 'What's fair and what's not?' All those little everyday issues about discipline were just so hard."

The sixth theme based on interview question 7 and 8 related to developing a sense of professionalism was divided into five sub-categories based on factors that contributed to its development or results of feeling more professional. Main factors that contributed or were a result of the development of a sense of professionalism included professional development opportunities aimed at helping beginning teachers (22.9%), developing confidence (18.8%), becoming more proficient at lesson planning and pacing (12.5%), and learning the curriculum (12.5%). Kelly, a beginning teacher stated, “I feel like I know what to do now. It wasn’t the scary experience that I thought it was going to be. I feel so much more confident, and feel like I’ve been teaching for years and not just for one year.” She attributed her feelings of confidence and success to her mentor teacher and to the help she received from the mentoring program throughout her first year. Becky, a beginning teacher stated, “I feel that being new teachers we got first dibs on getting to go to conferences. Everything I’ve asked about my assistant principal has said, ‘Great, let’s get you there!’ I feel like all those sessions have been helpful and no time was wasted, which is not always the case with professional development.” Caitlin, a new-to-district teacher, appreciated her mentor teacher’s confidence in her abilities. She said, “The old pacing guide was not relevant for what I would be teaching that year, and so it was confusing. Rather than remain frustrated about it, my mentor teacher encouraged me to come up with my own pacing guide, and trusted me to do that.”

The seventh theme based on interview question 9 related to developing collegiality was divided into five sub-categories: sharing frustrations, building relationships, sharing ideas, asking questions, and mutual encouragement. Primary

ways in which beginning and new-to-district teachers developed collegiality included sharing their frustrations and ideas (34.0%), as well as building relationships (34.0%), which mainly occurred at the monthly meetings. Most of the teachers interviewed discussed how it was important for them to feel that they weren't the only ones experiencing problems. Kelly, a beginning teacher said, "Just knowing that they're [other beginning teachers] going through the same things so you don't feel like you're the only one who's making mistakes. Just getting ideas and hearing how they handle certain situations and talking about ways we can improve together as a team."

Another remarked, "It's nice to have a safe space where you don't feel like you are the 'newbie.'" Stu, a beginning teacher, who did not enjoy the topics chosen for the monthly meetings nor the manner in which they were presented, did admit the value of meeting together with other beginning teachers on a monthly basis. "The one nice thing was that sense of camaraderie, that sense that we were all in this together.

Having that sense of community and knowing we were all in the same boat. That was the best thing about the mentoring program – the close-knit feeling of the group."

Becky, a beginning teacher, appreciated the fact that she had the opportunity to develop relationships with not only the other new teachers, but also the administrators from all the schools, as well as the superintendent and assistant superintendent of the district.

The eighth theme based on interview question 10 related to receiving feedback was divided into six sub-categories including: informal feedback, being observed by the mentor teacher, observing the mentor teacher, observing other teachers, being observed by the building administrator, and scheduling conflicts that

hindered observations and feedback. Feedback was received from mentor teachers often; however, most of it came informally (31.7%). Observations from the mentor teacher did not occur often (19.0%), and mentees did not have many opportunities to observe their mentor teachers (15.9%). The reason for the limited number of observations seemed to be due to scheduling conflicts, where the mentor teacher and the mentee were teaching at the same time, and were therefore unable to observe each other. When asked about the opportunities available to beginning and new-to-district teachers for observations, James, an administrator, stated, “We’ve always made it very clear to our teachers that we’re willing to hire subs in order to observe or be observed, but to the best of my knowledge I don’t know anybody who did that this year. We haven’t had that request yet, but we’d certainly do that if they wanted to do it.” Eleanor, a beginning teacher, admitted that this scheduling conflict was a disadvantage, and stated, “We probably could have worked it out for me to observe her. The principals have always said, ‘We’ll fill in for 20 minutes or so, so that you can go observe somebody.’ We just never took advantage of that. Probably, that would be a good thing, and should actually be part of the mentoring program.” Emily also stated that she received feedback from her mentor teacher on an informal basis everyday after school, and “There was a real openness, but you have to be willing to ask for help and admit that you need it.”

The ninth theme based on interview questions 11 and 13 related to suggestions for mentoring program improvement was divided into seven sub-categories: mentor teacher training, mentor/mentee matching, district monthly meetings, scheduling conflicts, extending the program to two years, special mentoring cases, and district

orientation sessions. Most of the suggestions for program improvement centered specifically on the need to develop a system of training and accountability for the mentor teachers (33.3%). Carefully matching the mentors with their mentees (29.4%) was also mentioned often. James, the administrator who was interviewed, explained that mentor teachers were chosen by their building administrator based on: (1) their years of teaching experience, (2) their willingness to be a mentor, (3) whether the mentor was in the same grade level or subject area as their mentee. He stated that they attempted to match mentor teachers based on the last criterion as often as possible; however, at times mentor teachers who met all three criteria were simply not available. As of the 2004-2005 school year, mentors were not formally trained for their position. Most beginning and new-to-district teachers interviewed felt that it was important to train mentor teachers, and also felt it was critical that mentor teachers have their classrooms close to their mentees, as well as teach the same subject area or grade level. Cody, a beginning teacher who struggled his first year stated, "From my own personal experience I wish that mentors were someone in your hall. The subject area or grade level helps, but I think just having someone next door is more important." Barbara, another beginning teacher who felt that having a mentor in the same subject or grade level was very important, said, "I guess I did feel a little left out because at our monthly meetings I would talk to people who had mentors in the same subject or grade level. I felt like I was missing something." Sally, a new-to-district teacher who had taught for three years, remarked, "I think they definitely need to find teachers who are willing to be mentors, who understand what their role is and are willing to take on the challenge and realize why it's so important."

The tenth theme based on interview question 12 related to effects on retention was divided into four sub-categories: the influence of the mentor teacher, the impact of the district monthly meetings, intrinsic motivation to stay in the field, and the influence of the district orientation meetings at the start of the school year. The majority of beginning and new-to-district teachers interviewed stated that their mentor teacher (57.9%) and the monthly meetings required by the mentoring program (15.8%), positively affected their decision to remain in the field of education, although some said that this decision was more intrinsic (15.8%). Most stated that input and encouragement from their mentor teacher was the main factor that influenced this decision, followed by the monthly meetings, which allowed them to develop relationships, vent frustrations, and share ideas. Becky, a beginning teacher who had switched careers and was thus older than most beginning teachers, observed, “It’s been interesting to see the impact it’s [the mentoring program] had on the younger teachers, because most of them are still trying to determine, ‘Is this what I really want?’ Most of them are going to stick it out at least another year because they’ve had the support. I definitely think that there were days that if I hadn’t had the support it would have been really tough.” Caitlin, a new-to-district teacher who had taught for five years, stated, “If I didn’t have somebody there that I felt like I could go to with problems, I think I would have just gotten so discouraged that it would have been hard to stay.” Sally, a new-to-district teacher who had returned to teaching this year after a difficult start several years ago, shared, “I left the teaching field because I didn’t have somebody there for support. It was hard. If you don’t have someone there to say, ‘You’re doing okay,’ why would you want to do it again? When I came here

one of the questions I asked was if there was a mentoring program, and how it worked. Luckily, here, it seems like they really take a strong initiative to make things work for new teachers.”

Frequencies and percentages of each sub-category found among the ten themes and based on the number of times the sub-category was mentioned in the interviews are represented in Table 6.

Summary

The research question of this descriptive study examined the perceived effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program in a public school district located in Central Virginia. The perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program was determined by surveying 33 beginning teachers, 25 new-to-district teachers, 23 mentor teachers, and 6 administrators who had been involved in the program at any time throughout its 5-year history and were retained by the school district for the 2004-2005 school year. Teachers and administrators no longer retained by the school district for the 2004-2005 school year were not surveyed due to unavailability of contact data. In addition, 17 of the survey participants were interviewed by the researcher, providing a rich and detailed account of their perceptions of the effectiveness of the mentoring program.

Results of the 20-item scaled survey questionnaire indicated a positive mean of 3.00 or greater (with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree) on all 20 items except one item, which addressed the amount of feedback that mentees received from their mentor teachers. This item had an overall mean of 2.92 (1.33). Items that had the highest overall means addressed

Table 6

Frequencies & Percentages of Interview Theme Sub-Categories

Interview Theme	Based on Interview Question #	Sub-Category	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
making the transition	1	district monthly meetings	24	25.5
		accessibility of mentor	21	22.3
		getting questions answered	20	21.3
		lesson planning/pacing	12	12.8
		Thrive monthly meetings	8	8.5
		reduction of stress	6	6.4
		district orientation sessions	3	3.2
improvement of teaching skills	2	classroom management	15	35.7
		planning/pacing	13	31.0
		paperwork organization	4	9.5
		handling parents	4	9.5
		meeting student needs	3	7.1
		self-reflection	3	7.1
fostering a positive attitude	3	receiving encouragement	18	50.0
		discussing problems	11	30.6
		cultivating friendships	5	13.9
		teamwork	2	5.6
dispelling feelings of isolation	4	mentor teacher	15	35.7
		district monthly meetings	10	23.8
		other veteran teachers	9	21.4
		administrators	5	11.9
		Thrive monthly meetings	3	7.1
greatest challenges	5, 6	classroom management	18	32.1
		diverse needs of students	12	21.4
		curriculum/SOLs	9	16.1
		lesson planning/pacing	5	8.9
		parents	3	5.4
		obtaining resources	3	5.4
		paperwork organization	2	3.6
		time management	2	3.6
		educational philosophy	2	3.6
		grading	1	1.8
developing a sense of professionalism	7, 8	professional development	11	22.9
		confidence	9	18.8

Table 6 continued

		lesson planning/pacing	6	12.5
		curriculum/SOLs	6	12.5
		classroom management	5	10.4
		student rapport	5	10.4
developing collegiality	9	sharing frustrations	16	34.0
		building relationships	16	34.0
		sharing ideas	8	17.0
		asking questions	4	8.5
		mutual encouragement	3	6.4
receiving feedback	10	informal feedback	20	31.7
		observed by mentor	12	19.0
		observing mentor	10	15.9
		observing other teachers	10	15.9
		scheduling conflicts	7	11.1
		observed by administrator	4	6.3
suggestions for program improvement	11, 13	mentor training	17	33.3
		mentor/mentee match	15	29.4
		district monthly meetings	7	13.7
		scheduling conflicts	4	7.8
		extension to 2 years	3	5.9
		special mentoring cases	3	5.9
		district orientation sessions	2	3.9
effects on retention	12	mentor teacher	11	57.9
		district monthly meetings	3	15.8
		intrinsic motivation	3	15.8
		Thrive monthly meetings	2	10.5

Note. Frequencies and percentages are based on the total number of times the sub-category was mentioned by any of the interview participants and not on the number of interview participants (17).

conducting monthly meetings for new-to-district and beginning teachers in order to share common teaching concerns, which had an overall mean of 3.86 (1.05); having clear communication with mentor teachers, which had an overall mean of 3.83 (1.28); and addressing feelings of isolation and loneliness, which had an overall mean of 3.74 (1.05). Items that ranked lowest addressed whether new-to-district and beginning teachers received enough feedback from mentor teachers, which had an overall mean of 2.92 (1.33); whether new-to-district and beginning teachers were encouraged to self-reflect on their teaching, which had an overall mean of 3.25 (1.22); and if new-to-district and beginning teachers received the amount of help they needed with their teaching, which had an overall mean of 3.54 (1.27). All four groups (beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers, administrators) indicated that beginning and new-to-district teachers were given ample opportunities to meet and discuss their teaching concerns with other beginning and new-to-district teachers throughout the school year. Both beginning and new-to-district teachers indicated that they were not receiving enough feedback about their teaching; however, mentor teachers and administrators indicated that feedback from mentor teachers was adequate. Administrators consistently ranked the majority of items higher, followed by mentor teachers, beginning teachers, and new-to-district teachers, who consistently ranked all items lower than any of the other three groups.

The ANOVA procedure used to analyze the effects of the survey participant demographics indicated that the two demographics of gender and role in the program (beginning teacher, new-to-district teacher, or mentor teacher) showed significance at

the $\alpha = .05$ level for over half of the items. Due to small sample size ($n = 6$), administrator results were not included in the ANOVA analysis.

Seventeen of the survey participants agreed to be interviewed by the researcher, allowing an opportunity for representatives from all four groups to provide further depth and insight into their perceptions of the effectiveness of the mentoring program. Overall, the results indicated a positive perception of the mentoring program's effectiveness. A list of themes based on each interview question included the following: making the transition into the field of education or into the school district, improvement of teaching skills, fostering a positive attitude, dispelling feelings of isolation and loneliness, greatest challenges, developing a sense of professionalism, developing collegiality, receiving feedback, suggestions for program improvement, and effect on retention. Reasons mentioned most often for making a helpful transition included the district monthly teacher meetings (25.5%), the accessibility of the mentor teacher (22.3%), and getting questions answered (21.3%). The top two teaching skills that were mentioned most often as improving were classroom management (35.7%) and lesson planning/pacing (31.0%). Receiving encouragement (50.0%) and the opportunity to discuss problems that arose in the classroom (30.6%) were cited as the main reasons for fostering a positive attitude the first year. Factors most frequently mentioned for the theme addressing isolation and loneliness were the influence of the mentor teacher (35.7%), the district monthly meetings (23.8%), and the influence of other veteran teachers (21.4%). The top two greatest challenges were classroom management (32.1%) and meeting the diverse needs of all students (21.4%). A sense of professionalism was developed mostly by

professional development opportunities (22.9%) and becoming more confident in the classroom (18.8%). Sharing frustrations and ideas (34.0%) and building relationships with other beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, and mentor teachers (34.0%) were cited as the main reasons which led to the development of collegiality. The main ways in which feedback was received were informally with the mentor teacher (31.7%) and through observations by the mentor teacher (19.0%). The two main suggestions for program improvement included the need to formally train mentor teachers (33.3%) and the need to carefully match mentor teachers with their mentees (29.4%). The main factors that were mentioned most often as influencing beginning or new-to-district teachers to remain in the field of education were the positive impact of the mentor teacher (57.9%) and the positive influence of the district monthly meetings (15.8%).

Chapter Five: Summary and Discussion

In this chapter the researcher presents a summary of the study, including the purpose, research question, instrumentation, and methodology. In addition, a discussion of the findings as related to the current literature, conclusions from the study, implications for further research, and summary statements are reviewed.

Purpose of the Study

This descriptive study investigated the perceived effectiveness of a beginning teacher mentoring program in one central Virginia public school district. It specifically investigated the research question, “What is the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program in its support of beginning and new-to-district teachers, based on the input of beginning, new-to-district, mentor teachers, and administrators involved in the program?”

Limitations of the Study

1. The selection of participants in the study was limited to beginning, new-to-district, mentor teachers, and administrators in one public school district in Central Virginia.
2. The study included input from teachers and administrators who had been involved in the teacher mentoring program in the chosen district at any time throughout the program’s five-year history and were still retained by the school district for the 2004-2005 school year.
3. Teachers and administrators who had been involved in the teacher mentoring program in the chosen district at any time throughout the program’s five-year history and were not retained by the school district for the 2004-2005 school year did not participate in the study.

4. There were insufficient numbers of participating administrators for adequate statistical analysis.
5. The assumptions derived from the survey questionnaire and interviews were limited by the specific questions that were addressed in the format.

Methodology

The type of research used was a descriptive method employing the use of a survey questionnaire and an interview protocol, both developed by the researcher. The study was conducted from October, 2004 through May, 2005. All elementary, middle school and high school teachers and administrators who had been involved at any time in the chosen district's beginning teacher mentoring program throughout its 5-year history and retained for the 2004-2005 school year were invited to participate in the survey and in the interview. Contact data was unavailable for teachers and administrators who were no longer retained by the school district for the 2004-2005 school year; therefore these teachers and administrators did not participate in the study. Of the 218 mentoring program participants who were invited to respond, 87 completed and returned the questionnaire, for a response rate of 40%. Of the 87 respondents, 33 were beginning teachers, 25 were new-to-district teachers, 23 were mentor teachers, and 6 were administrators. Seventeen of the survey questionnaire respondents agreed to be interviewed, 7 of which were beginning teachers, 8 were new-to-district teachers, 3 were mentor teachers, and 1 was an administrator. Two of the interview participants served the unique role of having been either a beginning or new-to-district teacher several years ago and mentor teachers more recently, so answered interview questions from both perspectives.

Instrumentation

A scaled response survey questionnaire and interview protocol, both developed by the researcher, were used as methods of data collection. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were employed in order to obtain triangulation, enhance validity and reliability, and provide a balance between numerical representations and human perspectives and thoughts (Creswell, 2003). Both the survey questionnaire and interview protocol were based on current research on beginning teacher mentoring programs, and on the teacher mentoring program guidelines developed and recommended by the Virginia Department of Education in 1999. Appendix M relates the survey questionnaire item and interview questions with a listing of the Virginia Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program Guidelines. Appendix L presents a table of content representativeness that links the survey questionnaire items, the interview protocol, and pertinent literature references.

The survey questionnaire addressed the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program regarding the support that beginning teachers received in transitioning into the field of education and the support new-to-district teachers received in transitioning into a new school district. The survey questionnaire was developed by the researcher in three separate versions; one version for beginning and new-to-district teachers, one for mentor teachers, and one version for administrators. Each version used the same questions; however slightly different wording was used, based on the role of the respondent. The demographic items for the administrators' version did not include items related to teacher preparation or teaching experience. The questionnaire used a five-part scaled format ranging from strongly disagree to

strongly agree. The first 20 items of the survey questionnaire addressed the perceived effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program in the chosen district, and the last 6 items addressed general demographic information about the survey participants.

Items 21-26 of the survey questionnaire asked respondents for general demographic characteristics, including gender, age, level taught, teacher preparation, teaching experience, and years in the mentoring program. Frequencies and percentages were presented as a cross-tabulation of the role that respondents served in the program (beginning teacher, new-to-district teacher, mentor teacher, or administrator) and the demographic data. A summary of the overall means and standard deviations for the 20 items that addressed the perceived effectiveness of the teacher mentoring program was presented. In addition, a frequency analysis for each group (beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators) presenting the results of the five scaled responses was included. A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedure was performed in order to evaluate the possible effects that each demographic may have had on the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program.

The interview protocol (see Appendix J) was comprised of 13 semi-structured and open-ended questions based on the survey questionnaire. Interviews took place from May 5, 2005 through May 16, 2005, and were conducted by the researcher at the participants' individual schools. Interviews were audio taped with prior written permission, and then transcribed by the researcher. A list of 10 themes based directly on the 13 interview questions was developed, which included the following: (a)

transition into the field of education (for beginning teachers) or into the school district (for new-to-district teachers), (b) improvement of teaching skills, (c) fostering a positive attitude, (d) dispelling feelings of isolation, (e) greatest challenges, (f) developing a sense of professionalism, (g) developing collegiality, (h) receiving feedback, (i) suggestions for program improvement, and (j) effects on retention. Each of the 10 themes was then further sub-divided into categories based on the interview responses given that related to each theme. Frequencies and percentages for each theme sub-category were presented based on the number of times each sub-category was mentioned by interview participants. An inter-rater reliability analysis of the interview themes was performed by the researcher and a colleague that resulted in an agreement rate of 75%. Demographic characteristics of interview participants were also presented.

Discussion of Findings

In this section of Chapter Five, the researcher presents the findings of the study supported by the review of related literature. The demographic data of the survey questionnaire respondents are discussed, as well as the data of the perceived effectiveness of the teacher mentoring program from both the questionnaire and the interviews. The data related to the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program are organized into categories based on Virginia's guidelines for beginning teacher mentoring programs. The categories discussed are: transition into the field of education (for beginning teachers) or into the school district (for new-to-district teachers), improvement of teaching skills, fostering a positive attitude, dispelling

feelings of isolation, greatest challenges, developing a sense of professionalism, developing collegiality, and receiving feedback.

Survey questionnaire demographics. Survey questionnaire respondents were asked to report demographic data about themselves in the categories of gender, age, level taught, teacher preparation, teaching experience, and number of years of participation in the mentoring program. The role in the mentoring program that each respondent served was determined based on which of the three versions of the questionnaire each respondent answered.

Of the 87 respondents, 33 were beginning teachers, 25 were new-to-district teachers, 23 were mentor teachers, and 6 were administrators. Demographic data on age and teaching experience indicated that overall, survey respondents tended to be a somewhat young group. Most of the respondents were age 50 or younger (93.1%), including 33 beginning teachers, 24 new-to-district teachers, and 19 mentor teachers. Only one new-to-district teacher, 3 mentor teachers and 1 administrator were in the 51-60 years age bracket, and 1 mentor teacher was in the 61-70 years age bracket.

Linked with age was the amount of teaching experience that teacher respondents indicated. Over half (49 = 56.3%) of the teacher respondents had taught for 7 years or less, with 48 of these teachers in the beginning and new-to-district roles. Four new-to-district teachers and 3 mentor teachers indicated they had 8-12 years of teaching experience. Four new-to-district teachers and 7 mentor teachers indicated they had 13-17 years of experience; 2 new-to-district and 6 mentor teachers had 18-22 years of teaching experience, and 6 mentor teachers had taught for 23 or more years. As expected, as the age of the teachers increased, their role in the

mentoring program shifted from that of beginning or new-to-district teacher to that of mentor teacher. Administrators were not asked how many years they had taught on their version of the survey questionnaire.

Most survey questionnaire respondents were female (78.2%), with the highest number found in the role of beginning teacher (8 = 28.7%). Male mentor teachers comprised the smallest group, with only 2 out of 23 serving as mentors. Four of the administrators were female and two were male. Administrators were evenly represented among elementary, middle school and high school. Teachers from the elementary school level represented 48.3%, middle school 25.3%, and high school 19.5%.

Teacher respondents who attended a traditional 4-year teacher education program comprised a total of 46.0%, while those attending a 4-year program plus earning a Master's degree comprised 18.4%. Only 8 teachers (9.2%); 2 beginning teachers, 5 new-to-district teachers, and 1 mentor teacher had completed a 5-year teacher preparation program. Lateral entry respondents comprised only 3.4%, with 2 respondents as beginning teachers and 1 as a new-to-district teacher. Another 4 (4.6%) teachers were lateral entry plus earning a Master's degree. Two of these were beginning teachers, one was a new-to-district teacher, and one was a mentor teacher. Teachers that indicated the other category for teacher preparation comprised 11.5%, with 7 as beginning teachers, 2 as new-to-district teachers, and 1 as a mentor teacher. Explanations given for the other category included having a provisional licensure, having an earned Bachelor's degree but currently working on a Master's degree or taking education courses, or having a counseling degree. Administrators were not

asked to report teacher preparation demographics on their version of the survey questionnaire.

Most of the respondents had participated in the mentoring program for 1 year (64.4%), most of which were beginning and new-to-district teachers. Those respondents who had been involved in the program for 2 years comprised 18.4%, with most of these as mentor teachers. The 3-year category comprised 3.4%, followed by 8.0% for 4 years, and 5.7% who had been involved for all 5 years of the program's existence.

A cross-tabulation of role in the mentoring program (beginning teachers, new-to-district teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators) with the other demographic characteristics of the survey questionnaire respondents revealed interesting data about each group.

Over 75% of the 33 beginning teachers surveyed were female, and a majority (66.7%), were in the 21-30 years age bracket; although 15.2% were in the 41-50 years age bracket. Most of the beginning teachers taught at the elementary level (54.5%), and most had graduated from a 4-year teacher preparation program (57.6%). A large percentage had only participated in the mentoring program for 1 year (84.8%); however, there were 3 beginning teachers who had been involved in the program for 2 years, and 2 who had been involved for 3 years. These teachers started as beginning teachers early in the program's history and had been retained by the school district long enough to then become mentor teachers.

Among the 25 new-to-district teachers surveyed, 72% were female, but were generally older than the beginning teachers surveyed. Most were in the 31-40 years

age bracket (48.0%), followed by 28.0% in the 51-60 years age bracket. Most new-to-district teachers surveyed were teaching at the high school level (40.0%), followed by 36.0% at the elementary level and 24.0% at the middle school level. Most new-to-district teachers had graduated from a 4-year teacher preparation program (48.0%), and most had taught for 3-7 years (62.5%). Most of this group of teachers had been involved in the mentoring program for one year; however, seven teachers indicated that they had been involved in the program for two years or more.

A large percentage of the 23 mentor teachers surveyed were female (91.3%), and most were in the 41-50 years age bracket (52.2%), with over half of them (52.2%) having 18 or more years of teaching experience. Most mentor teachers taught at the elementary school level (65.2%), and were evenly distributed between middle school and high school at 17.4% for each of these levels. Most had graduated from a 4-year teacher preparation program, but had also earned a Master's degree (47.8%). Those that had graduated from a 4-year teacher preparation program without earning a Master's degree comprised 39.1% of mentor teachers surveyed. The largest percentage of mentor teachers had participated in the mentoring program for 1 year (39.1%); however this was followed closely by 34.8% who had been involved for 2 years, and 6 mentor teachers indicated that they had been involved in the program for 3 years or more.

A small number of administrators participated in the survey (six); however, each level of teaching (elementary, middle school, and high school) was evenly represented among this group. Of the administrators surveyed, four were female. There was a wide range of ages represented, with 1 administrator in the 21-30 years

age bracket, 2 in the 31-40 years age bracket, 2 in the 41-50 years age bracket, and 1 in the 51-60 years age bracket. One administrator had served in the teacher mentoring program for one year; one administrator participated in the program for two years; one participated for four years; and three of the administrators surveyed had served in the mentoring program for all five years of the program's existence. Administrators were not asked to report teacher preparation program or years teaching experience demographics.

Making the transition. A majority of the survey questionnaire respondents (65.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that the mentoring program was doing a good job of transitioning beginning teachers into the field of education or transitioning new-to-district teachers into the district. Administrators ranked this item highest (100.0%), followed by mentor teachers (72.6%), beginning teachers (57.6%), and new-to-district teachers, who agreed or strongly agreed by 52.0%. The interview participants provided helpful insight into this question by discussing ways in which the mentoring program or the mentor teacher helped make the transition easier. A recurring theme that was often mentioned by the beginning and new-to-district teachers was the importance of having someone to go to with questions, get advice from, share ideas with, or with whom to share their frustrations. Eleanor, a mentor teacher who was interviewed, said, "I was always going in and checking on them [mentees], even if they weren't coming to me. Sometimes new teachers just need to vent a little bit, and from that venting we could have a good discussion about what worked or didn't work, and what we could try." Gordon & Maxey (2000) discussed how difficult and frustrating it can be for beginning teachers at the start of the school year, and how

they suffer from “information overload.” Important information is discussed during the new teacher orientation meetings that can be confusing and overwhelming for both the beginning teacher and the new-to-district teacher. Kate, a new-to-district teacher, remarked during her interview, “You never can keep it all in your head after the first meetings so it’s nice to have someone to go to and ask, ‘Now what did they tell me about such and such?’” Having mentor teachers to help beginning and new-to-district teachers sort out all of this information, as well as to help them learn all of the unwritten rules, customs, and routines of the school can be a key component of the transitioning process. In addition, different groups of people such as administrators, parents, students, and other teachers have different expectations, leading to what Corcoran called “the condition of not knowing” (1981, p. 20). Cody, a beginning teacher who had experienced a difficult start shared, “As a new teacher I was frustrated by not knowing what to do in a given situation.” Odell (1989), in a comprehensive list of things that new teachers need, included ideas about instruction, personal and emotional support, resources and materials for teaching, information about school policy and procedure, and techniques for classroom discipline.

The importance of having a mentor teacher who was in close proximity to their classroom and readily accessible was a theme sub-category that was mentioned 22.3% of the time by interview participants. Beginning and new-to-district teachers alike stated that it was nice when their mentor teachers were also in their same grade level or teaching their same subject. Kelly, a beginning teacher who had an excellent first year stated, “It’s much better to have your mentor next door than on the other side of the building. She was also in my grade, which I think is necessary.” Lila,

another beginning teacher shared, “My mentor teacher was right next to me and was always there to answer questions, give me suggestions about classroom management, seating arrangements, even individual concerns about students and how to best handle their behavior. She would meet with me and I could just go over and say, ‘Help! Show me how to do this!’”

Beginning or new-to-district teachers with mentor teachers who were not nearby, nor in the same subject area or grade level, expressed a higher level of disappointment and dissatisfaction with their transition experience. Maggie, a beginning teacher stated, “I had very little contact with my mentor. He’s in a different grade level and teaches a different subject, so that may have been the reason why.” Cody, a beginning teacher who experienced a difficult start, had been assigned to a mentor teacher at the beginning of the school year, but did not have much contact with the mentor teacher because the mentor teacher’s classroom was two floors removed from his classroom. Cody and his mentor teacher were also teaching different subjects, which Cody felt hampered an effective mentor/mentee relationship. These findings are supported by The Alliance for Excellent Education (2004), which lists several elements of a comprehensive induction package, which they say many beginning teachers are not receiving. One of these elements includes “a helpful mentor teacher in the same subject area.” Other studies suggest that beginning teachers are more likely to continue teaching in the schools in which they originally started teaching when they receive mentoring from teachers in their subject areas (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

The required beginning teacher monthly meetings that were part of the teacher mentoring program were found to be a positive aspect of the mentoring program. Results of the survey questionnaire indicated that 72.8% of beginning teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the monthly meetings provided opportunities to interact with other new teachers, and 64.0% of new-to-district teachers agreed or strongly agreed as well. Mentor teachers agreed or strongly agreed by 95.7% and administrators by 100%. Although some of the beginning and new-to-district teachers who were interviewed did not especially relish the idea of another monthly meeting, many did perceive the meetings as important, and several stated that the meetings were informative, relevant, and fun. Cody, a beginning teacher shared, “I did have somewhat of a bad attitude about them [the monthly meetings] because they were just one more thing to do that first year. It was valuable though to be with all those first year teachers, but you are exhausted your first year, and another meeting is hard.” Although several beginning and new-to-district teachers gave positive input about the monthly meetings, an exception was Stu, a beginning teacher in the mentoring program three years ago, who felt the monthly meetings had been a waste of time, the topics were “elementary in nature,” and mixed with wry humor, employing skits and role playing as presentation techniques that he felt were insulting and condescending. The main reasons given by beginning and new-to-district teachers interviewed as the primary value of attending the monthly meetings were sharing frustrations, getting new ideas, and developing relationships with other new teachers. These results reflect Darling-Hammond’s (2003) findings, where she stated that induction programs for beginning teachers that incorporate an effective program of mentoring have been shown to be highly effective in transitioning beginning teachers into the profession.

Getting the amount of help needed with teaching. The majority of survey questionnaire respondents (65.5%) felt that beginning and new-to-district teachers were receiving the amount of help they needed from their mentor teacher in order to develop their teaching skills. Beginning teachers agreed or strongly agreed by 66.7%, but new-to-district teachers less so, by 48.0%. Mentor teachers agreed or disagreed by 78.3% and administrators by 83.4%. Interview participants mentioned several specific teaching skills that they felt had improved as a result of the mentoring program or their mentor teacher's influence: classroom management was mentioned most often (35.7%), followed closely by the improvement of lesson planning and pacing (31.0%). Other skills that were mentioned as showing improvement included organization of paperwork (9.5%), handling parents (9.5%), meeting student needs (7.1%), and self-reflection (7.1%). Interview participants indicated that several of the monthly teacher mentoring meetings addressed these topics. Johnson et al. (2004) emphasized the importance of allowing beginning teachers to make a gradual transition as they acquire the teaching skills they need to become successful. Johnson and Kardos (2002) discussed the need that beginning teachers have for veteran teachers and principals to help them develop instructional strategies.

Beginning teacher challenges. Classroom management was the main challenge mentioned most often by interview participants (32.1%), and 72.4% of all survey questionnaire respondents agreed or strongly agreed that adequate opportunities were offered by the mentoring program to discuss classroom management strategies. One of the top challenges that beginning teachers have that is consistently listed in the literature is classroom management and discipline (Brock &

Grady, 2001; Levine & Nolan (2000); Wong, 1998). Renard (2003) lists the major concerns that beginning teachers have: classroom management, student motivation, meeting students' individual needs, assessment and evaluation, and successfully communicating with parents. Norton and Kelly (1997) also discuss organization of the overload of paperwork as well as behavior management, and Gordon and Maxey (2000) and Brock and Grady (2001) identify classroom management and dealing with difficult students as one of the major concerns that beginning teachers have. Renard (2003) stated that beginning teachers are learning to become experts in their subject matter and are often just one step ahead of their students. Other challenges discussed by interview participants support findings from the literature, and include meeting the diverse needs of students, getting to know the content and curriculum, lesson planning, communicating with parents, obtaining resources, organizing paperwork, time management, and student evaluation. Results of the study support the research findings about greatest challenges among beginning teachers, and how they are best addressed. A few of the teachers who were interviewed felt that the monthly mentoring program topics were important in helping them address their teaching challenges; however, most beginning and new-to-district teachers felt that their mentor teacher was the primary influence that helped.

Attitude. A majority of overall survey questionnaire respondents (56.3%) felt that the beginning and new-to-district teachers in the mentoring program had a positive attitude their first year of teaching. A large percentage of mentor teachers felt this was true (69.6%) and all of the administrators agreed or strongly agreed that the mentees in their program had a positive attitude. The majority of beginning teachers

felt their attitude was positive (54.5%), but only 36.0% of new-to-district teachers thought their attitude was positive the first year in this district. Beginning or new-to-district teachers who were interviewed mentioned receiving encouragement from their mentor teacher or other teachers as the most important factor in maintaining their positive attitude. Having a venue to discuss problems, with either the mentor teacher or at the monthly teacher mentoring meetings, was also listed as an important contributing factor to positive attitude. Cultivating friendships with other teachers and being part of a team were important factors as well. Hale's study in 1992 revealed that beginning teachers reported that their relationship with a mentor teacher to some degree increased their teaching ability and satisfaction with their job, improved their personal and professional well-being, assisted them with understanding the philosophy and community of the school, and reduced feelings of isolation and anxiety.

Interview participants discussed the importance of the monthly teacher mentoring meetings, which they felt afforded them an opportunity to talk with teachers their own age, exchange ideas, and just simply vent their frustrations with each other. Knowing that they were not alone and that they were "all in this together," was a recurring theme mentioned. Kelly, a beginning teacher, stated, "Just knowing that they're going through the same things so you don't feel like you're the only one who's making mistakes. Just getting ideas and hearing how they handle certain situations helped." Abby, a new-to-district teacher, shared, "The nice thing was that sense of camaraderie; that sense that we were all in this together. We could talk about similar problems we were having and share ideas."

Developing collegiality and dispelling isolation and loneliness. Closely related to positive attitude was a feeling that most teachers who were interviewed shared of “being part of the group.” Little (1990) discussed the importance of developing a sense of collegiality and of dispelling the feeling of isolation that beginning teachers often have. When beginning teachers join a close-knit staff where friendships and social groups are already formed and the shared history and norms of the school are unknown to them, it becomes a challenge to become part of the school community (Brock & Grady, 1995, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1995).

Findings from the study indicate that the teacher mentoring program is doing a good job of developing collegiality among beginning and new-to-district teachers and dispelling feelings of isolation and loneliness that they may often experience. Leslie, a beginning teacher, discussed how her mentor teacher had been instrumental in making her feel connected by stating, “She never leaves me alone. She never says, ‘Now you’re on your own.’ She’s always there to help. She has shared every idea with me. She’s introduced me to other teachers, and helped me get comfortable with the principal.” Cody, a beginning teacher, felt isolated or lonely his first year because he did not get the support he would have liked from his mentor teacher, and Maggie, a new-to-district teacher, felt isolated because of the nature of her teaching position. She was an elementary art teacher who did not experience the inclusive feeling that many of the other beginning or new-to-district teachers discussed. The mentor who had been assigned to her taught a different subject and grade level and did not make regular contact with her throughout the year. Despite this, she did have a good first year, because an art teacher from another school took it upon herself to informally

mentor her by regularly meeting with her, answering any questions she had, and providing the guidance and encouragement that would be expected from her assigned mentor.

The majority of beginning teacher survey questionnaire respondents (72.8%) indicated that they did not feel isolated or lonely their first year, with 60.0% of new-to-district teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing. All administrators agreed or strongly agreed that the mentees in the mentoring program did not feel lonely or isolated their first year, and 91.3% of mentor teachers agreed or strongly agreed. James, the administrator who was interviewed, stated, “I think they [new teachers] feel part of the team. That’s something we do a lot of at the beginning of the year – work on team building together.”

The monthly teacher mentoring meetings were cited by interview participants as an important contributing factor to the development of collegiality as well. Reasons given that contributed to the development of collegiality were the opportunities to share frustrations, build relationships, share ideas, ask questions, and receive mutual encouragement at the monthly meetings. Beginning teachers agreed or strongly agreed by 72.8% that adequate opportunities were provided by the mentoring program to meet with other new teachers to discuss concerns. New-to-district teachers agreed or strongly agreed by 64.0%.

Developing a sense of professionalism. Developing a sense of professionalism about teaching was addressed in the survey questionnaire as well as in the interview protocol. Brock and Grady (2001) discuss the importance of having a beginning teacher induction program that includes the goal of promoting professional well-

being. Most survey participants (66.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that the mentoring program helped beginning and new-to-district teachers develop a sense of professionalism throughout their first year. Many interview participants indicated that as their sense of confidence grew, so did their sense of professionalism and efficacy. As they became more adept in the classroom, and everyday tasks became second nature to them, they were free to begin to develop their own sense of teaching style and develop as a professional educator. Kelly, a beginning teacher, commented, “I feel so much more confident, and feel like I’ve been teaching for years – not just for one year.” Sally, another beginning teacher, stated, “I feel like I grew more confident in my educational background, and in being able to talk about why I do what I do. I almost felt like a veteran teacher in some ways.” James, the administrator who was interviewed, remarked, “It was fun to watch those leadership skills develop, and encourage that development. Our new teachers have a lot to contribute to what we do here – as much as our veterans do. Not allowing them to assume they can’t do anything well. They really do have a strength, and allowing them to share that strength with the rest of us.”

Professional development opportunities for new teachers, including the topics discussed at the monthly teacher mentoring meetings, were mentioned most frequently by interview participants, as factors that contributed to their professional development. Lila, a beginning teacher, stated, “My mentor has given me a new awareness about the professional development that is available if you just seek it out.” Jolie, a new-to-district teacher, when discussing the topics presented at the monthly meetings stated, “I feel like all of those sessions have been helpful and no time was

wasted, which is not always the case with [professional development] training.”

Research supports that novices must be offered continued professional development opportunities specifically designed for the beginning teacher (Hope, 1999; Walsdorf & Lynn, 2002).

Receiving feedback. The majority of the survey questionnaire respondents (72.4%) indicated that mentor teachers were communicating clearly with their mentees. Beginning teachers indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with this by 72.8%, and new-to-district teachers agreed or strongly agreed by 52.0%. Mentor teachers ranked themselves high in this category (91.3%), apparently perceiving themselves to be very effective communicators, with administrators agreeing or strongly agreeing by 83.3%. However, even though communication appeared to be strong between mentors and mentees, amount of feedback given by the mentor teacher was ranked poorly by beginning teachers and new-to-district teachers. The mentees present another picture, however, with beginning teachers agreeing by 33.4% and new-to-district teachers agreeing by only 16.0%. A clear contrast exists between perceptions of mentees and perceptions of mentor teachers and administrators on this topic. Mentor teachers felt that they were doing a good job of providing feedback to their mentees, as indicated by 78.2% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this item. Administrators also felt that mentor teachers were doing an adequate job of providing feedback, with 66.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing. Most interview beginning or new-to-district participants stated that they had not been observed by, nor had they observed their mentor teacher due to a scheduling conflict. Barbara, a beginning teacher, mentioned that her principal had offered to provide a substitute if she wanted

to pursue the observations, but that she had not followed through with it. James, the administrator who was interviewed, emphasized that he makes sure that all new teachers and their mentors know this opportunity is available; however, he stated that no new teachers or their mentors had taken advantage of it. Mutual observations between mentees and their mentor teachers are not a mentoring program requirement, and are only offered if the mentor teacher or mentee specifically request them. Many beginning or new-to-district teachers who were interviewed said that they were getting feedback through daily conversations, but that they often had to take the initiative on their own and seek help. Eleanor, a beginning teacher, stated, “There was a real openness, but you have to be willing to ask for help and admit you need it.” Cody, another beginning teacher, remarked, “I received feedback when I asked, but she [mentor] never came to me actually.” Feiman-Nemser (2003) stated that mentor teachers must think of beginning teachers as learners, and themselves as their teachers, and not simply wait to offer advice only when novices ask. Novices may feel reluctant to share problems or ask for help, believing that no one else is experiencing difficulties. They make the assumption that good teachers figure things out on their own. Cody, a beginning teacher who had a difficult first year said, “I would have liked to have seen the mentor teacher participate or come in and observe me. As a new teacher, I was frustrated by not knowing what to do in a given situation.” Johnson and Kardos stated (2002) that beginning teachers want veteran teachers and their principals to watch them teach and provide feedback, and then help them develop instructional strategies, model expert teaching behaviors, and share their insights. Danielson (2002) stated that when beginners are left to their own

devices in the early years of teaching, they are unlikely to grow. Any early satisfaction with their work, which is unfortunately too often the result of trial and error, has little chance of being sustained.

Related to feedback is the encouragement of self-reflection on teaching practices. Results of the survey questionnaire indicated that when mentor teachers were asked if they encouraged their mentees to self-reflect on their teaching, 86.0% agreed or strongly agreed that they did; however, only 24.0% of the new-to-district teachers agreed that they were encouraged to self-reflect on their teaching, and 51.5% of beginning teachers agreed or strongly agreed. These results also suggest a contrast in perceptions between mentor teachers and their mentees. In a study performed by Evertson and Smithey (2000), results suggested that mentors must not only provide much needed emotional support to their protégés, but must also be trained and willing to help them in a systematic manner through ongoing dialogue and reflection. They found that protégés of trained mentors showed evidence of developing and sustaining more workable classroom routines, managed instruction more smoothly, and gained student cooperation in academic tasks more effectively than beginning teachers who did not have trained mentors. Gratch (1998) reported that the sharing of teaching methods and materials was important to first-year teachers, but even more important was the mentor teachers' abilities to impart respect to novices and to help them reflect critically on their own teaching. Developing one's ability for reflective decision making during the teaching process is imperative to effective teaching. When beginning teachers are taught to critically reflect on their teaching, they begin to grow professionally and develop a sense of personal efficacy. Reflective thinking helps beginning teachers recognize the

strengths and weaknesses in their teaching, which in turn provides knowledge that will assist them in improving their teaching processes (Danielson, 2002).

As indicated by the conflicting results of the survey questionnaire about feedback received, as well as from several comments from the interviews, lack of adequate and timely feedback seems to be a weakness in the mentoring program. Informal feedback, which occurred during shared lunch periods, planning periods, or after school, was mentioned most often (31.7%) by interview participants as the main method that feedback was received from the mentor teacher. Reasons given most often for why observations were not occurring between mentees and their mentor teachers or other veteran teachers were conflicts in scheduling, where adequate time was not allowed for mutual observations. Research supports that purposefully scheduling time for first-year teachers to visit other classrooms and then reflect on the instructional practices they have observed is a key component of an effective induction program (Brock & Grady, 1998; Brown, 2002; Walsdorf & Lynn, 2002; Weasmer & Woods, 2000). Linked closely with feedback was the item which addressed the encouragement of self-reflection by the mentor teacher, which also produced conflicting perceptions of the effectiveness of the mentoring program between mentors and mentees. It is suggested that these two topics, providing valuable feedback and encouraging self-reflection on teaching, may need to be addressed by mentoring program administrators in greater detail.

Demographics and the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program. In order to examine the influence that the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents may have had on the perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedure was performed for each demographic item. The Analysis of Variance statistical procedure can be used to

compare two or more independent group means, and the one-way ANOVA addresses one independent variable (Shannon & Davenport, 2001). Due to the small sample size of participating administrators ($n = 6$), this group was not included in the ANOVA statistical analysis. Because some of the categories within each demographic item produced small cell sizes (see Table 2), some categories were collapsed in order to perform an adequate statistical analysis. Demographic items that had categories with inadequate cell sizes included age, teacher preparation, and years in the mentoring program. In the age demographic item, the last two categories (41-50 years and 51-70 years) were collapsed into one category, 41-70 years. In the teacher preparation demographic item, the first two categories (4 year degree and 4 year degree plus Master's degree) were collapsed into 4 year degree in order to maintain consistency with the other collapsed category; and the two categories of lateral entry and lateral entry plus Master's degree were collapsed into lateral entry. In the years of participation in the mentoring program demographic item the last three categories (3, 4, and 5 years) were collapsed into 3-5 years.

Results of the ANOVA procedure indicated that the demographic item related to role in the mentoring program (beginning teachers, $n = 33$; new-to-district teachers, $n = 25$; mentor teachers, $n = 23$) suggested significance at the $.05\alpha$ level for 12 of the 20 items. Post Hoc analyses of the 12 items that showed statistical significance indicated that significant relationships appear to exist between the new-to-district teacher group and the mentor teacher group in each of the 12 items, with 2 of the items (item 8 and item 17) also showing significance between the beginning teacher group and the mentor group. Upon reviewing data produced from the means and

standard deviations of the three groups of teachers, the researcher found that mentor teachers consistently ranked all of the 20 items that addressed perceived effectiveness of the mentoring program higher than the new-to-district teachers. Mentor teachers ranked 7 of the 20 items higher than all groups, including administrators, who typically had the highest ranking of all the groups. Conversely, new-to-district teachers ranked all of the 20 items lowest of all of the groups.

Distinct dichotomies appear to exist between the perceptions of mentees and their mentor teachers and some aspects of the mentoring program. For example, item 8, which showed significance ($p = .00$) between the mentor teacher group and both of the other teacher groups, addressed the amount of feedback that mentees were receiving from their mentor teachers. Both beginning and new-to-district teachers indicated that they were not receiving enough feedback about their teaching, as indicated by the means for these two groups for item 8. The mean for beginning teachers for this item was 2.76 (1.42), and the mean for new-to-district teachers was only 2.12 (1.30). However, mentor teachers indicated that feedback from mentor teachers was adequate, as the mean for this group for item 8 was 3.83 (0.78), revealing a sharp contrast between the perceptions of mentor teachers and their mentees. Another item that revealed significance ($p = .00$) between the mentor teacher group and both groups of mentees was item 17, which addressed whether the mentor teacher emphasized the importance of self-reflection on their teaching to their mentees. Mentor teachers had a mean of 4.04 (0.77) on this item, the beginning teachers' mean was 3.27 (1.23), and the new-to-district teachers' mean was only 2.44 (1.23) for this item.

Although administrators were not included in the ANOVA analysis due to small sample size ($n = 6$), the overall higher means of this group, which was 4.19 for all 20 items, compared to the overall means of beginning teachers (3.57) and new-to-district teachers (3.10) for these same 20 items, reveal a contrast that may indicate a dichotomy in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the mentoring program.

Mentoring program leaders may wish to address these contrasts, particularly in the areas of the amount and type of feedback that mentees are receiving and in the encouragement of self-reflection on teaching.

In addition to the demographic item of role in the mentoring program suggesting a large number of items that showed significance, gender also had over half of the items (11) indicating significance at the .05 α level. Since Post Hoc analyses of the ANOVA test indicated a high incidence of significance between mentor teachers and new-to-district teachers, one possible explanation may be the skewness of the sample, where only 2 mentor teachers were males, out of a total of 23. The new-to-district teacher group had 7 males out of 25, and the beginning teacher group had 8 teachers who were male out of 33.

The other demographic items revealed significance for a sporadic number of items. The demographic item related to level taught (elementary, $n = 42$; middle school, $n = 22$; high school, $n = 17$) indicated significance for 2 items at the .05 α level, items 3 and 18. Item 3 addressed reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness for beginning and new-to-district teachers, and item 18 addressed the amount of feedback received from the mentor teacher. The demographic item that addressed number of years in the mentoring program (1 year, $n = 55$; 2 years, $n = 15$; 3-5 years, $n = 11$) also indicated significance for 2 items at the .05 α

level, items 1 and 19. Item 1 addressed making a successful transition into teaching and item 19 was related to whether classroom management strategies were addressed by the mentoring program. The demographic item that addressed number of years of teaching experience (0-2 years, $n = 33$; 3-7 years, $n = 16$; 8-12 years, $n = 7$; 13-17 years, $n = 10$; 18-22 years, $n = 8$; 23+ years, $n = 6$) indicated significance for 1 item at the .05 α level, item 8. This item addressed the amount of feedback that mentees were receiving from their mentors. It is worthwhile to note that items 8 and/or 18, (where item 8 was positively worded and item 18 was negatively worded, both addressing the amount of feedback received from mentor teachers), showed significance for 3 of the demographic items: role in the mentoring program, years of teaching experience, and level taught. Both the age and the teacher preparation demographic items indicated significance for none of the items.

Conclusions. In 2002, the Committee to Enhance the K-12 Teaching Profession in Virginia recommended the implementation of a statewide, high-quality mentoring program for all beginning Virginia teachers. The report called for the development of standards for mentor teacher training, guidelines for the implementation of mentoring programs, and plans for the effective monitoring and evaluation of these programs. As a result, a set of guidelines was written for the development of beginning teacher mentor programs in Virginia (Virginia Department of Education, 2000). The key components of these guidelines include:

- The retention of quality teachers
- The improvement of beginning teachers' skills and performance
- The support of teacher morale, communications, and collegiality
- The development of a sense of professionalism and positive attitude
- The facilitation of a seamless transition into the first year of teaching

- The putting of theory into practice
- The prevention of teacher isolation
- The development of self-reflection

This research has examined the perceived effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program in one public school district in Central Virginia. The program was first implemented during the 2000-2001 school year, during the time when the state guidelines were undergoing development. The program has evolved in the past five years, gradually incorporating Virginia's guidelines into its own goals, among which are to provide a comfortable and nurturing environment that encourages and facilitates the personal and professional growth of beginning and new-to-district teachers. The district teacher mentoring program hopes to improve the effectiveness of the beginning and new-to-district teacher, with the goal of assuring quality for students, as well as increasing the retention rate of teachers with professional promise.

Based on the researcher's findings in this study, a positive overall mean ranking of 3.00 or greater for the perceived effectiveness of the teacher mentoring program was given for 95.0% of the 20 items on the survey questionnaire. The lowest overall mean on any survey item was 2.92 (1.33), which addressed whether mentor teachers provided feedback on a regular basis. The highest overall mean was 4.25 (1.00), which addressed whether new-to-district and beginning teachers were given opportunities to interact with each other throughout the school year.

Although the majority of interview participants indicated that they felt the mentoring program was doing a good job overall, several had suggestions for

program improvement. One recurring theme that was frequently mentioned was that mentors and mentees needed to be matched carefully. Three main criteria for the match surfaced: (a) the mentor and mentee should be in close proximity; (b) they should be in the same subject area, or; (c) the same grade level. Having compatible personalities was only mentioned by one beginning teacher, and this was in a positive sense and not a suggestion for improvement. James, the administrator who was interviewed, stated that every attempt is made to place the mentor with the mentee in close proximity to each other and to see that they are in the same grade level or subject area; however, at times there are not enough mentor teachers to fit the necessary criteria. Unfortunately, this results in some mentees being matched inappropriately. Cody, a beginning teacher who was interviewed, reflected, "From my own personal experience, I wish that mentors were someone in your hall. The subject area or grade level helps, but I think just having someone next door is important." Kate, a mentor teacher, shared, "They definitely need to try and match somebody up with someone who is in their field. I didn't mind mentoring the teacher I worked with, but I can't help but wonder if he would have benefited more from working with another social studies teacher, or a teacher on his grade level. But there was just nobody left who was willing to do it that year, and everybody had been matched up. That's why they came to me." Four of the teachers interviewed had special circumstances or a negative mentor teacher experience, and were either overlooked entirely or were inappropriately matched with their mentor teacher. Betty was a new-to-district teacher who had been hired late as a full-time substitute so had not been assigned a mentor. Maggie was a new-to-district teacher who taught art and had not

only been assigned a mentor teacher who taught in a different building, but who also taught a different subject and grade level. Barbara was a beginning teacher who had been assigned a mentor who taught in a different building so she never saw him except at the initial orientation meeting. Cody was a beginning teacher who was assigned to a mentor teacher who was a librarian, so they rarely connected with each other. Three of these teachers indicated that they would have had a very difficult year had they not had other veteran teachers who had taken them under their wing and informally mentored them throughout the school year. Cody did not have any such support, and had a very difficult time his first year. He stated, “A more proactive part on her [the mentor’s] part would have helped.” Many mentor/mentee matches fail for various reasons such as personality conflicts, divergent teaching styles, or school structures and schedules that do not support the mentoring relationship. Ideally, mentors and mentees should be paired from the same subject area or grade level, and their classrooms should be in close proximity to each other. Studies suggest that beginning teachers are more likely to continue teaching in the schools in which they originally started teaching when they receive mentoring from teachers in their subject areas (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Linked closely to mentor/mentee matching were suggestions from interview participants about mentor training; compensation for mentors, either monetarily or through providing release time; providing a specific set of criteria for mentoring; and requiring more accountability for mentoring. Kate, a new-to-district teacher stated, “I don’t think the mentor teachers receive any training, and I also don’t know if there is someone who goes in and checks on them and says, ‘How are you doing as a

mentor?’ Someone who evaluates the job they’re doing.” Maggie, another new-to-district teacher who had been assigned to a mentor but had very little contact with him, suggested, “If someone is a mentor, maybe they could have a little checklist that said something like: ‘Have you contacted your new teacher? Have you met them face to face so they at least know who you are?’” The district does provide a modest stipend for its mentor teachers (\$100) which comes from state funding for mentor programs; however, as indicated by the suggestions from the teachers interviewed, this state money could perhaps be channeled into mentor training, and mentor teachers be provided with another more meaningful form of compensation such as release time. Johnson et al. (2004) stated that mentors and their mentees should have common release time so that meaningful conversations about teaching can occur and so that mutual classroom observations can take place, and they must be willing to take on the responsibility of the mentoring relationship, and be fully equipped with the necessary training.

Most teachers interviewed agreed that the monthly meetings were valuable; however, some suggested that they be less frequent in the second half of the school year. Stu, a beginning teacher, suggested that the monthly meeting topics be presented in a more professional manner, by professors from a university, instead of “in-house” presentations. Becky, a beginning teacher, and James, an administrator, suggested that the program be extended beyond the first year, suggesting that second-year teachers would not only benefit from some of the monthly topics, but would also be valuable resources for the new group of first-year teachers the following year.

Although this research did not specifically examine teacher retention in the chosen school district, interview participants were asked if they felt that the mentoring program influenced beginning and new-to-district teachers' decisions to remain in the field of education. Over 75% agreed that the program was a positive influence on this decision in some regard. Bill, a beginning teacher, and Maggie, a new-to-district teacher, felt that their decision to remain in education was intrinsically motivated, although they did agree that the mentoring program positively affected their first year. Stu, a beginning teacher who had had a negative experience with the program, stated that he would continue to remain in education despite this experience, and Abby, a new-to-district teacher who felt she received too much criticism and not enough affirmation from her mentor teacher, stated that her experience had caused her to "think about the possibility of another career." Huling-Austin's research in 1990 suggested that mentoring in the early years of teaching is an investment that pays high long-term dividends for school districts, and that it is more cost-effective to provide beginning teacher induction programs that reduce teacher attrition than to continue funding recruitment and hiring initiatives to replace large numbers of teachers leaving the profession. Well-designed and well-supported induction and mentoring programs will enhance the beginning teacher's effectiveness, as well as increase their retention rates.

Most states currently mandate teacher induction and mentoring in some form; however, these induction and mentoring programs may not be comprehensive, and may consist of as little as a one-day orientation, a casual assignment of a teacher buddy, periodic workshops, or instruction in generic classroom management (Gold,

1996; Wayne, Youngs, & Fleischman, 2005). Less than 1% of teachers get what the Alliance for Excellent Education (2004) referred to as a comprehensive induction package. A comprehensive induction package would include a reduced number of course preparations, a helpful mentor in the same field, a seminar tailored to the needs of beginning teachers, strong communication with administrators, and time for planning and collaboration with other teachers. A meaningful beginning teacher mentoring program should have elements that include the following (Johnson et al., 2004; Saphier, Freedman, & Aschheim, 2001):

- mentors are carefully selected and matched with their mentees
- mentors are given training in effective communication and peer coaching techniques
- attention is given to the concerns of beginning teachers
- special consideration is given to the beginning of the school year when novice teachers will feel initially exhausted and overwhelmed
- regular contacts and meetings between mentors and mentees are scheduled throughout the school year
- assistance in acclimating beginning teachers to the school community is provided

Results of the findings indicate that several of these criteria for an effective mentoring program have been met. The majority of teachers and administrators surveyed agree that the program is doing a good job of mentoring both the beginning and new-to-district teachers involved. Both beginning and new-to-district teachers are introduced to the school and to teaching with several days of comprehensive and meaningful orientation. They are acclimated to the school community well, and are provided with a New Teacher Manual and computer disk that has helpful information regarding school contacts, procedures, rules, and

suggestions. They attend a monthly teacher mentoring meeting throughout the school year, where topics relevant to new teachers are presented. Here they are also given the opportunity to exchange ideas, share frustrations, and build relationships with other new teachers from within the district.

Johnson et al. (2004) suggested that at best, mentors can provide beginning teachers with valuable support that can answer their questions, share lesson plans, observe their classes, provide encouragement, and help transition them into the school community. Mentor/mentee relationships in the chosen district's program that were appropriately matched did a good job of meeting all of the criteria cited by Johnson et al. An attempt is made to appropriately match mentors with mentees by classroom proximity, grade level, and subject area; however, because there are not always enough mentor teachers who fit the criteria, inappropriate matches result.

Findings from the study suggest that some weaknesses of the program are inadequate observations & feedback between mentors & mentees and minimal encouragement by mentor teachers to their mentees regarding self-reflection on teaching. Suggestions for program improvement from the interview participants included addressing scheduling conflicts that do not allow for adequate observations and feedback between mentors and mentees, providing training and more accountability for mentor teachers, and carefully matching mentor teachers with their mentees in regard to classroom proximity, grade level or subject taught. Danielson (2002) discussed important skills that mentor teachers must possess in order to be effective in their mentoring role. Mentor teachers must know what to observe and how to provide feedback to their protégés; understand how to keep open lines of communication; know how to resolve conflicts; be able to reflect on their own teaching and

communicate their teaching thought processes; provide appropriate challenges for their protégés, and foster reflective thinking. Adequate mentor training would aid in the development of all of these skills in this district.

Recommendations for improvement of the beginning teacher mentor program in this study include:

- (a) Mentoring program leaders and administrators need to collaborate more fully to develop ways in which mentor teachers and their mentees' schedules may be arranged to more fully accommodate adequate observation and feedback time.
- (b) Mentoring program leaders and administrators need to provide in-service training for mentor teachers that will more adequately equip mentor teachers for the mentoring task. This may include instruction in how to effectively communicate and provide effective feedback to their mentees, particularly in areas such as the encouragement of self-reflection on teaching.
- (c) Mentoring program leaders and administrators need to provide an ongoing system of accountability for mentor teachers and program assessment that would effectively insure that the goals of the mentoring program are being fulfilled.

Implications for Further Research

Research studies and program evaluations on mentoring and induction programs have provided useful information that has influenced many programs to continually refine their efforts at effective beginning teacher mentoring. Well designed and well supported induction and mentoring programs have been shown to increase retention rates for beginning teachers because they improve their attitudes, feelings of efficacy, and their instructional skills. Not only are beginning teacher

induction and mentoring programs beneficial to new teachers, but they also provide ongoing and satisfying learning and leadership challenges for seasoned teachers who become mentors, thus increasing overall teacher retention rates (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

Additional research is needed to further refine the ongoing effort to improve programs of mentoring and induction for beginning teachers. Based on the researcher's findings from conducting this descriptive study of a mentoring program in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the following areas for further research are suggested.

1. Replicating the present study, compare the perceived effectiveness of a beginning teacher mentoring program in another school district.
2. Compare the perceived effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring programs with beginning teacher retention rates.
3. Compare the perceived effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring programs with the type of mentor training offered.
4. Compare the perceived effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring programs at the district level with programs at the building level.
5. Compare the perceived effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring programs that include both beginning and new-to-district teachers with programs that induct and mentor the two groups separately.
6. Compare the perceived effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring programs with mentor/mentee matches in the same subject area with mentor/mentee matches not in the same subject area.

7. Compare the perceived effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring programs with mentor/mentee matches at the same grade level with mentor/mentee matches not at the same grade level.
8. Compare the perceived effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring programs with mentor/mentee matches with classrooms within close proximity to each other with mentor/mentee matches not within close proximity.
9. Compare the perceived effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring programs with beginning teachers receiving a comprehensive induction and mentoring package with those receiving what their district typically offers for teacher induction and mentoring.

Findings from this study provide contributions to the existing literature on the effect of mentoring on beginning and new-to-district teachers, the systematic impact of beginning teacher mentoring programs and meeting beginning teacher challenges. The results suggest that the chosen district's beginning teacher mentoring program, as perceived by the teachers and administrators active in the program, is effective in meeting the needs of beginning and new-to-district teachers.

The findings indicate that the mentoring program in the chosen school district has begun to incorporate the suggested Virginia guidelines for mentoring programs upon which the survey instrument and interview protocol were based. Most teachers and administrators involved in the program were satisfied with many aspects of the program. Specifically, teachers and administrators involved in the mentoring program indicated that beginning and new-to-district teachers (a) were given ample

opportunities to discuss problems and share frustrations at the monthly beginning teacher meetings; (b) made to feel welcome and part of the school community; and (c) were provided with caring mentor teachers with whom they communicated clearly. Interview participants most often mentioned the beginning teacher monthly meetings and their mentor teachers as the two main influences that fostered a positive attitude their first year. The one challenge referred to most frequently was classroom management, and mentees indicated that their mentor teachers and the mentoring program provided opportunities for discussion which helped them address this challenge.

As suggested by the results of this study, weaknesses in the mentoring program include inadequate observation and feedback time between mentors and mentees, and minimal encouragement from mentor teachers to their mentees regarding self-reflection on teaching. Suggestions for program improvements from interview participants included addressing scheduling conflicts that do not allow for adequate observations and feedback between mentors and mentees, providing training and more accountability for mentor teachers, and carefully matching mentor teachers with their mentees in regard to classroom proximity, grade level or subject taught. Although the chosen district's mentoring program has several strengths, it currently does not have an ongoing system of program assessment in place, nor has it evaluated the relationship between teacher retention rates and the effect of the mentoring program since its inception five years ago.

The literature suggests that all programs of mentoring and induction need to be continuously assessed and improved in order to enhance strengths and improve on

weaknesses. Although favorable economic circumstances experienced by many affluent school districts permit expensive approaches to mentoring, school districts that struggle with limited budgets can adapt guidelines and recommendations from the literature in creative and innovative ways. This school district has demonstrated its commitment to beginning and new-to-district teachers, by conducting informative and relevant monthly beginning teacher mentoring meetings and by assigning mentor teachers to both groups of teachers. The current national emphasis on the recruitment of qualified teachers for every classroom is one important aspect of improving student performance. Retaining these qualified teachers requires a commitment to professional growth, which is a goal that can be addressed through a teacher mentoring program that exhibits ongoing commitment and excellence.

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Appendix A

Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program Survey, Mentor Teacher and Administrator Versions

Mentor Teachers:

Please reflect back on the experience you had as a mentor teacher *when you participated* in the beginning teacher mentoring program in this school district. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the mentoring program? (Please circle your answer).

1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = undecided
4 = agree
5 = strongly agree

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The beginning teacher mentoring program was a key factor in helping the teacher(s) I mentored adjust to the teaching profession (if a beginning teacher) or to this school district (if a new teacher). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I gave the teacher(s) I mentored the amount of help they needed with their teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. The mentoring program helped reduce feelings of isolation that new and beginning teachers may have. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The mentoring program helped the teacher(s) I mentored develop a positive attitude about teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The mentoring program helped the teacher(s) I mentored develop a sense of professionalism about teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. The mentoring program provided opportunities throughout the school year for new and beginning teachers to discuss their classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers within the school district. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I encouraged the teacher(s) I mentored to self-reflect on their teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I provided feedback to the teacher(s) I mentored about their teaching on a regular basis. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. The mentoring program afforded new and beginning teachers opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I had clear communication with the teacher(s) I mentored. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. The mentoring program did <i>not</i> play a significant role in helping the teacher(s) I mentored adjust to their first year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. The teacher(s) I mentored often needed more assistance with their teaching than what I provided. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. The mentoring program did <i>not</i> help new and beginning teachers feel less isolated or alone during their first year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. The mentoring program did <i>not</i> help the teacher(s) I mentored develop a positive attitude about teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. The mentoring program did <i>not</i> help instill in the teacher(s) I mentored a sense of professionalism about teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please go to next page

1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = undecided
4 = agree
5 = strongly agree

16. The mentoring program did *not* schedule district-wide meetings for new and beginning teachers throughout the school year to get together and discuss their teaching concerns. 1 2 3 4 5
17. I did *not* stress the importance of self-reflection on teaching to the teacher(s) I mentored. 1 2 3 4 5
18. I provided feedback to the teacher(s) I mentored about their teaching only when they asked. 1 2 3 4 5
19. Classroom management strategies were *not* addressed by the mentoring program. 1 2 3 4 5
20. I had difficulty communicating clearly with the teacher(s) I mentored. 1 2 3 4 5
21. Please indicate your gender:
 male
 female
22. Please indicate your age *during your most recent participation* in the mentoring program:
 21-30 years
 31-40 years
 41-50 years
 51-60 years
 61-70 years
23. Please indicate the level you taught *during your most recent participation* in the mentoring program:
 Elementary
 Middle School
 High School
24. Please indicate your type of teacher preparation:
 Teacher Preparation program, 4 year Plus Masters Degree
 Teacher Preparation program, 5 year
 Lateral Entry, alternate program Plus Masters Degree
 Other Please Explain: _____
25. Please indicate the number of years you have taught:
 3-7 years
 8-12 years
 13-17 years
 18-22 years
 23+ years
26. Including this year, how many years have you participated in the mentoring program?
 1 year
 2 years
 3 years
 4 years
 5 years

Thank you for your participation!
(Please complete, seal, and return to your principal by: Friday, April 29, 2005)

Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program Survey

Administrators:

Please reflect on your involvement in the beginning teacher mentoring program in this school district. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the mentoring program? (Please circle your answer).

1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = undecided
4 = agree
5 = strongly agree

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The beginning teacher mentoring program is a key factor in helping new and beginning teachers adjust to the teaching profession (if a beginning teacher) or to this school district (if a new teacher). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Mentor teachers give the teachers they mentor the amount of help they need with their teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. The mentoring program helps reduce feelings of isolation that new and beginning teachers may have. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The mentoring program helps new and beginning teachers develop a positive attitude about teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The mentoring program helps new and beginning teachers develop a sense of professionalism about teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. The mentoring program provides opportunities throughout the school year for new and beginning teachers to discuss classroom concerns with other new and beginning teachers within the school district. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Mentor teachers encourage the teachers they mentor to self-reflect on their teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Mentor teachers provide feedback to the teachers they mentor about their teaching on a regular basis. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. The mentoring program affords new and beginning teachers opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Mentor teachers have clear communication with the teachers they mentor most of the time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. The mentoring program does <i>not</i> play a significant role in helping new and beginning teachers adjust to their first year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Mentor teachers do <i>not</i> give the teachers they mentor the amount of help they need with their teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. The mentoring program does <i>not</i> help new and beginning teachers feel less isolated or alone during their first year. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please go to next page

1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = undecided
4 = agree
5 = strongly agree

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. The mentoring program does <i>not</i> help new and beginning teachers develop a positive attitude about teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. The mentoring program does <i>not</i> help instill in new and beginning teachers a sense of professionalism about teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. The mentoring program does <i>not</i> schedule district-wide meetings for new and beginning teachers throughout the school year to get together and discuss their teaching concerns. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Mentor teachers do <i>not</i> stress the importance of self-reflection on teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Mentor teachers provide feedback to the teachers they mentor only when they are asked. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Classroom management strategies are not addressed by the mentoring program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Mentor teachers often have difficulty communicating clearly with the teachers they mentor. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

21. Please indicate your gender:

- male
 female

22. Please indicate your age:

- 21-30 years
 31-40 years
 41-50 years
 51-60 years
 61-70 years

23. Please indicate the level you administrate:

- Elementary
 Middle School
 High School

24. Including this year, how many years have you participated in the mentoring program?

- 1 year
 2 years
 3 years
 4 years
 5 years

Thank you for your participation!
(Please complete by: Friday, April 29, 2005)

Appendix B

Postcard of Invitation

Postcard included in all survey packets inviting respondents to participate in a confidential interview with the researcher and to also enter their name into a random drawing for a \$50.00 gift certificate to a local restaurant

Gift Certificate Drawing & Interview Invitation

YES, (please print) _____ has completed the survey for all teachers & principals who have been involved in the beginning teacher mentoring program.

_____ YES, I have read the **Informed Consent Agreement** enclosed in my survey packet, & agree to its terms & conditions.

Signature of Survey Respondent: _____

Gift Certificate Drawing: To thank you for your time, I would like to enter your name in a random drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to the *Purple Foot Restaurant*. If you would like to be entered, please include your preferred method of contact below:

_____ YES, I would like to be entered in the drawing. If I win, please contact me by:

phone: _____ or e-mail: _____

Interview Invitation: In order to get your thoughts & suggestions on how to best improve the mentoring program, I would like the opportunity to interview you. The interview will last about 20 minutes, will be strictly confidential & will be audiotaped with your written permission. Your name will not be used, & once the study is completed, the interview tape will be destroyed. If you would like to be included, please indicate below by giving your preferred method of contact. I will contact you & we will arrange a mutually agreed upon time & place for the interview.

_____ YES, I would like to be interviewed. Please contact me by:

phone: _____ or e-mail: _____

Appendix C

Initial Letter of Contact

October 25, 2004

Assistant Superintendent
xxxx City Schools
Administrative Offices .
xxxx, VA

Dear,

Thank you for your willingness to meet with me and discuss my dissertation research on beginning teacher mentoring programs. As part of my doctoral dissertation work at Liberty University, my study will focus on the research based components of your mentoring program, specifically those that coincide with the “Guidelines for Mentor Teacher Programs for Beginning and Experienced Teachers” developed by the Virginia Department of Education. There are eight key components of these guidelines upon which my survey will focus: retaining quality teachers; improving beginning teachers’ skills and performance; supporting teacher morale, communications, and collegiality; building a sense of professionalism and positive attitude; facilitating a seamless transition into the first year of teaching; putting theory into practice; preventing teacher isolation; and building self-reflection. I am specifically interested in how these components impact the beginning teacher’s transition into the teaching profession as perceived by beginning teachers, mentor teachers, and principals.

Once you have had the opportunity to discuss my research ideas and survey draft with your principals, and have granted me official permission to proceed, this is the sequence of events that I plan to implement. I will distribute survey packets to your office sometime in the early spring semester of 2005, and in turn you will see that they be distributed to each principal. The surveys are to be completed by all teachers, principals, and assistant principals who have participated in your district’s beginning teacher mentoring program at any time since the start of the program. The packets will contain a brief introductory letter explaining my research, the survey, and a self-addressed stamped envelope for the return of the survey. The surveys will remain completely anonymous; however, I will also include a postage-paid postcard (to be mailed separately) inviting all respondents to contact me if they are interested in granting me a brief interview that will provide a more detailed and qualitative aspect to my study. Again, names will not be disclosed at any point. I am enclosing a copy of a draft of the survey for your perusal. The final draft will have three versions – one each for the new and beginning teachers, mentor teachers, and principals, and minor changes may be made to the surveys once they have undergone pilot studies.

I am very appreciative of your willingness to participate in a research study that I believe can be helpful to those of us who seek to provide beginning teachers with a high quality mentoring program. While I will not be reporting findings on individuals, as discussed, I will be happy to provide you with a composite of the findings at the conclusion of the study.

Should you need any clarification or additional information about this research study, please feel free to contact me at any time at tmflanagan@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Toni M. Flanagan

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THE DUPLICATE OF THIS LETTER AS AN INDICATION OF WRITTEN PERMISSION TO PROCEED WITH MY RESEARCH.

(Signature)

(School District)

(Date)

Survey Questionnaire Distribution Cover Letter and Instructions

April 18, 2005

Dear School Administrator:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study on the perceived effectiveness of your district's beginning teacher mentoring program. You have been given survey packets for each teacher and assistant principal (if applicable), who has participated at any time during the history of your district's beginning teacher mentoring program. There is also a survey packet for you to complete personally, as well as some extra packets in case they are needed. The packets contain a cover letter briefly explaining the study, an Informed Consent Agreement, a survey return envelope, and a postage-paid postcard. Upon completion of the survey, respondents should seal the survey in the return envelope and return it to you. The postcard is to be completed and mailed individually by all survey respondents. It invites them to participate in an interview, as well as enters their name in a random drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to a popular local restaurant, as my way of saying thank you for participating.

If you would simply distribute these survey packets to all participating teachers and assistant principals, (as well as retain one for yourself), I would be most appreciative.

Once again I thank you for your support in my research study. I look forward to compiling the results and forwarding a summary report to your assistant superintendent. If you have any questions, please feel free to call or e-mail me at any time.

Sincerely,

Toni M. Flanagan

e-mail: tmflanagan@liberty.edu

Appendix E

Survey Questionnaire Respondent Cover Letter

Dear Teachers and Principals/Assistant Principals,

Thank you so much for agreeing to give up a short amount of your very valuable time to participate in my research study. As a teacher myself, I know how challenging yet rewarding teaching can be, and also how precious your time is as well.

The enclosed short survey will only take **15-20 minutes** to complete. It asks for your opinion about the mentoring program your school district uses to orient both new teachers to the district and beginning teachers into the teaching profession. As you complete the survey, please reflect back on when you participated in the mentoring program and what role you fulfilled at that time. Your unique perspective can provide important feedback that will significantly help those who will be making future decisions about mentoring programs in order to better meet the needs of beginning teachers and their mentors. In my research study, I am specifically interested in the degree of satisfaction you have experienced with the mentoring program used by your district.

*There are no right or wrong answers – only **honest** ones.*

The risks to you as a participant are minimal. There are no identifying codes used for this survey; thus you are guaranteed complete anonymity. Your participation is completely voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty. Data will be reported for groups only, not individuals; no evaluation, judgment, or rating will be attributed to you. A summary report only will be released to your district for the purpose of enhancing the present beginning teacher mentoring program.

Enclosed in your packet is:

- A return envelope for your completed survey.
- A postage-paid postcard to be mailed by you once you complete and return your survey. This postcard will invite you to participate in an interview with the researcher, as well as enter your name in a random drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to the *Purple Foot Restaurant*.

Please return the survey in the attached envelope, seal it, and return it to your building administrator by Friday, April 29, 2005.

Mail the postage-paid postcard once you have completed and returned your survey.

Again, thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to help out with this important research study, and for making an investment in the future of new and beginning teachers that follow you. I will contact your principal in two weeks if I haven't heard from you in case you misplaced the survey or need a second copy. **Your input is extremely important!**

Sincerely,

Toni M. Flanagan
 Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

e-mail: tmflanagan@liberty.edu

Appendix F

Informed Consent Agreement

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Project Title: Perceptions of Elementary, Middle School, High School Teachers and Principals Who Have Been Involved in Their School District's Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to determine the effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring program in your school district, based on the perceptions of teachers and principals who have been involved in the program.

What you will do in the study:

Time required: You will spend about **15 minutes** to complete the survey. In addition, if you volunteer to participate in a confidential interview with the researcher, you will spend an additional **20 minutes**. The total time required is about **35 minutes**, if you participate in both activities.

Benefits: There is no guarantee of direct benefit to you by participating in this study; however, the study may help us understand how to further improve beginning teacher mentoring programs for the future. As we get better at assimilating beginning teachers into the profession, we increase the chances of retaining them, which will in turn benefit all educators, and ultimately the students they teach.

Confidentiality:

The survey that you complete in this study will be handled anonymously and will contain no identifying codes or numbers. You will complete the survey and seal it in the envelope provided, which will be mailed to the researcher. If you volunteer to participate in an interview conducted by the researcher, your responses will be audiotaped with your written permission. The tape will be assigned a code number, and any identifying information will remain confidential. The list connecting your name to this code number will be kept by the researcher in a locked file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, this list will be destroyed and the tape will be erased.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary, and deciding not to participate will not involve a penalty of any type.

Payment: You will receive no payment for participating in the study; however, as a small token of appreciation, your name will be entered into a random drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to the *Purple Foot Restaurant*. This postcard will be mailed by you once you have completed and returned the survey.

Whom to contact if you have questions:

Toni M. Flanagan, Doctoral Candidate
School of Education, Liberty University
e-mail: tmflanagan@liberty.edu

Whom to contact about your rights:

Dr. Ron Allen, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Liberty University
Lynchburg, VA 24502
e-mail: rallen@liberty.edu

Please sign and return the postcard included in your survey packet, which will grant your permission to participate in the study.

Appendix G

Administrator Reminder Letter

May 3, 2005

Dear Building Administrators:

Enclosed please find copies of **reminder letters** for all teachers and assistant principals who have participated in your district's beginning teacher mentoring program, and have not yet completed the survey for my research study. *If you have not had the opportunity to complete your own survey, please let this serve as a reminder as well.* Since the surveys will remain confidential, I do not have a record of which teachers, assistant principals, or principals have submitted them and which ones have not yet done so. If you would simply distribute these reminders to all participating teachers and assistant principals, I would be most appreciative.

Once again I thank you for your support in my research study. I look forward to compiling the results and forwarding a summary report to your assistant superintendent. If you have any questions, please feel free to call or e-mail me at any time.

Sincerely,

Toni M. Flanagan

e-mail: tmflanagan@liberty.edu

Appendix H

Survey Questionnaire Respondent Reminder Letter

**Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program Survey
Reminder**

If you have not yet had a chance to fill out the survey on the beginning teacher mentoring program in your district, please try to do so as soon as possible. Please seal it in the attached return envelope and return it to your principal. Once you have completed and returned your survey, don't forget to mail the postage paid postcard which invites you to participate in an interview with the researcher and also enters your name in the **random drawing for the \$50 gift certificate** to the *Purple Foot Restaurant*.

Extra surveys have been sent to your principal if you have misplaced yours, or you may contact me directly to obtain another one.

If you have already completed and mailed in your survey, **THANK YOU!**

Your input for this important research study is very much appreciated.

If you would like to speak to me directly about any aspect of this research, please feel free to contact me at:

Toni M. Flanagan
e-mail: tmflanagan@liberty.edu

Appendix I

Letter of Permission to be Audio Taped During Interview

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed about the beginning teacher mentoring program in your school district. In order to more accurately record your responses, I will be taping this interview with your written permission. No one else will have access to these tapes, and after all interviews have taken place and I have gathered and sorted the responses, the tapes will be destroyed. I will not use your name, position, school, or any identifying information about you in my final research report, but will report results generally in summary form only.

I hereby give my permission to be audiotaped during this interview:

Signature of interview participant: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Appendix J
Interview Protocol

Demographic Information:

Interview Number: ____

First Name: _____

Date: _____

Role in Mentoring Program: _____

Years of Teaching Experience: _____

School Name: _____

School Level: _____

1. What are some specific examples of how the beginning teacher mentoring program in your district helped you make the transition into the field of education? If it did not help you make this transition, what are some factors that could have been addressed that would have helped?
2. What are some specific teaching skills that you feel have improved as a result of being involved in the beginning teacher mentoring program and being assigned to a mentor teacher? If you feel your teaching skills did not improve as a result of being involved in the program or having a mentor, what helped them improve?
3. If you felt you had a positive attitude about teaching during your first year (as a teacher, or in this district), what are some factors that have contributed to the development of your positive attitude about teaching? If not, what are some factors that caused your negative attitude during your first year?
4. If you had a feeling of isolation and loneliness your first year, describe what you wished had been different about the program that would have helped. If you felt part of the team and not isolated, what were some of the things that the program or your mentor teacher did to help you feel this way?

5. What was your greatest challenge as a beginning (or new-to-district) teacher?
6. Do you feel that your mentor teacher or the mentoring program helped you address this challenge? Explain.
7. What are some specific ways you grew professionally during your first year of teaching?
8. Do you feel your mentor teacher or the mentoring program contributed to this professional growth? Explain.
9. What do you feel is the value of meeting with other new and beginning teachers throughout the school year?
10. If you were given consistent feedback about your teaching from your mentor teacher, what type of feedback was most valuable to you? If not, what type of feedback would have been most helpful to you?
11. What would you like to change about the beginning teacher mentoring program in your district?
12. Do you feel that the beginning teacher mentoring program has influenced your decision to remain in or leave the teaching profession in the future?
13. What else would you like to add that we haven't covered regarding beginning teachers and the mentoring program?

Appendix K
Interview Schedule

Interview Number	Interview Participant ^a	Date	Time	Location
1	Kate	May 5, 2005	11:00 a.m.	K.C. Middle School
2	Cody	May 5, 2005	12:30 p.m.	K.C. Middle School
3	Kelly	May 5, 2005	1:15 p.m.	B.G. Elementary
4	Lila	May 6, 2005	8:15 a.m.	W.H. Elementary
5	Becky	May 6, 2005	12:20 p.m.	K.C. Middle School
6	Eleanor	May 6, 2005	2:30 p.m.	K.C. Middle School
7	Chuck	May 11, 2005	10:00 a.m.	W. High School
8	Jolie	May 11, 2005	11:00 a.m.	K.C. Middle School
9	Stu	May 11, 2005	12:00 p.m.	W. High School
10	Caitlin	May 11, 2005	1:00 p.m.	W.P. Elementary
11	Bill	May 11, 2005	1:45 p.m.	K.C. Middle School
12	Sally	May 12, 2005	12:20 p.m.	K.C. Middle School
13	Maggie	May 12, 2005	1:15 p.m.	W.P. Elementary
14	Barbara	May 13, 2005	12:20 p.m.	K.C. Middle School
15	Betty	May 13, 2005	1:15 p.m.	K.C. Middle School
16	Abby	May 13, 2005	2:15 p.m.	W. Elementary
17	James	May 13, 2005	3:30 p.m.	W.H. Elementary

Note: Names of interview participants have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Appendix L

Listing of Literature References Corresponding with
Survey Questionnaire and Interview Protocol

Survey Item	Protocol Question	Literature References
1. The beginning teacher mentoring program was a key factor in helping me adjust to the teaching profession/school district.	1. What are some specific examples of how the beginning teacher mentoring program in your district helped you make the transition into the field of education? If it did not help you make this transition, what are some factors that could have been addressed that would have helped you?	Blair-Larsen (1998) Feiman-Nemser (2003) Gordon & Maxey (2000) Halford (1998) Johnson et al. (2004) Renard (2003) Rogers & Babinski (2002)
2. My mentor teacher gave me the amount of help I needed with my teaching.	2. What are some specific teaching skills that you feel have improved as a result of being involved in the beginning teacher mentoring program and being assigned to a mentor teacher? If you feel your teaching skills did not improve as a result of being involved in the program or having a mentor, what helped them improve?	Evertson & Smithey (2000) Gratch (1998) Hale (1992) Johnson et al. (2004) Rowley (1999)
3. The mentoring program helped me reduce my feelings of isolation as a new or beginning teacher.	4. If you had a feeling of isolation and loneliness your first year, describe what you wished had been different about the program that would have helped. If you felt part of the team and not isolated, what were some of the things that the program or your mentor teacher did to help you feel this way?	Brock & Grady (1998) Feiman-Nemser (2003) Little (1999) Sergiovanni (1995) Walsdorf & Lynn (2002)
4. The mentoring program helped me develop a positive attitude about teaching.	3. If you felt you had a positive attitude about teaching during your first year, what are some factors that have contributed to the development of your positive attitude about teaching? If not, what are some factors that caused your negative attitude during your first year?	Darling-Hammond (2003) Feiman-Nemser (2003) Hale (1992)
5. The mentoring program helped me develop a sense of professionalism about teaching.	7. What are some specific ways you grew professionally during your first year of teaching? 8. Do you feel your mentor teacher or the mentoring program contributed to this professional growth? Explain.	Darling-Hammond (2003) Gordon & Maxey (2000) Hope (1999) Walsdorf & Lynn (2002)
6. The mentoring program provided opportunities throughout the school year to discuss my classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers in the district.	9. What do you feel is the value of meeting with other new and beginning teachers throughout the school year?	Blair-Larsen (1998) Breaux & Wong (2002) Renard (2003)
7. My mentor teacher encouraged me to self-reflect on my teaching.		Danielson (2002) Evertson & Smithey (2000) Gratch (1998) Schon (1987)

<p>8. I received feedback about my teaching from my mentor teacher on a regular basis.</p>	<p>10. If you were given consistent feedback about your teaching from your mentor teacher, what type of feedback was most valuable to you? If not, what type of feedback would have been most helpful to you?</p>	<p>Brock & Grady (1998) Danielson (2002) Johnson & Kardos (2002) Rowley (1999)</p>
<p>9. The mentoring program afforded me opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies.</p>	<p>5. What was your greatest challenge as a beginning or new teacher?</p> <p>6. Do you feel that your mentor teacher or the mentoring program helped you address this challenge? Explain.</p>	<p>Brock & Grady (2001) Charles (1996) Evertson, Emmer, Clements & Worsham (1994) Levine & Nolan (2000) Renard (2003)</p>
<p>10. I had clear communication with my mentor teacher.</p>		<p>Brock & Grady (1998) Danielson (2002) Davis (2001) Evertson & Smithey (2000) Gordon & Maxey (2000)</p>
	<p>11. What would you like to change about the beginning teacher mentoring program in your district?</p> <p>13. What else would you like to add that we haven't covered regarding beginning teachers and the mentoring program?</p>	<p>Alliance for Excellent Education, (2004) Lopez et al., (2004) Moir, (2003)</p>
	<p>12. Do you feel that the beginning teacher mentoring program has influenced your decision to remain in or leave the teaching profession in the future? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>Darling-Hammond, (2003) Halford, (1998) Ingersoll, (2000, 2001) Ingersoll & Smith, (2003) Morrow, (1999)</p>

Appendix M

Listing of Virginia Teacher Mentoring Program Guidelines
Corresponding with Survey Questionnaire and Interview Protocol

Survey Item	Protocol Question	Virginia Guidelines
1. The beginning teacher mentoring program was a key factor in helping me adjust to the teaching profession/school district.	1. What are some specific examples of how the beginning teacher mentoring program in your district helped you make the transition into the field of education? If it did not help you make this transition, what are some factors that could have been addressed that would have helped you?	Facilitating a seamless transition into the first year of teaching
2. My mentor teacher gave me the amount of help I needed with my teaching.	2. What are some specific teaching skills that you feel have improved as a result of being involved in the beginning teacher mentoring program and being assigned to a mentor teacher? If you feel your teaching skills did not improve as a result of being involved in the program or having a mentor, what helped them improve?	Improving beginning teachers' skills & performance
3. The mentoring program helped me reduce my feelings of isolation as a new or beginning teacher.	4. If you had a feeling of isolation and loneliness your first year, describe what you wished had been different about the program that would have helped. If you felt part of the team and not isolated, what were some of the things that the program or your mentor teacher did to help you feel this way?	Preventing teacher isolation
4. The mentoring program helped me develop a positive attitude about teaching.	3. If you felt you had a positive attitude about teaching during your first year, what are some factors that have contributed to the development of your positive attitude about teaching? If not, what are some factors that caused your negative attitude during your first year?	Building a sense of professionalism & positive attitude
5. The mentoring program helped me develop a sense of professionalism about teaching.	7. What are some specific ways you grew professionally during your first year of teaching? 8. Do you feel your mentor teacher or the mentoring program contributed to this professional growth? Explain.	Building a sense of professionalism & positive attitude
6. The mentoring program provided opportunities throughout the school year to discuss my classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers in the district.	9. What do you feel is the value of meeting with other new and beginning teachers throughout the school year?	Supporting teacher morale, communications, & collegiality
7. My mentor teacher encouraged me to self-reflect on my teaching.		Building self-reflection

<p>8. I received feedback about my teaching from my mentor teacher on a regular basis.</p>	<p>10. If you were given consistent feedback about your teaching from your mentor teacher, what type of feedback was most valuable to you? If not, what type of feedback would have been most helpful to you?</p>	<p>Improving beginning teachers' skills & performance</p>
<p>9. The mentoring program afforded me opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies.</p>	<p>5. What was your greatest challenge as a beginning or new teacher?</p> <p>6. Do you feel that your mentor teacher or the mentoring program helped you address this challenge? Explain.</p>	<p>Putting theory into practice</p>
<p>10. I had clear communication with my mentor teacher.</p>		<p>Supporting teacher morale, communications, & collegiality</p>
	<p>11. What would you like to change about the beginning teacher mentoring program in your district?</p> <p>13. What else would you like to add that we haven't covered regarding beginning teachers and the mentoring program?</p>	
	<p>12. Do you feel that the beginning teacher mentoring program has influenced your decision to remain in or leave the teaching profession in the future? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>Improving teacher retention</p>

Appendix N

Means and Frequency Analysis of Scaled Survey Items, All Respondents

Table N1

Item 1: The beginning teacher mentoring program is a key factor in helping new and beginning teachers adjust to the teaching profession/school district.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.39	1.32	
New-to-district Teachers	3.00	1.22	
Mentor Teachers	3.96	0.82	
Administrators	4.67	0.52	
All Participants	3.52	1.22	
	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	4	12.1
	2	5	15.2
	3	5	15.2
	4	12	36.4
	5	7	21.2
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	3	12.0
	2	8	32.0
	3	1	4.0
	4	12	48.0
	5	1	4.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	2	8.7
	3	2	8.7
	4	14	60.9
	5	5	21.7
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	0	0.0
	4	2	33.3
	5	4	66.7
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	7	8.0
	2	15	17.2
	3	8	9.2
	4	40	46.0
	5	17	19.5

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

Table N2

Item 2: Mentor teachers give the teachers they mentor the amount of help they need with their teaching.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.55	1.39	
New-to-district Teachers	3.04	1.40	
Mentor Teachers	4.00	0.80	
Administrators	3.83	0.98	
All Participants	3.54	1.27	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	5	15.2
	2	3	9.1
	3	3	9.1
	4	13	39.4
	5	9	27.3
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	4	16.0
	2	7	28.0
	3	2	8.0
	4	8	32.0
	5	4	16.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	4.3
	3	4	17.4
	4	12	52.2
	5	6	26.1
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	16.7
	3	0	0.0
	4	4	66.7
	5	1	16.7
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	9	10.3
	2	12	13.8
	3	9	10.3
	4	37	42.5
	5	20	23.0

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

Table N3

Item 3: The mentoring program helps reduce feelings of isolation that new or beginning teachers may have.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.79	1.14	
New-to-district Teachers	3.24	1.23	
Mentor Teachers	4.04	0.47	
Administrators	4.33	0.52	
All Participants	3.74	1.05	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	2	6.1
	2	3	9.1
	3	4	12.1
	4	15	45.5
	5	9	27.3
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	3	12.0
	2	5	20.0
	3	2	8.0
	4	13	52.0
	5	2	8.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	2	8.7
	4	18	78.3
	5	3	13.0
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	0	0.0
	4	4	66.7
	5	2	33.3
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	5	5.7
	2	8	9.2
	3	8	9.2
	4	50	57.5
	5	16	18.4

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

Table N4

Item 4: The mentoring program helps new and beginning teachers develop a positive attitude about teaching.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.52	1.23	
New-to-district Teachers	3.08	0.95	
Mentor Teachers	3.74	0.69	
Administrators	4.33	0.52	
All Participants	3.51	1.03	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	3	9.1
	2	3	9.1
	3	9	27.3
	4	10	30.3
	5	8	24.2
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	1	4.0
	2	6	24.0
	3	9	36.0
	4	8	32.0
	5	1	4.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	4.3
	3	6	26.1
	4	14	60.9
	5	2	8.7
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	0	0.0
	4	4	66.7
	5	2	33.3
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	4	4.6
	2	10	11.5
	3	24	27.6
	4	36	41.4
	5	13	14.9

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

Table N5

Item 5: The mentoring program helps new and beginning teachers develop a sense of professionalism about teaching.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.67	1.19	
New-to-district Teachers	3.12	1.36	
Mentor Teachers	3.83	0.65	
Administrators	4.33	0.52	
All Participants	3.60	1.14	
	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	2	6.1
	2	4	12.1
	3	6	18.2
	4	12	36.4
	5	9	27.3
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	3	12.0
	2	8	32.0
	3	1	4.0
	4	9	36.0
	5	4	16.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	4.3
	3	4	17.4
	4	16	69.6
	5	2	8.7
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	0	0.0
	4	4	66.7
	5	2	33.3
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	5	5.7
	2	13	14.0
	3	11	12.6
	4	41	47.1
	5	17	19.5

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

Table N6

Item 6: The mentoring program provides opportunities throughout the school year for new and beginning teachers to discuss their classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers within the district.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.82	1.10	
New-to-district Teachers	3.36	1.19	
Mentor Teachers	4.30	0.56	
Administrators	4.50	0.55	
All Participants	3.86	1.05	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	2	6.1
	2	2	6.1
	3	5	15.2
	4	15	45.5
	5	9	27.3
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	3	12.0
	2	3	12.0
	3	3	12.0
	4	14	56.0
	5	2	8.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	1	4.3
	4	14	60.9
	5	8	34.8
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	0	0.0
	4	3	50.0
	5	3	50.0
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	5	5.7
	2	5	5.7
	3	9	10.3
	4	46	52.9
	5	22	25.3

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

Table N7

Item 7: Mentor teachers encourage the teachers they mentor to self-reflect on their teaching.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.21	1.41	
New-to-district Teachers	2.60	1.04	
Mentor Teachers	3.91	0.73	
Administrators	3.67	1.03	
All Participants	3.25	1.22	
	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	5	15.2
	2	7	21.2
	3	4	12.1
	4	10	30.3
	5	7	21.2
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	4	16.0
	2	8	32.0
	3	7	28.0
	4	6	24.0
	5	0	0.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	2	8.7
	3	1	4.3
	4	17	73.0
	5	3	13.0
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	16.7
	3	1	16.7
	4	3	50.0
	5	1	16.7
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	9	10.3
	2	18	20.7
	3	13	14.9
	4	36	41.4
	5	11	12.6

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

Table N8

Item 8: Mentor teachers provide feedback to the teachers they mentor about their teaching on a regular basis.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	2.76	1.42	
New-to-district Teachers	2.12	1.30	
Mentor Teachers	3.83	0.78	
Administrators	3.67	1.03	
All Participants	2.92	1.33	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	8	24.2
	2	8	24.2
	3	6	18.2
	4	6	18.2
	5	5	15.2
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	10	40.0
	2	6	24.0
	3	5	20.0
	4	4	16.0
	5	0	0.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	2	8.7
	3	3	13.0
	4	15	65.2
	5	3	13.0
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	16.7
	3	1	16.7
	4	3	50.0
	5	1	16.7
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	18	20.7
	2	17	19.5
	3	15	17.2
	4	28	32.2
	5	9	10.3

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

Table N9

Item 9: The mentoring program affords new and beginning teachers opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.61	1.09	
New-to-district Teachers	3.16	1.18	
Mentor Teachers	3.96	0.64	
Administrators	4.50	0.55	
All Participants	3.63	1.05	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	2	6.1
	2	4	12.1
	3	4	12.1
	4	18	54.5
	5	5	15.2
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	3	12.0
	2	5	20.0
	3	3	12.0
	4	13	52.0
	5	1	4.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	4.3
	3	2	8.7
	4	17	73.9
	5	3	13.0
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	0	0.0
	4	3	50.0
	5	3	50.0
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	5	5.7
	2	10	11.5
	3	9	10.3
	4	51	58.6
	5	12	13.8

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

Table N10

Item 10: Mentor teachers have clear communication with the teachers they mentor most of the time.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.76	1.35	
New-to-district Teachers	3.28	1.43	
Mentor Teachers	4.39	0.78	
Administrators	4.33	0.82	
All Participants	3.83	1.28	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	3	9.1
	2	5	15.2
	3	1	3.0
	4	12	36.4
	5	12	36.4
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	4	16.0
	2	4	16.0
	3	4	16.0
	4	7	28.0
	5	6	24.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	4.3
	3	1	4.3
	4	9	39.1
	5	12	52.2
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	1	16.7
	4	2	33.3
	5	3	50.0
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	7	8.0
	2	10	11.5
	3	7	8.0
	4	30	34.5
	5	33	37.9

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

Table N11

Item 11: The mentoring program does not play a significant role in helping new and beginning teachers adjust to the teaching profession/school district.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.39	1.46	
New-to-district Teachers	2.92	1.41	
Mentor Teachers	3.87	1.10	
Administrators	4.50	0.55	
All Participants	3.46	1.37	
	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	4	12.1
	2	8	24.2
	3	2	6.1
	4	9	27.3
	5	10	30.3
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	5	20.0
	2	6	24.0
	3	4	16.0
	4	6	24.0
	5	4	16.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	4	17.4
	3	3	13.0
	4	8	34.8
	5	8	34.8
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	0	0.0
	4	3	50.0
	5	3	50.0
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	9	10.3
	2	18	20.7
	3	9	10.3
	4	26	29.9
	5	25	28.7

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Negatively worded items 11-20 were recoded positively in order to show consistency between means with positively worded items 1-10.

Table N12

Item 12: Mentor teachers do not give the teachers they mentor the amount of help they need with their teaching.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.88	1.17	
New-to-district Teachers	3.32	1.38	
Mentor Teachers	3.57	1.24	
Administrators	3.50	1.22	
All Participants	3.61	1.25	
	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	1	3.0
	2	5	15.2
	3	3	9.1
	4	12	36.4
	5	12	36.4
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	2	8.0
	2	8	32.0
	3	1	4.0
	4	8	32.0
	5	6	24.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	2	8.7
	2	3	13.0
	3	3	13.0
	4	10	43.5
	5	5	21.7
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	2	33.3
	3	0	0.0
	4	3	50.0
	5	1	16.7
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	5	5.7
	2	18	20.7
	3	7	8.0
	4	33	37.9
	5	24	27.6

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Negatively worded items 11-20 were recoded positively in order to show consistency between means with positively worded items 1-10.

Table N13

Item 13: The mentoring program does not help new and beginning teachers feel less isolated or alone during their first year.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.61	1.27	
New-to-district Teachers	3.56	1.16	
Mentor Teachers	4.22	0.60	
Administrators	4.33	1.21	
All Participants	3.80	1.12	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	1	3.0
	2	9	27.3
	3	2	6.1
	4	11	33.3
	5	10	30.3
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	2	8.0
	2	2	8.0
	3	6	24.0
	4	10	40.0
	5	5	20.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	2	8.7
	4	14	60.9
	5	7	30.4
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	16.7
	3	0	0.0
	4	1	16.7
	5	4	66.7
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	3	3.4
	2	12	13.8
	3	10	11.5
	4	36	41.4
	5	26	29.9

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Negatively worded items 11-20 were recoded positively in order to show consistency between means with positively worded items 1-10.

Table N14

Item 14: The mentoring program does not help new and beginning teachers develop a positive attitude about teaching.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.58	1.15	
New-to-district Teachers	3.08	1.15	
Mentor Teachers	4.09	0.73	
Administrators	4.33	0.52	
All Participants	3.62	1.09	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	0	0.0
	2	9	27.3
	3	4	12.1
	4	12	36.4
	5	8	24.2
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	2	8.0
	2	6	24.0
	3	8	32.0
	4	6	24.0
	5	3	12.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	4.3
	3	2	8.7
	4	14	60.9
	5	6	26.1
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	0	0.0
	4	4	66.7
	5	2	33.3
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	2	2.3
	2	16	18.4
	3	14	16.1
	4	36	41.4
	5	19	21.8

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Negatively worded items 11-20 were recoded positively in order to show consistency between means with positively worded items 1-10.

Table N15

Item 15: The mentoring program does not help instill in new and beginning teachers a sense of professionalism about teaching.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.85	1.06	
New-to-district Teachers	3.00	1.26	
Mentor Teachers	4.00	0.67	
Administrators	4.33	0.52	
All Participants	3.68	1.09	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	0	0.0
	2	5	15.2
	3	6	18.2
	4	11	33.3
	5	11	33.3
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	3	12.0
	2	7	28.0
	3	5	20.0
	4	7	28.0
	5	3	12.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	5	21.7
	4	13	56.5
	5	5	21.7
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	0	0.0
	4	4	66.7
	5	2	33.3
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	3	3.4
	2	12	13.8
	3	16	18.4
	4	35	40.2
	5	21	24.1

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Negatively worded items 11-20 were recoded positively in order to show consistency between means with positively worded items 1-10.

Table N16

Item 16: The mentoring program does not schedule district-wide meetings for new and beginning teachers throughout the school year to get together and discuss their teaching concerns.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	4.21	0.96	
New-to-district Teachers	4.04	1.17	
Mentor Teachers	4.52	0.79	
Administrators	4.33	1.21	
All Participants	4.25	1.00	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	1	3.0
	2	2	6.1
	3	0	0.0
	4	16	48.5
	5	14	42.4
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	2	4.0
	2	1	4.0
	3	1	4.0
	4	11	44.0
	5	10	40.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	4.3
	3	1	4.3
	4	6	26.1
	5	15	65.2
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	16.7
	3	0	0.0
	4	1	16.7
	5	4	66.7
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	3	3.4
	2	5	5.7
	3	2	2.3
	4	34	39.1
	5	43	49.4

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Negatively worded items 11-20 were recoded positively in order to show consistency between means with positively worded items 1-10.

Table N17

Item 17: Mentor teachers do not stress the importance of self-reflection on teaching.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.27	1.23	
New-to-district Teachers	2.44	1.23	
Mentor Teachers	4.04	0.77	
Administrators	4.33	0.52	
All Participants	3.31	1.26	
	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	2	6.1
	2	8	24.2
	3	9	27.3
	4	7	21.2
	5	7	21.2
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	5	20.0
	2	11	44.0
	3	5	20.0
	4	1	4.0
	5	3	12.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	4.3
	3	3	13.0
	4	13	56.5
	5	6	26.1
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	0	0.0
	4	4	66.7
	5	2	33.3
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	7	8.0
	2	20	23.0
	3	17	19.5
	4	25	28.7
	5	18	20.7

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Negatively worded items 11-20 were recoded positively in order to show consistency between means with positively worded items 1-10.

Table N18

Item 18: Mentor teachers provide feedback to the teachers they mentor only when they asked.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	2.94	1.22	
New-to-district Teachers	2.72	1.28	
Mentor Teachers	3.52	1.12	
Administrators	4.17	0.75	
All Participants	3.12	1.24	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	2	6.1
	2	15	45.5
	3	3	9.1
	4	9	27.3
	5	4	12.1
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	3	12.0
	2	12	48.0
	3	2	8.0
	4	5	20.0
	5	3	12.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	7	30.4
	3	1	4.3
	4	11	47.8
	5	4	17.4
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	0	0.0
	3	1	16.7
	4	3	50.0
	5	2	33.3
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	5	5.7
	2	34	39.1
	3	7	8.0
	4	28	32.2
	5	13	14.9

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Negatively worded items 11-20 were recoded positively in order to show consistency between means with positively worded items 1-10.

Table N19

Item 19: Classroom management strategies are not addressed by the mentoring program.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	3.64	1.11	
New-to-district Teachers	3.36	1.15	
Mentor Teachers	4.13	0.82	
Administrators	4.00	1.10	
All Participants	3.71	1.08	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	1	3.0
	2	6	18.2
	3	4	12.1
	4	15	45.5
	5	7	21.2
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	2	8.0
	2	4	16.0
	3	5	20.0
	4	11	44.0
	5	3	12.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	4.3
	3	3	13.0
	4	11	47.8
	5	8	34.8
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	16.7
	3	0	0.0
	4	3	50.0
	5	2	33.3
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	3	3.4
	2	12	13.8
	3	12	13.8
	4	40	46.0
	5	20	23.0

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Negatively worded items 11-20 were recoded positively in order to show consistency between means with positively worded items 1-10.

Table N20

Item 20: Mentor teachers often have difficulty communicating clearly with the teachers they mentor.

Participant	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Beginning Teachers	4.03	1.26	
New-to-district Teachers	3.56	1.33	
Mentor Teachers	4.22	0.85	
Administrators	3.83	0.98	
All Participants	3.93	1.18	

	Scale Response	<i>f</i>	%
Beginning Teachers (<i>n</i> = 33)	1	3	9.1
	2	2	6.1
	3	1	3.0
	4	12	36.4
	5	15	45.5
New-to-district Teachers (<i>n</i> = 25)	1	3	12.0
	2	2	8.0
	3	5	20.0
	4	8	32.0
	5	7	28.0
Mentor Teachers (<i>n</i> = 23)	1	0	0.0
	2	2	8.7
	3	0	0.0
	4	12	52.2
	5	9	39.1
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 6)	1	0	0.0
	2	1	16.7
	3	0	0.0
	4	4	66.7
	5	1	16.7
All Participants (<i>N</i> = 87)	1	6	6.9
	2	7	8.0
	3	6	6.9
	4	36	41.4
	5	32	36.8

Note. Scale response item 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree. Negatively worded items 11-20 were recoded positively in order to show consistency between means with positively worded items 1-10.

Appendix O

Analysis of Variance for Survey Questionnaire Teacher Demographics

Table O1

Analysis of Variance for Role in Mentoring Program, Between Groups

Item	<i>n</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	
1. The beginning teacher mentoring program was a key factor in helping me adjust to the teaching profession or to this school district.	Beginning New-to-District Mentor	33 25 23	11.04	2	5.52	4.03	.02*
2. My mentor teacher gave me the amount of help I needed with my teaching.			11.08	2	5.59	3.51	.04*
3. The mentoring program helped reduce my feelings of isolation as a new or beginning teacher.			8.25	2	4.13	3.88	.03*
4. The mentoring program helped me develop a positive attitude about teaching.			5.48	2	2.74	2.66	.08
5. The mentoring program helped me develop a sense of professionalism about teaching.			6.82	2	3.41	2.68	.08
6. The mentoring program provided opportunities throughout the school year to discuss my classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers in the district.			10.68	2	5.34	5.24	.01*
7. My mentor teacher encouraged me to self-reflect on my teaching.			20.66	2	10.33	7.95	.00*
8. I received feedback about my teaching from my mentor teacher on a regular basis.			35.50	2	17.75	12.82	.00*
9. The mentoring program afforded me opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies.			7.68	2	3.84	3.74	.03*
10. I had clear communication with my mentor teacher.			14.85	2	7.43	4.80	.01*

Table O1 continued

11. The mentoring program did not play a significant role in helping me adjust to my first year as a teacher (or in this district).	10.81	2	5.40	2.96	.06
12. I often needed more assistance with my teaching than what my mentor teacher provided.	4.53	2	2.26	1.44	.24
13. The mentoring program did not help me feel less isolated or alone during my first year as a teacher (or in this district).	6.59	2	3.30	2.80	.07
14. The mentoring program did not help me develop a positive attitude about teaching.	12.15	2	6.08	5.53	.01*
15. The mentoring program did not help instill in me a sense of professionalism about teaching.	14.65	2	7.32	6.78	.00*
16. The mentoring program did not schedule district-wide meetings for new and beginning teachers throughout the school year to get together and discuss their teaching concerns.	2.85	2	1.42	1.46	.24
17. The importance of self-reflection on my teaching was not stressed by my mentor teacher.	30.88	2	15.44	12.33	.00*
18. My mentor teacher provided feedback about my teaching only when I asked.	8.23	2	4.12	2.80	.07
19. Classroom management strategies were not addressed by the mentoring program.	7.28	2	3.64	3.30	.04*
20. My mentor teacher and I had difficulty communicating clearly.	5.65	2	2.82	2.02	.14

Note. Administrators were not included in the ANOVA procedure for all demographics due to small sample size ($n = 6$).

* $p < .05$.

Table O2

Analysis of Variance for Gender, Between Groups

Item	<i>n</i>		<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1. The beginning teacher mentoring program was a key factor in helping me adjust to the teaching profession or to this school district.	Male	17	15.32	1	15.32	11.80	.00*
	Female	64					
2. My mentor teacher gave me the amount of help I needed with my teaching.			16.34	1	16.34	10.95	.00*
3. The mentoring program helped reduce my feelings of isolation as a new or beginning teacher.			12.11	1	12.11	12.08	.00*
4. The mentoring program helped me develop a positive attitude about teaching.			5.45	1	5.45	5.35	.02*
5. The mentoring program helped me develop a sense of professionalism about teaching.			5.05	1	5.05	3.95	.05
6. The mentoring program provided opportunities throughout the school year to discuss my classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers in the district.			5.83	1	5.83	5.46	.02*
7. My mentor teacher encouraged me to self-reflect on my teaching.			7.12	1	7.12	4.90	.03*
8. I received feedback about my teaching from my mentor teacher on a regular basis.			18.33	1	18.33	11.57	.00*
9. The mentoring program afforded me opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies.			5.58	1	5.58	5.35	.02*
10. I had clear communication with my mentor teacher.			15.51	1	15.51	10.22	.02*
11. The mentoring program did not play a significant role in helping me adjust to my first year as a teacher (or in this district).			2.26	1	2.26	1.18	.28

Table O2 continued

12. I often needed more assistance with my teaching than what my mentor teacher provided.	1.50	1	1.50	.95	.33
13. The mentoring program did not help me feel less isolated or alone during my first year as a teacher (or in this district).	7.46	1	7.46	6.47	.01*
14. The mentoring program did not help me develop a positive attitude about teaching.	2.38	1	2.38	1.97	.16
15. The mentoring program did not help instill in me a sense of professionalism about teaching.	1.65	1	1.65	1.34	.25
16. The mentoring program did not schedule district-wide meetings for new and beginning teachers throughout the school year to get together and discuss their teaching concerns.	.36	1	.36	.36	.55
17. The importance of self-reflection on my teaching was not stressed by my mentor teacher.	.67	1	.67	.41	.52
18. My mentor teacher provided feedback about my teaching only when I asked.	4.33	1	4.33	2.89	.09
19. Classroom management strategies were not addressed by the mentoring program.	.01	1	.01	.00	.95
20. My mentor teacher and I had difficulty communicating clearly.	5.96	1	5.96	4.33	.04*

* $p < .05$.

Table O3

Analysis of Variance for Teaching Level, Between Groups

Item	<i>n</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	
1. The beginning teacher mentoring program was a key factor in helping me adjust to the teaching profession or to this school district.	Elementary Middle School High School	42 22 17	7.44	2	3.72	2.63	.08
2. My mentor teacher gave me the amount of help I needed with my teaching.			3.42	2	1.71	1.02	.37
3. The mentoring program helped reduce my feelings of isolation as a new or beginning teacher.			7.32	2	3.66	3.40	.04*
4. The mentoring program helped me develop a positive attitude about teaching.			4.95	2	2.48	2.38	.10
5. The mentoring program helped me develop a sense of professionalism about teaching.			6.20	2	3.10	2.42	.10
6. The mentoring program provided opportunities throughout the school year to discuss my classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers in the district.			1.70	2	.85	.75	.48
7. My mentor teacher encouraged me to self-reflect on my teaching.			2.94	2	1.47	.96	.34
8. I received feedback about my teaching from my mentor teacher on a regular basis.			10.41	2	5.21	3.05	.05
9. The mentoring program afforded me opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies.			.07	2	.03	.03	.97
10. I had clear communication with my mentor teacher.			2.33	2	1.16	.68	.51
11. The mentoring program did not play a significant role in helping me adjust to my first year as a teacher (or in this district).			1.51	2	.76	.39	.68

Table O3 continued

12. I often needed more assistance with my teaching than what my mentor teacher provided.	4.47	2	.76	1.42	.25
13. The mentoring program did not help me feel less isolated or alone during my first year as a teacher (or in this district).	3.97	2	1.98	1.64	.20
14. The mentoring program did not help me develop a positive attitude about teaching.	3.16	2	1.58	1.30	.28
15. The mentoring program did not help instill in me a sense of professionalism about teaching.	6.62	2	3.31	2.80	.07
16. The mentoring program did not schedule district-wide meetings for new and beginning teachers throughout the school year to get together and discuss their teaching concerns.	.46	2	.23	.23	.80
17. The importance of self-reflection on my teaching was not stressed by my mentor teacher.	3.00	2	1.50	.93	.40
18. My mentor teacher provided feedback about my teaching only when I asked.	10.61	2	5.30	3.68	.03*
19. Classroom management strategies were not addressed by the mentoring program.	3.55	2	1.77	1.54	.22
20. My mentor teacher and I had difficulty communicating clearly.	.84	2	.42	.29	.75

* $p < .05$.

Table O4

Analysis of Variance for Years in Mentoring Program, Between Groups

Item	n		SS	df	MS	F	p
1. The beginning teacher mentoring program was a key factor in helping me adjust to the teaching profession or to this school district.	1 year	55	11.49	2	5.74	4.21	.02*
	2 years	15					
	3-5 years	11					
2. My mentor teacher gave me the amount of help I needed with my teaching.			3.11	2	1.55	.92	.40
3. The mentoring program helped reduce my feelings of isolation as a new or beginning teacher.			3.07	2	1.53	1.36	.26
4. The mentoring program helped me develop a positive attitude about teaching.			3.94	2	1.97	1.87	.16
5. The mentoring program helped me develop a sense of professionalism about teaching.			3.02	2	1.51	1.14	.32
6. The mentoring program provided opportunities throughout the school year to discuss my classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers in the district.			3.93	2	1.97	1.78	.18
7. My mentor teacher encouraged me to self-reflect on my teaching.			4.89	2	2.44	1.63	.20
8. I received feedback about my teaching from my mentor teacher on a regular basis.			1.94	2	.97	.54	.59
9. The mentoring program afforded me opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies.			5.53	2	2.76	2.62	.08
10. I had clear communication with my mentor teacher.			7.51	2	3.75	2.29	.11
11. The mentoring program did not play a significant role in helping me adjust to my first year as a teacher (or in this district).			8.52	2	4.26	2.30	.11

Table O4 continued

12. I often needed more assistance with my teaching than what my mentor teacher provided.	2.28	2	1.14	.71	.49
13. The mentoring program did not help me feel less isolated or alone during my first year as a teacher (or in this district).	4.65	2	2.33	1.93	.15
14. The mentoring program did not help me develop a positive attitude about teaching.	8.22	2	4.11	3.57	.03*
15. The mentoring program did not help instill in me a sense of professionalism about teaching.	2.74	2	1.37	1.11	.33
16. The mentoring program did not schedule district-wide meetings for new and beginning teachers throughout the school year to get together and discuss their teaching concerns.	4.46	2	2.23	2.33	.10
17. The importance of self-reflection on my teaching was not stressed by my mentor teacher.	7.20	2	3.60	2.31	.11
18. My mentor teacher provided feedback about my teaching only when I asked.	6.14	2	3.07	2.05	.14
19. Classroom management strategies were not addressed by the mentoring program.	8.27	2	4.13	3.79	.03*
20. My mentor teacher and I had difficulty communicating clearly.	2.47	2	.86	.86	.43

* $p < .05$.

Table O5

Analysis of Variance for Years of Teaching Experience, Between Groups

Item	<i>n</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1. The beginning teacher mentoring program was a key factor in helping me adjust to the teaching profession or to this school district.	0-2 years	33	5	2.44	1.74	.14
	3-7 years	16				
	8-12 years	7				
	13-17 years	10				
	18-22 years	8				
	23+ years	6				
2. My mentor teacher gave me the amount of help I needed with my teaching.		9.88	5	1.88	1.18	.33
3. The mentoring program helped reduce my feelings of isolation as a new or beginning teacher.		11.11	5	2.22	2.13	.07
4. The mentoring program helped me develop a positive attitude about teaching.		10.86	5	2.17	2.15	.07
5. The mentoring program helped me develop a sense of professionalism about teaching.		10.33	5	2.07	1.64	.16
6. The mentoring program provided opportunities throughout the school year to discuss my classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers in the district.		6.72	5	1.34	1.20	.32
7. My mentor teacher encouraged me to self-reflect on my teaching.		13.09	5	2.62	1.80	.12
8. I received feedback about my teaching from my mentor teacher on a regular basis.		20.08	5	4.01	2.48	.04*
9. The mentoring program afforded me opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies.		3.83	5	.77	.73	.60
10. I had clear communication with my mentor teacher.		12.72	5	2.55	1.58	.18
11. The mentoring program did not play a significant role in helping me adjust to my first year as a teacher (or in this district).		12.03	5	2.41	1.32	.27

Table O5 continued

12. I often needed more assistance with my teaching than what my mentor teacher provided.	10.20	5	2.04	1.31	.27
13. The mentoring program did not help me feel less isolated or alone during my first year as a teacher (or in this district).	7.86	5	1.57	1.29	.28
14. The mentoring program did not help me develop a positive attitude about teaching.	10.60	5	2.12	1.81	.12
15. The mentoring program did not help instill in me a sense of professionalism about teaching.	12.97	5	2.49	2.15	.07
16. The mentoring program did not schedule district-wide meetings for new and beginning teachers throughout the school year to get together and discuss their teaching concerns.	6.99	5	1.40	1.45	.22
17. The importance of self-reflection on my teaching was not stressed by my mentor teacher.	12.67	5	2.53	1.64	.16
18. My mentor teacher provided feedback about my teaching only when I asked.	7.93	5	1.59	1.02	.41
19. Classroom management strategies were not addressed by the mentoring program.	4.28	5	.86	.72	.61
20. My mentor teacher and I had difficulty communicating clearly.	6.16	5	1.23	.85	.52

* $p < .05$.

Table O6

Analysis of Variance for Age, Between Groups

Item	<i>n</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1. The beginning teacher mentoring program was a key factor in helping me adjust to the teaching profession or to this school district.	21-30 years	28	3	2.92	2.06	.11
	31-40 years	24				
	41-50 years	24				
	51-70 years	5				
2. My mentor teacher gave me the amount of help I needed with my teaching.		9.26	3	3.09	1.90	.14
3. The mentoring program helped reduce my feelings of isolation as a new or beginning teacher.		7.27	3	2.42	2.22	.09
4. The mentoring program helped me develop a positive attitude about teaching.		4.94	3	1.65	1.57	.21
5. The mentoring program helped me develop a sense of professionalism about teaching.		7.40	3	2.27	1.92	.13
6. The mentoring program provided opportunities throughout the school year to discuss my classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers in the district.		3.76	3	1.25	1.12	.35
7. My mentor teacher encouraged me to self-reflect on my teaching.		1.97	3	0.66	.42	.74
8. I received feedback about my teaching from my mentor teacher on a regular basis.		7.79	3	2.60	1.47	.23
9. The mentoring program afforded me opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies.		4.07	3	1.36	1.25	.30
10. I had clear communication with my mentor teacher.		9.09	3	3.03	1.85	.15
11. The mentoring program did not play a significant role in helping me adjust to my first year as a teacher (or in this district).		6.92	3	2.31	1.22	.31

Table O6 continued

12. I often needed more assistance with my teaching than what my mentor teacher provided.	2.95	3	0.98	.61	.61
13. The mentoring program did not help me feel less isolated or alone during my first year as a teacher (or in this district).	2.51	3	0.84	.67	.57
14. The mentoring program did not help me develop a positive attitude about teaching.	4.46	3	1.49	1.22	.31
15. The mentoring program did not help instill in me a sense of professionalism about teaching.	7.55	3	2.52	2.12	.10
16. The mentoring program did not schedule district-wide meetings for new and beginning teachers throughout the school year to get together and discuss their teaching concerns.	4.46	3	1.49	1.53	.21
17. The importance of self-reflection on my teaching was not stressed by my mentor teacher.	2.86	3	0.95	.58	.63
18. My mentor teacher provided feedback about my teaching only when I asked.	4.00	3	1.33	.86	.46
19. Classroom management strategies were not addressed by the mentoring program.	2.11	3	1.70	.59	.62
20. My mentor teacher and I had difficulty communicating clearly.	9.43	3	3.14	2.30	.08

Table O7

Analysis of Variance for Teacher Preparation, Between Groups

Item	<i>n</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1. The beginning teacher mentoring program was a key factor in helping me adjust to the teaching profession or to this school district.	4-year program 56 5-year program 8 Lateral entry 7 Other 10	3	2.78	.05
2. My mentor teacher gave me the amount of help I needed with my teaching.		3	1.53	.22
3. The mentoring program helped reduce my feelings of isolation as a new or beginning teacher.		3	2.24	.09
4. The mentoring program helped me develop a positive attitude about teaching.		3	.91	.44
5. The mentoring program helped me develop a sense of professionalism about teaching.		3	1.22	.31
6. The mentoring program provided opportunities throughout the school year to discuss my classroom concerns with other new or beginning teachers in the district.		3	.01	1.00
7. My mentor teacher encouraged me to self-reflect on my teaching.		3	1.10	.36
8. I received feedback about my teaching from my mentor teacher on a regular basis.		3	.63	.60
9. The mentoring program afforded me opportunities to discuss classroom management strategies.		3	1.13	.34
10. I had clear communication with my mentor teacher.		3	.38	.77
11. The mentoring program did not play a significant role in helping me adjust to my first year as a teacher (or in this district).		3	1.06	.37

Table O7 continued

12. I often needed more assistance with my teaching than what my mentor teacher provided.	3	.38	.77
13. The mentoring program did not help me feel less isolated or alone during my first year as a teacher (or in this district).	3	1.99	.12
14. The mentoring program did not help me develop a positive attitude about teaching.	3	2.13	.10
15. The mentoring program did not help instill in me a sense of professionalism about teaching.	3	1.27	.29
16. The mentoring program did not schedule district-wide meetings for new and beginning teachers throughout the school year to get together and discuss their teaching concerns.	3	2.67	.05
17. The importance of self-reflection on my teaching was not stressed by my mentor teacher.	3	.30	.83
18. My mentor teacher provided feedback about my teaching only when I asked.	3	1.94	.13
19. Classroom management strategies were not addressed by the mentoring program.	3	.78	.51
20. My mentor teacher and I had difficulty communicating clearly.	3	.15	.93