IMPROVING THE BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM EXPERIENCE FOR

AFRICAN AMERICAN TEACHERS WITHIN THE

GREEN PASTURES SCHOOL DISTRICT: AN APPLIED STUDY

by

Uvonda Marie Willis

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this applied study was to improve the BTI program for African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District by gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions. A multimethod design was used consisting of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The first approach was semi-structured interviews with district and school site administrators. The second approach was conducting a focus group with African American beginning teachers. The third approach involved the development of a survey completed by district and school site administrators and African American beginning teachers. Based on the findings, this applied study identified several recommendations for solving the problem of improving the BTI program experience for African American beginning teachers in the Green Pastures District. These recommendations included revamping the BTI program the areas of Summer Bridge planning and implementation, leadership and mentor training, diversity implementation in the classroom and implementation of small support groups that address various areas associated with years in the BTI program, content area and overall experiences as African American beginning teachers.

Keywords: African American teachers, beginning teachers, cultural competence, culturally responsive pedagogy, induction, teacher education

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project to my entire family. It started with my grandparents, who made numerous sacrifices to ensure I am the woman I am today. Grandad, your wisdom and words are continuous maps for my life, and your humbleness and servitude are attributes I continuously strive to emulate daily. Grandma, your life and legacy will continue through me, and I am forever grateful for the standard your set for my life and the final words you said to me. Mom, you are the greatest educator I know. You poured your life's work into all of us, and the fruition of your sacrifice as an educator is encompassed in this. Dad, while are no longer with us, you spoke the manifestation of this and other accomplishments over my life many years ago. While I know you are not here, I've continued to treasure your words and used them as encouragement along the way.

To my husband Delmus and our children, Keyasia, Jayden, and Jonathon. It's been a long journey, but your sacrifice did not go unnoticed. Delmus, I could not have completed this project without your support and encouragement, especially when I didn't think I could continue. Throughout this journey, we overcame so much, and I am thankful for you. To my children, thank you for understanding the time commitment for this and encouraging me to fulfill my dreams. My prayer is that I live a faith-filled life before each of you, and I hope the completion of this is a testament to faith in action.

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First, I would like to thank Dr. Quindag for your patience with me. I remember the times when I doubted my ability to complete this, and your words of wisdom comforted me and encourage me to continue. Most of all, thank you for seeing the vision. Thank you for pushing me to finish what God gave me and to not forfeit it and reminding me that I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I would also like to thank Dr. Patrick for challenging me to be the best researcher I could. Your feedback and questions always stretched me and made me think outside of the box and for that I am eternally grateful.

I would like to thank my all my colleagues. My experiences with you helped shape this; and I am especially appreciative to those who participated in this study and allowed your stories to be told. I am thankful to my accountability partners (and you know who you are) for understanding the assignment and sending me messages to meet the deadline and finish what I started.

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List of Abbreviations

Beginning Teacher Induction (BTI)

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP)

Local Education Agency (LEA)

North Carolina Effectiveness Educator System (NCEES)

Professional Development Plan (PDP)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The purpose of this applied study was to improve the BTI program for African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District by gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions. To explore this problem, the beginning teacher induction program needed to be revised to support the needs of all beginning teachers, but specifically African American teachers (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Nationwide, the educational field is confronted with a disparaging reality regarding the scarcity of African American teachers. In the last 30 years, while the number of teachers of color has slowly increased approximately 12%, unfortunately the number of African American teachers has continually decreased to approximately 8% of the teaching population nationwide (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

Green Pastures School District had a consistently low number of African American teachers participating in the BTI program; therefore, research was warranted to offer strategies of improvement. For example, this year, there were 34 teachers, and 11 were African American; in 2019-2020, there were 32 teachers and nine were African American; in 2018-2019, there were 34 teachers and eight were African American; in 2017-2018, there were 32 teachers and seven were African American; in 2016-2017, there were 43 teachers and nine were African American and in 2015-2016, there were 45 teachers and 7 were African American. For this study, a central question and three sub-questions were researched. The central question was how can the practice of the BTI be improved for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District, and the three sub-questions were how would school site administrators in an interview discuss potential solutions about improving the BTI program experience for African American teachers in the Green Pastures District; how would African American teachers in a focus group discuss

potential solutions about improving the BTI program experience for African American teachers in the Green Pastures District; and how would district administrators, school site administrators, and African American teachers completing a survey provide potential solutions about improving the BTI program experience for African American teachers in the Green Pastures District. This chapter presented the historical, social, and theoretical aspects of this study and explained why it was significant for research. Key terms were presented that the reader would encounter in this and later chapters.

Background

In 2018, Public Schools of North Carolina published the Beginning Teacher Support Handbook, as the state guideline for district implementation of induction programs. The purpose of the handbook was to "provide resources for LEA (Local Education Agencies) and Charters to successfully implement and monitor a Beginning Teacher Support Program" (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a, p. 3). Local districts, therefore, were required to implement an induction program for beginning teachers and outline the process for these teachers throughout their next three years of teaching (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a). There were five standards in this program. Standard One outlines the district's institutional plan for fostering beginning teacher success within the classroom. The key points of a district's plan must incorporate methods for data collection, program improvement and accountability. In addition, induction programs must demonstrate their implementation of policies outlined in the (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a).

Right before school starts, most districts present and implement these policies. Board policy required all districts provide an orientation before the first day of school, and this must occur within the first 10 days of employment (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a. The

orientation must review policies and procedures associated with the induction program. In the Green Pastures District, an induction coordinator instituted a three-day beginning teacher retreat called Summer Bridge, where all standards of the handbook were presented. Designated schools in the district scheduled instructional days to review standards with all their teachers. Standard Two highlighted the mentor selection process, the mentor roles, the responsibilities, and the aspects of mentor training. Green Pastures mentors were nominated by building administrators, and then these names were given to a district coordinator. Mentor candidates must complete an online mentor training module through the North Carolina Effectiveness Evaluator System (NCEES) and are only mentors if they successfully completed the training. The mentors were usually paired with beginning teachers who were compatible with their teaching assignment (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a).

Standard Three addressed mentors and beginning teachers' essential relationships through peer evaluations and peer reflections in and outside of the classroom (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a). Mentor and beginning teachers in the Green Pastures District used Google Doc mentor logs to document contact time spent and discussions. Mentors also documented observational information on the teachers' classroom walkthroughs and formal evaluations. Later, they discussed classroom management and diversity issues. Twice a year, mentor logs were submitted to a district coordinator for review, and documents were filed for auditing.

Standard Four addressed specific training sessions for beginning teachers that acclimated them to the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation System. Beginning teachers were required to attend various professional developments based on their number of years they taught in the classroom. For example, first year teachers must attend all professional development trainings;

second year teachers must attend four of five professional development trainings, and third year

teachers must attend three of five professional development trainings. Beginning teachers also

documented their professional development through a Google doc, and twice a year, submitted

this to the district coordinator. Standard Five streamlined the documentation process of the

induction program aligned with teacher licensure over the course of three years (Public Schools

of North Carolina, 2016a).

Every five years, induction programs must submit documentation to the Beginning

Teacher Support Program Monitoring Instrument to ensure induction programs were compliant

with Board policies for the support of beginning teachers (Public Schools of North Carolina,

2016a). In an effort to prepare for the audit, induction programs were assigned "team facilitators"

(p. 70), who assisted induction program coordinators in organizing material and documentation

and arranging site space for auditors to meet coordinators (Public Schools of North Carolina,

2016a).

Historical Perspective

The North Carolina Department of Public Education and the North Carolina Professional

Teaching Standards Committee collaborated and developed the current mentor and teacher

standards used with beginning teachers and their mentors (North Carolina State Board of

Education, 2009). This committee studied induction programs from California, Idaho, Illinois,

Ohio, Mississippi, Maine, South Carolina, and Arizona and concluded the revised standards

should incorporate the following:

Expand the criteria of the current North Carolina standards. These standards

focused on knowledge, skills and dispositions, but the recommendation from the

research suggested including "funding, time, professional development,

evaluation and systemic support.

Model proposed standards of principal and teacher evaluations. In both

evaluations, principals and teachers must exhibit artifacts of being marked

developing to be distinguished. The committee felt this model served as a great

example to decide the differentiating levels of support between a developing

induction program and a distinguished induction program.

Use the language, benchmarks and goals of the North Carolina Professional

Teaching Standards as alignment measures for induction programs. (North

Carolina State Board of Education, 2009)

This committee made four important recommendations that formed the foundation of teacher training. The first recommendation was that there must be continuous support for teachers, intentional selection of highly trained mentors, accountability for mentors and assessments of gradual development of teachers and their designated induction programs (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009). The second recommendation was that mentors emulate teaching and learning practices for beginning teachers that aligned with the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009). The third recommendation was that there must be more accountability with induction programs by requiring five-year audits and annual peer reviews (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009). Finally, the fourth recommendation suggested incentives for effective mentors in receiving licensure endorsements for their roles in facilitating instruction for beginning teachers (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009).

North Carolina's BTI program was not a new concept for North Carolina teachers. The program's origins were traced to the early 1980s. Initially, the program's design required new teachers to fulfill two-years of mentorship and training before candidates received full licensure (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009). In 1998, policy changes associated with the Beginning Teacher Support Program required teachers to participate in a three-year program with "a formal orientation, mentor support, observations, and evaluation prior to recommendation for continuing (Standard Professional 2) licensure" (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009, p. 6). One of the benefits was districts now had the "flexibility to develop induction programs that met the needs of their beginning teachers" (p. 6), and these changes held district personnel accountable for meeting guidelines set forth by North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2010). The policy's realignment was based on feedback from the State's Teacher Working Condition Surveys (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009). Approximately 100,000 teachers completed the survey, and the purpose was to determine if school environments increased student learning and teacher retention (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009).

Based on their findings, they concluded that beginning teachers require different professional development from veteran teachers, and early surveys indicated new teachers wanted professional development that addressed classroom management and teaching and learning (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009). Also, new teachers stated that induction programs needed more inclusivity reaching all new teachers and mentorship effectiveness would increase if mentors provided instructional feedback from observations (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009). The survey found when mentors provided feedback and regularly met with mentees, 76% of mentees expressed more confidence in

implementing their instructional strategies, and 76% of mentees' classroom management and discipline skills improved (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009).

However, the responses revealed ineffective mentors infrequently observed mentees and consequently, many of these teachers attributed their desire to leave the teaching profession to the lack of support from their mentors (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009). Specifically, one out of 10 beginning teachers did not have a mentor, and one-fifth of beginning teachers did not receive observations from mentors (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009). Reciprocally, mentors echoed support sentiments and felt district personnel needed to support mentors with better than what they received in order to transcend their needs in the classroom (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009). All of the aforementioned concerns were considered when creating the five beginning teacher standards, the foundation of the BTI program.

Social Perspective

Each year, every beginning teacher completed a self-assessment rubric based on the five standards associated with the Beginning Teacher Support Program within the designated district. This document was reviewed with the beginning teacher and the Beginning Teacher Program District Coordinator to develop a Professional Development Plan (PDP). According to Standard Three of the Self-Assessing the Beginning Teacher Support Program Rubric, beginning teachers must address issues of diversity through the lens of "race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and other aspects of culture" (Public Schools of North Carolina, n.d.c., para. 2).

Hinchcliffe's *Diversity by District* report researched race ratios within the Green Pastures District in North Carolina found discrepancies with teachers of color compared to White teachers (Hinchcliffe, 2019a). There are five White students per White teacher, and statewide, there are

nine White students per White teacher (Hinchcliffe, 2019a). Considering African American students and teacher ratios, there were 37 students per African American teacher and statewide, there were 25 African American students per African American teacher (Hinchcliffe, 2019a). Consequently, there was an imbalance of ratios in the Green Pastures District in North Carolina, but also revealed the need to recruit administrators of the Green Pastures School District in North Carolina who were not in the population of the district. Statewide, the statistics pertaining to White and African American teachers were even more staggering. Currently, 80% of the teachers in North Carolina were White and female (Hinchcliffe, 2019b). Although beginning teachers were assigned mentors, it was questionable that these mentors could effectively advise and specifically African American teachers, on issues surrounding diversity and culture since they have never experienced diversity.

Theoretical Perspective

The core standards of North Carolina induction programs were framed around diversity issues and knowing the various ways learning occurred for students (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a). Understanding how learning occurred required teachers to make connections about factors that contributed to student learning and these connections came from understanding diversity and culture (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a). All who participate in induction programs should embrace this principle and mandate.

Teacher education programs should be the foundational experiences where beginning teachers learn about learning diversity and culture. However, graduates of these programs exit teacher education programs, enter induction programs, and may be inadequately prepared to teach students in their classrooms. Diversity and cultural concepts were presented in overview courses, but the application on how to successfully implement these within classroom instruction

was missing. Often, White professors controlled the narrative concerning what was taught, valued and perceived as quality teaching pedagogy, and what the culture surrounding teachers' classrooms should resemble (Sleeter, 2017). With White teachers representing 80% of classroom teachers (Sleeter, 2017), it was understandable how White values and norms were presented within teacher education programs. However, the results may be that the culture and values of teachers of color were diminished and devalued since their experiences were not represented. Critical Race Theory (CRT) can provide a framework for expounding on the experiences of people of color (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and show the systemic and institutional racism in our educational institutions (Sleeter, 2017). For this applied study, CRT and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy were the two theoretical frameworks used.

CRT was a theory that has traditionally been used to show how the institutional tenants associated with race and racism and have affected people of color. Historically, CRT developed as a "response to criticisms of critical legal studies, a theoretical approach that while concerned about law itself helped to maintain social inequity, failed to address how the construct of race the practice of racism operated in these processes" (Brown, 2014, p. 328). CRT included counter storytelling, which gave credence to the stories of people of color through their experiences, and countered narratives about race in society and schools and coincided this with whiteness, which defined interests and rights preferred and used to exclude those of others (Brown, 2014). With counter storytelling, teachers of color expressed their experiences with "marginalization and lack of connection they felt to their programs, including their relationship to faculty, students and curriculum" (Brown, 2014, p. 336). For this reason, counter storytelling was so important because the concept of whiteness in education has denied African Americans the platform to share their experiences. These stories were termed counter stories because they offer a different

point of view of the ineffectiveness of teacher education programs for teachers of color in providing them with what was needed to be successful classrooms (Sleeter, 2017). Within education, the concept of whiteness is seen in the exclusion of the African American experience. One main tenant of whiteness was that others who are not White were excluded because whiteness is accepted as the norm (Harris, 1993).

In the article *Whiteness as Property*, Harris (1993) chronicled the institution of slavery and addressed its implications on shaping society's perception of race, property and the concept and whiteness itself. Harris (1993) defined whiteness "as the characteristics, the attribute, and the property of the free human being" (p. 1,721). Freedom was associated with whiteness and held its origins with the slave laws of the late 1600s (Harris, 1993). These laws viewed slaves as property or chattel and African Americans were subjected to laws that determined their daily routine, movements, and their ability to have social mobility. The abolishment slavery may have eradicated the institution on paper, but its core beliefs were also evident in the Representation Clause of the Constitution, which questioned if slaves should be identified as objects of individuals (Harris, 1993). In essence, "slavery made human beings market-alienable and in doing so, subjected human life in personhood" (Harris, 1993, p. 1,720).

Consequently, privilege associated with being White meant there were no boundaries and protection from anything was guaranteed (Harris, 1993). The absence of this meant that there was a sense of ownership to those who possessed this privilege over those who did not. In essence, Whites had privileges over African Americans simply because of their skin color. Harris argued that cases such as *Plessy* and *Brown I* were clear indicators of the deep-seated roots of whiteness, and these cases revealed the inequalities of segregation, but "failed to expose the problem of substantive inequality in material terms produced by White domination and race

segregate (Harris, 1993, p. 1,752), which as discussed are staple points of CRT and how the law continues to perpetuate these cycles in education.

CRP was the second theory used for this study. CRP is the teacher's ability to infuse knowledge of students' background and culture into how they learn (Gist, 2017a). CRP had three main characteristics that encompassed culturally relevant teacher educators: They understood what students truly knew and understood; they were culturally competent, and they were socially conscious (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). All stakeholders who work with beginning teachers can use these theoretical frameworks to capture the experiences of teachers of color and use this to be a catalyst for change in affirming the diversity of teachers of color (Gist, 2017b) and contribute to solving the problem surrounding improving the beginning teacher induction program experience of African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this applied study was to improve the BTI program for African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District by gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions. The problem was that induction experience for African American teachers needed improvement. In reviewing the GCS Equity Data, the retention of minority teachers in the traditional middle and high school setting was an inequity area where strategies for improvement were needed (GCS Equity Plan, 2020); hence, in the district, there was a need for more African American teachers. There were African American teachers who entered teaching and were not supported through the BTI program, and when novice African American teachers had issues and needed mentorship, their mentors did not understand or know how to coach or mentor them (Program Evaluation Division, 2020). This could be the result of the lack of diversity among the mentors. Consequently, these beginning teachers remained frustrated or left

teaching relatively early in their careers (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Mentors who work with African American teachers must understand the importance of race how it has adversely shaped the educational experience of African American teacher, which was the foundation of the theoretical framework of CRT. However, if the mentors in the BTI program understood the perspective of African American teacher, they would be able to assist in improving the induction experience for their mentees. This could possibly lead to further recruitment of African American teachers and other underrepresented groups in education.

Within the Green Pastures District, demographics show African American students made up the highest percentage of students (National Center of Education Statistics, 2017). There were 588 Hispanic students, 2,094 White students and 2,198 African American students (National Center of Education Statistics, 2017). As this district continued to grow and increased in diversity primarily with minority students, research suggested that this was one of the main reasons why African American teachers remained (Sun, 2018). Sun's (2018) study found where there were a high number of African American students served, African American teacher retention also increased. In the Green Pastures School District, African American male teachers decreased in numbers within their first three years of teaching. The California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (2016) study on teacher induction programs found overall, teacher induction programs increased beginning teachers' chances for staying in the teaching field. This information supported the earlier claim of the North Carolina Mentor Task Force, which also found that effective mentors and induction programs increased the likelihood of teachers returning to their site schools (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009).

There were 78% of new teachers in the workforce, but only 8% were African American

(U.S. Department of Education, 2016), and among male teachers nationwide, only 2% were African American males (Whitfield, 2019), and overall African American teachers decreased 4% in the classroom since 2012 (Hanford, 2017). Not knowing how to support African American teachers has severed the tie between African American teachers utilizing their passion to pursue purpose and preparing them to effectively do this. This was one of the main reasons why counter-storytelling was essential to the African American teacher experience because it allowed these teachers to share their journeys and revealed the counters of the ineffectiveness of their preparatory experiences (Brown, 2014).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this applied study was to improve the BTI program for African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District by gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions. A multimethod design was used consisting of both qualitative and quantitative approaches and descriptive statistics was used to quantify and analyze data. During the first phrase, structured interviews with administrators was conducted. During the second phase, a focus group with African American teachers was conducted, and during the third phase, surveys to district and school site administrators and African American teachers were distributed.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was that the findings from it would offer strategies that could be implemented to improve the BTI program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District. Furthermore, this study could offer findings to improve the overall induction program for developing novice teachers for classroom success. Implications from this study could also be used in restructuring the North Carolina Beginning Teacher Support Programs' policies and procedures in reviewing yearly annual reports and five-

year district induction program proficiency requirements (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2010).

Beginning teacher induction programs were created to implement strategies to promote retention among novice teachers; however, African American teacher retention continued to drastically decline. Nationwide, approximately 17% of the teachers the United States were teachers of color and only two percent of teachers were African American males (Goings & Bianco, 2016). In order for African American teachers to grow while in induction programs, more collaboration was needed with teacher education programs, and the cultural experiences of African American teachers must be intertwined within the conversation of cultural diversity and implementation within the classroom learning experience. In addition, all stakeholders must acknowledge the decline of African American teachers is a "serious problem that warrants attention and action" (Goings & Bianco, 2016, p. 644).

Research Questions

Central Question: How could the practice of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program be improved for African Americans within the Green Pastures School District?

Sub-question 1: How would administrators in an interview improve the Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District?

Sub-question 2: How would African American teachers in a focus group improve the Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African Americans teachers within the Green Pastures School District?

Sub-question 3: How would district administrators, school site administrators, and

African American teachers completing a survey improve the Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District?

Definitions

1. *Teacher attrition* – reasons why teachers leave the field of education (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016).

2. *Beginning teacher* – teachers designated as having three or less years of teaching experience (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018).

3. *Induction* - beginning teacher program that introduces teaching and learning concepts to beginning teachers (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018).

4. *Teacher retention* -characteristics within a district that reveal why teachers leave, transfer, or retire from their current positions (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018).

Summary

The purpose of this applied study was to improve the BTI program for African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District by gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions. Sub-questions addressed how administrators in an interview would discuss potential solutions about improving the BTI program experience of African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District; how African American teachers in a focus group would discuss potential solutions about improving the BTI program experience of African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District, and how surveys from district and school site administrators and African American teachers would provide potential solutions about improving the BTI induction program experience of African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District.

Implications of this study could provide information for institutions on not only how they

prepared African American teachers, but all prospective teachers. Understanding the importance of all teachers' experiences and valuing their voices would revolutionize how instructors were trained to support African American teachers so ultimately, African American teachers would view teaching as a profession that also belonged to them (Goings & Bianco, 2016) and eventually increase the number of African American teachers entering the teaching profession.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this applied study was to improve the BTI program for African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District by gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions. This chapter explained the BTI program experience through the lens of Critical Race Theory to understand how teacher education programs and its training practices directly correlated to induction practices implemented for African American teachers and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy was used as a framework to show how important culturally relevant teacher educators and practices were essential for African American teachers. This chapter reviewed relevant literature pertaining to induction programs, implications of what we know about these programs, their attrition rates and implications, model programs for African American recruitment and areas for further research.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

Because teacher education programs were institutions where African American teachers received their training prior to participating in BTI programs, it was important to understand how the CRT theoretical framework helped us understand how teacher education programs and its training practices directly correlated to induction practices implemented for African American teachers. CRT was a theory that highlighted how race, especially from a historical standpoint consistently impeded the framework of teaching and learning (Cook, 2014; Calderon, 2015). Moreover, it explained how "race and racism have been institutionalized and are maintained" (Sleeter, 2017, p. 157), and CRT provided a great framework for understanding

Whiteness and its connection to teacher education programs and ways to address it (Bialka, 2015; Brown, 2014; Sleeter, 2017).

CRT gave a foundation for how race permeated through education (Brown, 2014). Across the nation, over 70% of students enrolled in traditional teacher education programs were White (Sleeter, 2017). This statistic was important because CRT asserted the dominance of White students within teacher education programs drive curriculum changes (Sleeter, 2017), and perpetuated pedagogy, ethics and teaching that have been allowed to be permanent fixtures in teacher education (Matias et al., 2016). Due to the constant changes in student demographics in classrooms, diversity courses were required in teacher education programs. The issue was that within these courses, professors disseminated information that did not adequately prepare students for success within their own classrooms (Sleeter, 2017).

Scott and Rodriguez (2015) reiterated preparation in teacher education programs for what teachers of color would encounter in schools made these institutions essential in fostering what was expected in classrooms. In an interview with tenured faculty members concerning visiting adjacent communities observing the needs of students and school outlooks, faculty members noted that visiting communities and schools were not requirements, and universities did not provide direct incentives for actions such as this and did actually affect enrollment numbers within programs (Sleeter, 2017). Matias et al. (2016) questioned the effectiveness of teacher educators who were seemingly oblivious to race and refused to acknowledge its effects with their students of color. While universities did not make community and school collaboration requirements for university staff, visiting neighboring communities and schools made the information in courses more relevant and fostered conversations about diversity and more specifically, race. Milner (2016) noted successful teachers saw themselves as not just

"spectators" (p. 429) within communities, but extensions of them because learning about the communities acknowledged the students and their experiences from them (Milner, 2016).

Brockenbrough (2013) mentioned it was advantageous for teacher education programs to partner with local community stakeholders. The majority of teachers voiced they chose teaching because it offered an opportunity for them to reciprocate to their communities through teaching. Cochran-Smith et al. (2015) completed a study on teacher education found current teacher education programs were based on constructivist viewpoints where teacher candidates conceptualized needs of students within their internships and future classrooms on their personal beliefs about diversity and race and disregarded realities of student experiences within the classroom. The student experiences of African American teachers were well documented in Goings and Bianco's (2016) study where former African American teachers recalled their experiences as younger students. Many of these men reported "low expectations, racial microaggressions and stereotyping" (Goings & Bianco, 2016, p. 636) encompassed their learning experiences and what they learned in classrooms came from an inner drive to know what to do to prove teachers' perceptions of them as being inaccurate. Hence, all educators were encouraged to be mindful of the dialogue used with students, but especially how teachers spoke and motivated African American students because these experiences impacted success and potential careers in the education field (Goings & Bianco, 2016).

CRT and Interest Convergence

Brown (2014) noted this mindset undermined the concept of interest convergence, which analyzed ways to address racial issues associated with White interests (Gist, 2018c); however, this concept was used to recruit teacher candidates of color for statistical purposes, only and ignored the cultural and diversity measures that needed for success (Brown, 2014). The

backstories of teachers served as a catalyst for teachers desiring to work in schools that

mimicked their upbringing. This was because teachers felt their experiences and wisdom helped

students in similar situations (Sleeter, 2017). However, Sleeter's (2017) study of the internship

experiences of pre-service teachers revealed "curriculum and field placements were not relevant

to preparing teachers for their communities" (p. 162). Another study also concluded African

American pre-service teachers too believed their placements were ineffective, unsupportive and

offered poor mentorship (Maylor, 2018). When experiences of students of color were discussed

in teacher education courses, candidates also reported feeling alone and silenced their opinions

because White students were the majority, and their perceptions and experiences were favored

and ultimately dominated classroom discussions (Sleeter, 2017). A study by Damrow and

Sweeney (2018) found that students from various sociocultural backgrounds welcomed the

opportunity to learn about their peers' learning experience; however, this space had to be

cultivated by faculty with clear expectations and outcomes that provided opportunities for the

stories of others to be told and reflected upon by the person telling the story and those listening

(Damrow & Sweeney, 2018).

CRT and Whiteness

This perceived dominance was an attribute of whiteness that Brown (2014) offered was a

fixture of White culture in teacher education programs and because within these educational

experiences, White experiences were valued and discussed, and minority experiences and

opinions were marginalized and dismissed. In the educational sphere, a property of whiteness

was that there were benefits White students had over their teachers of color (Annamma, 2015).

CRT argued that this property of whiteness was grounded in White privilege, which permeated

societal values, even in schools. Therefore, new societal and educational values were needed

(McCarther & Davis, 2017). The emotionality of whiteness was the outwardly response to race

by White educators as a defense mechanism to cover true intentions or emotions (Matias et al.,

2016). Ironically, what also occurred was teachers of color matriculated through teacher

education programs realized this and acclimated their biases and opinions to favor viewpoints of

White instructors and peers because these stances were more accepted (Matias et al., 2016).

Several researchers coined terminologies that paralleled the emotionality of whiteness. For

example, Gist (2017b) defined double bind as the tug of war teachers of color experienced

between embracing how their personal experiences shaped their identities versus how institutions

perceived and accepted who they really were. Green and Martin (2018) suggested this was the

Black man's burden because as African Americans, there was an inward need to act a particular

way to justify how African Americans were viewed, felt and the necessity to code switch to

successfully play the game required to be successful in teacher education programs. The effect of

this was that White experiences were valued as normal, acceptable and the dominant viewpoint

for what was qualified as knowledge and experience essential for teachers (Brown, 2014), or just

being a teacher of color exemplified perceptions, value systems and beliefs differently and did

not fit school norms (Madsen et al., 2019). For example, many candidates of color reported they

were encouraged by professors to dismiss their personal cultural experiences (Brown, 2014).

Consequently, if teachers of color chose to continue silencing their viewpoints and maintain

"uncritical subjectivities" (Calderon, 2015, p. 211), the realities were these affected the

authenticity of teachers of color. In addition, this continued the cycle of alienation for students of

color (Calderon, 2015), and teacher education programs realized its framework perpetuated

whiteness (Matias et al., 2016). Teachers graduated from these institutions and carried these

perceptions into their BTI programs. This notion of chronicling experiences of teachers of color

was known as counter-storytelling (Brown, 2014), which was a cornerstone of CRT (Carmen-Salazar, 2018).

CRT and Counter-Storytelling

Counter-storytelling shed light on experiences of teachers of color and allowed the realism of racism to be dissected and provided narratives about racial oppression in schools and society (Leondardo, 2013). In counter-storytelling, interviews with pre-service teachers of color, Jackson and Kohli (2016) found teachers did not feel valued and commented on the ineffectiveness of their teacher education experiences. Bialka (2015) noted teacher candidates were required to examine their personal dispositions. Gist (2019) advocated for communities where teachers of color could share their experiences. The counter-effect of these stories was that the perceptions given 'countered' what society thought about teacher education programs because it revealed the program's ineffectiveness in preparing teachers of color (Brown, 2014), which affected the quality of teachers participating in beginning teacher programs. Counter-storytelling also allowed teachers of color to share their perspectives and experiences and created a space for them to so effectively (Gist, 2019).

The experiences of teachers of color in teacher preparation programs did not just affect their work there, but how they performed in their BTI programs and their classrooms. Brown (2014) acknowledged teacher education programs did indeed marginalize, alienate, and did not culturally accept the experiences of teachers of color. Induction programs needed to tap into the power of teacher testimonies as a means of valuing the experiences of all teachers, but particularly teachers of color and shape learning spaces that positioned teachers of color to thrive and realize what pedagogical practices and leadership worked best for them (Gist, 2019; Leonardo, 2013). These testimonies allowed all to "generate strategies and solutions on their

own terms, sidestepping diluted or misconstrued research interpretations" (Gist, 2019, p. 39) and accepted accounts pertinent to how racism affected those participating in teacher education programs.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Because culture was constantly changing (Ladson-Billings, 2014), pedagogical practices implemented needed to adjust to the diverse student body. The framework surrounding CRP encompassed the pedagogical practices teachers implemented to adjust to students whose cultures and experiences were "traditionally marginalized or denigrated by schools" (Gist, 2019, p. 1). Its features were very fluid and depended on contextual aspects of classrooms (Gist, 2019).

The theoretical framework surrounding CRP was developed by Gloria Ladson-Billings. In the late 1980s and early 90s, Ladson-Billings desired to analyze the inside instructional practices within classrooms to find ways to "improve teacher education in order to produce new generations of teachers who would bring an appreciation of their students' assets" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 74). During that time period, Ladson-Billings wanted to find research associated with successfully educating African American students, but was unsuccessful in finding adequate research (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Hence, since there was no "language associated with academic excellence" (p. 76) of these students, Ladson-Billings (2014) determined to do. Her early research focused on student learning, academic achievement and the sociopolitical, which were the foundation of CRP and not tenants such as "classroom and behavior management, cultural assimilation and school-based tasks" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 76). Her initial research with CRP noted that students could and would take interest in their

educational experiences if they were aligned to their individual cultural experiences within the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

The history of CRP was also outlined in Ladson-Billings (2000) book, *Crossing Over to Canaan,* which chronicled her experience working with novice teachers. Ladson-Billings and fellow colleagues documented major concerns of their local teacher education program that affected the new teachers within her department. In mentoring these new teachers, she and her colleagues heard from their mentees that faculty from local universities frequently spoke about the importance of multicultural education; however, none of the faculty members gave them insight or practical strategies on how to implement multicultural education within their classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2000); however, these faculty members assumed that the mentees (new teachers) understood how to implement CRP because they were African American (Jackson & Kohli, 2016).

Secondly, mentees mentioned their lack of pedagogical understanding and attributed this to the continuous disconnect between academic and professional expectations. In a study, African American preservice teachers reported that their instructors did not grasp the components of CRP and failed to develop pedagogy that embraced cultural responsibility (Jackson & Kohli, 2016). Moreover, Ladson-Billings found this fragmentation also intertwined with the field experiences and coursework of mentees and hence, mentees complained about being placed with cooperating teachers who were compliance figures for paperwork purposes, but lacked knowledge of assisting mentees in achieving successful student teaching experiences (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Ladson-Billings and her colleagues' conversations with these teachers solidified her ideals that the foundational principles associated with constructing a successful teacher

education program must change and encompass strategic ways of assisting new teachers to incorporate multicultural education in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

As mentioned, the theoretical framework of CRP consisted of three components: "academic achievement, cultural competence and sociopolitical consciousness" (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 31). Ladson-Billings described academic achievement through five viewpoints noting that all students were capable of being educated because teachers believed they could and did not make assumptions about students' learning capability; achievement was determined by what actually occurred in the classroom; teachers not only knew what they taught, but were also familiar with their students and methods used to teach them; teachers were mindful in ensuring the material used in their instruction was factual and accurate for student learning and teachers utilized various modes of assessing student learning (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

The second component of CRP was cultural competence. Cultural competence was defined as the ability to understand one's own culture and its role in the individual's life (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Within the classroom, cultural competence allowed teachers to understand culture, and its importance in education; to share in the responsibility for student learning; to promote student culture as a foundational aspect of learning and to promote students' understanding of their local and extended cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

The third component of CRP focused on sociopolitical consciousness. Ladson-Billings defined this as when teachers were able to take their curriculums and academic requirements and intertwined these with social justice issues (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Sociopolitical conscious teachers understood the sociopolitical environment of their school, community and nation, and it was essential to know these facets and how they were intertwined. These teachers understood the

importance of good citizenship and contributions within their community and parallelism of their success to their students' success (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

As previously stated, CRP intentionally depicted how teachers incorporated background knowledge of students to increase student learning (Gist, 2017a). Before teachers entered the workforce, they were students in teacher education classrooms, and their instructors were charged with taking their background experiences and using these to shape what they experienced in classrooms; however, if the needs of teachers of color were not met because institutions did not value their backgrounds, how could true preparation for student diversity take place for what these teachers encountered in their own classrooms?

CRP and Culturally Relevant Teachers

Culturally relevant teachers constantly recognized the experiences of their students and used these as modes of inspiration that were consistently cultivated (Bryan & Williams, 2017; Gist, 2019). The goal of CRP was for teachers to reflect on their experiences and use these as exemplars for students to use to understand their views on race and ultimately prepare these students for success in and out of the classroom. Milner's (2016) study highlighted the experiences of teachers who instructed using CRP and found these teachers validated their students' learning only after they all discovered their personal viewpoints and acknowledged these may indeed differ from their students. In addition, these teachers and their students reciprocally learned from each other and neither made assumptions about how learning took place; rather each acquired an interest in learning from each other (Milner, 2016). Culturally relevant teachers were also charged with empowering students academically, politically and socially with new knowledge and dispositions (Bryan & Williams, 2017).

This was where the notion of cultural competence paralleled with CRP. Teachers who are culturally competent and relevant possessed abilities to guide their students and assessed and embraced all aspects of their own individual cultures (Epstein & Gist, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2014), and reflected on its cultural importance (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). In addition, culturally competent and relevant teachers realized the complexity of culture and how it is connected to all areas of life (Ladson-Billings, 2000) and understood that teachers must learn the intricacies of students' cultures and communities they served because doing so showed students their valued interest in their backgrounds outside the classroom, which benefited student learning inside of the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Culturally competent and relevant teachers also knew that it was important to incorporate students' prior knowledge and use it to acquire new knowledge and facilitate multicultural instruction (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Aronson and Laughter (2016) study also revealed classrooms implementing cultural competence practices and found students made gains and associations of information in all academic areas and even developed more cultural appreciation.

Teacher education programs became culturally responsive programs that promoted cultural and linguistic diversity and developed an awareness of what it truly meant to prepare teachers for incorporating these attributes in the classroom. All stakeholders needed education about CRP and its implementation within the classroom (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). In terms of teacher education programs, Gist proposed there must be a curriculum change that welcomed different perspectives from various backgrounds and programs must commit to this change and promote strategies that intertwined the lived experiences of all students.

Culturally responsive educators must effectively model practices and not resent educating beginning teachers about it because of educators' lack of knowledge about it. Jackson's study of

preservice teachers found that faculty members use the term CRP because it was a part of their curriculum, but lacked knowledge about it (Jackson & Kohli, 2016) and showed a "clear disconnection with the subject (p. 231). This was especially important for teachers of color who needed other culturally responsive teacher educators who revealed and exclaimed inequities associated with privilege and power that affected teachers of color (Gist, 2019). Educators who were willing to do this continuously encouraged the silence of teachers of color (Jackson & Kohli, 2016) and produced teachers "who were nonracialized and prepared to teach all students using universal best practices that did not include CRP at the center" (p. 231).

Mentors who coached novice teachers in BTI programs were cognizant of their role as culturally responsive educators and ensured their pedagogical strategies given did not characterize properties of whiteness. Mentors possessed the skill sets that promoted them to be effective mentors (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2010). Guindon et al. (2014) reported on teacher retention strategies of beginning teachers in North Carolina found mentoring was the best practice for supporting beginning teachers. Mentoring was a required aspect of the beginning teacher program, and the mentors were obligated to guide and to provide adequate feedback in various areas i.e. classroom management, diversity, and other designated areas of support. Mentors embraced cultural backgrounds of beginning teachers and navigated beginning teachers on how these experiences could also guide the experiences of students in the classroom. Gist (2017a) further emphasized culturally responsive teacher educators had the attributes of being culturally competent, mindful and prepared to equip teachers of color for situations that inevitably occurred within classrooms. If there was true concern about educating all students, it was important that the commitment was made to truly value their background experiences and how this shaped how and what they perceived and learned (Huff, 2020).

Situations involving African American teachers' struggle with culturally relevant issues were cornerstones of Brockenbrough's study. For example, many teachers in this study struggled with scenarios where parents and students of communities dismissed their authenticity as competent educators because of their color and sex (Brockenbrough, 2013). Teachers of color who had mentors who embraced CRP noted the feedback from their mentors allowed them to intentionally reflect on pedagogical practices (Gist, 2017a) used in the classroom. Brockenbrough took this a step further and suggested that mentors should not only provide feedback for their mentees, but should also create safe spaces where mentors and mentees could truly discuss and examine the true complexities of the classroom (Brockenbrough, 2013). Creating those spaces could also be done district wide by leadership mandating feedback from all stakeholders who played integral roles in the development and implementation of policies for induction programs (Huff, 2020).

Related Literature

Recruitment was defined as the selection, the categorizing, and the positioning of policies and procedures that ultimately affected retention. Subsequently, retention depended on the environment and relationships created for success (Bryan & Ford, 2014). BTI programs were implemented to help all new teachers within their first three years of teaching; however, the problem concerning helping African American teachers in their preparation in teaching proved to be more difficult. Green and Martin (2018) emphasized education entities improve its efforts to attract and keep teachers of color. Research also showed that nationwide, approximately 80% of districts did not have and were not prepared to support teachers from various underrepresented backgrounds, including African Americans. Bryan and Williams (2017) noted preparation programs potentially served as hinderances for African American teachers in the teaching

profession. In comparing graduation rates of White students, African American students majoring in education graduated 42% within six years versus 73% of White students who completed the required Praxis exams (Goings & Bianco, 2016). If accepted into education programs, African American teachers also received little to no culturally responsive teaching strategies, which affected their ability to diversify interactions with students and lessoned activities in the classroom (Goings & Bianco, 2016) and equipped themselves with the necessary pedagogy for classroom success (Bryan & Williams, 2017).

Purpose of Induction Programs, Statistics, and Implications

Reeder (2013) conducted research on induction programs in North Carolina found that the attributes of sustainable beginning teacher support induction programs were those that created atmospheres that eliminated stress and anxiety for new teachers; fostered communication networks for new teachers and prioritized creating meaningful learning environments for students.

Induction programs were used to help with teacher attrition with teachers in the beginning stages of their teaching careers (Ronfelt & McQueen, 2017), but were they effective? New research suggested that there was no correlation between induction programs and teacher retention (Ronfelt & McQueen, 2017), and Bastian and Marks (2017) also found that beginning teachers were more likely to leave teaching. Between 2014-2018, North Carolina's State of Teaching Profession Report revealed correlating data associated with beginning teachers.

In 2014-2015, there were 18,944 beginning teachers and 3,942 left the profession by the end of the year, with the statewide attrition rate of approximately 4% for beginning teachers. In 2015-2016, there were 17,618 beginning teachers and 2,252 left the profession by the end of the year, with the statewide attrition rate of approximately 13% for beginning teachers and

approximately 8% non-beginning teachers. In 2016-2017, there were 21,276 beginning teachers and 2,619 left the profession by the end of the year, with the statewide attrition rate of approximately 12% for beginning teachers and approximately 8% non-beginning teachers. In 2017-2018, there were 15,595 beginning teachers and 7,674 left the profession by the end of the year, with the statewide attrition rate of approximately 12% for beginning teachers and approximately 7% non-beginning teachers (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014, 2015, 2016b, 2017).

These statistics showed the rate at which beginning teachers were leaving the profession steadily increased in North Carolina over the past four years, and the rate at which non-beginning teachers were leaving the profession decreased over the past four years, respectively. This trend with beginning teachers leaving the profession supported the national data, which reported approximately 19% to 30% of teachers left teaching within their first five years of teaching (Castro et al., 2018). Diversity with the student population throughout the U.S. steadily increased; however, teacher diversity has not (Sun, 2018). 2014 marked the diversity shift where African American students became the demographic majority in the US (Paris, 2016; Sebastian-Cherng & Haplin, 2016). One of the biggest concerns within the teacher workforce was that racial diversity declined (Sun, 2018). Approximately 18% of the teacher workforce encompassed teachers of color, and in North Carolina, the yearly retention rate of African American teachers was 75% (Sun, 2018). Comparatively, recent research showed teachers of color had the "lowest retention rate, at 78%, as compared to 85% for White; 79% for Hispanic; 96% for Asian and Pacific Islander, and 89% for multiracial teachers" (Sun, 2018, p. 2). The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Program Evaluation Division data from 2015 to 2019 revealed a greater divide of the teacher-student diversity in this state. In reviewing this data, minority

teacher growth only grew from approximately 17% to 21%, and minority student growth was approximately 49% to 52% (Program Evaluation Division, 2020). However, in analyzing this data more closely by individual years, the lack of diversity was more apparent. For example, between 2015-2017, the diversity percentage difference between minority teachers and minority students was approximately 32% each year. In 2018 and 2019, there was a slight decrease of approximately, 1%, with the diversity difference dropping to 31%. It should be noted that while there was decrease in these percentages, 2019 also had the highest number percentage of teacher and student diversity (Program Evaluation Division, 2020).

From a national standpoint, over the last 20 years, data from Ingersoll et al. (2019) study found that the rate of African American teacher growth was not at the same rate as other minority subgroups. This study looked at the recruitment, employment and retention of nonminority and minority teachers from 1987-2012 (Ingersoll et al., 2019). In studying the growth of groups previously mentioned, the study found contrasts in the growth rates. For example, over this timespan, the subgroup with the most teacher growth was Hispanic teachers, with a growth rate increase of 245%; Asian teacher growth increase of 148%; nonminority teacher growth increase of 41%. Areas of teacher decrease were noted with Native Americans, which decreased by 30%, and African American teachers, which decreased by 31%. Out of all other subgroups, these two subgroups overall also had the lowest percentage numbers of student growth increase (Ingersoll et al., 2019). These statistics countered the findings that African Americans pursued careers in teaching at higher rates than Whites (Ahmad & Bozer, 2014).

Reasons Beginning Teachers are Leaving

While it was established that beginning teachers were leaving the teaching profession at higher rates than other teachers, what were the main reasons for teachers leaving the teaching

profession in North Carolina? In reviewing the State of Teaching Profession in North Carolina data for the past four years, personal reasons was the number one explanation (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014, 2015, 2016b, 2017). Within this category, the three highest sub-groups were given for each year. The highest sub-question was resignation due to family relocation, 12.6% 2014-2015, 2% consecutive years, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2014, 2015, 2016b, 2017). The second highest sub-question was resignation due to career change 9.9% 2015-2016, 10.6% 2016-2017, and 11.5% (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2015, 2016b, 2017). The third top sub-question was dissatisfaction with teaching, 1% 2015-2016, 9.3% 2016-2017, and 1% 2017-2018 (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2015, 2016b, 2017). Data from 2014 was not comparable for these sections. Districts could not control family relocation, but career changes and dissatisfaction with teaching were reasons directly related to how we supported teachers. While this data culminated all teachers, it was suggested more research be done as to the percentage breakdown of beginning teachers in these areas and specifically African American teachers.

Nationwide, dissatisfaction with teaching was also a contributing factor to why teachers left the profession. Statistics showed that over half of beginning teachers left the profession within their first five years, and a staggering nine and a half percent of these teachers left within the first year (Abitabile, 2020; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). Hence, "teacher retention should be of continuous importance for every educational system" (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014, p. 2014). Employment location of where minority teachers were placed also factored into reasons why they left the profession. Ingersoll et al. (2019) found that within the public school system, minority teachers worked in schools characterized as having higher poverty levels, higher number of minority students and employed at schools located traditionally in urban

communities. In addition, minority teachers were "two to three times more likely than nonminority teachers" (Ingersoll et al., p. 17) to work in school of this nature, and only 3% of nonminority teachers worked in public schools characterized as such (Ingersoll et al., 2019).

It was a known fact that African American teachers were leaving the profession. Maylor (2018) found African American teachers' experiences directly affected their choice to remain in the teaching profession, and if they chose to leave, studies showed it was linked to perceptions of unfavorable working conditions (Bristol, 2018). Former education secretary John King noted African American males possibly left the profession because of the invisible tax (King, 2016). The invisible tax was a direct result of the understaffing of African American male teachers with districts and those hired were submerged with discipline-prone class rosters based on the adage and stereotype that African American male teachers worked better as disciplinary teachers (Brockenbrough, 2015; D'Amico et al., 2017; King, 2016; Pabon, 2016), and as a result of their "instructional and curriculum" (National Education Association [NEA], 2014, p. 6) attributes were not valued. What was taxing about this assumption was that African American male teachers were automatically given the task to fix students of color, which made their teaching experience more challenging and afforded expectations and responsibilities White counterparts did not have to experience (Paterson, 2018). However, school leaders could counter this stereotype by getting to know their teachers on a personal level and not merely assume their teachers' instructional strengths (Merritt, 2019).

Leadership was a very important factor for teachers to remain in the teaching field. Teachers who had principal leaders who made time to communicate with them outside of the classroom, provided timely feedback and intentionally formed relationships with teachers were all important areas for teachers remaining in the profession (Abitabile, 2020). For example, a

study by Farinde et al. (2016), focused on reasons why teachers left the classroom and found that administrative support was one of the main reason participants cited as reasons why they left. Specifically, the study noted that teachers were more inclined to stay in schools where administrators made teachers feel as if they were not valued and environments were potentially toxic (Farinde et al., 2016). Ingersoll et al. (2019) found teachers who worked in schools with less organizational issues, saw a decrease in teacher turnover and in many instances, these numbers doubled with minority teachers. In addition, veteran teachers who helped new teachers learn the culture and beliefs of a school was also a key component of keeping teachers in the classroom (Abitabile, 2020).

Mentors

Overwhelmingly, the literature revealed that mentoring was one of the best practices for keeping new teachers and was usually used for induction supports (Polikoff et al., 2015); however, using mentors effectively came from implementing very strategic guidelines (Guidon et al., 2014). According to the Public Schools of North Carolina (n.d.b.), mentors supported beginning teachers effectively through the following standards, and they were created to streamline the "knowledge, skills and dispositions beginning teachers need and clearly articulated how mentors could help teachers attain them" (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2019).

> Standard one: Demonstrating Leadership- effective mentors should work to establish essential working relationships with their beginning teachers and share their knowledge of best practices and ethical standards.
>
> Standard two: Establishing Respectful Environment for Diverse Population of Students- mentors effectively support beginning teachers by providing strategies to develop key

relationships with all students, parents, and communities. Mentors share strategies on how to manage and respect diversity and create classroom atmospheres that promote teaching and learning.

Standard three: Knowing the Content They Teach-mentors understand the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and effectively help beginning teachers navigate through its requirements and how to implement these artifacts within the classroom setting.

Standard four: Facilitating Learning for Their Students-effective mentors scaffold how to embed formal and informal assessments in lessons and methods of analyzing this for student growth.

Standard five: Reflecting on Their Practice-effective mentors reserve time to communicate with beginning teachers and commit to developing them as teacher leaders. (Public Schools of North Carolina, n.d.b.)

While the above standards outlined the guidelines mentors followed, there were also guidelines that gave overarching guidelines for mentor selection. According to the North Carolina State Board of Education Policy Manual (2019), districts were required to have programs that provided continuous support for beginning teachers. Listed were some of the major guidelines all mentor programs must include

1. Public school units shall select excellent, experienced, and qualified teachers to serve as mentors, and retired teachers are eligible to serve as mentors.

2. Mentor teachers must be rated at least at the "proficient level on the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES). "Proficient" means a teacher has received ratings of proficient or higher on three of the five standards on the most recent

summative evaluation, or on Standards 1 and 4 for teachers on the Abbreviated
Evaluation.

3. The principal shall determine which mentor teacher best meets the needs of each new
   teacher and shall assign the most appropriate mentor teacher to that new teacher, with
   priority consideration for those mentor teachers rated as "distinguished" and
   "accomplished." Distinguished indicates a teacher has received ratings of
   distinguished on three of the five standards to include Standard 4 on the recent
   summative evaluation, or on Standard 4 for teachers on an Abbreviated Evaluation.
   Accomplished means a teacher has received ratings of accomplished or higher on
   three of the five standards to include Standard 4 on the most recent summative
   evaluation, or on Standard 4 for teachers on an Abbreviated Evaluation. (North
   Carolina State Board of Education, 2019)

Research showed that mentors needed to have an understanding of the setting and context
for which mentees worked. A case study by Lunsmann et al. (2019), studied the prior
experiences of mentors when they were new teachers and how this shaped their perceptions of
mentors. This study found that the majority of the participants had mentors who focused on
building authentic relationships with them and assisted with classroom issues such as behavior
management and lesson preparation also prioritized these skills to their mentees in later years
(Lunsmann et al., 2019). The one exception was from a participant whose mentor offered
minimal feedback and interaction and this participant used this negative experience to improve
how he coached mentees in their classroom experience (Lunsmann et al., 2019).

In another study, Richter et al. (2013), focused on quality and frequency and how this
impacted on beginning teachers' development. This study highlighted two mentoring types:

transmissive, where the mentor solely facilitated the learning process for the new teacher, and constructivist mentoring where the learning experience of the new teacher not only involved the experiences learned from the mentor, but also considered the background experiences of the new teacher (Richter et al., 2013). The study found that beginning teachers who preferred constructivist mentoring were overall more pleased with their jobs and displayed better dispositions and exhibited higher levels of efficacy. The study also showed that mentors were selected and properly trained for successful supervision of mentees (Richter et al. 2013).

Izadinia (2015) study on mentor relationships' roles in shaping teacher identity also found that the positive relationships with mentors produced beginning teachers who were confident about their craft, enjoyed their jobs, exhibited better emotions and self-awareness (Izadinia, 2015). However, the study also found the opposite occurred in mentor relationships when there were unclear expectations, which resulted in low self-esteem and unhappiness (Izadinia, 2015). Maor and McConney (2015) study on mentor programs found that reciprocally, mentors benefited from their experiences with mentees, and these experiences actually improved their reflection practices associated with their instruction (Maor & McConney, 2015).

Gist (2014) affirmed effective mentors must be "knowledgeable of the sociocultural consciousness" (p. 1,013) of the teachers they mentor. Moreover, while North Carolina held a consistent record of success with mentorship (California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, 2016, p. 11), its evaluation of the teacher mentor requirements of North Carolina's Beginning Teacher Support Program, found there was no available information surrounding the process of assigning mentors to mentees. The other five states in the study held strict requirements for mentor pairings (California County Superintendents Educational Service Association, 2016). Mentor pairing requirements were very important and were found to be

effective if done correctly. A study by Polikoff et al. (2015) looked at mentor-mentee pairings based on values and found that beginning teachers enjoyed their mentor-mentee experience more when they shared values with their mentor (Polikoff et al., 2015).

In addition, the study also revealed that mentor policies were very important to the mentor experience of new teachers. This study looked at five policy features, which were rules for recruitment, selection and assignment, mentor location, mentor training and duration of training, mentor interactions and mentor caseload (Polikoff et al., 2015). Major findings from this study were that mentors who had set times to meet with their mentors had more engagement and meaningful experiences with their mentor versus mentor who did not have built in time to meet with their mentees. Interviews with mentees also revealed that they had better experiences with mentors when these mentors held a larger role in the evaluation process, worked in the same building and had a lot of mentor training experience (Polikoff et al., 2015). In reviewing North Carolina's mentor guidelines, as mentioned, the only criteria for choosing mentors was for them to have the minimum rating of "proficient" on a summative evaluation and/or a preference of "accomplished" or "distinguished" on three of the five standards listed in the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2019). In addition, one of the required standards was standard 4, which focused on facilitating learning for students, and teachers noted as distinguished must have observable artifacts to support their ratings in the listed eight elements. It should be noted that in each standard, elements were given that specified criteria teachers demonstrated with students in their classroom setting, and while "proficient" was the base rating for satisfactory evaluation performance, all other ratings built upon this component.

Element one focused on how teachers knew learning occurred for students, and how they understood the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional levels of development for students (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Proficient teachers understood all the developmental levels of instruction and their lessons showed how they differentiated instruction and gathered resources for students assessed their areas of weakness or strengths (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Accomplished teachers not only understood these levels of instruction, but were able to correctly identify these and routinely incorporated these in their differentiated instruction (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Distinguished teachers worked collaboratively with others to incorporate these research-based practices not only in their classrooms, but school-wide in other classrooms (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018).

Element two focused on how teachers plan appropriate instruction (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Proficient teachers used data to drive their short and long term planning of instruction and strategically monitored this instruction and modified it as needed for students (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Accomplished teachers not only monitored and modified instruction, but also focused on student engagement in the learning process (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Distinguished teachers monitored and modified and incorporated student engagement, but also incorporated "cultural diversity needs through the school improvement process" (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018, p. 29).

Element three focused on the type of instructional methods teachers use. This element focused on the effectiveness of the methods used in bridging gaps in instruction for students (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Proficient teachers incorporated lessons that used instructional methods that demonstrated teachers were aware of "appropriate methods and materials necessary to meet the needs of all students" (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018, p.

29). Accomplished teachers used these methods to "ensure the success of all students through the selection and utilization of appropriate methods and materials" (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018, p. 29). Distinguished teachers continuously used new and emerging ways of instruction to ensure all students learned in the classroom (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018).

Element four focused on how teachers used technology and how this maximized instruction (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Proficient teachers implemented lessons that utilized technology and accomplished teachers also utilized technology within their lessons and used the technology to maximize student learning (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Distinguished teachers used their lessons infused with technology to implore critical thinking skills from students (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018).

Element five also focused on developing critical thinking skills, but also included the problem-solving aspect of this (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Proficient teachers had a basic knowledge of what was needed to help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Accomplished teachers built upon this foundation and ensured their lessons demonstrated students' ability to "think creatively and critically, develop and test ideas, draw conclusions and exercise sound reasoning" (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018, p. 30). Distinguished teachers promoted these elements school wide by and assisted other teachers on how develop lesson with these characteristics and methods for assessing critical thinking and problem-solving skills with students (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018).

Element six focused on how teachers helped students work with other students and develop their leadership skills (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Proficient teachers

used their knowledge of their students and applied this to create groups for their students to inter-act with others and develop leadership (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Accomplished teachers took groups and implemented group roles and norms that were used in lessons to strengthen leadership skills in students (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Distinguished teachers found ways to sustain these groups and the leadership skills developed continuously in lessons and ensured these leadership skills taught students how to communicate with others who had different backgrounds (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018).

Element seven focused on how teachers communicated with students. In addition, these methods removed possible language barriers and helped students communicate effectively (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Proficient teachers used different types of ways to communicate with their students and encouraged their students how to communicate (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Accomplished teachers created different ways to communicate with students and made these communication methods standard procedures within their classrooms to promote effective communication (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Distinguished teachers were aware that barriers were apparent and created lessons that troubleshoot these concerns and encouraged other colleagues to do the same in the classrooms (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018).

Element eight focused on different types methods of assessing student learning and how teachers used formative and summative assessments (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Proficient teachers used the mentioned assessment types to drive their instruction and incorporated 21st century skills students needed outside of the school setting (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018). Accomplished teachers reflected on assessment information gathered and used it to improve teaching and learning strategies (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018).

Distinguished teachers facilitated peer assessment strategies, use this as feedback to improve teaching and learning and encourage colleagues to develop instructional practices that also promote 21st century practices (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018).

In reviewing these eight elements, it should be noted that these elements were from the NCEES evaluation system, and this system was designed for teachers so administrators and other district personnel could use it as an instrument to improve student achievement and continuous professional growth of educators (NC Educator Evaluation System, 2020), but should this system be used as a guideline for considering mentors when administrators and other district personnel were not trained on how to use this system in evaluating teachers and mentors were not trained on how this system in this manner?

Another consideration was that while diversity was an evaluative component for NCEES, there were not any specific guidelines for ways that increased teacher diversity and no specific oversight for this was at the state level. In essence, there were no state laws that mandated teacher diversity and/or state strategies on how to recruit or retain teachers of color in North Carolina (Program Evaluation Division, 2020). As a result, a question that should be considered was why were there no state laws in North Carolina mandating teacher diversity? Could this be one of the main reasons why African American teachers were struggling in teaching induction programs because there was no legal oversight for implementing strategies for success? More importantly, because lawmakers did not pass legislation mandating diversity, whose voice, ideas and pedagogy were being heard and implemented? In relationship to CRT, this itself was the essence of whiteness because the viewpoints of White counterparts were indeed valued more because laws were not in place that suggested otherwise. Alienating teachers of color by not implementing policies reversed the efforts of increasing teacher diversity because the lack of

these policies and procedures placed systematic obstacles in the educational pathways of teachers

of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

Program Models Successfully Recruiting African American Teachers

It is known that BTI programs were required to provide structured professional

development for beginning teachers. This professional development should offer a great

foundation to teachers' "successful entry and engagement in the school community (Public

Schools of North Carolina, n.d.b.). Bialka (2015) noted CRP should drive how teachers learn

about their communities. Backward-designed instruction was a pedagogical practice where

beginning teachers were taught to identify needs of communities and schools served and utilized

this data for student populations served (King & Butler, 2015). Paris (2016) referred to

innovative practices where all teachers were more "immersed in communities" (p. 9). In essence,

teachers learned all they could about the cultures of schools and communities. The Call Me

Mister program was a perfect example of how African American male teachers could effectively

recruit and train within the educational field. Data on this program reported that since its

inception 19 years ago, all participants received their teaching certification and remained in the

teaching profession (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). This program built networks with other

institutions and these schools recruited Black males interested in teaching elementary and/middle

school who were from "underserved, socioeconomic disadvantaged and educationally at-risk

communities" (Public Schools of North Carolina, n.d.b., p. 100). One of the great things about

the Call Me Mister program was that its success was rooted in providing extensive support to its

participants. In fact, students had tremendous social and academic support in all stages of their

program and even resided with colleagues within their cohort. Students were financially

compensated and received assistance with gaining employment (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015).

The Program Evaluation Division (2020) recognized the accomplishments of this program and made recommendations for North Carolina to possibly create programs that used this framework with local institutions to allow teachers of color to live and to work together and partner them with specified mentors, internships and peer collaboration to increase recruitment and retention.

The Grow Your Own Program Model also specialized in recruiting students from their communities and had a vision of creating a lineage of African American teachers for communities (Gist, 2018a). In their report addressing the reasons for U.S. teacher shortages, Castro et al. (2018) recommended the Grow Your Own Program Model as a way for districts to "build local and community capacity associated with recruiting and preparing community based teachers" (p. 3), and Gist (2018b) also recommended programs such as this because they intentionally "seek" (p. 353) and formed valuable partnerships from local schools that "increase the likelihood of location fit" (p. 353) for African American teachers (Bryan & Williams, 2017; Gist, 2018b). The Program Evaluation Division (2020) also recommended the Grow Your Own model from recruiting African American teachers because it focused on connecting with students when they were in middle and high school and fostered their interest in education with financial stipends as incentives for returning to their local communities for employment.

Jones et al. (2019) referred to a living-learning community, where teachers lived together and participated in summer internships within the community, where they learned about the community and entities such as the community center, housing projects and visited local churches. Green Pastures School District did a one-day bus tour of the neighboring communities, but more must be done in this area. Green Pastures Summer Bridge model could use these methods as an improvement on the current model, which only devoted three days of professional development to new teachers and allotted one full day of in-house administrator's professional

development at the beginning teacher's designated school of employment. In addition, Green

Pastures School District could promote a program like this for high school students interested in

teaching via the Teacher Cadets Program and/or Future Teachers Program, which were popular

programs in high schools where students gained classroom experience through volunteer

services, actual coursework and received credits for their work. Paraeducators could participate

in an internship-like program to receive licensure and possibly be financially compensated for

doing so (Program Evaluation Division, 2020). Because there are three community colleges and

one university within a 30-mile radius of the district, a 2+2 partnership could also be

implemented where the community colleges and the university work together to assist

prospective teaching students two years each to ensure these students are adequately prepared for

the classroom. The Program Evaluation Division (2020) recommended the 2+2 partnership as a

pliable initiative to improve teacher diversity throughout North Carolina by creating teaching

pathways through Career and Technical courses for prospective teachers.

Elizabeth City State University is located in North Carolina and implemented strategies

to counter teaching shortages, while fostering partnerships with local community colleges and

townships (Carver-Thomas, 2018). This university successfully implemented the 2+2 partnership

and incorporated strategies that eliminated barriers prospective teachers experienced. For

example, one of the primary barriers involved distance and travel, and the university countered

this by actually permitting faculty to travel to the local community colleges to offer instruction

and provide online learning if needed. Students who participated in their program graduated from

it with a bachelor's degree and certification for licensure (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

The Teacher Quality and Retention Program was another program focused on recruiting

African American teachers in the educational field. The program also partnered with other

institutions and offered incentive-based summer internships where participants learned more about their perspective fields, had follow-up interactive webinars throughout the year and monitored their goals with TQRQ staff on their individualized action plans (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). Continuous professional development opportunities for these teachers to meet with other teachers of color and reflect on their unique challenges were great methods for African American teacher recruitment (Bristol, 2015; Bristol, 2019; Gist, 2018c). This program also offered academic support throughout the participants' schooling and scaffolded research-based strategies for students. Participants were assigned mentors, and these mentors were licensed classroom teachers, who also dually served as faculty members of this organization (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015).

Caver-Thomas (2018) highlighted the teacher residency program of North Carolina Agriculture and Technical State University as a success story in countering the narrative of teaching shortages in its area. In 2017, the university used funding to recruit prospective teachers to participate in their program and paired them with mentors who helped them navigate through their academic experience. One other benefit of this program was that the participants also had educational coaches who frequently visited their schools and assisted with instruction strategies. This program also offered stipends and provided living expenses for participants, so that the financial burdens associated with attending college were eliminated.

As the research showed, successful recruitment for developing African American teachers begins early in their educational experience, with public education and outreach programs molding their interest, and hence research showed the number one career choice for African American students in college was teaching (Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Hinchcliffe, 2019b). The reason why these outreach programs were essential was because

they bridged gaps that students experienced associated with school selection and course studies (Paterson, 2018). This pipeline mentioned was metaphorical. Paterson (2018) succinctly described this as the leaky pipeline because it began long before African American teachers entered the workforce. It began with their college education experience and continued through their induction and hiring process. For example, research showed that implementing effective recruiting practices doubled the number of African American teachers in classrooms (Paterson, 2018); however, ineffective support systems for these teachers led to the likelihood that they were "24 percent more likely than their White colleagues to change careers" (Paterson, 2018, p. 51). These statistics suggest a disconnect between the interests of African American teachers desiring to teach, teacher education program efforts fostering these interests and BTI programs' ineffectiveness to support African American teachers. As mentioned, Green Pastures School District was a low socioeconomic district where African American students were the highest demographic population, with 2,198 students (National Center of Education Statistics, 2017). One of this year's initiatives from Green Pastures High School was to develop four-year career plans for all incoming freshmen and tailor coursework towards desired career paths.

This framework could be used with African American students interested in the educational field by utilizing the high school's career coach to coordinate internships for interested students at district schools so these students could gather experience and form essential networks needed. Because the case studies previously mentioned the importance of African American mentorship, the African American teachers within the district could serve as mentors to these youth and expound upon their interest in becoming future African American teachers. District personnel and counselors could use these partnerships to encourage African American students to apply for educational scholarships and their community service within

local schools and strengthen their chances for getting scholarships, but also solidify their commitment to return and intern at local schools. Offering scholarships toward the recruitment of for African American was important because research showed that college debt for African American college students was approximately $7,400 higher for these students than their counterparts (Paterson, 2018), hence consideration should also be given for incentives such as full loan forgiveness (Paterson, 2018), which others noted could be effective retention and recruiting practices (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Program Evaluation Division, 2020). These efforts could change the trajectory of research concluding low expectations of African American students in high school affects the effort placed on academics, and therefore African American students did not consider teaching because teachers' perception deterred them from pursuing it as a career choice (Gershenson, 2015; Goings & Bianco, 2016). Consequently, Fields (2019) reiterated this and described these perceptions and dispositions of educators as detrimental ones that ultimately solidified African American students' decisions to walk away from the education as a career choice. Therefore, all school districts should begin and continue the discussion on eliminating factors within schools that drive African American students' decisions to reconsider teacher careers (Fields, 2019).

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

Improving the beginning teacher induction program support experience for African American teachers is a national crisis. African American teachers' lack of success was not just an induction program issue, but also stemmed from the educational practices of teacher education programs that notoriously did not value the cultural experiences or input of African American teachers. Hence, the continuing trend of White pre-service teachers being the majority in teacher education programs would continue to drive pedagogy, teaching practices and curriculum shifts

(Sleeter, 2017) unless the teacher educators were willing to acknowledge the importance surrounding the declining enrollment of African Americans in teacher education programs, and the reasons surrounding it associated with these students assimilating to the opinions of their White counterparts for acceptance (Matias et al., 2016) or actually personifying the experiences of White counterparts because this was what their institutions culturally accept (Brown, 2014; Green & Martin, 2018).

Attrition rates were highest among beginning teachers and teachers of color. Data noting attrition years from the past three years in North Carolina showed that attrition percentages continuously were at its highest at years zero to three, and rates did not increase again until teachers were near the end of their teaching careers, which was approximately years 25-30, respectively, (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2020, 2019). Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) study on the attrition and beginning teachers concluded that induction programs that had "good functioning mentor systems" (p. 44) could definitely assist beginning teachers with navigating expectations and responsibilities those first three years of teaching and prepare them for years afterwards; however, if mentors were such an essential part of induction programs, why does the criteria not exist for mentor evaluation and was this a reason for why attrition rates steadily increased for beginning teachers? North Carolina has guidelines outlined for district mentor programs to follow; however, some of the guidelines allowed contradict research findings. For example, studies showed that if mentors and mentees were in the same building and teach common subjects, this was a contributing factor that allowed attrition with new teachers (Polikoff et al., 2015), and the Beginning Teacher Support Program Policy allowed mentees to have teachers assigned to them who worked in another building (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2010).

Some implications were not just to have guidelines, but implement mentor policies that improved teacher and student outcomes (Polikoff et al., 2015). Polikoff et al. (2015) also noted that mentor policies were a great way to help with mentor accountability. Their research suggested having mentor polices that require mentors to not only observe mentees, but also require mentees to observe mentees and use this as an avenue to promote co-teaching among both teachers (Polikoff et al., 2015). Other highlighted areas of their research included policies about mentor and mentee interactions, which supported other research by Van Ginkel et al. (2018), which noted that mentor preparation programs should employ mentors who have had vast mentor training and were able to identify the behavioral and learning patterns of mentees.

Moreover, more research was needed as to why African American teachers were dissatisfied with teaching and chose different career paths (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2015, 2016b, 2017), and more research was needed on teaching preparation and its correlation to how beginning teachers perform, but one of the drawbacks was that much of the literature about teacher education was published by higher education instructors who held viewpoints that did not reflect the needs of the schools, where teacher candidates were placed and ultimately found employment (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015). In addition, mandating teacher preparation programs to publish their data concerning minority graduates. These programs were required to report the enrollment numbers of minorities in teacher education programs, but did not have to report how many actually graduated. While this data was public knowledge, unfortunately, the data has not been used by the state or institutions to make informed decisions for program improvement and develop strategies that could help minority students in these programs (Program Evaluation Division, 2020). Carver-Thomas (2018) reiterated the importance of using data such as this by suggesting that programs that were intentional about improving their recruitment efforts for

teachers of color should use this data as a baseline to create essential policies and pedagogy for change.

Districts could use their data collection associated with their equity plans to gain strategies needed to help with teacher inequities associated with experience, mentorship, and effectiveness (GCS Equity Plan, 2020). This was important because many low-income districts were identified as Title I, and their federal funding correlated with their ability to design plans that addressed student and teacher disparities (GCS Equity Plan, 2020). According to Green Pastures' District Title I information, Title I funds could be used to design strategies for implementing effective instructional practices (GCS Title I Information, 2020) and Title II funds designated for leadership development could be used for administrator professional development, induction supports and other development that fosters effective school leadership for all stakeholders (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

Districts need to be more transparent about their need for African American teachers (NEA, 2014). One of the main recommendations in the Program Evaluation Division (2020) report was for there to representation of a Historically Black College/University or minority serving institution as a part of the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program. And while the revised version of the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program has recognized its shortcomings in partnering with Historically Black Colleges, more work still needs to be done in this area (Hinchcliffe, 2019a). Historically Black Colleges could offer essential insight and strategies needed for the African American teacher experience in induction programs. A partnership and inclusion could immediately increase African American teacher recruitment through many avenues such as educator career fairs and community initiative recruitment. Research showed that minority institutions were not only have successful at teacher recruitment,

but also graduated teachers of color at a much higher rate than White institutions (Carver-Thomas, 2018). As the literature showed, programs that recruit African American teachers were very direct and intentional about their purpose in doing so and school systems could learn a lot from the strategies implemented in these programs.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this applied study was to improve the BTI program for African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District by gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions. To explore this problem, the beginning teacher induction program needed to be revised to support beginning teachers, but specifically African American teachers. Nationwide, the educational field is confronted with a disparaging reality regarding the scarcity of African American teachers. In the last 30 years, while the number of teachers of color slowly increased approximately 12%, unfortunately the number of African American teachers continually decreased to approximately 8% of the teaching population nationwide (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

Green Pastures School District had a consistently low number of African American teachers participating in the beginning teacher induction program; therefore, research was warranted to offer strategies of improvement. For example, this year, there were 34 teachers, and 10 were African American; in 2019-2020, there were 32 teachers and nine were African American; in 2018-2019, there were 34 teachers and eight were African American; in 2017-2018, there were 32 teachers and seven were African American; in 2016-2017, there were 43 teachers and nine were African American and in 2015-2016, there were 45 teachers and 7 were African American. For this study, a central question and three sub-questions were researched. The central question was how can the practice of the BTI be improved for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District, and the three sub-questions were how would school site administrators in an interview discuss potential solutions about improving the BTI program experience for African American teachers in the Green Pastures District; how would

African American teachers in a focus group discuss potential solutions about improving the BTI program experience for African American teachers in the Green Pastures District; and how would district administrators, school site administrators, and African American teachers completing a survey provide potential solutions about improving the BTI program experience for African American teachers in the Green Pastures District. This chapter presented the study's purpose and design. In addition, research questions, setting, participant details, researcher's role and procedures were specified. The data collection and analysis procedures were also outlined, as well as the ethical considerations for this applied research study.

Design

For this research design, a multi-method research design was used for this applied study. According to the Liberty University's Applied Dissertation Template Handbook (2019), multimethod research designs culminated three research approach types. The first approach was a qualitative approach, the second approach could a qualitative and/or quantitative approach and the third option was a quantitative approach. For this multimethod design, the first approach used interviews to capture the experiences of participants in a research study. A narrative research approach was used because it allowed the researcher to chronicle the experiences of the interviewees (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The second approach was qualitative approach using a focus group, and the third approach used quantitative approach with surveys from participants.

According to Bickman and Rog (2009), applied research allowed researchers to closely examine issues that affected the lives people live each day. This research design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to capture the experiences of African American teachers who participated in a BTI program. In applied research, three factors were crucial for effective research: credibility, usefulness and feasibility. Credibility was associated with the validity of a

study to make implications and conclusions and determines a viable research question. Usefulness was implemented to determine if the research and sub questions appropriately address research problems (Bickman & Rog, 2009). Feasibility was used to determine if the proposed research could effectively be executed in the context (Bickman & Rog, 2009).

Research Questions

Central Question: How could the practice of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program be improved for African Americans within the Green Pastures School District?

Sub-question 1: How would administrators in an interview improve the Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African Americans within the Green Pastures School District?

Sub-question 2: How would African American teachers in a focus group improve the Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African Americans within the Green Pastures School District?

Sub-question 3: How would district administrators, school site administrators, and African American teachers completing a survey improve the Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African Americans within the Green Pastures School District?

Setting

The site for this study was a small, rural district in Eastern North Carolina. This district was comprised of seven schools. There were three elementary schools, one middle, one traditional high school and alternative education center and one early college high school (GCS Equity Plan, 2019). This site was ideal for this study because its beginning teachers were required to participate in the district's induction program. Reviewing the Green Pastures Equity Plan, Green Pastures High School had the highest teacher turnover rate when compared to other

schools at 20.30%, but what was not known was how many of these teachers were beginning teachers. That was why this district was sufficient for this study. While the district had a BTI support program, its recruitment and retention plan did not include anything directed towards recruiting and retaining minority teachers, specifically African American teachers (GCS Equity Plan, 2019). According to the National Center of Education Statistics (2017), Green Pastures School District had 220 teachers and a student-teacher ratio of 14.19 with a demographic breakdown of approximately 588 Hispanic students; 2,094 White students; 2,198 Black students, and 11 American Indian students (National Center of Education Statistics, 2017). The district pseudonym was Green Pastures School District and each district personnel, administrator and educator were assigned pseudonyms.

Participants

The participants varied during each research type as they were incorporated throughout this study. For the first sub-question, seven school site administrators were used to share their expertise and experiences working with African American teachers in their designated buildings/schools in the Green Pastures School district. These administrators represented the pre-kindergarten center, primary and elementary school, intermediate and middle school, high school alternative education center and early college. This participant number fell within the guidelines of five to 10 participants for interviews portions of applied research studies (Liberty University Applied Dissertation Template Handbook, 2019). For this study, there are approximately 11 African American beginning teachers in the district, and they served as the focus group participants. To address the third sub-question, 15 surveys were administered. The site administrators (four female, three male) represented the head administrators of the seven schools within the district; six district directors (three female and three males) worked directly with

beginning teachers in various capacities at the district level and approximately 11 African

American beginning teachers. Because this was a multimethod design approach, purposeful

sampling was used to fully comprehend the research problem and phenomenon of the study and

the convenience sampling strategy was used (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018)

noted convenience sampling was used when sites were easily assessable for the researcher, and

my administrative position within the district afforded easy access to data and participants. For

the purpose of this study, participants' ages ranged from early 20s to early 40s for African

American teachers; early 30s to early 50s for administrators and early 40s to Mid-70s for district

administrators and all participants identity as either Caucasian or African American. Specifically,

district administrators were two Caucasian males and one Caucasian female, and school site

administrators were two African American females, three Caucasian males and two Caucasian

females.

The Researcher's Role

As an assistant principal, providing administrative support for beginning teachers was

one of the main job responsibilities. I planned various professional development activities for

beginning teachers not only at my school, but also other beginning teachers throughout the

district. These sessions focused on setting up rules and procedures for the first day of class,

classroom management, conflict resolution and contacting parents. My work with beginning

teachers throughout the district allowed me to notice the lack of African American teacher

presence. Furthermore, in surveying the demographics of our high school beginning teachers, it

was apparent there was a lack of diversity in our teacher population. Concerning the participants

in this study, I was the assistant principal for four of the African American teachers who taught

high school, peer colleague to the participating head administrator and administrative beginning teacher high school liaison for the district administrators.

As an administrator who directly worked with beginning teachers, I understood that my biases were apparent with this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018); however, it also allowed me to position myself within the setting of the research and participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Because I was positioned in the environment of participants in context of the research study, it was important to collaborate very closely with participants in the various research approaches administered and allow transparency and participant feedback to occur during each phrase ensuring all information collected was accurate and validated with participants. For authenticity purposes, this allowed participants to truly reflect on the information provided. Peer debriefing was used to allow an outside person to "vet" the research and analyze it for appropriateness and integrity associated with research. This also allowed individuals to become familiar with the research and provide insight to strengthen it (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Procedures

According to Liberty University's Doctoral Dissertation Template Handbook (2019), the Institutional Review Board (IRB) must approve all studies. IRB approval occurred after a candidate successfully defended his or her proposal and this must be done within 10 days of the proposal defense (Liberty University's Applied Dissertation Template Handbook, 2019). A candidate's dissertation chair ensured all accompanying documents were included and satisfactory for IRB approval. Because this study involved schools, I requested district permission using either written and/or email documentation and submit this for IRB approval (see Appendix A). Pseudonyms were given to all participants.

Data Collection and Analysis

After IRB approval was secured, the approaches of interviews, focus groups and surveys were implemented. For this multimethod design, the first approach used were the interviews, to capture the experiences of administrative participants in the research study; the second approach used a qualitative approach with focus groups and teacher participants for collecting informative data, and the third approach used a quantitative approach with surveys from district office participants. Interviews were analyzed by the researcher and Microsoft Word software was used for transcriptions. Interviews were transcribed quickly so participants could review transcriptions for accuracy and validity. Peer reviews were incorporated for validity purposes. In addition, triangulation for data analysis were used to compare and contrast data used. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), active participation with participants was essential when multiple measures were used associated with external individuals and participants and this validated the accuracy of narrative interviews and other forms of data. Coding involved placing data in categories and labeling these categories for future use (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Coding was used in analyzing data to find themes and patterns.

Interviews

The first research sub-question entailed how administrators in an interview would improve the BTI program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District. Due to Covid-19, all interviews were conducted virtually and recorded through Zoom. Interview times were scheduled with participants, and they received a registration confirmation email. All measures were used to ensure field errors were minimal. Instructions were sent to all participants highlighting the objectives and context of the study, along with time of completion, which was approximately 60 minutes.

1. What were the principal's responsibilities for the beginning teacher induction support program?

The purpose of this question was to gather if administrators understood their role in implementing a successful induction program. The Public Schools of North Carolina, (2016a) outlined the responsibilities of administrators and this question sought to find if administrators understood this role and if not, did this affect the quality of support their beginning teachers received.

2. In your building, describe the leadership structure that oversaw the implementation of the beginning teacher induction support program?

This question sought to understand if there were other individuals outside of the administrator who oversaw the induction program. In our district, it was not the principal who held this responsibility, but the assistant principal who worked closely with the district coordinator. Research showed that successful induction programs had great administrative support, and administrators were well versed in the importance of things such as common planning time between mentor and mentees and providing instructional resources needed for the classroom (Reeder, 2013).

3. How did the designated person monitor each beginning teacher's progress?

This question was an extension of question two, but sought to find what measures the designated person used to monitor teacher progress. This was important because data such as this was reviewed and was a part of the five-year program audit of each district. According to Public Schools of North Carolina (2016a), mentors and principals had designated responsibilities that must be followed (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a). In addition, the five-year review of programs was to ensure the highest level of

support was provided for beginning teachers and to see if adjustments need to be made (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2010).

4. What specific induction support did your school provide for struggling beginning teachers?

This question sought to find the various induction supports used throughout the Green Pastures School District. All schools had flexibility with supports used this, and this question was a great way to discover these and offer strategies for other schools that may not have had strong induction supports to help struggling teachers. Research found that induction supports played a significant role in whether new teachers decided to return to a position (Ronfelt & McQueen, 2017). For example, research by Gist (2018a) found that mentorship and pedagogical relevance were great supports for teachers of color (Gist, 2018a).

5. What characteristics should a mentor possess?

The purpose of this question was to determine if administrators understood mentor qualifications. Often, administrators selected teachers who were great leaders, but there were other aspects of mentorship. Effective mentors must also exhibit great communication skills, resonate cultural awareness, hold ethical principles, respect diversity, and be instructionally sound teacher educators (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a).

6. What was the training process for mentors?

This question sought to determine if administrators understood the training process required of mentors. Traditionally, induction coordinators provided specifications for training; however, research showed that beginning teachers valued the input of their

leaders and the administrator's knowledge and support played a significant role in the retention of beginning teachers (Guindon et al., 2014).

7. How did you select mentors for your beginning teachers?

The purpose of this question was to evaluate if administrators involved others in the selection process of mentors. According to Public Schools of North Carolina (2016a), mentor selection should be continuously developed by various stakeholders. The selection of mentors was very important to any induction program. Mentors were required to complete an application and participate in an interview coordinated by a selection committee (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a).

8. How did you monitor mentor collaboration with beginning teachers?

The purpose of this question was to determine how administrators monitor mentor and mentee collaboration. Induction programs were required to provide artifacts associated with its review process, and administrators were assigned the task of reviewing mentor notes and meeting agendas (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a).

9. Describe the cultural/racial demographics of your staff?

This question was designed to see how administrators implemented equity measures set by the Green Pastures School District. Currently, the equity plan called for more diversity and administrators were encouraged to attend more job fairs throughout the state (GCS Equity Plan, 2019).

10. Throughout the district, there were approximately 11 African American teachers. In your opinion, why did this district not employ a larger number of African American teachers?

This question sought to find reasons from administrators why our district struggled to retain

and hire minority teachers. In a district where over 70% of the students were minorities, (National Center of Education Statistics, 2017), the district was aware of these gaps and had acknowledged in its equity plan the need to retain and recruit more strategically to promote and implement diversity in hiring practices (GCS Equity Plan, 2019).

11. What strategies could offer for recruiting African American teachers?

As the previous question suggests, there were gaps for recruitment and retention of minority teachers, but this question sought to gather specific strategies administrators had towards hiring African American teachers, and these strategies could be used for implications later in the study and to help our district's equity plan. Research by Osler (2016) found that strategies such as strategically listing what strategies were in place to support teachers of color, hosting recruiting events for teachers of color to learn their needs and creating spaces where teachers of color and worked together collaboratively (Osler, 2016).

Focus Group

The second sub-question addressed how African American teachers in a focus group improve the BTI program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District. Due to Covid-19, focus group participants participated virtually and received instructions facilitated by a moderator, who was used two-fold to ensure the group discussion ran as specified, but also ensured the agenda for the focus group was implemented and followed. Questions were open-ended, and the focus group session was approximately 60 minutes and was virtual.

1. Describe your beginning teacher induction program experience.

The purpose of this question was to gain insight into the beginning teacher experience of

African American teachers. Because they were a marginalized subset of teachers, their experiences and values were key in this research for implications that would help in uncovering strategies to improve this induction program. Research showed that more awareness and attention were suggested to understand how to effectively "recruit, prepare, and retain a diverse teaching force" (Jackson & Kohli, 2016, p. 2).

2. Describe what type of professional development your induction program offered its beginning teachers.

The purpose of this question was to find what induction supports participants received. Their responses were a great way to measure our program's true strengths in servicing all beginning teachers, but more importantly if we were compliant with State requirements. Research showed that African American teachers thrived in environments that offered continuous professional development that was aligned with induction supports (Sun, 2018).

3. Describe the type of feedback you discussed with your induction program colleagues outside of meetings.

The purpose of this question was to gather data concerning if there was camaraderie among beginning teachers participating in the induction program. It was common for beginning teachers to share ideas and strategies; however, did this occur with African American teachers and their peers? Findings from this question could help our induction program plan better professional development surrounding supporting colleagues within the program. Research showed that African American teachers did have a harder time making connections with other teachers and this could be attributed to counterparts not knowing how to relate to them, and therefore chose not to communicate with them

(Bristol, 2018). Further research found that African American teachers were more successful in the classroom when they had affinity groups with other African American teachers where they could share their experiences (Mosley, 2018).

4.   Describe the relationship with your mentor.

For beginning teachers, mentor relationships were extremely important. It was deemed one of the best practices for beginning teacher success (Public Schools of North Carolina 2016a), and for African American teachers, the lack of effective mentoring had consistently been shown to affect African American teacher retention (Sun, 2018). Data collected from this question could help our district's equity plan.

5.   If you struggled in an area, how did your mentor support you?

This question was a continuation of question four. This question sought to understand when struggles occurred, what mentors specifically did to support African American teachers. Information gained from this question could help our program in improving mentor selection.

6.   How did your mentor advise you to handle diversity issues within the classroom?

The purpose of this question was to measure how well mentors help African American teachers. There were specific standards that noted mentors were required to be able to help beginning teachers navigate through these issues (Public Schools of North Carolina 2016a). Research showed that because there was a lack of African American teachers in the classroom, mentors struggled to relate to the experiences of these teachers because they could not adequately advise them about issues pertaining to diversity and race (Jackson & Kohli, 2016). This data could help our program find better mentor candidates

to help African American teachers, but also provide data to help beginning teachers overall with diversity issues.

7. Describe the interactions that you had with your students and parents.

The purpose of this question was to gather data on how parents view African American teachers. This was important because research showed that parents or guardians also stereotyped teachers based on their experiences with them, and this mindset was usually passed down to their children (Brockenbrough, 2013). This data could help our district in planning professional development surrounding parent conferences and interactions with parents in general.

8. In your subject area, describe your interactions with colleagues.

The purpose of this question was to gather data on the various types of interactions African American teachers had with their colleagues. Research showed that African American teachers were primarily sought out for strategies on handling disciplinary issues, but were not included in academic conversations (Brockenbrough, 2013).

9. Describe your administrator's involvement throughout your induction process.

The purpose of this question was to gather data on how many administrators actively participated in the induction process themselves or passed this responsibility to other leaders within the building. According to Public Schools of North Carolina (2016a), administrators had various checklist items they did to ensure the school environment was conducive to an effective induction program.

10. If you could make any changes to your induction program, what would you suggest?

The purpose of this question was to capture the suggestions of African American teachers. The silencing of their voices over the years and decline of African American

teachers in the classroom were all reasons why their perspective on improving induction programs needed to be heard and could help improve the induction program. Research by Jackson (2015) found that successful induction programs for teachers of color value their experiences and cultures (Jackson, 2015).

Focus group data was analyzed and transcribed quickly by the researcher so participants could review transcriptions for accuracy and validity. Peer reviews were also incorporated for validity purposes. In addition, triangulation data analysis and contrast data were used. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), active participation with participants was essential when multiple measures were used associated with external individuals and participants and this validated the accuracy of narrative interviews and other forms of data. Coding involved placing data in categories and labeling these categories for future use (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Coding was used in analyzing data to find themes and patterns.

Survey

The third sub-question addressed how district administrators, school site administrators, and African American teachers completing a survey improved the BTI program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District. Surveys were administered to all administrators, teachers and district personnel involved in the study. This survey was created using Google forms and was electronically sent to participants. All participants had two weeks to complete the electronic survey, and a follow up letter was sent via email at the end of the first week if potential participants had completed the survey. Surveys were emailed, and a five-point Likert scale was used to measure participants' responses. The following were the numerically assigned responses: 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Frequently, 5=Always. There were 10 questions and participants were allowed 30 minutes for completion. The

instructions explained to respondents that the purpose of the study was to improve the BTI program experience for African American teachers. Subsequently, participants answered questions about their experiences with the BTI program and had 30 minutes to complete the closed-ended survey questions. Since the static web instrument collection procedure was used, participants were instructed to click the submit button at the end of the survey. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data submitted in the survey.

1. I/beginning teachers in the district regularly meet (or met) with my/their assigned mentor.

The purpose of this question was to gather data pertaining to how often mentors meet with beginning teachers. According to Public Schools of North Carolina (n.d.b.), mentors were expected to frequently meet with their mentees.

2. My mentor/mentors in the district gives (gave) advice on how to handle cultural differences within my/the classroom.

The purpose of this question was to gather data on how well assigned mentors support beginning teachers with diversity issues. Standard Two of the Public Schools of North Carolina (n.d.b.) stated that effective mentors were expected to help mentees reach all students and learn their learning needs (para. 19). In addition, effective mentors offered differentiation strategies associated with diversity.

3. My administrators/mentors in the district monitor (monitored) my/the progress within the beginning teacher induction program.

The purpose of this question was to get data about how often and to what extent administrators monitored beginning teachers. Administrators were expected to be well versed in the requirements of all beginning teachers, but also hold responsibilities

themselves. Administrators were expected to ensure designated induction program requirements were implemented with beginning teachers and constantly check documentation (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a).

4. My mentor/mentors in the district encourages (encouraged) me/other mentees to use my/their personal experiences to connect with my students.

The purpose of this question was to gather data about effective mentorship within our district. This data could help us make informed choices in choosing mentors for our beginning teachers. Effective mentors encouraged their mentees to constantly reflect on their instructional practices and identify strengths and weaknesses (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2016a).

5. My school/the schools in the district embraces (embraced) the cultural differences of teachers.

The purpose of this question was to gather data pertaining to the professional cultural capacity within our schools. This information was important because we complete climate surveys every two years, and if our schools did not do well in embracing other cultures, it created a toxic working environment. In her study, Gist (2018c) found that teachers of color did not have good experiences with school and/or their colleagues. Participants in her study reported that the opinions of White teachers were valued over teachers of color, and these teachers felt their viewpoints were constantly marginalized (Gist, 2018c).

6. My/the schools in the district beginning teacher induction program offers (offered) continuous induction support.

The purpose of this question was to gather data on the type of induction support our

schools offer throughout the district. While flexibility was encouraged, we wanted to ensure what schools offered directly benefited all beginning teachers. BTI programs were structured to support beginning teachers throughout their first three years of teaching (Reeder, 2013). Successful induction programs were those that focused on retaining teachers and intentionally incorporate strategies for beginning teacher growth (Guindon et al., 2014).

7. My principal/principals in the district offers (offered) leadership support when needed.

The purpose of this question was to gather data about the effectiveness of administrators in providing support to beginning teachers. Leadership was important for African American teachers. In studies where leadership was not supportive, research showed that African American teachers were more likely to leave their schools because of the lack of leadership support (Sun, 2018), and beginning teachers in general were found to be more effective with leadership who attempted to form relationships (Guindon et al., 2014).

8. My school/the schools in the district embraces (embraced) the various cultures of all students.

The purpose of this question was to gather data about cultural competency. Our schools now are more diverse than ever. Students of color now encompass over 50% of classrooms (Sun, 2018). Teachers lacking culturally competent skills educate many students. Cultural competency was a cornerstone of being a culturally relevant teacher educator (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

9. My staff/building staff in the district has (had) other African American teachers.

The purpose of this question was to gather data about how well we implemented the recruitment strategies outlined in the Green Pastures Equity Plan. In many schools,

African American teachers were low in number (King, 2016). The result of this was because they were few in number, the assumption was they represented the perceptions of people of color and consequently, there was an overwhelming burden on these teachers, and this phenomenon was commonly referred to as the invisible tax on African American teachers (King, 2016). Each year, the equity plan results were shared with the district, so this could be a great accountability measure.

10. My principal/principals in the district is/are attempting (has attempted) to hire more African American teachers.

The purpose of this question was to gather data about how well administrators implement the Green Pastures School Equity Plan within their buildings. Each year, the equity plan results were shared with the district, so this could be a great accountability measure. Research showed that outreach programs were a great way to encourage African American teachers to enter the educational field (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). These outreach programs partnered with community school stakeholders and molded African American teachers who resided in these communities to do internships that acclimated them to the needs of the school, but also allowed them to gain experience within the classroom (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration was required in every phrase of research; hence, it is important to "consider what ethical issues might surface during the study and to plan how these issues need to be addressed" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 53). As mentioned, prior to the study, proper procedures were followed to secure IRB approval and after this, district permission was obtained for participants, site interviews, and focus groups. At the beginning of the study,

consent forms ensured all information pertaining to the purpose and design of the study were provided to participants. Forms also ensured participants understood their participation was voluntary. While collecting data, participants were allowed to review transcriptions for accuracy. Questions were worded so that they did not lead or misguide participants. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, and the district itself received a pseudonym. All participants received identifying codes, which were used as a part of the electronic storage system.

Summary

All beginning teachers were required to participate in induction programs and these programs were designed to help beginning teachers at their craft. More specifically, Reeder (2013) explained that the purpose of induction programs was to support teachers in their early years of teaching. Guindon et al. (2014) noted, the most effective programs implemented strategies increased retention; however, for African American teachers, retention numbers were very low. Jackson and Kohli (2016) noted there needed to be a closer look concerning the experiences of teachers of color so that there could be a better understanding of how to "recruit, prepare, and retain a diverse teaching force" (p. 2). Studies on the experiences of African American teachers revealed certified African American teachers still felt their credentials were insufficient and they continuously had to prove their qualifications for teaching not only to White faculty stakeholders, but also community parents and students (Brockenbrough, 2013; Bryan & Ford, 2014). It was imperative that the experiences of African American teachers were examined so that teacher education programs could better prepare them for working in K-12 schools.

A part of examining the experiences of African American teachers was intertwined in the lack of culturally responsive teaching pedagogy modeled for African American teachers. Incorporating culturally responsive teaching was important for African American because it

ensured they were prepared to teach and connect with students from all backgrounds, but also showed the value of their own backgrounds and experiences towards teaching learning (Bryan & Williams, 2017). Many African American teachers felt disconnected and associate this with whiteness, which noted that the "experiences, perspectives, knowledge and dispositions aligned with and valued by the dominance White society (Bryan & Ford, 2014, p. 337) were the only experiences valued. Gist (2017a) recommended that culturally responsive teacher educators could demonstrate practice CRP were needed in every aspect of preparing teachers for success within the classroom with students. In our schools, African American teachers left the profession because they were not adequately supported by a system that truly did not know where to begin in this process.

Ironically, BTI programs were created to foster professional and personal development of teachers, but the latter had not been addressed for every teacher. Hence, this applied research sought to improve the BTI program experience of African American teachers with sub questions that addressed how administrators in an interview would discuss potential solutions about improving the BTI program experience of African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District; how African American teachers in a focus group would discuss potential solutions about improving the BTI experience of African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District, and how surveys from district and school site administrators and African American teachers would provide potential solutions about improving the BTI program experience of African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this applied study was to improve the BTI program for African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District by gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions. The problem was that induction experience for African American teachers needed improvement. A multimethod approach was used to gather input from school site administrators, African American beginning teachers and district administrators within the Green Pastures School District. Data collection methods included interviews with school-site administrators, focus groups with African American beginning teachers and surveys with district and school site administrators and African American beginning teachers. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches and descriptive statistics were used to quantify and analyze data. Chapter Four presented the findings, using narrative thematic analysis and tables.

This research was guided by the following questions:

Central Question: How could the practice of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program be improved for African Americans within the Green Pastures School District?

Sub-question 1: How would administrators in an interview improve the Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District?

Sub-question 2: How would African American teachers in a focus group improve the Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District?

Sub-question 3: How would district administrators, school site administrators, and

African American teachers completing a survey improve the Beginning Teacher Induction

Program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District?

Participants

Administrator Interview Participants

Out of the seven schools within the Green Pastures School District, five school site

administrators participated in interviews addressing the sub-question of how would

administrators in an interview improve the BTI program experience for African American

teachers within the Green Pastures School District? Because this was multimethod design

approach, purposeful sampling was used to fully comprehend the research problem and

phenomenon of the study and the convenience sampling strategy was also used (Creswell &

Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) noted convenience sampling is usually used when sites

are easily assessable for the researcher, and my administrative position within the district

afforded easy access to data and participants. A narrative research approach was used because it

allowed the researcher to chronicle the experiences of the interviewees (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

There were three female administrator interview participants and two male administrator

participants, and three district level administrator participants. Their ages ranged from 40 to 60

and above. The administrator interview participants were head principals at the following

schools: Green Pastures Alternative Education Center, Green Pastures Early College, Green

Pastures Pre-K Center, Green Pastures High School, and Green Pastures Middle School. For

confidentiality purposes, interview participants were assigned numbers based on the order in

which they interviewed and subsequently identified as Principal 1, Principal 2, Principal 3,

Principal 4, and Principal 5, and District Leader 1, District Leader 2, and District Leader 3 (see

Table 1).

Table 1

Administrator Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Gender	Grade	Role
Principal 1	40-50	White	Female	9-12	School Site Administrator
Principal 2	30-40	Black/African American	Male	9-12	School Site Administrator
Principal 3	40-50	Black/African American	Female	K-5	School Site Administrator
Principal 4	40-50	White	Female	6-8	School Site Administrator
Principal 5	30-40	White	Male	9-12	School Site Administrator
District Leader 1	50-60	White	Male	K-5	District Administrator
District Leader 2	40-50	White	Male	9-12	District Administrator
District Leader 3	60-Above	White	Female	9-12	District Administrator

Focus Group Participants

Green Pastures School District had 11 African American beginning teachers, and out of those 11, four participated in this study. There were two male African American teachers and two female African American teachers, and the ages of these teachers ranged from 25-45. The teachers were identified in the focus group as Teacher one, Teacher two, Teacher three and Teacher four (see Table 2). Because this was multimethod design approach, purposeful sampling was used to fully comprehend the research problem and phenomenon of the study and the convenience sampling strategy was also used (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) note convenience sampling is usually used when sites are easily assessable for the researcher, and my administrative position within the district afforded easy access to data and participants. A narrative research approach was used because it allowed the researcher to chronicle the experiences of the interviewees (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Table 2

Focus Group Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Gender	Grade	Role
Teacher 1	20-30	Black/African American	Female	9-12	Beginning Teacher
Teacher 2	20-30	Black/African American	Male	6-8	Beginning Teacher
Teacher 3	40-50	Black/African American	Female	9-12	Beginning Teacher
Teacher 4	30-40	Black/African American	Male	9-12	Beginning Teacher

Survey Participants

African American beginning teachers, school site administrators, and district administrators from the Green Pastures School District completed a survey. The individuals completing the surveys were chosen because they were the same people who participated in the interviews and focus groups, with the exception of District Leaders 4, 5 and 6. These participants only completed the survey. There were 15 participants who completed the survey. Demographic information about the survey participants' age ranged from 20 to 60 and above. Out of the 15 survey participants, three were between the ages of 20-30, three were between the ages of 30-40, seven were between the ages of 40-50, one was between the ages of 50-60, and one was 60 and above. Six of the survey participants were Black, and nine survey participants were White. Seven of the survey participants were male, and eight of them were female. The district level positions of the survey participants were six district administrators, four beginning teachers, with three from the high school and one from the middle school, and five school site administrators, with one from the high school, one from the alternative education center, one from the early college, one from the middle school and one from the Pre-K Center (see Table 3).

Table 3

Survey Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Gender	Grade	Role
Teacher 1	20-30	Black/African American	Female	9-12	Beginning Teacher
Teacher 2	20-30	Black/African American	Male	6-8	Beginning Teacher
Teacher 3	40-50	Black/African American	Female	9-12	Beginning Teacher
Teacher 4	30-40	Black/African American	Male	9-12	Beginning Teacher
Principal 1	40-50	White	Female	9-12	School Administrator
Principal 2	30-40	Black/African American	Male	9-12	School Administrator
Principal 3	40-50	Black/African American	Female	K-5	School Administrator
Principal 4	40-50	White	Female	6-8	School Administrator
Principal 5	30-40	White	Male	9-12	School Administrator
District Leader 1	50-60	White	Male	K-5	District Administrator
District Leader 2	40-50	White	Male	9-12	District Administrator
District Leader 3	60-Above	White	Female	9-12	District Administrator
District Leader 4	40-50	White	Male	6-8	District Administrator
District Leader 5	40-50	White	Female	9-12	District Administrator
District Leader 6	20-30	White	Female	9-12	District Administrator

Results

Structured interviews were conducted with school site administrators addressing the sub-question of how would administrators in an interview improve the BTI Program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District? Ten questions were asked to the school site administrators to find themes related to improving the BTI program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District. Several themes emerged from the qualitative analysis of these questions (see Appendix J). Second, a focus group was conducted with African American beginning teachers to find themes related to improving the BTI program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School

District. Finally, a quantitative survey was administered to district and school site administrators and African American beginning teachers to corroborate themes associated with improving the BTI program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District.

Sub-Question 1

Sub-question 1 for this study was, "How would administrators in an interview improve the Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District?" Interviews were conducted with school site administrators within the Green Pastures School District to find themes related to improving the BTI program experience for African American beginning teachers within the Green Pastures School District. Due to Covid-19, all interviews were conducted virtually through Zoom. Interview participants completed a registration link to voluntarily participate in the study and confirmation emails were sent to participants (see Appendix G). Afterwards, interview dates and times were scheduled, and personal Zoom links were sent to interview participants, noting dates and times of interview. Before each interview, each interview participant reviewed a slide with instructions for navigating the Zoom interview. Each interview was transcribed using the Microsoft Word transcription software and checked for accuracy.

Theme 1: Leadership's Role in the BTI Process

Theme one focused on leadership's role in the BTI process. Whether the leader was a principal or district leader, all interview participants have roles that impacted the BTI process. The sub-themes associated with the leadership roles are district mandates, delegation of BTI tasks, mentor selection and BTI support.

District Mandates. All interview participants agreed that their implementation of the

BTI program began with district mandates that outline BTI program specifications. These district mandates came from the BT Coordinator. District Leader 3 is the BT Coordinator, and in her interview, she emphasized that she was responsible for all beginning teacher paperwork, meeting coordination and licensure. She reiterated that she was "responsible for getting them through the BT process successfully." From a district standpoint, the leadership structure of the BTI program began with the Superintendent, and then flowed to the HR director and finally the BT Coordinator. District Leader 1 explained that everyone "works together" to plan the Summer Bridge program, which was the introductory three-day program for beginning teachers before the first day of school. The principals interviewed shared their understanding of the district mandates for BTI program implementation. Principals 1, 3, and 5 all noted that their responsibilities were based around the district mandates for implementing an induction program at their various schools. Principal 3 specifically expressed that it was her "responsibility to make sure they are aware of the district policies" and Principal 5 also stated that because there are district mandates, it was important to work within those expectations.

Delegation of BTI Tasks. While principals received their instructions from the BT Coordinator, each school delegated these responsibilities differently, and this was based on other supporting leadership staff within the buildings. Schools with assistant principals had them as the individuals who supervised the BTI programs. Principals 4 and 5 had assistant principals, and these individuals monitored mentor logs, paperwork and worked closely with mentors. Principals 1, 2, and 3 did not have administrators and subsequently oversaw their BTI programs.

Mentor Selection. Every beginning teacher had a mentor who helped them through the BTI process, and principals selected mentors for beginning teachers. Throughout the interviews, principal and district interview participants shared their knowledge about the training process

required by mentors, their beliefs about the characteristics mentors should possess and their process for selecting mentors. Out of the five school administrators, only one knew the training process for mentors. Words such as "I think" and "not sure" were repeated in multiple interviews. Principal 2 said "I just don't know the qualifications of training to be a mentor." Principal 3 said "I'm going to be very honest, I'm not 100% sure if I know what the process is." Principal 4 was unsure if all the mentors had training but did know it included an "online PD." District Leaders 1 and 2 were also not sure of the process. District Leader 3 is the BT Coordinator and explained that mentors were required to complete online modules through NCEES, which covered mentor responsibilities and expectations, and mentors got accompanying notebooks with other criteria that must be completed.

Principal and district interview participants were very specific in their opinions on the characteristics of a good mentor. Some of the characteristics described were great communicators and listeners, well-organized, honest, and passionate. Principals 1 and 5 noted that mentors needed to be good teachers. Principal 1 expressed mentors needed to have a "good basic understanding of good teaching practices and a good understanding of dynamics of children." Principal 5 echoed mentors needed the "technical knowledge to know how to navigate what good teaching looks like." The passion previously mentioned was connected to Principal 2's belief that mentors should be "life-long learners" and people who were "willing do to do the work" as mentors. Principal 3 acknowledged that mentors "need to be passionate about what they're doing." District leaders also shared the same viewpoints, as they mentioned some of the same attributes such as "good listener," and "seeks to understand." One unique characteristic described by District Leader 2 was "one who suspends judgement."

All the participants noted mentor selection was about the right fit, but as Principal 5

expressed, "unfortunately, we're looking for good fits; this is the easy answer to that." Principal 2 elaborated on the notion of mentors being a good fit by saying,

> So, I have an idea of those that are ready for the leadership opportunity and experience. When I pair a beginning teacher with a mentor, at first, it's like, who would I want you to become the most like as a teacher? Who has shown inability to lead and provide guidance to someone in a similar stage in their career, so I tend to look first at those that have hosted interns and student teachers, because that process is a lot more intense than the mentor/mentee relationship.

Principal 4 also discussed the importance of internally having a reason to want to mentor a beginning teacher because of the sacrifice involved.

> I want my mentors to be very good teachers and almost as important as being an excellent teacher, have that coaching spirit where they believe their fellow colleagues can improve and their willingness to take the time and energy to put into that person. There has gotta be an intrinsic motivation behind being a good mentor. It is not the $100 or whatever they get.

All administrators felt that if their mentor was overwhelmed with things in their personal life, then this would serve as a distraction to being a good mentor. Principal 3 said, "I mean, I just have to be real. . . I don't want to add one more thing to their personal life if I don't have to." Principal 2 also said, "who has the time to be able to invest into someone else?" District Leaders explained that the BT Coordinator looks for perspective mentors who were "proficient" or "accomplished" on their teacher evaluations. District Leaders 1 and 2 commented that principals worked with the BT Coordinator to ensure mentors were selected for beginning teachers and have adequate resources to support beginning teachers. The interviews also revealed how

participants monitored the mentors and mentee progress throughout the BTI process. Many principals noted that they monitored mentor collaboration by frequently reviewing mentor/mentee logs. These logs were a district requirement in which the BT Coordinator also reviewed to gather whether each school followed state requirements for district induction programs. Other principals monitored monitor collaboration through observations and conversations. Principal 2 mentioned that during observations, he would ask, "how things are going" and "how are things going with your mentor" and "how is that working out" this to assess whether the mentor/mentee collaboration was working. Principal 3 also used this monitoring method and said that she asked specific questions that focused on if the monitor regularly met with them, was available when needed and provided feedback as needed. Principal 5 emphasized that when having these conversations, trust was important because whatever experience shared determined whether the mentor was a good fit or match.

> For that, you've got to really trust the beginning teacher. When you have those conversations with them of how's it going, If they are consistently overwhelmed, and they're not getting fed from the outside person and your conversations with them that they're not getting what their need, and the expectation is that their mentor is, at some point, intervening and helping feed that and helping that that individual, then it's probably not a great fit and that person is not doing what they need to be doing to help that individual. And you probably need to look for a better fit elsewhere.

He also stressed that principals must "progress monitor" beginning teacher growth through the journey and ensure they are getting "fed along the way" and "getting the support" they need or ultimately "find somebody else who can," and this is not necessarily a "bad dig on the mentor," but may not be the "right year, right time, right person, and that's ok." The District Leaders

commended the efforts of the BT Coordinator in monitoring mentor collaboration by noting that she was on mentors and mentees "like white on rice" in ensuring they completed mentor/mentee logs and thoroughly reviewed them. District Leader 2 also added that this was an area where instructional and technology were instrumental because their work in the schools with beginning teachers was reviewed at meetings with district personnel. He said that while he monitored from a "distance," he knew what occurred in buildings because of the "standing monthly meetings" and "weekly check-ins" with coaches to discuss these issues.

BTI Support. All principals noted a lot of their BTI support came from spending time in classrooms and informally and formally observing beginning teachers. Informal observations were described to be in the form of walkthroughs, talking to mentors, or frequent conversations with beginning teachers in the classrooms or hallways. Schools smaller in size shared similar approaches to connecting with beginning teachers. Principal 1 shared that she ate breakfast and lunch with her beginning teachers and used this time to check on their progress. Principal 1 noted that since she only had one beginning teacher since being in her position, the support she offered to the beginning teacher focused on debunking unrealistic expectations the beginning teacher placed on his or herself. Principal 1 used her informal observation feedback to share strategies for a first year beginning teacher, so the teacher did not feel so "overwhelmed" and "ok with not doing everything like everyone else."

Principal 2 prided himself on having a goal to connect with beginning teachers. He noted, "It's my personal development goal to have a personal one on one interaction" with beginning teachers every day." Principal 2 allowed beginning teachers to have "direct access" to him daily and felt this was "extremely beneficial" for his beginning teachers and believed it was his responsibility to "provide structure and the framework for growth for beginning teachers." In

addition, he ensured his beginning teacher only had one "prep" to teach and taught on a A week/B week schedule, so she had the opportunity to plan and "develop her craft" as a teacher. Finally, he noted that all beginning teachers received a manual that highlighted things they should "know and understand about the school." Principal 3 has a lead teacher whom she relies on for assistance to "fill in gaps" with needs of beginning teachers. Principal 3 highlighted that she ensured beginning teachers were able to attend professional development opportunities they personally felt would serve as additional supports for them, and that she gathered this information as she would sit with them and "have conversations" with them. Principals 4 and 5 utilized the technology and literacy coaches that worked in both their buildings for beginning teacher support. Principal 4 described coaches provided "very specific and clear feedback" and then "suggestions on how to implement" with beginning teachers. Principal 4 felt her responsibility was based on building relationships with beginning teachers for success within the induction program. Principal 5 utilized each coach's knowledge of teacher's skill sets and encouraged them to pair beginning teachers with similar teachers who could assist in specified areas. District Leader 1 mentioned that the district supported beginning teachers financially by paying for workshops that provided Praxis tutoring sessions to assist beginning teachers with successfully passing their licensure exams. District Leader 3 is the BT Coordinator, and she noted that if beginning teachers need additional support, they have also used resources outside of the district.

Theme 2: Importance of Cultural and Racial Representation

Cultural and racial representation was the second theme that emerged from the participant interviews. With the smallest staff of the study, Principal 1 noted that teacher assistants were African American women, and her teachers where both White females, along

with her receptionist and herself. Principals 2 and 3 also oversee small schools. As an African American male, Principal 2 prided himself on saying "we have a little bit of everything." He expounded on this statement by noting that the only counselor is an African American female, "who is fluent in Spanish," and that fact was important to him because 50% of his students come from Spanish-speaking homes," and due to this, "representation matters without identifying who you are." While there are many White teachers on staff, Principal 2 emphasized that he had an African American English teacher, and his two science teachers were also African American females. Other facts he mentioned were that he had a staff member in her 70s and staff of the LGBT community. And while Principal 2 believed his staff is very diverse, he desired to expand these efforts to hire staff of the Latin X community because he felt students need to see people "they can relate to" or who has experienced something similar.

> We have people with kids and people that don't have kids, so, you know in a
>
> small environment, in a small school like this, you know, we have people that don't have
>
> strong family connections and the school is sort their extended family. And the kids
>
> understand a lot of these dynamics too, and so there's someone that they can relate to
>
> here. Just about any background or situation, there's somebody who's experienced
>
> something close to or can at least understand what it is you're dealing with.

Principal 3 staff was "all females." There were 10 certified, female teachers and five are African American and five are White. She also had 10 teacher assistants, with two Hispanic, five African American and three White. Having a diverse staff was very important to Principal 3 because it showed her that she attempted to meet the district goals to improve "recruitment and retention" in the district. Principal 4 also mentioned the district's efforts to improve in these areas by highlighting her initiatives implemented and said,

We made a real point of diversifying the teaching staff, because when I got here, the only diversity was in the teacher assistants and custodial staff, so we've made a real point of not just hiring people based on their color, but really making an effort to integrate minorities in every hallway. And we have where we've gotten up to about a third of my staff is African American or Latin X, and that was not the case when I got out here. I'm trying to make my staff look like my population and it's hard. It's very hard to do that because like I said, I'm not hiring people just because of their ethnicity or their race. You want the best people in the position, so really just making an effort to do that, and we have in the six years that I've been here, it's definitely much more diverse. I think it's a really good thing for our kids to see that it's not just my custodial staff that are minorities, but also their teachers, you know?

Principal 5 reflected on the nine years at his school and his observation about student success. He noted that it was important for students to see people that look like them, but also important to see people who did not look them because the "world is comprised of people who are not like you." He shared a story about one of his teachers who was of a different ethnicity, and how that individual taught him a lot of life lessons and "about being a good human being" and that having a different viewpoint was important because allows people to "come to terms with their own biases." District Leaders answered this question from the standpoint of how the district compared to the state and national demographic information. District Leaders 1 and 2 recalled that before the Pandemic, "80% of the teaching force was White females," and the district's demographics are better than the national average; however, the district's teaching force "does not mirror the makeup of the student population," and that there are "issues" with that. From a state perspective, it was also mentioned that prior research on the district's staff

demographics found that Green Pastures' demographics were very much compatible with larger districts and neighboring districts. District Leader 3 noted that across the district, 1/3 of the beginning teachers were African American, and it was "problem to try to hire more."

Theme 3: Hiring African American Teachers

Participant interviewers also gave great insight as to why there were not more African American teachers within the district. One of the main reasons given focused on the pool of candidates. Principal 1 noted that she did not "have many African American candidates for jobs," and the one she did have left because he wanted different profession. Principals 2 and 5 gave interesting perspectives by suggesting that the pool for African candidates had declined because of interest in the profession. Principal 2 stated,

> I know that a lot of Black people don't want to go into education and don't want their kids to go into education. I don't want my daughter to become a teacher. She's
>
> probably going do it because that's what both of her parents did, and that's what she saw and that's what provided for the life that she's lived, so she's probably going to want to. I also think it's not a glorious profession, so if you don't have some type of personal attachment to wanting to become a teacher, it's kind of hard to recruit people into it.

From a historical perspective, Principal 5 added that much of this could be attributed to the effects of the Brown vs. Board case, where he stated,

> I mean you're thinking about the impacts of Brown versus Board, when we desegregated schools in the 50s and the Supreme Court said separate by equal is not equal, what we said was Black schools are inferior to White schools. What that told schools as we desegregated is that Black teachers are inferior to White teachers, and we have lost an entire generation of African American teachers. And when we did that, when you think

about why people get into education; they either had someone in their own family who was an educator who inspired them, or they knew someone who they had a connection with who was a good educator that inspired them to make them want to do the same. But when you lose an entire generation of African American teachers that may have gone on to inspire their own children and grandchildren and other extended family members who want to become educators, you lost a gigantic talent pool, and we are just beginning to recover from that 60 years later, because it literally lost a generation.

Other reasons given were that the district needed to do a better job of recruiting African American teachers. Principal 2 said, "we need to do a better job of actively recruiting and making it known that this is who we are as a district" and willing to "say that out loud." Principal 3 believed that district needed to "be more intentional overall in recruiting diverse staff" and be willing to seek strategies from neighboring districts on how they "handle recruitment" and be willing to be "creative" in how we recruit teachers and have "incentives" for teachers in Green Pastures that worked and lived in the district. Principal 3 also suggested that the district must do things to "inspire young teenagers to enter the profession." District Leader 1 also commented on the district's desirability as a place to live by saying that the district is "not as attractive" to beginning teachers as the larger districts because they have "more to offer" African American educators because they are not as "isolated" and may feel more "supported" by "educators who look like them."

Sub-Question 2

Sub-question 2 for this study was, "How would African American teachers in a focus group improve the Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African Americans teachers within the Green Pastures School District?" Due to Covid-19 the focus group was

conducted virtually through Zoom. Focus group participants completed a registration link to voluntary participate in the study and confirmation emails were sent to participants (see Appendix H). Afterwards, a focus group date and time were scheduled and a Zoom link was sent to focus group participants. A moderator was used to navigate the communication signal features in Zoom, so that when a focus group participant wanted to speak or respond to someone in the group, the participant would be recognized and unmuted to speak. The responses of the focus group participants were transcribed using the Microsoft Word transcription software and checked for accuracy.

Theme 1: Lack of Preparedness

The first theme that emerged came from the focus group participants describing their BTI program experience. When asked about this the answers of Teachers 1, 2 and 3 correlated in that all of them responded that their experiences seemed inadequate, rushed, or non-informative. In describing her initial experience with the induction program, Teacher 1 mentioned that her experience seemed as if she missed a lot of information because she did not get to attend sessions due to her hiring date. She explained,

> So, my personal experience when was I hired was kind of like last minute in the middle
> of August when I received my offer from Green Pastures High School, so my I think my
> experience was a little bit different than other people where um, maybe 2-3 days after I
> was hired, I jumped right in. And I missed Summer Bridge and everything, so I dived in
> headfirst and like a week later, school started. So, my experience was...personally, it was
> a little overwhelming,

Because she was hired so late in the year, Teacher 1 felt she did not get the induction training and noted that she "missed Summer Bridge" and that her experience was "last minute

and overwhelming" because she only had a few days to get things in order as a "brand new teacher in a brand-new job to get everything in order." Teacher 2's experience was similar in that he was also hired right before school began noted that he did not get to attend the induction sessions either and was placed in his position three days before school began and "felt like everything was rushed." Teacher 3 commented that majority of the information given was just "fluff," and the best part of the orientation was "getting her iPad and MacBook and learning how to log into Canvas." Teacher 3 was very adamant in saying that majority of the information could have been sent in an electronic format, and what she really needed was "an understanding of what's needed for a first-year teacher completely not just to Green Pastures, but to teaching." Teacher 4 was the only teacher not new to teaching, as he came from another district, and attributed that to helping him with his adjustment. He noted that his issues did not come from district itself, but from his prior district with licensure discrepancies on whether he was a BT2 or BT3.

Theme 2: Professional Development Preferences

The second theme that emerged dealt with professional development preferences of the focus group participants. Three of the four teachers responded, and each had their personal preferences about the professional development offered. Teacher 1 wanted there to be a required checklist of items beginning teachers need to have completed before the first day of class, first semester and/or first year. In addition, Teacher 1 suggested this checklist be "content specific" and note designated people over these items. Teacher 3 enjoyed the professional development associated with Canvas and Keys to Literacy, because these sessions were very "informative" because they offered information to help teachers teach during the Pandemic. However, Teacher 3 also reflected on the professional development that did not go well by saying,

Now there were also professional developments for best practices. Sigh...that was a waste of time. Only because I felt that the best practices probably would have been a good idea if people would have truly taken the time to prepare and teach whatever their best practice was, but it was more so, oh, I just eat lollipops and hit kids on the heads. Like whatever that best practice was, it was a simple statement. So again, it was one of those things where I walked in with a notebook and my phone. I'm ready to record information and take pictures and write notes and it was like, oh yeah, you know, I just do such and such. I'm like, boo, you could have emailed that.

Teacher 2 enjoyed the professional development provided by administrators, because it "offered weekly check-ins" and suggestions on strategies teachers could do to build relationships with students. Because Teacher 4 transferred from another county, he noted that the professional development offered by the online modules helped him adjust to classroom expectations. It should be noted that the online modules were added after the Pandemic to replace the face-to-face meetings beginning teachers were required to attend monthly. Teacher 4 offered that if the modules were to remain, the number of modules needed for completion should decrease, and modules should be tailored toward the years of the teacher. For example, there should be modules just for BT1, BT2, and BT3s, and Teacher 2 also suggested that there be separate modules for those "who do not have an educational background in their subject area."

Theme 3: Colleague Interaction

The third theme that emerged from the focus group was colleague interaction. This theme was categorized into two areas: colleague interaction outside of BTI meetings and colleague interaction within subject area. It was interesting that the responses ranged from no feedback at all, great feedback and a difference in feedback that was contributed to Covid. Teacher 3 quickly

commented, "I didn't" as her response to if there was any feedback from induction program colleagues outside of meetings. Out of the interview four participants, three of the interview participants were high school teachers in the building with Teacher 1. Ironically, Teacher 1 said she only knew Teacher 4 was a BT because they completed orientation together, but "didn't know any other BTs." She continued to say that she didn't know who else was a BT until the BT luncheon and specifically said, "I only knew who I was." Teacher 4's experience was different because he and Teacher 2 coached at Green Pastures High School, and therefore had prior experiences with colleagues before being hired in their teaching positions. They knew a lot of people through coaching and felt this allowed them to "open up" and not be so reserved with others because their coaching peers ensured they knew the ins and outs of school and district itself. Teacher 1 was the only BT who participated in the induction program before and during the Pandemic. She explained that before the Pandemic, people were more "active," and you had a "reason to reach out to colleagues and plenty to talk about." She further discussed that there were other things to do in the induction program beside the modules such as book studies and meetings, and she got the "greatest benefit from the BT programs, meetings and assignments."

Colleague interaction within subject area was also discussed. Teacher 1 described that while her department is very big, it has subcategories based on what you teach, and in that subcategory department, she was the "only person of color and her interactions are interesting." She commented that she "does not feel heard" "feels left out," and because of this "does not put forth a lot of effort because it does not matter." She noted that when she feels as if she has something great to say and feels very confident to ask for what she needs, "I still feel it will not make a difference." Teacher 3 said her interactions with colleagues were "slim" but "not negative and aren't meaningful either," and that outside of school, she was "not friends with any

of them." Teacher 4 noted that he felt a lot of ambiguity from his colleagues because of the side

bar conversations that occurred about him. He said that when he was hired, he "was greeted with

open arms." However, he was later informed by colleagues that "he was not the initial choice for

the position, and this made him want to stick to myself." Because of this, Teacher 4 felt his

colleagues were "fake." Because Teacher 4 works within two departments, his colleagues in

other department have made him feel welcomed and offered to "lend a hand with no hesitation."

He commented that he felt they were genuine, and it "showed." Teacher 2 is the only teacher

from the focus group not at Green Pastures High School and is a teacher at the middle school. He

noted that everyone there is "supportive," and he "believes they care about each other." Because

he is a laid-back person, he noted that he does what is required and does not like to "make

anything problematic."

Theme 4: Mentor Relationships and Support

The fourth theme that emerged focused on mentor relationships and mentor support.

Two out of the four focus group participants had two mentors each, and most of the focus group

participants had informal mentors, who they felt more comfortable go to for assistance than their

assigned mentors. Teacher 2 had one mentor who had no curriculum experience to offer him, but

assisted very well with information associated with data entry with grades, etc. He noted that

when paired with the first mentor, their "curriculums didn't mix, and there were a lot of things he

didn't know as far as my curriculum, being that he was a PE teacher." However, Teacher 2 was

assigned a different mentor the next year and had a difference experience. He noted that his

second mentor was "fantastic" and "checks on me every week, whether through emails or just

stopping by the room and always asking if I need anything." Teacher 3 also had a mentor out of

her curriculum area and noted that the mentor had an "open-door policy," but there were "no

formal, consistent meetings." Like Teacher 2, Teacher 4 had two mentors. He described their

relationship as "rocky," and that the mentor liked mentees to come and do work in her room and

"be around her 24/7," but those arrangements did not work for Teacher 4, and a new mentor was

assigned. In discussing the new mentor, Teacher 4 said that everything "flowed differently" and

the mentor "always wanted to know what he could do to make my experience at Green Pastures

High School better." Teacher 4 discussed that his second mentor worked around his schedule to

set up meetings and ensured formal meetings took place. Teacher 4 described his mentor as

"always being there." Teacher 1 had a challenging experience with her mentor. She is at the end

of her BT experience, and when initially describing this experience with her mentor, she said,

> I've had the same mentor from the beginning, and in those three years of having my same
>
> mentor, the saying goes "life happens," so my mentor received a new position, so
>
> therefore, we no longer taught beside one another, and she moved into a non-teaching
>
> position, so we no longer had a classroom beside each other. My mentor also had a baby
>
> and came back to work, so I kind of went without a mentor for a little bit. She took care
>
> of herself and family, and in the event that she changed positions, her time looked a little
>
> different. We never had set times for meeting; it was just call or email me if you need me
>
> and I did just that. There's never been a time that I called or texted her that she didn't sort
>
> through it and figure it out. . . she never left me hanging. But there was a shift when her
>
> position shifted and her time shifted and I didn't really want to bother her, so I sought
>
> help from other places. And our relationship is fine and over the three years, our
>
> relationship has evolved as her being my mentor and me being the mentee.

When it came to struggles beginning teachers encountered, the commonality with the

responses here was that all the teachers hid their struggles from their mentors. Teachers 1 and 3

both noted that they did not feel comfortable letting their mentors know they were struggling. Teacher 1 noted, "It's not that I wanted to present myself as perfect Patty, but I didn't feel as there was even an open area for me to mention that." Teacher 3 commented,

> If I struggled, my mentor did not know it. Again, we did not have any set meetings. I knew I could pop in if I needed a quick question, but I didn't feel they had the time to deal with all that I needed. So generally, when I struggled, I went to you, or texted you and asked where I could find this or any teacher who would randomly pop in and I felt that they would know. I also called different counties because I have family in other counties who are in education, and I would call them. So, they were more my mentors than my in-house mentor because I felt more comfortable asking the type of questions I struggled with. I didn't know my mentor well enough to know if I would be judged by my needs or limitations. Personally, I didn't feel comfortable sharing my limitations because I didn't know who I could trust.

Focus group participants also mentioned a lack of mentor support when it came to discussing diversity issues in the classroom. When asked about mentor support in how to handle diversity issues within the classroom, all focus group participants answered that their mentors didn't address diversity issues. Teacher 3 gave the direct response of "they didn't" and "diversity wasn't a topic of conversation or concern" and her mentor did not see a reason to talk about it because it was not a "need for them." Teacher 1 also echoed the same noting, "It wasn't talked about; it wasn't a thing. You know it didn't happen." Teacher 2's response to mentor advice with diversity was almost the same in that he said, "We really didn't talk about diversity because they felt it really wasn't an issue." Because Teacher 4 worked as an EC teacher, he did not discuss

diversity issues with his mentor, but did note that his mentor encouraged him to allow his general education teachers to assist where needed.

Theme 5: Administrator Involvement in the BTI Process

The final theme that emerged was administrator's involvement throughout the BTI process. All the participants felt the administrator assigned to directly oversee beginning teachers were very involved in their induction process; however, focus group participants felt that the administrative team did not interact with them as much as their assigned administrator and were not as helpful. Teacher 4 responded that outside of observations, she really does not talk much to the other administrators, noting that it not anything "negative, but there's just not a lot of engagement outside of observations" and that she'd love to go to them, but "there's not really a relationship" and she "holds back or research questions until I can speak to my direct BT administrator." Teacher 1 stated that her assigned BT administrator was always available and even when she didn't tell the administrator what was wrong, "she finds a way to get it out of me." Teacher 1 also noted that the administrator's in-house professional development "set the tone" for a great BT/administrator relationship and it is still going well. In reference to the administration team, Teacher 1 said that the "relationships are not there." Teacher 4 also reiterated that his assigned BT administrator "welcomed him with open arms," but that he felt that because he has been in two other schools, this school's administration "is the best I've had in my three schools." Teacher 2 replied that his assigned BT administrator "makes sure we have what we need and has quick talks with us."

Sub-Question 3

Sub-question 3 for this study was, "How would district administrators, school site administrators, and African American teachers completing a survey improve the Beginning

Teacher Induction Program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District?" Survey participants completed a registration link to voluntarily participate in the study and confirmation emails were sent to participants (see Appendix I). To answer this question, a Google form survey was electronically sent to participants. A five-point Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Frequently, 5=Always) was used to measure participant responses. There were 15 participants who completed the survey, and descriptive statistics were used to show the gender and age breakdown of survey participants (see Table 4).

Table 4

Survey Participants Descriptive Statistics by Gender and Age

Gender	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-Above	Total
Female	2		5		1	8
Male	1	3	2	1		7
Total	3	3	7	1	1	15

Table 5

Survey Question and Survey Participant Average Scores

Question	Question Score	Participant	Average Score
Q1	3.9	T1	3.1
Q2	2.4	T2	3.7
Q3	3.5	T3	2.5
Q4	3.3	T4	4.1
Q5	3.8	P1	4
Q6	3.7	P2	4
Q7	3.8	P3	3.8
Q8	3.8	P4	3.7
Q9	3.8	P5	3.9
Q10	3.8	D1	3.5
	Total Average 3.63	D2	3.8
		D3	3.7
		D4	3.5
		D5	3.4
		D6	3.6
			Total Average 3.62

Note. Table 5 showed the breakdown of each question's average score, and the breakdown of each participant's overall score, which included their average score of all 10 questions (see Table 5).

Theme 1: Higher Results Focused on BTI Supports

Questions one, seven, and eight all had the highest number of participants who responded *frequently* with their survey results. In addition, these questions also had the top two overall average question scores, 3.9, 3.8, and 3.8 (see Table 5). Question one had eight respondents; question seven had nine respondents, and question eight had eight respondents. Question one focused on beginning teachers regularly meeting with their assigned mentor. These results

somewhat support the findings of the focus group data, where beginning teachers who had multiple assigned mentors had great experiences with their mentors and reported that their mentors met with them frequently, whether in person and/or through emails and held open-door policies. The other two beginning teachers had one mentor each; had mentors who were extremely busy and inconsistent meetings with mentors, which left them to seek guidance from other individuals in the building. Question seven focused on principals offering leadership support to beginning teachers. The survey results showed that respondents believed principals frequently offered leadership support to their beginning teachers, which supported the focus group data where administrators who planned professional development for their beginning teachers had better relationships with them and those beginning teachers felt more comfortable with those administrators. In addition, interview data also supported these findings in that many of the principals interviewed strategically planned meetings with their beginning teachers to check on them. Question eight focused on schools embracing various cultures of all students, and the survey results showed that schools in the district frequently value cultures of all students. These results coincide with cultural and racial representation theme from the interview data. Participant interview data revealed that majority of the schools attempted to not only hire teachers who looked like their students, or if they had not achieved this goal, those schools acknowledged the work that needed to be done in these areas for cultural and racial representation not only in their schools, but in the district.

Theme 2: Lower Results Focused on Diversity and Personal Experiences in the Classroom

Question two had the highest number of *never* responses, and question four had the highest number of *rarely* responses. These questions also had the lowest overall question average score, with question two having a score of 2.4, and question four having a score of 3.3 (see Table

5). Question two focused on whether mentors gave advice to beginning teachers on how to handle cultural differences within the classroom. These findings parallel with the focus group data, which found that mentors did not feel diversity was an issue of concern in classrooms and did not help beginning teachers in this area. Question four dealt with mentors encouraging beginning teachers to use their personal experiences to connect with students. These findings suggest that mentors rarely did encourage beginning teachers to use their personal experiences to connect with students in their classrooms, which supported findings in chapter two of the study on the importance of counter storytelling for African American teachers to be successful teachers in their classrooms (Sleeter, 2017).

Discussion

The study findings associated with gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions to improve the BTI experience for African American teachers in the Green Pastures District. Data was gathered through conducting building and district administrator participant interviews, focus group participant interview with African American beginning teachers, and survey completion with building and district administrators and focus group participants. The findings of this data were reviewed to support theoretical and empirical framework of this study.

Theoretical Literature

CRT was used as a framework for this study due to its focus on race and its impact on educational practices. CRT is a theory that highlights how race, especially from a historical standpoint consistently impedes the framework of teaching and learning (Cook, 2014; Calderon, 2015).

CRT and Interest Convergence

Interest convergence is a concept that finds ways to address racial issues associated with White interests (Gist, 2018c). This is important because allowing African American teachers to discuss their experiences within BTI programs can offer solutions for change. In the focus group participant interviews, Teacher 1 discussed her experiences as being the only person of color in her department and felt left out, with constant feelings of indifference and opinions not being heard by her colleagues. She further reiterated that in situations where she knew she had valuable input to give, she lacked the confidence to provide her viewpoint because she felt it would not matter. A study done by Sleeter (2017) supported these findings in those scenarios where students of color were the minority, felt alienated and silenced, and the opinions of White counterparts were favored and ultimately dominated conversations.

CRT and Whiteness

The concept of whiteness in the educational sphere was that White opinions were valued and discussed, and minority experiences and opinions were marginalized and dismissed. CRT argued that the property of whiteness was grounded in White privilege and values. For example, Principal 2 was an African American interview participant who shared his experience about wanting to hire an African American candidate who, was the most qualified candidate on paper and had the best interview. He explained that his dilemma was that while he always wants to hire the best candidate, he was concerned about the perceptions of people with his hiring choice. He asked a colleague what the perceived implications would be if he recommended his choice, and the colleague said that people would assume the principal made his recommendation because the candidate was also African American. This dilemma supported Green and Martin's (2018)

description of the Black man's burden, which was an inward way to justify how African Americans were viewed and felt, and Gist (2018a) concept of the double bind.

CRT and Counter-Storytelling

Counter-storytelling shed light on experiences of teachers of color and allowed the realism of racism to be dissected and provided narratives about racial oppression in schools and society (Leondardo, 2013). It allowed teachers of color to share perspectives and experiences and created a space for them to do so effectively (Gist, 2019). The data collected from the focus group interview participants was an example of counter-storytelling in that four African American beginning teachers in the Green Pastures School District had the opportunity to share their experiences matriculating through the BTI program. The teacher testimonies of the focus group interview participants served as a safe space for each participant to see that their experiences were valued and would be used to create solutions for change for this study. The findings of the survey data also showed that the second lowest question average score 3.3 was associated with a question that asked survey participants to rate if mentors in the district encouraged beginning teachers to share their experiences with students in the classroom; therefore, these results showed that concept counter-storying telling was important to all stakeholders in the district, and there was room for improvement in this area.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

CRP was the second framework discussed in Chapter two. The framework surrounding it focused on the pedagogical practices teachers implemented to adjust to the cultures and values of students who are traditionally unrepresented (Gist, 2019). In essence, CRP addressed issues associated with diversity that teachers experienced in the classroom. The framework itself was developed by Gloria Ladson-Billings, and the second component cultural competence aligned

with data findings in this study. In the classroom, cultural competence allowed teachers to understand culture, and its importance to education as a foundational aspect of learning for students' local and extended cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Culturally relevant teachers realized that culture was connected to all aspects of life, and teachers must learn the intricacies of students' cultures and communities they serve because this showed the students they teach that they valued them as individuals (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Mentors were considered culturally responsive educators because they were expected to model practices for beginning teachers and not resent doing do because of their lack of knowledge in this area. Educators who were not willing to do this continuously silence teachers of color (Jackson & Kohli, 2016). Findings from the focus group and survey results supported the importance and need for culturally responsive educators and highlighted the issues of individuals in mentorship who do not function in this capacity. When asked how mentors advised beginning teachers on handling diversity issues within the classroom, all focus group participants noted that diversity was not discussed, and mentors felt it was not important or an issue in classrooms and did not need to be discussed.

In the survey participant results, the question that had the lowest average score rating of 2.4 also focused on mentors across the district and in their ability to give advice on diversity issues beginning teachers would experience in the classroom. It should be noted that these survey participants encompassed not only the focus group participants, but also the principal and district leaders of the district; therefore, their data feedback showed that diversity implementation in the classroom is an area of concern not just for African American teachers, but principals and district leaders as well.

Empirical Literature

A review of the empirical literature and data collected through this applied study revealed several considerations associated with themes identified.

Theme 1: Leadership Role in the BTI Process

The leadership's role in the BTI process varied from administrator interview participants understanding the district mandates associated with implementing a BTI program in their buildings, delegation of tasks, mentor selection and BTI support. The literature suggested that lack administrator support was one of the main reasons beginning teachers left their positions, and schools with less organizational issues did not have a high turnover (Farinde et al., 2016). The findings from the administrator interviews showed that principal and district leaders were not informed about the mentor training and selection process. This corresponded with one requirement outlined the North Carolina mentor guide, which suggested that all leaders needed additional training on mentor training and that North Carolina Board of Education should consider updating and expanding the requirements for mentor selection.

Mentor Selection. Mentoring is one of the best practices for keeping new teachers and is incorporated widely as an induction support (Polikoff et al., 2015). According to the Public Schools of North Carolina (n.d.b.), standards one, two and five focused on the responsibilities and attributes expected of mentors, which were that mentors worked to create relationships with their beginning teachers and shared their experiences and knowledge with them; mentors shared strategies associated with diversity and its implementation in the classroom, and mentors make time to connect with beginning teachers. The findings from this study supported literature findings associated with the interview participant data, but do not with the focus group and survey data. The interview participant findings believed the mentors must be willing invest time

in their mentorship roles and give quality feedback to beginning teachers. The focus group interview findings showed that many of the participants did not enjoy their mentor experiences because their mentors did not have the time to properly mentor them and dismissed their inquiries to learn more about diversity integration in the classroom. Positive experiences with some of the focus group participants only occurred with mentor replacements occurred. The survey participant data found that questions associated with mentors and diversity issues and mentors and personal experiences in the classroom received the lowest question average scores of 2.4 and 3.3.

BTI Support. The literature found that one of the main BTI supports leadership could implement was getting to know beginning teachers on a personal level (Merritt, 2019). The findings from the study supported the literature in that principal participants in the study all reported that they ensured they spent time with their beginning teachers and had frequent informal conversations with them. Many principals made it their personal goals to have open door policies for their beginning teachers. The survey findings also supported the literature in that the number one survey question average score was associated with asking survey participants about leadership support.

Theme 2: Importance of Cultural and Racial Representation

Culturally responsive educators understood the importance of learning about student culture and that of the communities they served because it benefited students inside of the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2000). In addition, students who grew more academically were in classrooms where cultural competence practices were implemented (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). The interview participant findings supported the literature in that all the principals made great

gains in increasing the diversity of their staff, so that it would emulate the racial demographics of students.

Theme 3: Hiring African American Teachers

Green and Martin (2018) noted that education entities must improve its efforts to attract and keep teachers of color. The literature noted the success of Grow Your Own Programs, which specialized in creating a lineage of African American teachers for communities and built local capacity for communities (Gist, 2018a). The findings of the study supported the literature in that all participants in the study acknowledged that improvement must be made to employ more African American teachers. Many participants felt that the pool of educators did not include a lot of African American candidates for teaching positions, but also noted that the district itself needed to improve recruitment efforts and partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities. District Leader participants mentioned past success with incentivizing minority students who were interested in teaching, and a few of them did return to the district.

Summary

The findings from the building and district administrators interviews, focus group interview and survey participants were essential components for gathering information on the BTI program in the Green Pastures District. Eight interviews were conducted with principals and district administrators, and a focus group of four African American beginning teachers was conducted. In addition, these 15 individuals completed a 10-question survey developed by the researcher. The administrator interviews revealed that more leadership training was needed on the mentor selection process for beginning teachers and finding solutions for hiring more African American teachers. The focus group interviews revealed that many beginning teachers did not value their induction experience, and those that did only did so because of mentor changes and

assistant principals who developed meaningful professional development opportunities for beginning teachers. Beginning teachers also did not trust their mentors and had informal mentors who provided them with information they needed for success in the classroom. The survey results overall suggested that participants believed that the district and other stakeholders within it believed that the BTI provided adequate supports for beginning teachers, but struggled to implement diversity within the classroom and fostered environments where beginning teachers felt comfortable incorporating their personal experiences in their classrooms to connect with students.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this applied study was to improve the BTI program for African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District by gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions. The problem was that induction experience for African American teachers needed improvement. Chapter Five provided formulated solutions needed to address the central question based on the findings of the study, identified needed resources and funding and implications associated with the study that were essential to improving the induction experience of African American beginning teachers in the Green Pastures School District.

Restatement of the Problem

This applied study attempted to formulate solutions to improve the BTI practices for African American beginning teachers in the Green Pastures District. According to Carver-Thomas (2018), the BTI program needed to be revised to support the needs of all beginning teachers, but specifically African American teachers, because nationwide, the educational field is confronted with a disparaging reality regarding the scarcity of African American teachers. In the last 30 years, while the number of teachers of color has slowly increased approximately 12%, unfortunately the number of African American teachers has continually decreased to approximately 8% of the teaching population nationwide (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

Proposed Solution to the Central Question

The central question of this applied study asked, "How can the practice of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program be improved for African Americans within the Green Pastures School District? The solution to the central question required the current induction program model used in the Green Pastures District to be restructured, using the recommendations from

the literature and findings from the qualitative and qualitative analysis of the applied study. Listed are the suggested goals and supporting objectives:

Goal 1: Improve the Summer Bridge Training Format for Beginning Teachers

Goal 1 addressed the themes that emerged from sub-question 1. Because the Summer Bridge training was the core of the Green Pastures BTI program and was the introductory program that beginning teachers experience before the beginning of the school year, it was essential to improve the format of the training that occurred throughout this three-day training so that beginning teachers could be successfully prepared for their classroom experiences.

Objective 1: Provide Training Sessions Specifically for Administrators on the Mentor Training and Selection

Currently, building administrators do not participate training associated with how mentors are trained to be mentors for beginning teachers. The BT Coordinator has the responsibility of connecting with the administrators in charge of implementing the district requirements for the BTI program and checking in to see that mentors completed the required online training modules. The findings from the building and district administrators revealed that principals did not know the training process or requirements for mentors, and hence principals could be using incorrect methods that were not researched-based or following criteria set forth by the North Carolina Mentor Standards Handbook for selecting mentors for beginning teachers. The literature noted that successful programs encompassed mentors who had vast training were able to identify behavioral and learning patterns of mentees (Van Ginkel et al., 2018). And because principals place mentors, it is therefore important for them to also understand training procedures. In addition, knowing these standards were important not just for the principals, but for the mentors because principals hold mentors accountable for their responsibilities in helping

teachers streamline the "knowledge, skills and dispositions beginning. Teachers need and clearly articulated how mentors could help teachers attain them (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2019). Furthermore, according to the North Carolina Board of Education Policy Manual (2019), districts were required to have programs that offered continuous support for beginning teachers.

Objective 2: Provide Small Support Groups for Beginning Teachers based on Years in the BTI Program, Grade Level, Teaching Content and Diversity

Findings from the focus group with African American beginning teachers revealed that many of them did not enjoy the monthly district meetings because the information was geared more towards lower-level beginning teachers. The focus group participants suggested that breakout groups geared towards BT1, BT2 and BT3 be implemented, so the content discussed was relevant and feedback was more meaningful and applicable. In addition, focus group participants noted that because district meetings usually involved all beginning teachers, small groups designated for content areas would also address the problem of beginning teachers feeling as if they could not gather feedback from individuals because often, they would be the only teacher of color in their subject area.

In addition, diversity implementation in the classroom was a very big issue discussed in the focus group portion of the study. Participants constantly reiterated that their mentors did not acknowledge or address the importance of diversity or issues associated with it in the classroom, and therefore, the participants felt unprepared to implement strategies associated to deal with it. It should be mentioned that diversity was an evaluative component for teachers; however, there were no state guidelines for measuring diversity implementation in the classroom or strategies to address it (Program Evaluation Division, 2020). And this raised the question as to was this one of

the reasons why African American teachers were struggling in teacher induction programs because there was no legal oversight for implementing diversity strategies for success in the classroom. The literature noted that not implementing policies reversed the efforts of increasing teacher diversity because the lack of these policies and procedures placed systematic obstacles in the educational pathways of teachers of color (Caver-Thomas, 2018).

Furthermore, implementing these small support groups allowed African American beginning teachers the opportunity to counter story, or share their experiences within the BTI program that offered a safe space where their experiences were valued and heard, and strategies could be formulated to help them be successful in the classroom.

Goal 2: Actively Recruit More African American Teachers in the Green Pastures District

As this study noted, out of the seven schools in the district, there were only 11 African American beginning teachers. The findings from the qualitative and quantitative methods used in this study revealed that everyone acknowledged that African American teachers were underrepresented in the district and in the applicant candidate pool. Specifically, principal interviews survey results found that attempts were being made at hiring African American teachers, but changes need to occur on the effectiveness of this. The GCS Equity Plan was created to address teacher disparities; however, specifications on how to improve disparities particularly with African American teachers did exist. Furthermore, because Green Pastures School District is a Title I district, funding was associated with its ability to design plans that addressed these teacher disparities (GCS Equity Plan, 2020), and the district's District Title I information allotted funding for the effective implementation of these instructional practices (GCS Title I Information, 2020). The literature noted that not only do districts need to be transparent about their need for African American teachers NEA (2014), but also seek

partnerships from Historically Black Colleges/Universities, which would immediately increase recruitment efforts and provide strategies in this area, but also offer community initiatives available for teachers (Program Evaluation Division, 2020).

One of the ongoing initiatives of Green Pastures High School focused on developing four-year career plans for all incoming freshmen and tailored coursework toward their desired career paths. Using this framework, African American students who were interesting in teaching could be identified and the school's career coach could coordinate internships with these students to gain insight into the profession and formulate essential networking connections. This format would also foster buy-in from these students because they would realize the district was invested in their academic pursuits and allow the district to incentivize their collegiate educational experience. District personnel and counselors could use these partnerships to encourage African American students to apply for educational scholarships and their community service within local schools and strengthen their chances for getting scholarships, but also solidified their commitment to return and intern at local schools. Offering scholarships toward the recruitment of for African Americans was important because research showed that college debt for African American college students was approximately $7,400 higher for these students than their counterparts (Paterson, 2018).

Resources and Funds Needed

Because Green Pastures District is a low-wealth district, Title I funding was available to address any issues associated with teacher disparities and strategies associated with implementing them (GCS Equity Plan, 2020). Therefore, funding was already allocated for these projects. The BT Coordinator, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent were district personnel who worked with building administrators and mentors implementing the intricacies of

the BTI program. Because of time restraints associated with scheduling and planning, all these individuals would probably have to meet during the summer because students and teachers will not be the buildings, so there will be time plan appropriate workshops and revise BTI procedures already put in place. In addition, other personnel such as the Career and Technical Education Coordinator and Career Counselor must also be trained on their contributing parts to implementing a successful BTI program, and this would be a great time for principals to receive training about the overall induction program and online mentor training components. The Career and Technical Education Coordinator and Career Counselor and principalships were 12 month positions, so they were staff members who were on already on campus and working throughout the summer and would not need a stipend because their contracts paid them to work during this time; however, most mentors and beginning teachers were 10-month employees, which meant they did not receive paychecks during the summer, so stipends would need to be secured to financially compensate them for BTI program training. Mentors and beginning teachers would receive a $100.00 a day stipend, and the training would take place during the Summer Bridge training sessions, which lasted three days. Because the BT Coordinator received all information for induction implementation from the North Carolina Department of Instruction, she could provide the training for the Career and Technical Education Coordinator, Career Counselor and principals.

Roles and Responsibilities

To formulate solutions to improve the BTI program experience for African American beginning teachers in the Green Pastures District, it was recommended that BT Coordinator not only work with principals, mentors and beginning teachers, but also collaborate with Historically Black Colleges/Universities. The district could train designated personnel, who work with

beginning teachers to serve as liaisons for the district and work closely with the colleges and universities to formulate recruitment strategies and build relationships with potential candidates for employment. Suggestions for personnel would be the instructional and technology coaches, because they already worked closely with beginning teachers in the classroom and had regular meetings with the assistant superintendent and BT coordinator that focused on the progress of beginning teachers; therefore, they already had a grasp on what beginning teachers experienced and could use this knowledge in their meetings with prospective intern placements to better prepare them for what they would experience in the classroom. This training would focus on procedures and outcomes associated with connecting with interns and frequent check ins meetings, traveling for recruitment and campus visits.

Timeline

The timeline to establish the recommendations are as follows:

- Prior to the summer:
  - notify all personnel about upcoming Summer Bridge program planning dates.
  - send out prospective dates and have personnel decide on what dates will work for all participants and secure location to hold planning event.
  - send out surveys on the overall effectiveness of the BTI program throughout the year.
  - finalize planning dates and send out Summer Bridge planning dates and location.
- Early summer:
  - meet at the specified place and time for Summer Bridge planning.
  - plan Summer Bridge agenda i.e., session topics and speakers and discuss time

lengths for sessions.

- o create session materials.

- o connect with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and discuss potential intern placements, solidify recruitment dates, campus visits and school visits.

- o finalize agenda and disseminate all session materials and information to all principals, mentors and beginning teachers.

- o follow up on availability of all participants and secure their attendance to the Summer Bridge program.

- Late summer:

  - o hold Summer Bridge program.

  - o gather feedback from attendees and share with BT Coordinator and principals, mentors and beginning teachers and review BTI effectiveness survey results.

  - o hold follow-up meeting to discuss feedback given.

  - o designated administrators or personnel assigned to work with beginning teachers hold sessions to review individual polies and procedures.

  - o assign mentors to newly hired beginning teachers, etc.

- Fall and spring semester:

  - o implement BTI program supports.

  - o BT coordinator checks in on beginning teachers and mentors monthly.

  - o principals schedule weekly check in meetings with beginning teachers and biweekly meetings with mentors and instructional coaches on beginning teacher progress.

- o beginning teachers have small group support meetings within their BT cohort.
- o principals finalizing intern placements with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and scheduling school and community visits and consider employment recommendation for vacancies that arise.

Solution Implications

The positive implications for solving the problem of improving the BTI program experience for African American beginning teachers was that implementing these proposed solutions not only benefit African American beginning teachers, but improve the BTI program district wide. Implementing strategies that created a pipeline and supported system for African American students who were interested in pursuing teaching as a career field and providing incentives for doing so immediately increased potential candidate pool of African American teachers, which was noted as a barrier was to why there were not more African American teachers hired within the district. Changing the monthly meeting format from a whole group approach and creating small, intentional cohort groups for beginning teacher meetings signified that the district was committed to addressing the needs of beginning teachers. These strategies could serve as a catalyst for strategies that could be implemented in North Carolina's Beginning Teachers Handbook, which was used as a guideline for all districts in implementing BTI programs. The literature noted that for the past three years in North Carolina, attrition rates among beginning teachers and teachers of color were at an all-time high (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2020, 2019).

The negative implications of these solutions were that it required an immense amount of monitoring and personnel responsibility to ensure goals were met and significant gains were met with the ultimate purpose of ensuring the success of the BTI program in the Green Pastures

District. If individuals who were previously mentioned with assigned roles and responsibilities do not follow through with expectations provided, then the BTI experience for African American beginning teachers would remain unchanged, and the district would continuously decline in diversifying its teaching staff and possibly lose Title I funding associated with improving teaching disparities with African American teachers, and this would ultimately affect initiative implementation and could affect student performance in the classroom.

Evaluation Plan

For this study, a goal-based survey could be created to assess various stages of the district's BTI program implementation. For example, a survey could be created to determine the effectiveness of the Summer Bridge program and feedback from that survey could be used to adjust measures proposed for the upcoming school year with the BTI program district wide. An additional survey could be given at the end of the school year to assess progress on these goals. Throughout the year, formative and summative evaluations will also be conducted by the BT coordinator and principals.

Summary

This applied study identified various themes that informed recommended solutions for solving the problem of improving the BTI program experience for African American beginning teachers in the Green Pastures District. These themes highlighted the need for BTI program revamping in the areas Summer Bridge planning and implementation, leadership and mentor training, diversity implementation in the classroom and implementation of small support groups that address various areas associated with years in the BTI program, content area and overall experiences as African American beginning teachers.

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APPENDIX A: DISTRICT ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Superintendent

December 2, 2020

Uvonda M. Willis

Dear Uvonda:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled Improving the Beginning Teacher Induction Program Experience for African American Teachers within the Green Pastures School District, I have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at the various schools in our district.

We do ask that all identifying information pertaining to the district and personnel is removed and a copy of the results upon study completion is provided to the Superintendent.

Sincerely,

Superintendent

APPENDIX B: DISTRICT PERMISSION LETTER

December 2, 2020

Superintendent

Dear

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree. The title of my research project is Improving the Beginning Teacher Induction Program Experience for African American Teachers within the Green Pastures School District and the purpose of my research is to provide improvements concerning the practices used in the induction program that can benefit all teachers within our district.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research virtually at all the schools within and this will also encompass potential participants who are lead administrators at each school; African American teachers who are induction participants in our district's program and district personnel who oversee the district's Beginning Teacher Induction Program.

Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on our district's official letterhead indicating your approval. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,
Uvonda M. Willis

APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Date: ▮▮▮▮▮

IRB #: ▮▮▮▮▮▮
Title: IMPROVING THE BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM EXPERIENCE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN TEACHERS WITHIN THE GREEN PASTURES SCHOOL DISTRICT
Creation Date: ▮▮▮▮▮
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: ▮▮▮▮▮
Review Board: ▮▮▮▮▮
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	No Human Subjects Research

Key Study Contacts

Member	▮▮▮▮▮	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	▮▮▮▮▮
Member	▮▮▮▮▮	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	▮▮▮▮▮
Member	▮▮▮▮▮	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	▮▮▮▮▮

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What were the principal's responsibilities for the beginning teacher induction support program?

2. In your building, describe the leadership structure that oversaw the implementation of the beginning teacher induction support program?

3. How did this designated person monitor each beginning teacher's progress?

4. What specific induction supports did your school provide for struggling beginning teachers?

5. What characteristics should a mentor possess?

6. What was the training process for mentors?

7. How did you select mentors for your beginning teachers?

8. How did you monitor mentor collaboration with beginning teachers?

9. Describe the cultural/racial demographics of your staff?

10. Throughout the district, there were approximately 11 African American teachers. In your opinion, why did this district not employ a larger number of African American teachers?

APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Describe your beginning teacher induction program experience.

2. Describe what type of professional development did your induction program offer its beginning teachers.

3. Describe the type of feedback you discussed with your induction program colleagues outside of meetings.

4. Describe the relationship with your mentor.

5. If you struggled in an area, how did your mentor support you?

6. How did your mentor advise you to handle diversity issues within the classroom?

7. Describe the interactions that you have had with your students and parents.

8. In your subject area, describe your interactions with colleagues.

9. Describe your administrator's involvement throughout your induction process.

10. If you would make any changes to your induction program, what would you suggest?

APPENDIX F: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Demographic Information:

Instructions: Read Each Question and Select One Answer.

1. Select your age category.

    20-30   30-40   40-50   50-60   60 and above

2. Select your race.

    White   Black/African American   Hispanic   Other

3. Select your gender.

    Male   Female   Other

4. Select your district school level.

    K-5   6-8   9-12

5. Select your job title:

    District Administrator   School Site Administrator   Beginning Teacher

Survey Questions:

Survey Instructions: Read each answer and select the best answer. You will be allowed to go back and review or answers. At the end of your survey, click complete and you will receive a copy of your results.

1. I/beginning teachers in the district regularly meet (or met) with my/their assigned mentor.

    1   2   3   4   5

      Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Frequently   Always

2. My mentor/mentors in the district gives (gave) advice on how to handle cultural differences within my/the classroom.

    1   2   3   4   5

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Frequently   Always

3. My administrators/administrators in the district monitor (monitored) my/the progress of beginning teachers participating in the induction program.

1   2   3   4   5

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Frequently   Always

4. My mentor/mentors in the district encourages (encouraged) me/other mentees to use my/their personal experiences to connect with my/their students.

1   2   3   4   5

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Frequently   Always

5. My school/schools in the district embraces (embraced) the cultural differences of teachers.

1   2   3   4   5

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Frequently   Always

6. My/the beginning teacher induction program offers (offered) continuous induction support.

1   2   3   4   5

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Frequently   Always

7. My principal/principals in the district offers (offered) leadership support when needed.

1   2   3   4   5

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Frequently   Always

8. My school/schools in the district embraces (embraced) the various cultures of all students.

1   2   3   4   5

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Frequently   Always

9. My staff/building staff in the district has (had) other African American teachers.

1   2   3   4   5

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Frequently   Always

10. My principal/principals in the district is/are attempting (has attempted) to hire more African

American teachers.

1   2   3   4   5

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Frequently   Always

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT LETTER

Dear Potential Participant:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree. The purpose of my research is to solve the problem of improving the Beginning Teacher Induction (BTI) experience for African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District by gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions. This interview will specifically address the first sub-question of how administrators in an interview would improve the Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District. As an administrative employee who either oversees or works with beginning teachers, I am writing in hopes that you will consider participating in my study.

Potential participants will be district administrators and school site administrators. Due to Covid-19 and social distancing policies from our district, all interviews will be conducted virtually through Zoom and each interview will be recorded using the Zoom and its recording feature. These recordings will be downloaded and transcribed using the NVivo qualitative software. Interview times will be individually scheduled. The interview consists of 11 questions, and it should take approximately 60 minutes to complete it. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, participants must complete a registration form that will confirm your participation in the study. Listed is the link for the registration form Participant Registration Link. Thank you for your time, and if you have any questions and/or concerns, please feel free to contact me from the information listed.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX H: FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT LETTER

████████████████████

████████████████████   ██████████████

████████   ████████████████

Dear Potential Participant:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree. The purpose of my research is to solve the problem of improving the Beginning Teacher Induction (BTI) experience for African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District by gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions. This focus group will specifically address the second sub-question of how African American teachers in a focus group would improve Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District. As African American Beginning Teachers who participate in the BTI program, I am writing in hopes that you will consider participating in my study.

Potential participants will be African American teachers within the BTI program. Due to Covid-19 and social distancing policies from our district, this focus group will be conducted virtually through Zoom and recorded using the Zoom and its recording feature. This recording will be downloaded and transcribed using the NVivo qualitative software. The focus group session will be scheduled during a designated time and date and sent to participants. The focus group will consist of 10 questions, and a moderator will be used to ensure the focus group discussion runs as specified, and to also review instructions with all participants. The focus group session will be approximately 60 minutes. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, participants must complete a registration form that will confirm your participation in the study. Listed is the link for the registration form: Participant Registration Link. Thank you for your time, and if you have any questions and/or concerns, please feel free to contact me from the information listed.

Sincerely,

████████████

████████

APPENDIX I: SURVEY PARTICIPANT LETTER

Dear Potential Participant:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree. The purpose of my research is to solve the problem of improving the Beginning Teacher Induction (BTI) experience for African American teachers in the Green Pastures School District by gathering information on the BTI program and formulating solutions. The survey will specifically address the third sub-question of how district administrators, school site administrators, and African American teachers completing a survey improve the Beginning Teacher Induction Program experience for African American teachers within the Green Pastures School District. As an employee who either oversees beginning teachers or participates in the BTI, I am writing in hopes that you will consider participating in my study.

Potential participants will be district administrators, school site administrators, and African American teachers. Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the data submitted in the survey. The survey consists of 10 questions, and it should take approximately 30 minutes to complete it. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, participants must register by completing the following link Participant Registration Link, then complete an online survey and listed is the accompanying link: Survey Link. Participants will have two weeks to complete the survey and follow-up reminder to complete it will be sent via email after the first week. Thank you for your time, and if you have any questions and/or concerns, please feel free to contact me from the information listed.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP FREQUENCY CODES

Theme	Code	Frequency
Leadership Role in BTI Process	Communicate Policies	8
	Support	7
	Paperwork	4
District Mandates	Summer Bridge	11
	Central Office	8
	Paperwork	5
Delegation of BTI Tasks	Assistant Principal	5
	Principal	3
	Leader Teacher	2
	BT Coordinator	3
Mentor Selection	Mentor Online Training Knowledge	8
	Communication	8
	Personal Life	6
	Connection	4
	Veteran Teacher	4
	Listener	3
	Passionate	3
	Internal Reasons	3
	Mentor Collaboration	3
	Mentor Logs	2
BTI Support	Walkthroughs	5
	Observations	5
	Personal Conversations	4
Importance of Cultural/Racial Representation	African American	5
	White	5
	Latin X	3
	Women	3
Hiring African American Teachers	Candidates	8
	Recruitment	5
Professional Development Preferences	Administrator	7
	Colleagues	3
	Grade Levels	2
	Praxis	2
	Departments	1

Colleague Interaction	Pre-Covid	7
	After Covid	4
	Workplace	3
Mentor Relationships and Support	Multiple Mentors	12
	Availability	10
	Informal Mentor	10
	Struggles	7