

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE STUDY OF BEGINNING TEACHERS'
PRE-SERVICE AND INDUCTION EXPERIENCES

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by:

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

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Many thanks to the people in my life who believed in me:

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encouraging me to achieve my dreams.***

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SECTION ONE:
INTRODUCTION TO DISSERTATION

Background

Like many professions, teaching is forever evolving. Due to several trends in the teaching force within the past forty years, the demographics of public school teachers have changed. Because many baby-boomers have reached retirement age, there has been an exodus of retiring teachers, which in turn has created a large number of open teaching positions in schools across America (Ingersoll, 2012). Pre-service teacher preparation programs across the nation have responded to this departure of retiring teachers by allowing an overproduction of teachers. According to Greenberg, Pomerance, and Walsh (2011), universities are producing twice as many elementary teachers than are needed by public schools.

Consequently, since the mid-1980s, the number of beginning teachers (a teacher with five or less years experience) has greatly increased. This ballooning of the teaching force resulted in the rate of beginning teachers growing twice as fast as the growing student enrollment rate. Due to such an inflation of teachers, the demographics of teachers reflected a greening effect. “In 1988, there were about 65,000 first-year teachers; by 2008, the number had grown to over 200,000” (Ingersoll, 2012, p. 49). By 2008, the most common teacher was a beginning teacher; one fourth of all teachers had five or less years of experience (Ingersoll, 2012).

As a result of this influx of new teachers, schools have not been equipped to support, prepare, and train these teachers. Many teachers have struggled, and over time, have left education completely. Some teachers have moved to different schools or districts, but many have left the teaching profession altogether, causing an alarmingly high turnover rate of beginning teachers (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010). As Ingersoll (2012)

pointed out, contrary to popular belief, schools are not having a hard time finding teachers; they are having a hard time keeping them. This predicament has created what Ingersoll called a *revolving door*. Teachers are entering the teaching profession, as many others are leaving it.

Between 40 and 50% of teachers leave the classroom within their first five years of teaching (Ingersoll, 2012). How are schools reducing this high turnover rate amongst beginning teachers? To decrease this attrition, 27 states have mandated schools provide a teacher induction program and a mentoring program to support these new teachers (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012).

Missouri is one of the 27 states requiring districts to provide induction programs to their beginning teachers (Goldrick et al., 2012). Due to the high standards set by *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* in 2001, Missouri implemented a policy mandating every school district in the state provide a two-year beginning teacher induction program for all new teachers. The policy was enforced in 2003 and was a requirement for all new teachers to meet the state certification requirements (New Teacher Center, 2011). In 2014, 26% of all teachers in Missouri had only been teaching one to five years, which by definition considers them to be beginning teachers. Across the state, 58.4% of all new hires were first year teachers. Yet despite these numbers, 30-40% of the teachers leaving the classroom across the state are beginning teachers (Missouri DESE, 2014).

The repercussions of teachers leaving the classroom affect not only the teachers who are leaving the profession, but also the school environment, the students, the quality of teachers being hired, and the selection process of new teachers (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Though induction and mentoring programs are in place, many teachers leave the

teaching field. It seems there is a piece of the puzzle missing. The programs are in place. Teachers have a mentor. And yet, if so many teachers have the necessary support and a mentor, why are they still leaving within their first five years of teaching? An examination of one district can help other schools facing retention challenges.

Statement of the Problem

Problem of Practice

Even though the state of Missouri requires each school to have a two-year beginning teacher induction program, the structure of these programs varies between school districts. Much of the research done on this topic has supported the need for beginning teacher induction programs (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003), but little research has been found on what structures and components are the most effective for specific schools. Not only this, the experts cannot seem to agree on what components of an induction program are the most beneficial.

Due to the inconsistencies in regards to what makes an effective induction program, schools often fail to fully implement induction programs and still struggle with high turnover rates. In fact, as induction participation rates have increased, attrition rates have not declined (Fry, 2010). Just because a policy is mandated by the state does not mean the schools have the skillset, money, and time to implement the programs effectively. Schools may have the necessary supportive programs in place for their beginning teachers, but are they effective? Are those teachers staying in the district? When teachers do leave a school, is there an opportunity for them to share their perspective of their experience so the district can learn how to support teachers in the future?

Existing Gap in the Literature

Though many states require schools to provide induction programs for their beginning teachers, teachers are still leaving the profession before serving five years in the classroom. Scholars and educators still know very little about the perspectives and experiences of beginning teachers who left the classroom compared to those who stayed. Furthermore, there is little research looking at the pre-service experiences of these beginning teachers. Is there a connection between what happens at the university level of teacher preparation with the experiences as a beginning teacher?

While there is research supporting the need for induction programs, there is much discrepancy on what components should be included in the programs to fully support beginning teachers. According to Fry (2010), there is a “clear need for the educational community to examine potential shortcomings with how induction is implemented” (p. 1166). Further research is needed to focus on these problems so schools may benefit from the results.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to take an honest look at a district that implemented a beginning teacher induction program and yet experienced a high beginning teacher turnover rate (M. Youngblood, personal communication, March 23, 2016). The problem was looked at from two different perspectives: the experiences of beginning teachers who left the district before five years and the experiences of beginning teachers who stayed in the district beyond five years.

Though there is plenty of research supporting *why* districts need to support their beginning teachers, there is little research discussing why teachers are *still* leaving

despite all of the supportive programs, and what schools can do to change their programs to better support new teachers. What happens when these mentoring and induction programs fail and teachers continue to leave the teaching field? Furthermore, there are few studies showing the viewpoints of the teachers who left the classroom and comparing them with the teachers who stayed in the classroom. The purpose of this study was to increase understanding of pre-service and induction experiences of teachers to inform future teacher development.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study were:

1. What are the pre-service experiences of teachers who stayed in the district and who left?
2. What are the induction experiences of teachers who stayed in the district and who left?
3. What can be learned from the pre-service and induction experiences of teachers who stayed and those who left that can inform future teacher development practice?

Conceptual Framework

The theory underlying induction utilized in this study was the Mutual Benefits Model (Zey, 1984). This model is drawn from social exchange theory and is based on the “premise that individuals enter into and remain part of relationships in order to meet certain needs, for as long as the parties continue to benefit” (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 4). The beginning teacher benefits from the counsel of the mentor and the mentor benefits from the relationship built with the beginning teacher. Furthermore, the school

that contains the mentor, and beginning teacher also benefits from the interaction. The purpose of induction and mentoring is for schools to help acclimate teachers to their new professions while at the same time reaping the benefits of their retention.

The Theory of Teacher Development (as seen in Figure 1) served as the conceptual framework for mentoring and induction programs in this study. There are four components to this framework, the first component being pre-service preparation. In this model, *pre-service* is referring to student teaching, practicum, and methods courses. This preparation helps beginning teachers as they become accustomed to their new career. The induction program then helps to improve classroom teaching practice and ultimately helps to retain the teacher. The outcome of all of this support is improved learning and growth.

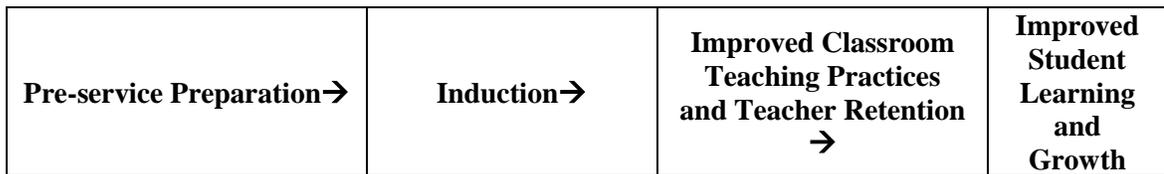


Figure 1. Theory of Teacher Development. This figure shows the four components of teacher development based on the research of Ingersoll and Strong (2011).

The focus of the research looked primarily at the first and second components of the model. Wong’s (2004) list of seven components of a successful induction program was used to guide the research and interactions with the participants of the study. The interview protocol was formed around these components. According to Wong (2004), beginning teachers should: (a) attend four or five days of orientation before school starts, (b) receive professional development for beginning teachers over two or three years, (c) belong to a study group for new teachers, (d) be provided strong administrative support,

(e) be assigned a carefully chosen mentor, (f) observe modeling by the mentor, and (g) have opportunities for inductees to visit demonstration classrooms. Though many scholars have lists of components that make effective induction programs, Wong is considered an expert in the area of induction and his components are a good representation of all the lists.

In summary, the concept of induction derives from the Mutual Benefits Model, which explains how beginning teachers can have a positive impact on a school and community while the beginning teacher simultaneously benefits from the mentor and school environment. The conceptual framework for this study utilized the first two components of the Theory of Teacher Development, which are pre-service preparation and induction. Wong's (2004) seven components of a successful induction program will be utilized for interviews.

Design of the Study

The overarching design of this qualitative case study was phenomenological in nature. A case study is “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). A case study was chosen because the focus was on one district and specific groups within that district. A phenomenological study “describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). Teacher development was the phenomenon that was explored. By conducting this type of study, it was possible to study the beginning teachers and develop a description of the *essence* of their experiences by describing “*what* they experienced and *how* they experienced it” (Creswell, p. 76).

Setting

The setting of this study took place in the Branson School District (BSD). BSD is the largest district within Taney County, Missouri and serves about 4,500 students (Hayter, 2010). Though there are nine different schools in the district, this study focused especially on the elementary schools. There are two intermediate schools, two elementary schools, a primary school, and a preschool in Branson. Serving buildings within an elementary setting are five head principals and three vice-principals.

Participants

The focus of the study was on two different groups of individuals: kindergarten through sixth grade (K-6) teachers who stayed and K-6 beginning teachers who left the district. The focus on teachers from the elementary school instead of the whole district narrowed the selection of participants because they had similar induction experiences with each other. Criterion-based selection (LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch, 1993) was utilized, which means each participant had to meet the criterion in order to be a part of the study. Regarding the group of K-6 teachers who stayed, this meant they had taught more than five years; all of those years in the Branson School District. For the teachers who left, the focus was on K-6 teachers who taught less than five years in Branson and who left the district before their fifth year of teaching. All of the participants had been a part of the beginning teacher induction program. The range of years was narrowed to teachers who participated in the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) in the 2005-06 school year to the 2009-10 school year. This five-year window allowed this group of teachers to have similar experiences within the induction program and gave enough time for five years to pass its mark.

The Chain Sampling Method (Merriam, 2009) was used to find the participants of the study. This was especially helpful in finding teachers who left the profession. I depended on others to find these teachers and make contact with them. In order to contact my potential participants, I used email, phone calls, face-to-face contact, and social media when necessary. Each participant was given a recruitment letter explaining the study and the expectations (see Appendix A). It was my hope to find fifteen participants in each group (thirty total) who met the criterion.

Data Collection Tools

To support a thorough understanding of the experiences of the induction program, I conducted interviews, made observations, studied archival records, and looked at pre-existing data or documents (see Appendix B) that were available to me (Merriam, 2009). Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes, and was audio recorded in order to be transcribed. The interview itself was a shorter interview but was conversational in nature. For those who were not able to meet in person, I provided an open-ended online opportunity to conduct the interview or made a phone call. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the *why* and the *how* of the phenomenon under study. To get these results, I asked open-ended questions (see Appendix C) and followed an interview protocol (Yin, 2014).

It was important for me to be aware and sensitive to a threat known as *reflexivity*. This happens when the researcher's perspective "unknowingly influences the interviewee's responses, but those responses also unknowingly influence [the researcher's] line of inquiry" (Yin, 2014, p. 112). This type of threat can hinder the findings of the interviews.

While conducting interviews, I was making observations. My role as an observer was as a complete participant because I was fully engaged with the teachers I observed. I jotted down observations while conducting the interviews. An observational protocol (see Appendix D) was used while making descriptive, reflective, and logistical notes. Physical setting and nonverbal gestures of the participants were observed as well. Given the sensitive nature of decisions to leave the teaching profession, observing nonverbal cues provided insight into the teachers' experiences. I used five of my senses to make these observations and focused from a broad perspective to a narrow focus (Creswell, 2016).

As I pursued this topic and made connections with building principals and other leaders in the district, I also collected any pre-existing data and documents that served as important pieces of data (see Appendix B). Documents available on the Branson School District website such as district policies and annual goals pertaining to the induction program were also collected and analyzed. Archival records shown on the DESE website were collected to gather data regarding the district demographics. It was my hope both the documents and archival records would be relevant to the study (Yin, 2014).

Research Ethics

As the research was carried out, I was mindful of research ethics. Before the study began, the proposal was submitted for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Written permission from the superintendent of the Branson School District acknowledging my research was also received (see Appendix E). Because the participants are employees (current and former) of the Branson School District, it was imperative for the names to be identified with a code and remain confidential.

Pseudonyms were also given to the grade levels and teaching positions of the participants to maintain confidentiality. Each participant was given an informed consent letter (see Appendix F), which included permission to opt out of the study at any point. Within this consent, the process of the research, the purpose of the study, and how the data obtained would be used (Creswell, 2014) was carefully explained.

Within the study, I recognized my own biases as a researcher. I am an employee of the Branson School District, therefore it was important to keep an open mind and try to keep my observations and interactions with participants as objective as possible. It was necessary for me to bracket myself out of the study, meaning I set aside my own experiences in order to have a fresh perspective on the focus of the study, the experiences of the other teachers (Creswell, 2013).

Though being a participant-observer had its challenges, there were many opportunities. I had direct access to participants and had knowledge of documents and other pieces of evidence that helped the research process (Yin, 2014). In some ways, having an insider perspective (Merriam, 2009) was beneficial as I did my research. Having such a perspective was “invaluable in producing an accurate portrayal of a case study phenomenon” (Yin, 2014, p. 117). I believe because I am an elementary teacher, I had the ability to make connections with the participants in a way that made them feel safe to be honest about their experiences, more than if I was currently an administrator or in a position of authority over the participants.

Data Analysis

The data was interpreted by looking for patterns by coding (moving from open, axial and then to selective), making detailed field notes, scribing interviews and focus

groups, finding common threads in conversations and documents, and categorizing the findings until themes emerge (Merriam, 2009). These patterns helped to analyze the data.

Special considerations were taken as the study was conducted. In order to show reliability as a researcher, the data was triangulated by using multiple sources of evidence. I looked to peers and an advisor to look over my work and for accountability purposes, and created an audit trail using journals and notes describing my research processes in careful detail (Yin, 2014). All of these considerations also showed trustworthiness and credibility as a researcher.

As a researcher, it was important for me to be cautious of making overly generalized statements. I wanted to allow the reader to draw his or her own conclusions and be aware of the external validity in the research process. In order to achieve transferability in my research, rich, thick descriptions were included as I carried out the qualitative process and had maximum variation (Creswell, 2014). This was achieved by selecting teachers meeting the criterion from kindergarten through sixth grade levels in elementary schools in the Branson School District.

In order to conduct this phenomenological study (Creswell, 2013), certain data analysis procedures were followed. First, the phenomenon was identified, in this case teacher development through the induction programs. I then bracketed out my own experiences and collected data from the participants through interviews. Once obtained, the data was analyzed by looking for themes and patterns. *Textural* descriptions (what was experienced) and *structural* description (how it was experienced) were then developed. Through these descriptions, the essence of the phenomenon was conveyed (Creswell, 2013).

Limitations and Assumptions

Limitations

As is the case in any research, there were limitations to this study. One of the limitations was the number of participants. Each teacher goes through the induction program in the district and only focusing on 30 teachers limited the perceptions and experiences related in the study. Another limitation was the specific criteria required for participants to qualify. The focus of the study was only on teachers who teach elementary school and who went through the program within a five-year window. This limits the teachers who teach junior high or high school and those who went through the induction program during other years. The fact that this study only focused on teachers who had participated in the induction program at Branson was also a limitation. In addition, the phenomenological aspect of this qualitative study limited the findings to experiences and perceptions of the beginning teachers. It did not look at the problem of practice from a quantitative perspective, where data may have had an impact on the findings.

Assumptions

All of the participants in the study had participated in the Branson Induction Program during their first two years as a teacher. Though the teachers may have gone through the induction program, it was assumed the induction experience was comparable through the years. It was also assumed the teachers had similar induction experiences regardless of what grade they taught. Another assumption was the expectation that the program was fully implemented during the time of the teachers' experiences.

Definition of Key Terms

Teacher Mentoring and Induction Programs

There were several key terms important to understand when researching the topic of teacher mentoring and induction programs.

Beginning teacher induction. Beginning teacher induction refers to any orientation programs for teachers meant to support, guide, and orient new teachers into the profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). There are two types of teacher induction programs: comprehensive and add-on. Though both of these programs aim to acclimate new teachers to their new positions, they are very different in their degree of implementation. *Comprehensive induction programs* are very thorough; require specific times and meetings, require professional development for mentors, allow inductees opportunities for observations and reflections, and have weekly meetings for the beginning teachers. *Add-on induction programs* are much less structured. There is less frequent professional development required for mentors, inconsistent meetings, mentors may have more than one mentee; meetings, observations, and reflections are optional (Johnson, 2009).

Beginning teachers. Beginning teachers includes any teacher who is in their first five years of teaching. This term also comprises teachers who have not been tenured.

Mentoring. Mentoring refers to the relationship intended to support, prepare, and guide new teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). In an educational setting, the mentor helps acclimate a beginning teacher to the school environment, shares strategies to be a successful teacher, models and critiques instruction, and provides guidance in many other

areas (Rikard & Banville, 2010). In regards to induction, mentoring is only one component of induction. It is not to be confused or used interchangeably with induction.

Pre-service. Pre-service refers to the education a teacher receives before teaching. This education encompasses all teaching methods courses, practicum hours, and student teaching.

Teacher Crisis

The following terms define key phrases associated with the teacher crisis in regards to the lack of qualified teachers in the classroom.

Teacher shortage. Teacher shortage refers to the crisis in education concerning the lack of qualified teachers.

Teacher attrition. This term signifies teachers leaving the profession completely. This does not include teachers who transfer to other districts or schools.

Teacher retention. The phrase refers to the ability to retain teachers in their respective teaching positions and locations.

Teacher turnover. This is regarding the rate teachers leave their current position or profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Elements of Successful Induction Program

The following key terms define the elements of successful induction programs according to Wong (2003). These are the basis of the conceptual framework within the study.

Orientation. Orientation refers to the first few days of the induction program spent by beginning teachers before the school year begins. It usually involves familiarizing teachers to the procedures, policies, vision, and traditions of the district.

According to Wong (2003), the most important focus of the orientation should be on classroom management because “without it, teaching and learning cannot take place” (p. 125).

Professional development. Professional development includes any type of training or support teachers receive throughout the school year that develops them into quality teachers. Schools can provide professional development using resources within the district or can branch out and incorporate outside programs and training.

Study groups. Study groups are groups created in order for beginning teachers to network and build “support, commitment, and leadership in a learning community” (Wong, 2003, p. 33). Mentors, administrators, or other veteran teachers can lead these groups.

Administrative support. Administrative support refers to the support offered to beginning teachers by principals, superintendents and school board members. This support can be done personally or in scheduled sessions.

Modeling. Modeling refers to opportunities for beginning teachers to view mentors or other veteran teachers teach in an authentic classroom environment. Modeling is used to show classroom management techniques, procedures, and lessons within specific content areas such as math, reading, or writing.

Demonstration classrooms. Demonstration classrooms are “classrooms of the district’s most successful veteran teachers” (Wong, 2003, p. 125). These classrooms are usually open to beginning teachers during the orientation days and give a chance for the veteran teacher to show how the room is set up, procedures for the first days of school,

classroom management tips and advice, and an opportunity to answer questions from the beginning teachers (Wong, 2003).

Teachers

The following key words and phrases help explain the different participant groups within the study.

Kindergarten through sixth grade. Kindergarten through Sixth Grade (K-6) refers to any classroom teacher who teaches within the confines of kindergarten to sixth grade.

Teachers who stayed. Within this study, teachers who stayed includes the teachers who went through an induction program and stayed in the district after the first five years of teaching, the time required to no longer be considered a beginning teacher.

Teachers who left. Teachers who left refers to beginning teachers participated in induction yet left the district before their fifth year of teaching. This includes teachers who left the district or school to teach somewhere else and those who left education completely.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant because its findings made contributions to both the scholarly and practitioner realms. There was a lack of research showing what schools should do if their current induction programs are not producing the desired outcomes. There were also very few studies looking at the perspectives of teachers who left the classroom, especially comparing the experiences of teachers who left with teachers who stayed. The findings of this study helped fill these gaps in the scholarly literature.

From a practitioner's standpoint, this study was meaningful because the findings could help other schools improve their teacher retention rate by sharing results of how to effectively support beginning teachers, especially when programs are already in place. In addition, hearing about different perspectives could increase administrators' awareness of the beginning teachers in their building, and encourage them to take an active role in the induction program.

Because this study was important to the Branson School District, results and recommendations were shared with the administration. It was my belief these findings would help improve the mentoring and induction programs currently in place within the district. The findings reinforced what was being done well, in addition to showing areas of weakness. I also believed the findings would be substantial to the district because there were perspectives and experiences shared from two different groups of teachers. It was my hope these new shared perspectives made positive changes in the district.

Summary

In a profession with high turnover rates, it is important to provide support for beginning teachers. Though there is a lot of research supporting the need for induction programs, there is a lack of literature focusing on the perspectives and experiences of teachers who left the profession compared to teachers who stayed. This study aimed to answer the research questions presented in this study. To do this, a qualitative phenomenological case study to learn about the perspectives and experiences of teachers who left the district and teachers who stayed was ethically designed. After careful analysis, these findings helped improve this program and added to the gap currently in the literature.

SECTION TWO:
PRACTITIONER SETTING FOR THE STUDY

Introduction

In order to understand the practitioner setting of this study, it was necessary to take a closer look at the Branson School District (BSD) as an organization. Within this section, the history of the district's Teacher Induction Program (TIP) and Teachers Optimizing Practices (TOP) will be looked at to describe how these programs fit within the context of the organization as a whole. Descriptions of how district leaders make and carry out decisions and how they support the beginning teacher induction program within the district will also be given. Clear connections with organizational and leadership scholarship will support these descriptions. Implications for research within the Branson School District will then be stated and discussed in regards to the study's research questions.

History of Organization

The Branson School District is the largest district within Taney County, Missouri and currently serves about 4,500 students. The district covers 111 square miles and has approximately 600 employees. There are nine different schools within the district: a high school, a junior high, two intermediate schools, two elementary buildings, a primary Taney County school, a preschool, and an alternative school. The administration team in the Branson School District includes three superintendents, a curriculum director, seven head principals, and five vice-principals. The Branson School District has a reputation known for beautiful facilities, solid curriculum, high learning standards for students, and strong community support (Hayter, 2010).

Branson, Missouri is a tourist destination for millions of tourists each year. Since the tourism economy boomed in the early 1990s, Branson has grown between 2% and 6%

each year (Hayter, 2011). Because of the seasonal tourist jobs, Branson has a transient population with students frequently moving in and out of the district. This transiency results in Branson serving a high population of students (57.3% of the student population) who qualify for free and reduced lunch (Missouri DESE, 2013). This high demographic of students living in poverty within the district has labeled Branson a Title I school, which allows extra state funding to support struggling learners. The Branson School District is unique because of these demographics and the economy supporting the schools.

The Teacher Induction Program in the Branson School District was created in response to the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. According to the new laws, all schools in the state of Missouri were mandated to have an induction program for beginning teachers (Missouri DESE, 2014). According to Missouri Revised Statutes 168.021 and 161.375, the state does not currently dedicate funding for the induction programs, rather it is up to the jurisdiction of the districts to decide how and what funds will be utilized for the program. The statutes also state the programs should be teacher-driven (Missouri Revised Statutes, 2015).

The Branson TIP and TOP programs were both formed in 2003 to provide a two-year experience for beginning teachers. The three components of the induction program are participation in TIP, TOP, and meeting periodically with a mentor. Within this program, the teachers partake in TIP during the first year of teaching, TOP during the second and all the while have the guidance of a mentor. The purpose of the induction programs is to support and retain beginning teachers.

Teacher Induction Program

The TIP program begins before the school year even starts. Beginning teachers attend a three-day workshop early in August before the beginning teachers even set up their classrooms. The TIP workshop is mandatory but does provide a stipend since the event takes place before the teacher's contract has officially started. TIP lasts until the completion of the first year of teaching.

During the first three days of TIP, the beginning teachers learn about the district expectations, the mission and vision, and take a bus tour of the district. The purpose of the tour is to show the different facilities as well as point out where students live. Because Branson has a high number of impoverished students, showing the teachers the living conditions of some of the students makes a powerful impact. After the tour, the teachers listen to presentations from various departments in the district such as technology, administration, and human resources. An insurance representative comes and helps the beginning teachers understand their new benefits. On the final days, the teachers meet their mentors and the mentors stay to get to know their new mentee. The purpose of these workshops is to acclimate the teachers to the district.

The format and structure of the rest of the TIP program has changed throughout the years. Initially, the beginning teachers would all meet together quarterly and discuss tips for beginning teachers. This was not the most effective approach because the information was not relevant or all. For instance, a high school math teacher may need different support than a kindergarten teacher. The district then changed the format of the program and had each building lead the TIP program during the school year. The

principal was responsible for appointing an experienced teacher to lead the TIP meetings. The teachers still met quarterly, but in much smaller groups and only with the first year teachers in that building. The drawbacks to this format were the lack of consistency between buildings. There was loose accountability when it came to the integration of the program. During the 2015-2016 school year, the district changed back to the whole group setting. The quarterly meetings are now set up in a workshop format, where each meeting covers a different topic.

Teachers Optimizing Practices

As teachers leave their first year, they “graduate” from TIP and move into the second component of the induction program: TOP. The requirements of TOP are less time intensive and consist of more tasks than the first year of induction. The purpose of this second year is to provide professional development on topics that can be used in the classroom. Topics such as differentiation, special need students, interventions, behaviors, classroom management, and others are presented to the second year teachers either directly, through professional development videos, or online seminars. Teachers are required to write reflections and participate in online discussions, almost like an online class.

When teachers finish their second year of induction, they receive a certificate of completion in addition to a \$20/hour stipend for their hours of participation in the program. The stipend is given at the end of the two years as an incentive to finish the program. Another incentive for beginning teachers to finish TOP is the opportunities for further professional development. When a teacher has completed their second year of teaching, he or she is eligible for funds allotted for further education (as in a masters or

specialist program) and opportunities for fully-funded educational conferences and workshops. It is the hope of the district that these incentives will add to the number of teachers retained each year.

Mentoring Program

The final component of the Branson induction programs is the mentoring aspect. Mentors are chosen by the principals and must meet the district requirements. They must have a minimum of three years of teaching experience in the district and teach a common subject or grade level as the beginning teacher. There is a stipend of \$100 included with the mentoring position. The mentors are expected to meet with the new teacher periodically and provide necessary support for the teacher when needed. The official mentoring relationship lasts for two years. Mentors within the district do not have to have any type of formal mentoring training. Though the mentors are given the same set of rules and expectations across the district, the participation of the mentors varies from building to building.

The Problem

The national and state turnover rate for teachers is 16% (Harrington & Grissom, 2010). While BSD maintains a turnover rate below this average, the rate of beginning teachers leaving is still highly inconsistent (see Figure 2). According to the district numbers, retention rates between first and second year teachers have ranged from 53% in 2009 to 85% in 2010, and down to 63% in 2011. This fluctuation is consistent across the data, yet poses a challenge for administrators each year. On average, 40% of the teachers who leave Branson are first or second year teachers (M.Youngblood, personal communication, March 23, 2016).

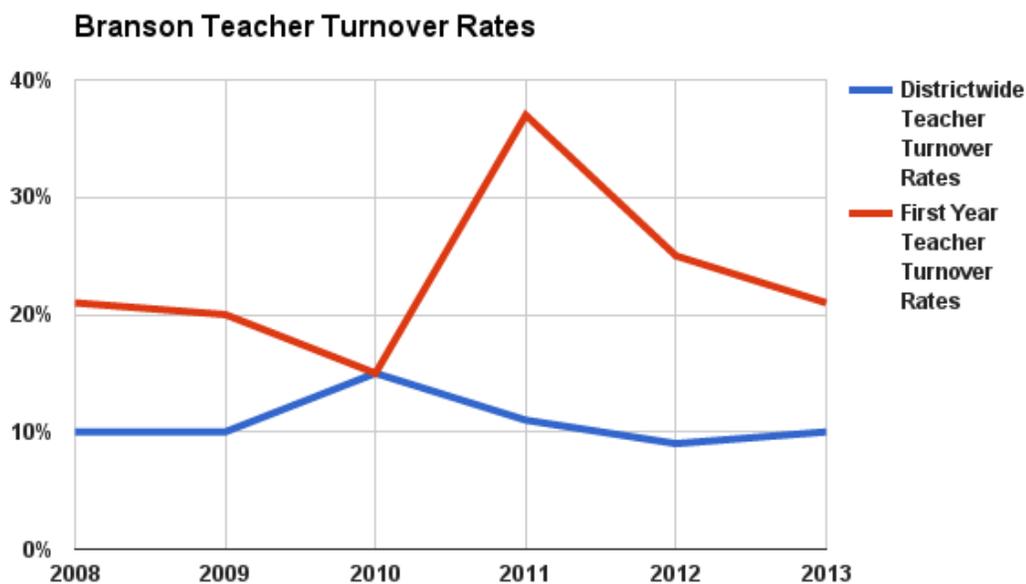


Figure 2. Branson Teacher Turnover Rates. This figure shows the comparison of turnover rates of first year teachers versus the district as a whole.

Position of Researcher

It is important to note that I am a teacher in the Branson School District. I began my teaching career in Branson during the 2006-2007 school year and have taught all of those years in the upper elementary school. During my first year of teaching, I participated in the TIP program and during the following year completed my induction requirements with the TOP program. During my sixth year of teaching, I was appointed coordinator of the TIP program for my school building. It was my responsibility to meet with the group of first year teachers four times a year to help support them throughout their first year. It was during this time that I really started to see what happens when there are inconsistencies in the support system. Each of the new teachers had a mentor, yet they all had very different experiences. It was this coordinating role and desire to help new teachers that led me to research this topic further.

Organizational Analysis

When analyzing an organization, it is helpful to look at the different frames that make up an organization: (a) structural, (b) political, (c) human resource, and (d) symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2008). For the purpose of this analysis, the focus will be on the structural frame and the political frame, while also bringing in aspects of the other two frames when applicable.

Structural Frame

Within the structural frame, there are two concepts that are central: “how to allocate work and how to coordinate diverse efforts once responsibilities have been parceled out” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 52). These two concepts are also known as *differentiation* and *integration*, respectively. To understand how the district differentiates and integrates work, it is useful to look at what parts make up the organization as a whole and how those parts reflect the induction program.

There is a sense of parallelism (see Figure 3) when comparing the Branson School District as an organization to the Teacher Induction Program (TIP). According to Mintzberg (1979/2005), there are five basic parts of an organization: (a) strategic apex, (b) middle line coordinator, (c) operating core, (d) support staff, and (e) technostructure. When looking at the district as a whole, it is clear to see the strategic apex is comprised of the head superintendent, his two assistant superintendents and the school board. The middle line coordinators are the administration team, which includes principals, curriculum directors, and other heads of departments such as transportation, food, and technology. The operating core would consist of the classroom teachers. The product of the organization is the education and safety of the many students in the district, and it is

the teachers who ultimately have the most impact on the students. The supporting staff includes literacy coaches, math leads, counselors, special education departments, and other positions whose priority is to support the teachers. The technostructure involves departments such as custodial, technology, food service, and the transportation department.

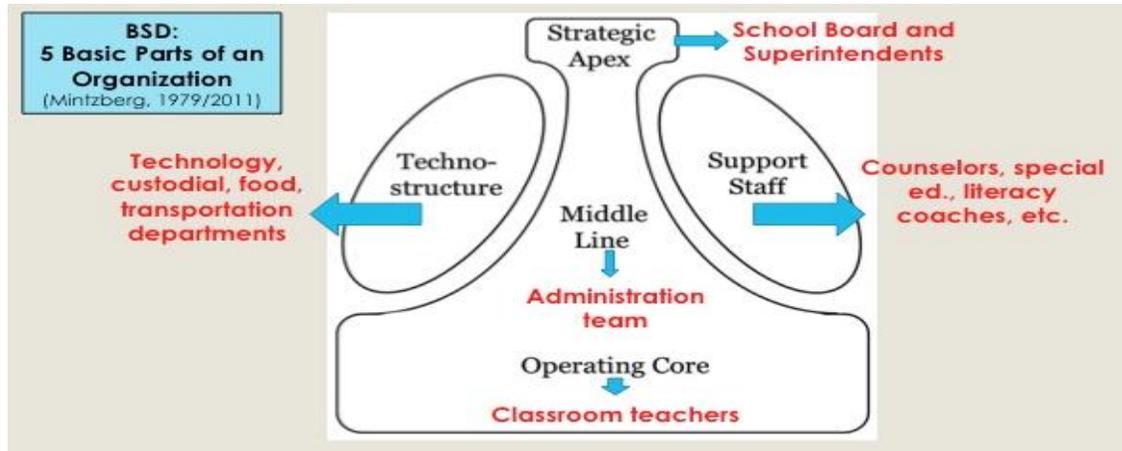


Figure 3. Branson School District Defined by the Five Basic Parts of an Organization.

This figure shows how the roles of the Branson School District are categorized as defined by the Five Basic Parts of an Organization (Mintzberg, 1979/2005).

Both the district and induction program have the same five parts of the organization, yet the characters within each part and the final product or outcome are different (see Figure 4). The strategic apex of the induction program is the assistant superintendent who is responsible for curriculum and professional development. He then corresponds with the TIP coordinator, who represents the middle line. The operating cores of the induction program are the beginning teacher mentors, who work closely with the beginning teachers to provide the necessary guidance and support. The support staff includes building principals, literacy coaches, and the special education department. The technostructure is the same as the district, with more emphasis on the technology

department. The ultimate product of the induction program as an organization is the retention and support for beginning teachers.

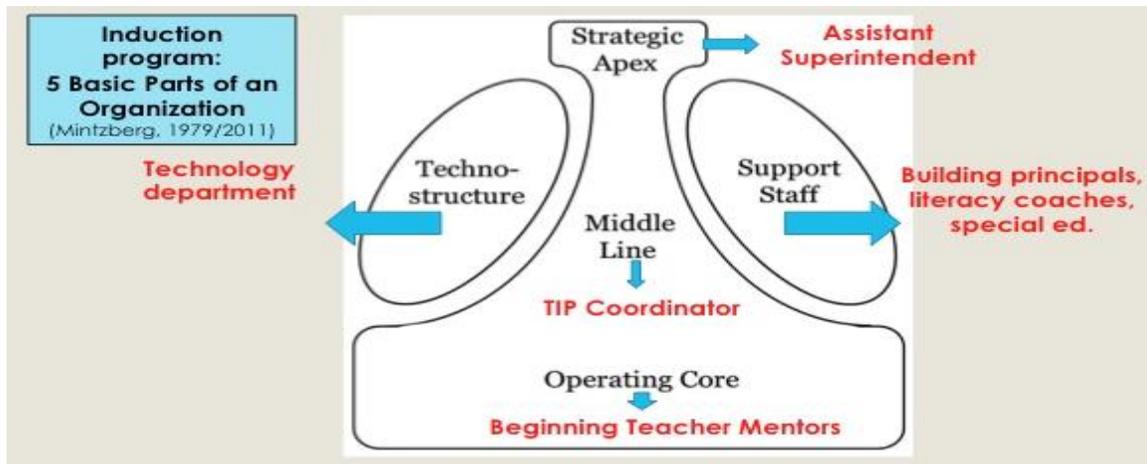


Figure 4. Branson Induction Program Defined by the Five Basic Parts of an Organization. This figure shows how the roles of the Branson School District are categorized as defined by the Five Basic Parts of an Organization (Mintzberg, 1979/2005).

The assistant superintendent, the building principals, and the program coordinator decide the allocation of work within the induction program. The assistant superintendent, as the strategic apex, is ultimately responsible for the program. However, it is the job of the principals to choose the appropriate mentors for the beginning teachers. Once the mentors have been chosen, it is the program coordinator who is responsible for the integration of the program.

Because the “higher levels coordinate and control the work of subordinates through authority, rules and policies, and planning and control systems” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 54), the induction program is an example of vertical coordination. Authority within the program follows a chain of command, with the mentors reporting to the program coordinator, and the coordinator reporting to the superintendent. The mentors are expected to follow a given set of rules, standards, and policies, which help “ensure

that behavior is predictable and consistent” (p. 54). This is especially important because the induction program affects all beginning teachers within the nine buildings in the district. One of the expectations of the program is ensuring beginning teachers in each building have comparable experiences.

Political Frame

While the structural frame focuses on the parts and roles of the members of the organization, the political frame focuses on who has the power, what resources are available, and the interests of the stakeholders (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Looking at the five parts of the organization helps to explain structurally what positions make up the organization and what they are expected to do in that role (see Figure 5). However, certain positions within the induction program have more power than others.

According to Bolman and Deal (2008), power in organizations is “basically the capacity to make things happen” (p. 196). However, there are different types of power. The assistant superintendent, the strategic apex, has the most widely spread range of positional power in the organization. In order for the strategic apex to have the most power within the organization, political skill is needed. Political skill means the ability to “convince those to whom one has access, to use one’s resources, information, and technical skills to their fullest in bargaining, to exercise formal power with a sensitivity to the feelings of others, to know where to concentrate one’s energies, to sense what is possible, to organize the necessary alliances (Mintzberg, 1983/2005, p. 336). Anyone in the role of strategic apex, in this case the assistant superintendent, needs to have political skill. Not only is this person in charge of the beginning teacher induction program, he

also serves and leads on many other committees. Political skill is needed to balance his many responsibilities.

The program coordinator, the middle line, has *legitimate power*; her title alone gives her power which is socially accepted within the organization. The mentors, though part of the operating core, have a sort of *expert power* (French & Raven, 1959/2005). In order to be a mentor in the Branson School District (BSD), teachers have to have a minimum of three years of teaching experience and be considered a master teacher by their building principal.

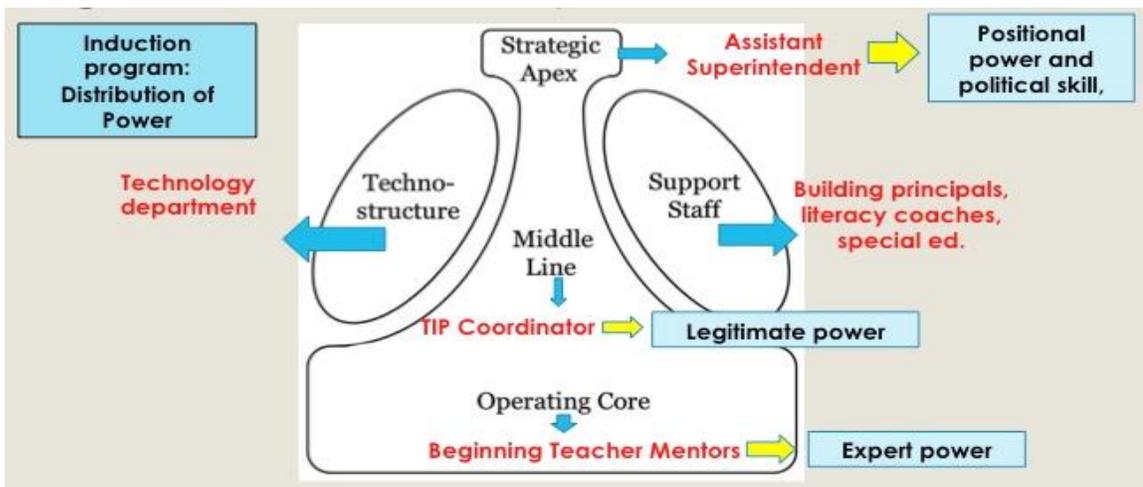


Figure 5. Distribution of Power in the Branson Induction Program Defined by the Five Basic Parts of an Organization. This figure shows the distribution of power of the Induction Program (French & Raven, 1959/2005) as defined by the Five Basic Parts of an Organization (Mintzberg, 1979/2005).

The allocation of resources is one of the most important and challenging jobs of someone with power. Whether an organization has an abundance or lack of resources, the tension of who gets which resources and how many resources they get is an important decision. Because BSD is located within a tourism region, the district overall is not

lacking in funds. The school district benefits from the taxes the tourism industry brings to the city. Within each school buildings, principals have complete control of their budget and have an abundant sum to spend each year. The resources that are scarce within the induction organization are all rooted in the lack of time.

It takes time to truly implement a program and see a desired outcome, and when everyone involved has other roles and responsibilities, it is hard for people to find the time to focus on the program. Though time is scheduled for the whole group of beginning teachers to meet, it is harder to schedule the one on one times with the mentors. The factor of time becomes a real challenge.

The Branson School District has a multitude of programs and outreaches. It is challenging when new programs are implemented and older programs (like TIP) get pushed down lower on the priority list. This becomes an issue of time in regards to how much time is spent is focused on the program as a priority. “Scarce resource and enduring differences make conflict central and power the most important asset” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 195). TIP is a program that has been part of the district for many years. Because it has been there for so long, it does not draw as much attention as it probably should from those who are in charge of important decisions.

One resource that is scarce in the Branson School District is the lack of qualified staff willing to take on new responsibilities. Those who do serve and act in a leadership role often serve on multiple building and/or district committees or extra-curricular activities and shoulder many responsibilities as a result. This excessive amount of volunteering can lead to burnout and then a decreased number of teachers willing to take on new jobs. All of these roles and responsibilities pile onto the metaphorical plate, and

there is no more room. The induction program faces this issue. New mentors are needed each year for beginning teachers, yet the most qualified, experienced teachers are either burned out or already busy with other committees and obligations.

Stakeholders depend on the decisions made by those who have the power (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The retention and support of beginning teachers is the ultimate product of the Teacher Induction Program. If the new teachers are not given a qualified mentor, they will not feel supported. Likewise, if the beginning teachers are not supported, their students will suffer the consequences. The support and retention of teachers even affects teachers who are already in the district. Teachers work together and collaborate regularly; when someone on the team lacks essential skills or knowledge or is lacking in confidence, it can be detrimental to the team. Looking out for the interests of the stakeholders is important and can make or break the intentions and purposes of an organization.

Leadership Analysis

Taking a closer look at an organization helps to understand the leadership styles represented by that organization. Because the Teacher Induction Program is led by the assistant superintendent and is consistent of the leadership represented throughout the district, this leadership analysis will take a broader look at the Branson School District as a whole. Leadership traits and behaviors, characteristics of ethical leadership, and how the district has dealt with change will be discussed.

Leadership Traits

According to Northouse (2013), there are five significant leadership traits: (a) intelligence, (b) integrity, (c) self-confidence, (d) sociability, and (e) determination.

These are all traits that describe the leadership in the Branson School District. Within the district, the leadership flows from the school board to the head superintendent, to his assistants, to the other directors, then to the building principals, and finally to the teachers and staff within each building. Though there are many leaders in the district, the true examples for all the leaders are the superintendents.

The three superintendents are intelligent and show self-confidence in their knowledge of school matters, but also in their ability to guide and direct a district of employees and students. As previously mentioned, the head superintendent has *referent power* (French & Raven, 1959/2005). The superintendent is respected within the school district; the community looks to him for wisdom and trusts him with major decisions. He is sociable, able to articulate what is happening within district at the local level, and can communicate what is happening in education at the state and national scale. The leadership within the BSD shows determination. Despite the transient, growing population, the district continuously strives to meet local, state, and national requirements and standards. Because the leadership in district has such high standards, the building principals also exude these leadership traits to their staff and student populations.

Leadership Behaviors

According to Northouse (2013), there are two general kinds of behavior in leadership: task behaviors and relationship behaviors. Leaders who lean towards task behaviors focus on goal accomplishment; those with relationship behaviors help “subordinates feel comfortable with themselves” (p. 75). Leadership in the BSD shows both styles of leadership behaviors in two different ways.

When looking at the district vertically, from the top to bottom, the leadership behaviors tend to be more task-driven. Meaning, the focus tends to be on goal accomplishment and how to meet high standards. When looking at the district from the vertical lens, there are not a lot of opportunities for relational interaction. For instance, if there is an opportunity for the superintendents to meet with the principals or a committee of teachers, there is an atmosphere of professionalism and business. The agenda has a list of the tasks at hand and there is little room for variation or distraction.

However, when the district is viewed horizontally, within buildings or teaching teams, or with peer-led committees, there is a sense of relational behaviors. In fact these relationships are encouraged. Every Friday district-wide, students leave an hour early to allow teachers to work together in teams, collaborate on new ideas, and work through behavioral strategies for students. Within those collaboration times, there are situations when the agenda must be task-driven, but for the most part the leadership knows and encourages the team mentality. By incorporating both leadership behaviors, the district is well-balanced and continues to be successful on many levels.

Ethical Leadership and Change

The leaders within Branson School District pride themselves on showing characteristics of ethical leadership: (a) respect, (b) service, (c) justice, (d) honesty, and (e) community (Northouse, 2013). These traits were most visible to the community in the past five years as the district undertook changes in the structure of the district. For the first time in Branson history, the district decided to split into two kindergarten through sixth grade campuses in different areas of town. This transition took place over the course of three years, and, in that process, the leaders of the district had a lot of decisions

to make, scenarios to articulate, and many nervous staff members and community members.

What could have been a nightmare went very smoothly. “Developing a healthy solution to conflict requires open communication, respect for the other side, and a creative search for mutually satisfying alternatives” (Levi, 2014, p. 125). Ethical leaders are fair when making decisions and attempt to balance the interest of multiple parties, and this is exactly what the district managed to do (Mihelic, Lipicnik, & Tekavicic, 2010). District leaders were able to communicate all aspects of the transition through email, person-to-person contact, parent interest groups, informational videos, and surveys. The leaders were proactive when it came to communicating the many aspects of change. The superintendents and principals listened to the desires of each teacher in all of the elementary buildings and tried to honor as many requests as possible. Though the district was going through a big change, it went much smoother than anyone ever anticipated due to the ethical leadership displayed.

Implications for Research in the Practitioner Setting

The findings from this study will respond to the research questions, which are to explore what is limiting the impacts of the Teacher Induction Program in the Branson School District, discover why teachers who have been mentored and supported through the induction program are leaving the district, determine the role of mentors in the retention of beginning teachers, and discuss the most effective components of an induction program in retaining teachers. The findings of this study have implications for the district and those affected by the induction program.

This study has the potential to make a difference in the practitioner setting. This study is focusing on an important program that is not seeing desired results. Though the Branson School District has good intentions with the Teacher Induction program, the turnover rate of beginning teachers is still highly inconsistent. Beginning teachers are still struggling with the workload, the mentoring program is not consistent across the district, and the new teachers are buckling under the pressure. It is the hope of the study to bring light to the voices of the beginning teachers who have stayed within the Branson School District, and those who have left. Learning about the perspectives and experiences of beginning teachers will enable leaders within the district to use the knowledge to make necessary changes to the program.

This study will benefit members of the district locally and beyond. The leaders who will locally benefit and be interested in the results of this program are the superintendents, principals, the program coordinator, and the mentors. The findings will be presented to the leaders of the district in the form of a PowerPoint presentation and an executive summary outlining the study. Outside of the district, other practitioners, such as superintendents and principals will glean from the findings revealed in this study so changes may be implemented within their districts to strengthen teacher induction programs.

The findings of this study may inspire new research on beginning teacher induction programs. This is a qualitative study focused on a mid-sized school in the Midwest. Similar studies could be conducted in different locations such as an urban setting or a rural setting. Other studies could also focus on the perceptions of others affected by induction programs such as the principals or superintendents, or even other teachers who

are neither a beginning teacher nor a mentor. There are many other areas that could be researched in the future.

Summary

In order to understand and appreciate the findings of this study, it is important to comprehend the practitioner setting. Within this section the history and background for the beginning induction program in the Branson School District has been shared. The program as an organization was analyzed through the lens of the structural and political frames. Focus on the leadership within the district and organization followed then implications for the study were addressed. Sharing the details of the Branson induction program helps to shed a light on why this study was conducted and the possibilities for future research.

SECTION THREE:
SCHOLARLY REVIEW FOR THE STUDY

Introduction

As the following literature review reveals, there are many studies supporting the implementation of mentoring and induction programs. To completely understand the significance of the mentoring and induction movement, it is important to understand what happens in the transition from pre-service college student to classroom teacher. Teacher preparation programs work to lay a strong foundation for future teachers, preparing them for success through practicum hours, methods courses, and student teaching. Once a teacher accepts his/her first teaching position, it is the responsibility of the school district to support them with induction and mentoring programs. This literature review will begin by focusing on the transition from student to teacher by looking at the different components of teacher preparation programs.

This review of the current literature will then focus on the teacher crisis by discussing recent trends in the teaching force as well as shed light on what state educators and individual districts are doing to meet the teaching crisis head-on. Components and elements of effective mentoring and induction programs will be shared as well as what happens when induction programs are not implemented effectively. The purpose of this literature review is to share some of the studies conducted that have laid the foundation for quality pre-service programs, the implementation of mentoring and induction programs, as well as identify key gaps in the literature.

The Transition from Student to Teacher

The current teacher crisis does not necessarily begin during the induction period of the first year of teaching. For many beginning teachers, the problems started long

before when the teachers were a part of the teacher preparation program in their respective universities, making the transition from student to teacher a difficult one.

Teacher Preparation Programs

For the purpose of this study, teacher preparation refers to the practicum hours, methods courses, and student teaching experiences of pre-service teachers. When a pre-service teacher is a part of a program that does not fully prepare them for the classroom, a strong foundation is not set for a successful teaching career. According to Adoniou (2013), there are four contexts crucial to the preparation of teachers: (a) personal, (b) university, (c) practicum, and (d) employment contexts. The personal context refers to the beliefs and motivations of why future teachers decided to be a teacher. The university context includes theory-based courses for future teachers. The practicum context encompasses all hands-on, real world practice in an educational environment, and includes student teaching. The employment context refers to a beginning teacher's first year of teaching, where they are finally able to put all of the theories and pre-service experiences into practice. This last context is the final destination of the teacher preparation program.

A study conducted by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) stated only 5% of teacher preparation programs have all the components needed for a strong student teaching experience (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014). According to Helfrich and Bean (2011), one of the biggest issues in teacher preparation programs is the lack of consistency between programs and experiences. Mismatched coursework and practicums results in student teachers not being prepared. Often what is being taught at the university level does not meet the same expectations required of public schools.

Teachers are essentially learning the wrong information (Helfrich & Bean, 2011).

Teacher educators need to be better informed about the transition from university to the classroom.

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) conducted a study looking at 1,612 elementary and secondary teacher preparation programs (Greenberg et al., 2014). It was discovered there is still much to do to prepare teachers to meet the challenges of the modern American classroom. Through the study, it was concluded that elementary programs are far weaker than secondary programs, with 1.7 times as many elementary programs failing as secondary programs failing. Their poorer performance speaks to both the specialized training elementary teachers need and its continuing neglect” (Greenberg et al., 2014, p. 2). Areas of reading and math instruction are especially weak across teacher preparation programs. This lack of knowledge of core subjects creates a *capacity gap*, which puts new teachers in a position of not knowing the content foundation of what they need before beginning their career in teaching (Greenberg et al., 2014).

Schramm-Possinger (2016) conducted a quantitative study comparing the educational beliefs of pre-service teachers before and after their student teaching experience. Findings showed most of the teachers changed their beliefs in some way. It was recommended student teaching be done earlier in the college career so real world experiences could be taught before the last semester. “Because teaching is so difficult and novices are not well prepared for its challenges, first-year teachers are notoriously and almost uniformly weak” (Greenberg et al., 2011, p. 29). Because of this, many beginning teachers make less than a year’s progress during the first year of teacher (Greenberg et al., 2011).

Adoniou (2013) conducted a qualitative study in Australia studying the transition from pre-service teachers to classroom teachers. Through qualitative analysis, the reoccurring themes of vision, frustration, and knowledge emerged. The theme of vision referred to way the pre-service teachers viewed themselves as a potential teacher. Another theme was frustration of the teachers who felt their freedom to teach as they had hoped inhibited by the school system. The pre-service teachers struggled with how to turn their knowledge and philosophies of teaching into action as a classroom teacher, many experiencing a knowledge gap. The expectations of the pre-service programs did not always align with the school systems. It is crucial for universities to help bridge the gap between pre-service learning and the first year of teaching.

Student Teaching

Student teaching is the most important component of the teacher training experience (Greenberg, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2011). “The student teaching experience is the most prevalent way in which colleges and universities link the theory of educational preparation with the reality of daily classroom practice” (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010). There are approximately 200,000 student teachers each year in classrooms coming from about 1,400 higher education institutions. Yet despite these numbers, there is very little research on what features of the student teaching experience make an effective teacher. There is also a lack of consistency within state regulations and guidelines of student teaching programs (Greenberg et al., 2011).

Overproduction of teachers. Universities are producing twice as many teachers than needed by public schools. Of 186,000 teachers graduating from teacher preparation programs (K-12), only about 77,000 are hired immediately. Approximately 80,000

teachers graduating from teacher preparation programs are elementary teachers. These figures suggest institutions are producing more new teachers than needed. This overproduction of teachers is “harming the quality of the preparation provided to their student teachers” (Greenberg et al., 2011, p. 17). Though there is an over production of teachers, this does not necessarily help against teacher shortages in districts. In many districts, the problem with finding qualified teachers is due to employing schools being in undesirable locations, high populations of disadvantaged students attending these schools, and low salaries for beginning teachers (Greenberg et al., 2011).

According to a study conducted by Greenberg et al. (2011), it is recommended that institutions “shrink the pipeline” (p.35) of elementary teachers into the profession. Universities are producing twice as many elementary teachers than are needed by public schools. To limit this number, universities should limit the number of college students admitted into teacher preparation programs. This can be done by creating more rigorous demands on content knowledge, by only accepting students who perform in the top half academically, and by only sending teacher candidates into school districts who are “promising teachers” (p. 36).

Student teacher responsibilities. The process of student teaching can be very overwhelming to future teachers. They must “synthesize everything they have learned about planning instruction: collecting or developing instructional materials, teaching lessons, guiding small group activities, and establishing and maintain order—not to mention meetings with faculty and parents and, in some districts still, taking on lunchroom and playground duties (Greenberg, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2011). Because of

the many responsibilities given to student teachers and the pressure to perform, it is important they are placed with a capable and willing cooperative teacher.

Cooperating teachers. The effectiveness of the placement is pivotal in regards to the experience of a student teacher (Helfrich & Bean, 2011). One of the biggest issues is the lack of qualified and willing teachers who volunteer to be a cooperating teacher. Only 1 out of 25 elementary teachers is qualified and willing to accept a student teacher. To be qualified is one thing, but cooperating teachers must be willing. No one is required to be a cooperating teacher and many are reluctant to take on this challenging role because there is little incentive to do so. There is usually a small stipend (average of \$250) and many teachers are hesitant to hand their class over to an amateur teacher. Due to these challenges, there is an estimated annual shortage of 40,000 qualified and willing elementary-level cooperating teachers to place 80,000 student teachers. Because of this, many elementary student teachers are placed with cooperating teachers who are subpar (Greenberg et al., 2011).

New model of student teaching. Some experts critique the format of the student teaching model, which has not changed in almost 200 years (Greenberg et al., 2011). According to Hodson, Smith, and Brown (2012), student teaching is an example of mimicry. It does not provide opportunities for the student teacher to develop skills needed in all other educational settings. In a study conducted by Bacharach et al. (2010), a co-teaching approach to the student teaching model was discussed and implemented. In a traditional student teaching setting, the cooperating teacher supports the student teacher until they have complete control of the classroom. In the co-teaching model, the cooperating teacher and the student teacher remain actively engaged with the students the

whole time. This method allows students to get the help they need when they need it because there are two professionals in the classroom together instead of just one. One of the greatest benefits of this model is that it can be implemented in any grade level, in any subject area, and with any curriculum (Bacharach et al., 2010).

Many beginning teachers struggle as a first year teacher because of a poor teacher preparation program. There is often a lack of consistency between programs, which creates unequal experiences. Another issue is elementary teacher preparation programs are generally weaker than secondary programs with future teachers struggling to acquire all the knowledge needed to teach elementary school. Student teaching is the most important component of the teacher preparation period, yet with an over production of new teachers, it makes it hard to place student teachers with a qualified and willing cooperating teacher. The quality of the teacher preparation program lays a crucial foundation for the future experiences of beginning teachers.

Trends in the Teaching Force

According to extensive research, Ingersoll, Merrill, and Stuckey (2014) claimed there are seven prominent trends and changes within the teaching force. Currently the teaching force is: (1) larger, (2) grayer, (3) greener, (4) more female, (5) more diverse, (6) consistent in academic ability, and (7) less stable. After World War II, the population of both teachers and students increased. The numbers continued to increase till the 1970s, which resulted in a plateau for about a decade. During the 1980s, while the rate of students increased, the rate of teachers grew even faster, creating a *ballooning effect* that continued till the economic decline of 2008 (Ingersoll et al., 2014). “From the late 1980s to 2008, total K-12 student enrollment went up by 19%...the teaching force increased at

over 2.5 times that rate, by 48%” (Ingersoll, 2012). As reported by the U.S. Department of Education, there will be close to 419,000 new teachers hired for the 2015-2016 school year (Aud et al., 2011).

Ingersoll et al. (2014) stated the teaching force is both grayer and greener than it used to be. Many teachers are currently nearing retirement (gray), which requires schools to hire new teachers, resulting in a much less experienced teaching force (green). According to Sun (2012), approximately 1.5 million veteran teachers will retire in the next decade. In 1987-1988, the most common teacher had at least 15 years of teaching experience in contrast to 2008-2009, where the most common teacher was a first year teacher.

The fourth trend Ingersoll et al. (2014) addressed is the increasing percentage of women in the teaching force. It is not a surprise to hear there are many female teachers, but the percentage of them has increased over the past twenty years. In 1980, 66.9% of all teachers were female as opposed to 76.1% in 2011. While the genders of teachers are not very diverse, the ethnic and racial backgrounds of teachers are becoming more diverse. Traditionally, there has always been a shortage of minority teachers throughout the United States. In 1987, there were only 325,000 minority teachers, but that number increased to 666,000 teachers in 2011.

Ingersoll et al. (2014) stated traditionally teachers tend to have “below-average test scores” (p. 19) and added some researchers say this is because of the increase in women in the teaching force. There was indeed a decrease in test scores from the 1960s to the mid-1990s, but as a whole, there has been no decline since then to the mid-2000s, leading to a consistency in academic ability. One of the biggest trends in the teaching

force is the instability within the profession. Between 40 to 50% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Ingersoll, 2003). These high attrition rates lead to instability within the teaching force. Attrition and turnover will be discussed in greater detail within this literature review.

A Teacher Crisis: Teacher Attrition and Turnover

Due to the high rates of teacher attrition and turnover, the teaching force is in the middle of a crisis. Just as many teachers are leaving the teaching profession as are coming in, a phenomenon Ingersoll (2001) referred to as a *revolving door*. Within this section, the impacts and costs of teacher attrition and turnover will be discussed in greater detail.

Why Teachers are Leaving

Various studies have been conducted looking at the impacts of teacher attrition and to learn why teachers are leaving the profession. There are many different reasons why teachers leave their positions. Shen's (2001) quantitative study discovered newer teachers were more likely to leave than more experienced teachers. It also appeared teachers were more likely to leave their school when teaching in a poor district. Also, not surprisingly, teachers with a higher salary were more likely to stay with their district than the schools not paying as well. Schlichte, Yssel, and Merbler (2005) conducted a qualitative study with beginning teachers to learn about their experiences and realized some causes of attrition are "large caseloads, problems of behavior management, and excessive paperwork" (p. 35). It was also noted poor administrative support, principal's administrative style, and organizational structure led to isolation and burnout.

Similarly, Mee and Haverback (2014) investigated beginning middle school teachers to examine early indicators of why they may leave teaching before their fifth year and learned classroom management issues, curriculum implementation problems, and organization issues were all reasons why the teachers were contemplating leaving. Buchanan (2012) also conducted a qualitative study and learned three common reasons teachers leave the profession were “inadequacy of support and professional development, classroom discipline problems, and lack of self-confidence” (p. 214). He added teachers often became a teacher to make a real difference, but only faced disappointment when they do not have the necessary support to do so.

According to Villani (2009), teachers leave the classroom for the following reasons: “too little preparation time, too heavy a teaching load, poor salary or benefits, large classes, student behavioral problems, lack of faculty influences, too little parental support, no opportunities for professional advancement and too little collaboration time” (p. 3). Ingersoll (2001) added these reasons to the list: personal reasons, retirement, school staffing cutbacks, pregnancy, child rearing, health problems, and family moves. While some of these reasons cannot be helped or prevented, the ones hurting schools the worst are those related to dissatisfaction: low salaries, lack of support from administration, lack of student motivation, and student discipline. Resolution of these issues could have potentially prevented a teacher from leaving a classroom.

Turnover

Because turnover rates are high in the teaching field, Sun (2012) said it is no surprise teaching is a profession that “eats its young” (p. 3). Ingersoll (2003) argued turnover is not always a bad thing, but also noted, “[Researchers] have also long held that

high employee turnover is both the cause and effect of performance problems in organizations” (p. 148). Turnover rates are especially high in impoverished districts, urban schools, and private schools. The turnover rate in districts with a high poverty level is often 50% higher than schools with more money (Ingersoll, 2001). According to a study of middle schools in New York City, Marinell and Coca (2013) shared that 66% of teachers leave before their fifth year of teaching. Even though teachers in high-poverty schools may receive support, they are less likely to be retained (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Ingersoll (2001) also pointed out teachers in the fields of special education, math, and sciences experience the highest turnover.

The Cost and Impact of Teachers Leaving

One of the biggest problems with high teacher turnover rates is schools facing “considerable instructional, financial, and organizational costs associated with losing and replacing staff” (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 3). The cost of teachers leaving the profession nationally is \$2.2 billion annually (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). Villani (2009) reported one teacher leaving a district can cost as high as 200% of the leaver’s salary, depending on how many resources the school invested. Breaux and Wong (2003) added one teacher leaving could cost taxpayers up to \$50,000. This is money most districts cannot afford to spend. The revolving door continues to drain districts of money and resources.

The costs of teachers leaving a district are not just financially based. When teachers leave, it disrupts the process of creating a “consistent, constructive school culture” (Marinell & Coca, 2013). It also disturbs the continuity of any programs within the district and the plans that had been made (Shen, 2001). One of the biggest obstacles a

district faces, when replacing a teacher, is finding a replacement certified and qualified to teach. When teachers leave, they are often replaced with someone who has less experience, which affects student achievement (Marinell & Coca, 2013). In some districts, certified teachers are unavailable, so uncertified teachers are hired and out-of-field teachers teach classes, though they are not qualified. This happens especially in rural and urban districts and in the fields of math and science. “Frequent teacher turnover, low retention rates, and lack of subject matter knowledge are often crippling blows to struggling students” (Villani, 2009, p. 4). The costs are high when a teacher decides to leave the teaching profession.

As previously mentioned, the teaching force is in the middle of a crisis due to the high rates of attrition, turnover, and the constant revolving door of teachers. Teachers leave schools for many reasons ranging from personal, to lack of support, to the stress of teaching. Turnover rates are especially high in impoverished districts as well as urban settings. The high rate of turnover comes at a high cost and not just financially. It also disrupts the learning process within the school setting. Because of this crisis in the American school system, many experts believe the implementation of quality induction programs will help alleviate the problem of high turnover rates.

Induction Programs

Because the costs are high to replace teachers, districts and policy makers have created programs and policies to proactively retain teachers. “Beginning teachers have legitimate learning needs that cannot be grasped in advance or outside the contexts of teaching” (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, p. 26). This is where induction programs come into the picture. In order to discuss how these programs can help to retain teachers, it is

important to understand the theoretical backgrounds behind these programs, the types of induction programs, components of effective induction and mentoring programs, and the impacts of induction and mentoring programs.

Theoretical Backgrounds

The underlying theory of induction is the Mutual Benefits Model (Zey, 1984). This model is drawn from social exchange theory and is based on the “premise that individuals enter into and remain part of relationships in order to meet certain needs, for as long as the parties continue to benefit. Zey extended this model by adding that the organization as a whole (in this case the school) that contains the mentor and mentee also benefits from the interaction” (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 4).

One framework regarding mentoring and induction programs is the Theory of Teacher Development. The first component of pre-service preparation helps beginning teachers as they get accustomed to their new career. The induction program then helps to improve classroom teaching practice and ultimately helps to retain the teacher. The outcome of all of this support is improved learning and growth (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

When teaching induction programs became more mainstream in the educational setting there were two research perspectives. During the 1980-90s, induction was viewed through a deficit model. It was understood teachers were lacking something and the only way to get them up to par was to place them in induction programs. There was a shift beginning in the early 2000’s to a growth model. Within this perspective, teachers are viewed as capable and are placed in induction programs to be nurtured and mentored to allow ultimate growth (Kessels, 2010).

Types of Induction Programs

There are two types of teaching induction programs: comprehensive and add-on. Though both of these programs aim to acclimate new teachers to their new positions, they are very different in their degree of implementation. Comprehensive induction programs are very thorough, require specific times and meetings, require professional development for mentors, allow inductees opportunities for observations and reflections, and have weekly meetings for the beginning teachers. Add-on induction programs are much less structured. There is less frequent professional development required for mentors, inconsistent meetings, mentors may have more than one mentee, and meetings, observations, and reflections are optional (Johnson, 2009).

Johnson (2009) conducted a study focusing on both types of induction programs and its effects on instructional practice and student engagement. His findings showed increasing levels of student engagement within the comprehensive model and little effect on those students within the add-on model. According to a study conducted by Glazerman, Mayer, and Decker (2006), comprehensive programs, while not affecting the achievement during the first two years of teaching, had a tremendous impact on the third year.

Components of an Effective Induction Program

Because every school is different, no induction program is the same (Wong, 2004). Though many schools have some sort of an induction program, there is “insufficient data to assist educators and policy makers in determining the most effective or critical components of induction programs” (Johnson, 2009, p. 1). Many scholars and

experts on the topic have their own list of components of effective induction programs. Sun (2012) argued the following are the elements of a comprehensive induction program: (a) the program lasts for at least two years, (b) the presence of high-quality, well-prepared mentors, (c) common planning time with other teachers, and (d) ongoing professional development standards-based evaluations for new teachers throughout the induction process.

According to Kessels (2010), within a comprehensive induction program the mentor should be trained, recognized and supported. The beginning teachers should have the following: (a) collegial relationships with peers, (b) opportunities to reflect, (c) chances to observe and be observed by the mentor, (d) various opportunities for growth, and (e) orientation meetings. Wong (2004) believed the following elements result in a successful induction program: (a) the program should start four or five days before school starts, (b) professional development for beginning teachers over two or three years, (c) study groups for new teachers, (d) strong administrative support, (e) a carefully chosen mentor, (f) modeling during inservice and mentoring, and (g) opportunities for inductees to visit demonstration classrooms. According to Sun (2012), beginning teachers are not at a high level of effectiveness until they have taught between three and five years, consequently it is important for these new teachers to have a strong support system their first two years in the profession.

Beginning teacher induction programs have been implemented in response to the teacher crisis. It is the hope of school districts that such programs will provide support to beginning teachers and reduce turnover rates. Add-on and comprehensive are the two types of induction programs, the latter being the most thorough and structured.

Components of effective induction programs vary by expert, which causes confusion and inconsistency when implementing the programs. Despite the many lists of components being different, almost all experts agree new teachers need a strong support system in place as well as a mentor to walk them through the first years of teaching.

Mentoring Programs: One Component of Induction

When speaking on the topic of beginning teachers, many people use the terms induction and mentoring programs interchangeably, as if they were the same thing; however, they are very different. Mentoring programs are only one component of the induction process. It is key for beginning teachers to have a mentor, but having a mentor alone will not lead to retention. The mentoring process must be imbedded within the induction program to increase beginning teacher retention (Wong, 2004). Much like induction programs, however, there are different views of the necessary components of a mentoring program, especially when it comes to the frequency of meetings, the amount of professional development needed to mentor, and the level of the match of the mentor and mentee (Rikard & Banville, 2010).

Highly Qualified Mentors

Mentors need to be more than buddies (Sun, 2012). Mentors should offer “an orientation to the school environment, insights and strategies for successful teaching, modeling and critiquing teaching styles, and provide guidance to the new teacher” (Rikard & Banville, 2010, p. 246). Those individuals chosen to advise and mentor the beginning teacher should be actively involved in the induction process, not just chosen by the building administrator (Wong, 2004). Teachers who are chosen to mentor are most effective when they have been prepared in advance, are given ongoing professional

development in regards to mentoring, are compensated for their time, and are held accountable to the induction program (Potemski & Matlach, 2014).

Whitaker (2000) noted it is crucial mentors understand the importance of being a mentor. In order for this to happen, mentors should have more than a few days of training. Just because an experienced teacher is good in the classroom with children does not mean he or she will be an effective mentor. It is important for mentors to be trained in the art of coaching and supporting new teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

Roles of a Mentor

Mentors have many roles within a comprehensive induction program including those of “colleagues, confidant, supporter, model, and coach” (Villani, 2009, p. 10). Anderson and Shannon (1988) discussed five functions of mentoring: “teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling, and befriending” (p. 40). Typically, mentors are full-time classroom teachers who will be assigned to work with one or more mentees. Depending on how comprehensive the induction program, mentors meet periodically with their mentees. Some meetings are scheduled, though Whitaker (2000) found, while studying a group of special education first year teachers, informal meetings were just as effective as planned meetings. The key to a positive mentoring experience is the frequency of meetings and the relationships formed during these encounters.

Responsibilities of a Mentor

Before-school orientation meetings acclimate new teachers to the district by welcoming them, introducing the district missions and visions, sharing procedures, and sharing the culture. It is the responsibility of the mentor to connect with the beginning teacher in this induction process, help set up the classroom before school begins, and

ensure they understand the curriculum and procedures (Breux & Wong, 2003). Mentors also collaborate with their mentees on projects or lessons, and help model how to be a professional in regards to behaviors with other colleagues and the parents of students (Villani, 2009). “Effective mentors must be able to observe and communicate; track a new teacher’s immediate needs and broader concerns; and know when to elicit a new teacher’s thoughts and when to provide concrete advice” (Moir & Bloom, 2003, p. 59).

It is also the mentor’s responsibility to help the new teachers feel connected to their new school and environment. “Teachers who feel connected to a school—who feel that their work is important and recognized—are more likely to remain vital, dynamic, and contributing members of the school community” (Sargent, 2003, p.47). This connection often starts through the relationship with the mentor. Retention can be enhanced by professional support structures that create opportunities for teachers to network and collaborate (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Teachers learn from peers who teach the same subject and grade level. Collaboration with other teachers and having a mentor in the same subject or grade has a positive impact on retention (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Mentoring programs are only one component of induction. In order to be successful, mentors must be highly qualified and actively involved in the induction process (Wong, 2004). Mentors have many roles including that of colleague, coach, and encourager. It is the responsibility of the mentor to be actively present with the new teacher and collaborate on lessons and projects, serve as a model teacher, and connect new teachers to their new school environment.

Impacts of Quality Induction Programs

“The single most important element in a child’s education is the teacher,” (Moir, 2009, p. 15). When districts and schools invest in the early careers of beginning teachers, they are addressing the student achievement gap. Schools then “break the cycle of inequity and provide children who are most in need of a high-quality education with teachers capable of helping them” (p. 15). Participation in a comprehensive induction program improves the classroom practices of a beginning teacher as well as student achievement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Sun, 2012). Quality induction programs have the ability to help schools, lower attrition rates, and retain teachers (Kessels, 2010; Sun, 2012).

After analyzing data collected from 20 years of research on the topic of induction programs, Moir (2009) claimed induction programs require system-wide commitment to teacher development, and this support can “transform our nation’s schools” (p. 15). While analyzing the cost-benefits of teacher induction programs, Sun (2012) discovered savings in money due to teacher retention, beginning teacher effectiveness, more free time for administrators due to less monitoring of inexperienced teachers, and increased student achievement.

Why Some Induction Programs Fail

Because experts disagree over the exact components that make an effective induction program, it is clear why schools struggle to implement sound induction programs (Johnson, 2009). There are inconsistencies when it comes to the implementation of induction programs. According to Ingersoll (2012), most new teachers only receive two of the components: working with a mentor and having

supportive communication with the principal. Those teachers who experience only these two components of an induction program have better retention than teachers with no induction program, but just barely. However, the more comprehensive the induction program, the better retention rates of the teachers. In the 2007-08 school year, only 5% of new teachers participated in a truly comprehensive induction program.

One issue some inductions programs have is not having a solid mentoring component imbedded within the program. In a qualitative study focused on first year physical education teachers, Rikard and Banville (2010) discovered 45% of the beginning teachers felt their mentors served them well; 55% did not. One of the issues some programs struggle with is the lack of consistency in meetings and interactions between mentor and mentee. Without the intentional support of a mentor, beginning teachers can often find themselves overwhelmed and isolated (Renard, 2003). For some teachers, the selection and matching of mentors is a frustration. In a study of first year special education teachers, Whitaker (2000) discovered many of the teachers who left their first year had a mentor not even in the special education department. Though they had a mentor, the support was minimal and the mentor was not able to help them with real needs.

Some new teachers do not make it beyond the induction period because they are overwhelmed with responsibilities. “We expect brand-new, just-out-of-the-wrapper teachers to assume the same responsibilities and duties as our most seasoned professionals” (Renard, 2003, p. 63). The solution to this problem is to give a lighter load to beginning teachers until they learn the ropes of the profession. Renard (2003)

added it is the school's responsibility to nurture new teachers to improve teacher retention.

In one Australian study, researchers looked at beginning teachers' perceptions of their induction into the teaching profession and came to several conclusions. The study showed the support given to beginning teachers is not equally available to all beginning teachers. The inconsistency between school districts creates inequitable experiences for many beginning teachers. Also, the way professional development is provided to new teachers should be reconsidered. Time allocation is hard for beginning teachers and the researchers suggest a more appropriate format such as online chat rooms for beginning teachers to connect with more experienced teachers (Kidd, Brown, & Fitzallen, 2015).

When districts invest in the careers of beginning teachers, they are doing much more than just retaining those teachers. Quality induction programs have the potential to lower attrition rates, improve classroom practices, and raise student achievement levels. On the other hand, ineffective induction programs can do great harm to schools. Some programs fail due to lack of consistency within the induction program, while other programs fail due to a lack of a solid mentoring program. Beginning teachers leave schools for various reasons, yet there is a better chance of retention when a comprehensive induction program is in place.

Conclusion

Due to the influx of new teachers in the education system, districts have been challenged with the task of retaining beginning teachers and providing adequate support for them as they begin their new profession. As previously stated, many schools have implemented induction and mentoring programs for new teachers in the field of

education. This literature review has been relevant by sharing some of the numerous studies supporting the presence of such programs and the effectiveness of their implementation. This review has also mentioned previous research done on teacher preparation programs, student teaching, teacher retention, attrition, and necessary qualities of a comprehensive induction and mentoring program. There is a lack of research showing the viewpoints of the teachers who left the classroom and comparing them with the teachers who stayed in the classroom. One of the purposes of this literature review has been to highlight this gap in the research and support the necessity for additional research on this topic.

SECTION FOUR:
CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE

To Be Submitted to: Branson School District Administration Team

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Problem: High turnover rate of beginning teachers

Purpose of the Study: To examine the induction and mentoring program in Branson through the perspectives of teachers who stayed in the district and teachers who left.

Research Questions

- What are the induction experiences of teachers who stayed in the district and who left?
- What can be learned from pre-service and induction experiences of teachers who stayed and those who left that can inform future teacher development practice?

Conceptual Framework

Theory of Teacher Development (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011)			
Pre-service Preparation→	Induction→	Improved Classroom Teaching Practices and Teacher Retention→	Improved student learning and growth

Design of the study: Qualitative phenomenological case study

Setting: Branson K-6

Participants:

- 30 participants
 - 15 teachers who stayed in the district
 - 15 teachers who left the district
 - 7 teachers who left education; 8 who left to go to another district

Data Collection

- Interviews: 45 minutes long; transcribed

Data Analysis

- Qualitative Coding (Creswell, 2013) to capture the essence of the phenomenon by looking for emerging themes and patterns
- Process of Coding
 - Open, axial, selective
 - Triangulation using multiple sources of evidence

FINDINGS

First Year Challenges (in order from most responses to least)

1. Feeling overwhelmed
2. Feeling isolated
3. Struggling with classroom management
4. Challenge implementing state standards
5. Unsure how to meet student needs
6. Stressed over distractions from teaching
7. Finding a balance between school and life outside of school
8. Struggling with the literacy model

	POSITIVE EXPERIENCES	NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES
TIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with other new teachers • Orientation to Branson • Leadership Camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content was overwhelming • Vague memories of TIP • Little or limited benefit of TIP
TOP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with other teachers • Deanna Sheets • Applicable strategies for teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vague memories of TOP • Little or limited benefit of TOP
Mentoring Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor was present • Mentor was willing to share • Mentor encouraged collaboration with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor was not effective • Poor planning by administrators • Lack of opportunities to observe mentor
Experiences with Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator was a good communicator • Administrator was present • Administrator was supportive • Administrator set reasonable expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distrust of administrator • Administrator was not present • Administrator was not supportive • Administrator set unreasonable expectations

MOTIVATIONS TO STAY	MOTIVATIONS TO LEAVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abundant resources within district • Relationships with kids • Good teachers in district • Great district • Faith of the teachers • Fear of change • Teaching gets better with more experience 	<p>District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family reasons • New position • Lack of support from administrators and colleagues <p>Profession:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burned out • Fear of future if staying in district • Overwhelmed

RECOMMENDATIONS

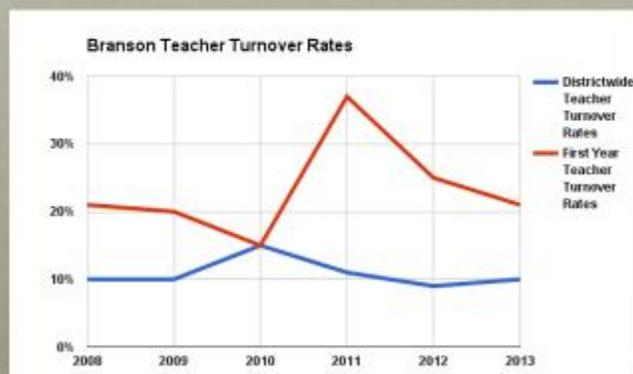
Induction Program	Mentoring Program	Administrators
<p>TIP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move orientation to earlier in the summer • Separate TIP into K-6 and 7-12 groups • Reinstate Leadership Camp <p>TOP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize veteran/retired teachers to help beginning teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carefully select mentors • Provide professional development for mentors • Use mentors of same grade level and close proximity to mentee • Assign mentor for each new teacher • Use consistent requirements between buildings for mentors • Hold mentors accountable for their position • Compensate mentors for their time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationships with new teachers to build trust • Be present and available to new teachers • Verbally support beginning teachers • Set reasonable expectations

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE STUDY OF BEGINNING TEACHERS' INDUCTION EXPERIENCES

Presented by Casey Chambers

PROBLEM

- High turnover rate of beginning teachers in Branson



PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- To examine the induction and mentoring program (TIP and TOP) in Branson through the perspectives of teachers who stayed in the district and teachers who left.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the induction experiences of teachers who stayed in the district and who left?
- What can be learned from the induction experiences of teachers who stayed and those who left that can inform future teacher development practice?

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

- Qualitative Study
 - Phenomenological
 - Case Study
- Setting: Branson K-6
- Participant: 30 participants
 - 15 teachers who stayed in the district
 - 15 teachers who left the district
 - 7 teachers who left education
 - 8 teachers who left to go to another district

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Participants:

Teachers who stayed:	Teachers who left:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kindergarten-6th grade• Taught 5+ years (all in Branson)• Participated in TIP and TOP• Began teaching between 2005-2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kindergarten-6th grade• Left Branson before 5th year of teaching• Participated in TIP and TOP• Began teaching between 2005-2009

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Data Collection

- Interviews
 - 45 minutes
 - Audio-recorded

Data Analysis

- Qualitative Coding
 - Emerging themes and patterns
 - Essence of the phenomenon
- Process of Coding
 - Open, axial, selective
 - Triangulation using multiple sources of evidence
 - Bracketing own experience

FINDINGS: INDUCTION

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
TIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration with new teachers• Orientation to Branson• Leadership Camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overwhelming content• Vague memories of TIP• Little or limited benefit of TIP
TOP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration with other teachers• Deanna Sheets• Applicable strategies for teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vague memories of TOP• Little or limited benefit of TOP

FINDINGS: INDUCTION

- Words describing overall induction experience:

confusing...survival mode
...whirlwind...overloaded...
stressful...anxiety...
fast paced...drowning

FINDINGS: INDUCTION

"We had to meet with other new teachers and it was nice to see how things were going for them. It was nice knowing the first year wasn't just hard for me... it was hard for us all."

Teacher who stayed

"I remember...all of the first-year teachers were together and...we didn't feel alone or isolated and...a lot of the admin...and Dr. Swafford...around. I remember feeling...relief that they took the time to make sure we got the gist of what we were expected to do."

Teacher who stayed

FINDINGS: INDUCTION

- “It was a very long, tiring time. I wanted to spend the time in my classroom, preparing for my students. The information was something that I already had experience with...it was not extremely helpful.”

Teacher who left the district

- “It needs to be done earlier in the summer because it was a very stressful time as a first-year teacher. It was very overwhelming and I don't remember a ton...If I had not student taught in the district I would have felt even more overwhelmed...Earlier in the summer would be better so you could go back and process.”

Teacher who stayed

FINDINGS: INDUCTION

- “I think lumping everyone in the district together was really not smart. There were high school teachers, elementary teachers, new principals...it just didn't make any sense to have K through 12 doing the same thing because their jobs are so different.”

Teacher who left education

FINDINGS: MENTORS

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mentor was present• Mentor was willing to share• Mentor encouraged collaboration with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mentor was not effective• Poor planning by administrators• Lack of opportunities to observe mentor

“Most valuable...was having a mentor teacher. I was able to ask...every day about classroom management, organization ideas, lesson plans, curriculum, etc...I had a teacher who had been teaching for a long time and had great organization and management.”

Teacher who left the district

FINDINGS: MENTORS

- “I would say I didn’t take advantage of the opportunity to observe, mostly because you would have to get a sub for your room, then write the lesson plans for the sub, and it’s just more of a hassle.” **Teacher who stayed**
- “I learned a lot from the teachers around me. I feel like I was surrounded by an entire grade level of teachers that wanted me to succeed.” **Teacher who stayed**

FINDINGS: ADMINISTRATORS

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator was a good communicator • Administrator was present • Administrator was supportive • Administrator set reasonable expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distrust of administrator • Administrator was not present • Administrator was not supportive • Administrator set unreasonable expectations

“My principal and I met often...and I always appreciated her honesty... [about] areas I needed to improve on, helped me learn to communicate with parents and promote peace and understanding...pointed out positive things she saw me doing...trusted my instincts and abilities, as well as my love for my students...She supported and built me up to parents. She made sure that they knew she trusted her teachers and had our backs.”

Teacher who left the district

FINDINGS: ADMINISTRATORS

- “The administrator would often drop in and observe...or...catch me after school and ask how things were going,...send emails and follow up if I had questions...[or] a behavior issue...she immediately took care of those for me. I felt extremely supported and valued as a teacher.” **Teacher who left the district**
- “No, I probably wasn't honest about how I was really feeling...but you...think, ‘Where would you start? I'm a little overwhelmed here!’ and then you don't want him to doubt your ability or make him think...he made a bad decision in hiring you... and so you're not overly honest.” **Teacher who left education**

FINDINGS: ADMINISTRATORS

- “Well, honestly I wasn't totally honest...The reality was I was super stressed, super overwhelmed, my best never seem to be enough; there always seemed to be something else that I needed to be doing, more things that I could spend time on and I just felt like I can't keep this pace... it just wasn't going to work. I [wanted] to leave on a good note...so I didn't feel like it was necessary for me to give that specific of information at the time.” **Teacher who left education**

FINDINGS: ADMINISTRATORS

- “...At the beginning of the school year, there was an effort made to check on me and see if I needed anything. I was provided with additional class funds to order supplies. However, as the year progressed, the amount of support coming from my administrator dwindled to a barely noticeable amount...Honestly, I feel like I was ignored after the beginning of the year... Once we got through conferences, I rarely ever heard from, or saw, my administrator. When I would see him, polite small talk was exchanged, but I don't remember anything beyond that level.”
Teacher who stayed

FINDINGS: CHALLENGES

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling isolated
- Struggling with classroom management
- Challenged with implementing state standards
- Unsure how to meet student needs
- Stressed over distractions from teaching
- Finding a balance between school and life
- Struggling with the literacy model

FINDINGS: CHALLENGES

- Words and phrases used to explain **feeling overwhelmed**:

overwhelmed...**overload of tasks**
...**drowning feeling**...fast pace...
rigor...full plate...too much...**stressful**
...**huge load**...**struggles to fit it all in**
...**bombarded**...volume of work...
high expectations...**demands**...
...**unrealistic expectations**...intense
pressure

FINDINGS: CHALLENGES

- **On feeling overwhelmed:** "I wanted to feel like the best teacher possible, I just felt like I was drowning. Every. Single. Day. Personally I felt like I loved the people and the principal, I loved everything about Branson, but professionally I was drowning."
Teacher who left education
- "...The sheer amount of workload is kind of insane...if you weren't in the education field, you would kind of feel like it's on the edge of insanity...You're crazy enough to do it or you're just crazy. It's...too much for one person to do and so you have to be able to recognize that, accept it, and climb the mountain everyday anyway. You fall down the avalanche and then you start over the next day. I think for me the first year accepting that this was the way it was just made me realize okay, this is how it is." **Teacher who stayed**

FINDINGS: CHALLENGES

- Words and phrases used to explain the feelings of isolation:
thrown to the wolves...**edge of insanity**
...**defenseless**...invisible...
no outside support...**clueless**...alone...
survival mode...discouraged...
fended for self...**lack of direction**...
lack of confidence

FINDINGS: CHALLENGES

- **Distractions from teaching:** “You have to prove that you taught well...doing the lessons...and... making contact with parents and having that evidence...And all of that is taking up the time of when you should actually be *teaching* your kids and you start feeling the pressure, and everything you want to do is actually what you're *not* doing... which is listening to your students, learning from them, doing what needs to be done, and instead it's completely going in a different direction.”
Teacher who left education

FINDINGS: CHALLENGES

- **Lack of balance:** “I struggled, and still do, to balance my work as a teacher with all other areas in my life. So much of my time is spent thinking about my class, working in my room, or planning lessons that other areas of my life begin to get less attention than deserved.”
Teacher who stayed

FINDINGS: MOTIVATIONS

TO STAY	TO LEAVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abundant resources within district • Relationships with kids • Good teachers in district • Great district • Faith of the teachers • Fear of change • Teaching gets better with more experience 	<p>District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family reasons • New position • Lack of support from administration and/or colleagues <p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burned out • Fear of future if staying in district • Overwhelmed

FINDINGS: MOTIVATIONS

TO STAY: “But more than anything, it's watching those kids who have that light in their eyes and have the confidence you've been helping them work hard for and just them finding that confidence and then seeing them shine. I love my job and I love it fiercely.”

Teacher who stayed

TO LEAVE: “I was given several difficult groups of students over the last several years. I felt that I was getting burned out and stressed. I didn't know if that would improve. I felt punished for being a good teacher.”

Teacher who left the district

RECOMMENDATIONS: TIP & TOP

- TIP
 - Move orientation to earlier in the summer
 - Separate TIP into K-6 and 7-12 groups
 - Reinstate Leadership Camp
- TOP
 - Utilize veteran/retired teachers to help beginning teachers

RECOMMENDATIONS: TIP & TOP

- “TIP and TOP should be a resource which intentionally addresses building positive and caring classroom climate, how to reach the hardest students through trusting relationships, building positive and collaborative relationships with parents, classroom management, etc. Anyone can teach curriculum. Those relational skills have to be taught, demonstrated, and encouraged.”
Teacher who left education

RECOMMENDATIONS: MENTORING

- Mentoring Program
 - Carefully select mentors
 - Provide professional development for mentors
 - Use mentors of same grade level and close proximity to mentee
 - Assign one beginning teacher for each mentor
 - Use consistent requirements between buildings for mentors
 - Hold mentors accountable for their position
 - Compensate mentors for their time

RECOMMENDATIONS: MENTORING

- “Be more selective about the teachers chosen to be mentors. Experience and excellence in teaching aren't enough. A mentor must be compassionate, supportive, have excellent interpersonal skills, have positive relationships with their students, be able to share their experience, but help the new teacher relate it to her own experience, and help the new teacher feel empowered and confident.”

Teacher who left education

RECOMMENDATIONS: ADMINISTRATORS

- Administrators:
 - Be present and make yourself available to new teachers
 - Develop relationships with new teachers to build trust
 - Set reasonable expectations
 - Verbally support beginning teachers

RECOMMENDATIONS: ADMINISTRATORS

“Be approachable, listen and ask questions to get more information when they come to you about something before just giving generic advice. Notice the good things that the teachers are doing, and let them know you saw it.” **Teacher who left the district**

“Just make yourself available to new teachers. You need to be in their room. You come into observe a few times but you need to be in there a lot so they don't freak out ‘Oh my God’ when they do come in to observe.” **Teacher who stayed**

SECTION FIVE:
CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOLARSHIP

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Laying the Foundation—The Power of Teacher Education Programs on the Retention of Beginning Teachers

Abstract: Blame for the high turnover rates of beginning teachers is often pointed towards the lack of quality school district induction and mentoring programs. While these components can make or break a beginning teacher's experience, perhaps more of the issue lies in the pre-service experience. For the teachers who would eventually leave education, were they truly prepared to enter the teaching force, or were they destined to struggle and ultimately fail before setting a foot in the classroom? The pre-service experiences of elementary teachers who left and who stayed in education are shared in the following article in order to bring light to the struggles of beginning teachers and why they leave the classroom.

Introduction and Background

Like many professions, teaching is forever evolving. Within the last forty years, trends in the teaching force have changed the demographics of public school teachers. Many baby-boomers have reached retirement age and there has been an exodus of retiring teachers, which has created a large number of open teaching positions in schools across America (Ingersoll, 2012). Pre-service teacher preparation programs across the nation have responded to this departure of retiring teachers by allowing an overproduction of teachers. According to Greenberg, Pomerance, and Walsh (2011), universities are producing twice as many elementary teachers than are needed by public schools.

Since the mid-1980s, the number of beginning teachers (a teacher with five or less years of experience) has greatly increased. This ballooning of the teaching force resulted

in the rate of beginning teachers growing twice as fast as the growing student enrollment rate. Due to such an inflation of teachers, the demographics of teachers reflected a greening effect. “In 1988, there were about 65,000 first-year teachers; by 2008, the number had grown to over 200,000” (Ingersoll, 2012, p. 49). By 2008, the most common teacher was a beginning teacher; one fourth of all teachers had five or less years of experience (Ingersoll, 2012).

Schools have not been equipped to support, prepare, and train this influx of new teachers. Many teachers have struggled, and over time, have left education completely. Some teachers have moved to different schools or districts, but many have left the teaching profession altogether, causing an alarmingly high turnover rate of beginning teachers (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010). As Ingersoll (2012) pointed out, contrary to popular belief, schools are not having a hard time finding teachers; they are having a hard time keeping them. This predicament has created what Ingersoll called a revolving door. New teachers are entering the teaching profession as many others are leaving it.

Though many states in America require schools to provide induction and mentoring programs for their beginning teachers, many teachers are still leaving the profession before serving five years in the classroom. Scholars and educators still know very little about the perspectives and experiences of beginning teachers who left the classroom compared to those who stayed. Furthermore, there is little research looking at the pre-service experiences of these beginning teachers. Is there a connection between what happens at the university level of teacher preparation and the experiences as a beginning teacher?

The Context for the Study

The focus of this article is only one component of a larger study. The original study focused on a school district in the Mid-western United States who experienced a high beginning teacher turnover rate. Though the school had abundant resources, mandated a two-year induction program, and required all beginning teachers to have a mentor for the first two years, many beginning teachers left the district before five years. The study focused on the pre-service, mentoring, and induction experiences of 30 teachers who had taught in the district; 15 teachers who stayed in the district beyond five years and 15 teachers who left the district before five years. Seven teachers of the 15 who left the district left the field of education completely. It is the pre-service experiences of these teachers compared with those who stayed that are the focus of this article.

The Theory of Teacher Development (as seen in Figure 1) served as the conceptual framework for the study as a whole. There are four components to this framework, the first component being pre-service preparation. In this model, pre-service is referring to student teaching, practicum, and methods courses. This preparation helps beginning teachers as they become accustomed to their new career. The induction program then helps to improve classroom-teaching practice and ultimately helps to retain the teacher. The outcome of all of this support is improved student learning and growth. The causality between each component leads to the following assumption: If a teacher has been retained and is improving student learning and growth, then that teacher had a quality pre-service and induction experience.

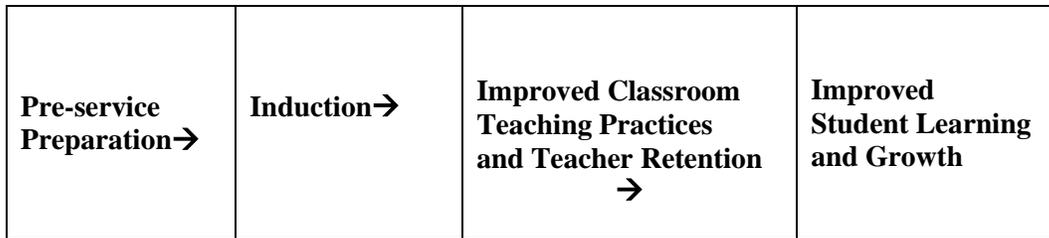


Figure 1. Theory of Teacher Development. This figure shows the four components of teacher development based on the research of Ingersoll and Strong (2011).

The Transition from Student to Teacher: A Review of the Literature

As the following literature review reveals, there are many studies supporting the implementation of mentoring and induction programs. To completely understand the significance of the mentoring and induction movement, it is important to understand what happens in the transition from pre-service college student to classroom teacher. Teacher preparation programs work to lay a strong foundation for future teachers, preparing them for success through practicum hours, methods courses, and student teaching. Once a teacher accepts his/her first teaching position, it is the responsibility of the school district to support them with induction and mentoring programs.

This literature review will focus on the transition from student to teacher by looking at the different components of teacher preparation programs. The current teacher crisis does not necessarily begin during the induction period of the first year of teaching. For many beginning teachers, the problems started long before when the teachers were a part of the teacher preparation program in their respective universities, making the transition from student to teacher a difficult one.

Teacher Preparation Programs

For the purpose of this study, teacher preparation refers to the practicum hours, methods courses, and student teaching experiences of pre-service teachers. When a pre-

service teacher is a part of a program that does not fully prepare them for the classroom, a strong foundation is not set for a successful teaching career. According to Adoniou (2013), there are four contexts crucial to the preparation of teachers: (a) personal, (b) university, (c) practicum, and (d) employment contexts. The personal context refers to the beliefs and motivations of why future teachers decided to be a teacher. The university context includes theory-based courses for future teachers. The practicum context encompasses all hands-on, real world practice in an educational environment, and includes student teaching. The employment context refers to a beginning teacher's first year of teaching, where they are finally able to put all of the theories and pre-service experiences into practice. This last context is the final destination of the teacher preparation program.

A study conducted by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) stated only 5% of teacher preparation programs have all the components needed for a strong student teaching experience (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014). According to Helfrich and Bean (2011), one of the biggest issues in teacher preparation programs is the lack of consistency between programs and experiences. Mismatched coursework and practicums result in student teachers not being prepared. Often what is being taught at the university level does not meet the same expectations required of public schools. Teachers are essentially learning the wrong information (Helfrich & Bean, 2011). Teacher educators need to be better informed about the transition from university to the classroom.

The NCTQ conducted a study looking at 1,612 elementary and secondary teacher preparation programs (Greenberg et al., 2014). It was discovered there is still much to do to prepare teachers to meet the challenges of the modern American classroom. Through

the study, it was concluded that “elementary programs are far weaker than secondary programs, with 1.7 times as many elementary programs failing as secondary programs failing. Their poorer performance speaks to both the specialized training elementary teachers need and its continuing neglect” (Greenberg et al., 2014, p. 2). Areas of reading and math instruction are especially weak across teacher preparation programs. This lack of knowledge of core subjects creates a capacity gap, which puts new teachers in a position of not knowing the content foundation of what they need before beginning their career in teaching (Greenberg et al., 2014).

Schramm-Possinger (2016) conducted a quantitative study comparing the educational beliefs of pre-service teachers before and after their student teaching experience. Findings showed most of the teachers changed their beliefs in some way. It was recommended student teaching be done earlier in the college career so real world experiences could be taught before the last semester. “Because teaching is so difficult and novices are not well prepared for its challenges, first-year teachers are notoriously and almost uniformly weak” (Greenberg, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2011, p. 29). Because of this, many beginning teachers make less than a year’s progress during the first year of teaching (Greenberg et al., 2011).

Adoniou (2013) conducted a qualitative study in Australia studying the transition from pre-service teachers to classroom teachers. Through qualitative analysis, the reoccurring themes of vision, frustration, and knowledge emerged. The theme of vision referred to the way the pre-service teachers viewed themselves as potential teachers. Another theme was frustration of the teachers who felt their freedom to teach as they had hoped inhibited by the school system. The pre-service teachers struggled with how to

turn their knowledge and philosophies of teaching into action as a classroom teacher, many experiencing a knowledge gap. The expectations of the pre-service programs did not always align with the school systems. It is crucial for universities to help bridge the gap between pre-service learning and the first year of teaching.

Student Teaching

Many researchers contend student teaching is the most important component of the teacher training experience (Greenberg et al., 2011). “The student teaching experience is the most prevalent way in which colleges and universities link the theory of educational preparation with the reality of daily classroom practice” (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010, p.3). There are approximately 200,000 student teachers each year in classrooms coming from about 1,400 higher education institutions. Yet, despite these numbers, there is very little research on what features of the student teaching experience makes an effective teacher. There is also a lack of consistency within state regulations and guidelines of student teaching programs (Greenberg et al., 2011).

Overproduction of teachers. Universities are producing twice as many teachers than needed by public schools. Of 186,000 teachers graduating from teacher preparation programs (K-12), only about 77,000 are hired immediately. Approximately 80,000 teachers graduating from teacher preparation programs are elementary teachers. These figures suggest institutions are producing more new teachers than needed. This overproduction of teachers is “harming the quality of the preparation provided to their student teachers” (Greenberg et al., 2011, p. 17).

Greenberg et al. (2011) recommended institutions “shrink the pipeline” (p.35) of elementary teachers into the profession. Universities should limit the number of college

students admitted into teacher preparation programs by creating more rigorous demands on content knowledge, by only accepting students who perform in the top half academically, and by only sending teacher candidates into school districts who are “promising teachers” (p. 36).

Though there is an over production of teachers, this does not necessarily help against teacher shortages in districts. In many districts, the problem with finding qualified teachers is due to employing schools being in undesirable locations, high populations of disadvantaged students attending these schools, and low salaries for beginning teachers (Greenberg et al., 2011).

Student teacher responsibilities. The process of student teaching can be very overwhelming to future teachers.

[Student teachers] must synthesize everything they have learned about planning instruction: collecting or developing instructional materials, teaching lessons, guiding small group activities, and establishing and maintain order—not to mention meetings with faculty and parents and, in some districts still, taking on lunchroom and playground duties (Greenberg et al., 2011, p.1).

Because of the many responsibilities given to student teachers and the pressure to perform, it is important they are placed with a capable and willing cooperative teacher.

Cooperating teachers. The effectiveness of the placement is pivotal in regards to the experience of a student teacher (Helfrich & Bean, 2011). One of the biggest issues is the lack of qualified and willing teachers who volunteer to be a cooperating teacher. Only 1 out of 25 elementary teachers is qualified and willing to accept a student teacher. To be qualified is one thing, but cooperating teachers must be willing. No one is required

to be a cooperating teacher and many are reluctant to take on this challenging role because there is little incentive. There is usually a small stipend (average of \$250) and many teachers are hesitant to hand their class over to an amateur teacher. Due to these challenges, there is an estimated annual shortage of 40,000 qualified and willing elementary-level cooperating teachers to place 80,000 student teachers. Because of this, many elementary student teachers are placed with cooperating teachers who are subpar (Greenberg et al., 2011).

Format of student teaching. Some experts critique the format of the student teaching model, which has not changed in almost 200 years (Greenberg et al., 2011). According to Hodson, Smith, and Brown (2012), student teaching is an example of mimicry. It does not provide opportunities for the student teacher to develop skills needed in all other educational settings. In a study conducted by Bacharach et al. (2010), a co-teaching approach to the student teaching model was discussed and implemented. In a traditional student teaching setting, the cooperating teacher supports the student teacher until they have complete control of the classroom. In the co-teaching model, the cooperating teacher and the student teacher remain actively engaged with the students the whole time. This method allows students to get the help they need when they need it because there are two professionals in the classroom together instead of just one. A great benefit of this model is that it can be implemented in any grade level, in any subject area, and with any curriculum (Bacharach et al., 2010).

Many beginning teachers struggle as first year teachers because of poor teacher preparation programs. There is often a lack of consistency between programs, which creates unequal experiences. Another issue is elementary teacher preparation programs

are generally weaker than secondary programs with future teachers struggling to acquire all the knowledge needed to teach elementary school. Student teaching is the most important component of the teacher preparation period, yet with an over production of new teachers, it makes it hard to place student teachers with a qualified and willing cooperating teacher. The quality of the teacher preparation program lays a crucial foundation for the future experiences of beginning teachers.

In conclusion, school districts have been challenged with the task of retaining beginning teachers and providing adequate support for them as they begin their new profession. There is a lack of research showing the viewpoints of the teachers who left the classroom and comparing them with the teachers who stayed in the classroom, especially as related to their pre-service experiences. One of the purposes of this literature review has been to highlight this gap in the research and support the necessity for additional research on this topic.

Design of the Study

The purpose of the larger study was to increase understanding of pre-service, mentoring, and induction experiences of beginning teachers by taking an honest look at a school district with a high beginning teacher turnover rate. The focus of this article is on the first component of the Theory of Teacher Development, pre-service preparation, and the challenges faced by beginning teachers.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this article are:

1. What are challenges faced by beginning teachers in their first year of teaching?

2. What are the pre-service experiences of teachers who stayed in education and who left?
3. What can be learned from the pre-service experiences of teachers who left education that can inform future teacher development practice?

The overarching design of this qualitative case study was phenomenological in nature. A case study was chosen because the focus was on one district and specific groups within that district. A phenomenological study “describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). Teacher development was the phenomenon that was explored. By conducting this type of study, it was possible to study the beginning teachers and develop a description of the *essence* of their experiences by describing “*what* they experienced and *how* they experienced it” (Creswell, p. 76).

Setting

The setting of this study was a school district in the Mid-western United States. The school district is the largest in its county and serves about 4,500 students. Though there are nine different schools in the district, this study focused on the five K-6 schools. There are two intermediate schools, two elementary schools, and a primary school in the district. Each of the five schools in the study has a lead principal with three assistant principals serving all five buildings.

Participants

The focus of the study was on two different groups of individuals: kindergarten through sixth grade (K-6) teachers who stayed in the district and K-6 teachers who either left the district or the profession of education. The focus on teachers from the elementary

school instead of the whole district narrowed the selection of participants because they had similar induction experiences with each other. Criterion-based selection (LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch, 1993) was utilized, meaning each participant had to meet the criterion in order to be a part of the study. Regarding the group of K-6 teachers who stayed, this meant they had taught more than five years; all of those years were in the same school district. For the teachers who left, the focus was on K-6 teachers who taught less than five years in the district and who quit teaching before their fifth year of teaching. All of the participants had been a part of the beginning teacher induction program. The range of years was narrowed to teachers who participated in the induction program in the 2005-06 school year to the 2009-10 school year. This range of years allowed the participants to have similar experiences within the induction program and allotted enough time for the teachers who began in 2009 to teach five years.

Data Collection Tools

Interviews were conducted and observations made to support a thorough understanding of the pre-service experiences of the beginning teacher (Merriam, 2009). Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and was audio recorded so it could be transcribed. The interview itself was a shorter interview but was conversational in nature. For those who were not able to meet in person, an open-ended online opportunity was provided to gather responses. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the *why* and the *how* of the phenomenon under study. To get these results, open-ended questions were asked and an interview protocol was followed (Yin, 2014).

Data Analysis

The data were interpreted by making detailed field notes, scribing interviews, finding common threads in conversations, looking for patterns by coding (moving from open, axial and then to selective), and then categorizing the findings until themes emerged (Merriam, 2009). Within the coding process, it is important to note there was no differentiation between teachers who left the district and those who stayed. Each piece of data was coded with a participant code number and was sorted into common themes. This lack of differentiation allowed for more objectivity and did not influence the researcher. These patterns helped to analyze the data, which were triangulated by using multiple sources of evidence. After the data were triangulated, the participant codes were revealed showing the true results of the coding process.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was focusing on only 30 teachers. Furthermore, the focus of the study was only on teachers who teach elementary school and who went through the induction program within a five-year window. This excluded teachers who taught junior high or high school and those who went through the induction program during other years. Lastly, the phenomenological aspect of this qualitative study limited the findings to experiences and perceptions of the beginning teachers without potential insights from quantitative data.

Findings

When the data were analyzed, it became clear there was a division between positive and negative experiences regarding teachers' pre-service experiences. In some of the areas, both teachers who stayed and left the district had similar experiences, and in

others they were very different. Overall, there was no black and white difference between the experiences of the teachers who stayed in the district and who left.

Challenges of Beginning Teachers

As the teachers were sharing their experiences, it became clear all of the teachers faced a variety of challenges during the first years of teaching. It is important to note many of the challenges shared by the teachers are universal challenges for all beginning teachers, not just specific to the setting of this study. The seven most mentioned challenges for the beginning teachers were (in order of most mentioned to least): (1) feeling overwhelmed, (2) feeling isolated, (3) classroom management, (4) changing curriculum and state standards, (5) student needs, (6) distractions from teaching, and (7) balance between school and home.

Feeling overwhelmed. Sixteen teachers out of 30 spoke about feeling completely overwhelmed their first two years. Eleven of the teachers who shared this challenge eventually left the district. Some of the words used to describe this challenge are the following: “overwhelmed...overload of tasks...drowning feeling...fast pace...rigor...full plate...too much...stressful...huge load...struggles to fit it all in...bombarded...volume of work...high expectations...demands...unrealistic expectations...intense pressure...”

One teacher described this challenge:

I think [beginning teachers] just don't really have any realistic expectations of what's going to happen in the classroom. You just don't know... and the expectations are huge and the expectations just keep getting more and more of what you are expected to teach, and you have in your mind all these ideas of what you want to teach and what your class is going to look like and feel like that when

you get in there, you're just trying to fit it all in and deal with all the things you have to deal with. So then you get frustrated and feel like you're failing, and you feel like you're doing a horrible job, and you don't feel like you have anybody to turn...because teaching is hard.

Another teacher who left education shared through tears, “I wanted to feel like the best teacher possible, I just felt like I was drowning. Every. Single. Day. Personally I felt like I loved the people and the principal, I loved everything about [the district], but professionally I was drowning.”

One teacher who stayed in the district shared how they overcame these overwhelming feelings:

I think the sheer amount of workload is kind of insane. I think if you weren't in the education field, you would kind of feel like it's on the edge of insanity that we accept it as part of our society. You're crazy enough to do it or you're just crazy. It's kind of really just too much for one person to do and so you have to be able to recognize that, accept it, and climb the mountain everyday anyway. You fall down the avalanche and then you start over the next day. I think for me the first year accepting that this was the way it was just made me realize okay, this is how it is.

Feelings of isolation. Fourteen teachers in this study felt very isolated and alone during their first years in the classroom. The teachers who mentioned this challenge were evenly split between teachers who stayed in the district and who left. The following are words and phrases used to explain this feeling: “thrown to the wolves...edge of insanity...defenseless...invisible...no outside support...survival mode...alone...fended

for self...discouraged...clueless...lack of direction...and lack of confidence.” One teacher who left the district shared:

I remember feeling left to defend for myself and I don't think there was a ton of collaboration at the time. So I was just in my own room doing what was necessary and unless I asked for help, I wasn't given it. I feel like I was left to fend for myself a lot.

Classroom management. Thirteen teachers mentioned classroom management as one of the greatest challenges of the beginning teacher experience. Ten teachers who struggled with classroom management left the district. A teacher who left education said, “Without [classroom management], I couldn't teach my students what they needed to learn. I didn't know how to handle different situations because I had never had to deal with them before.” Another teacher who left shared, “My classroom management was a struggle the first year. I tried to do what others did and learned that wasn't for me.”

Curriculum and state standards. Thirteen teachers, divided equally between those who stayed in the district and those who left, mentioned the changing curriculum and state standards as one of their biggest challenges. Because the state changes the standards and types of standardized tests given, the curriculum is also changing. One teacher who left education shared her frustrations about the curriculum changes within the district. “And with everything changing in state testing, how you teach the curriculum is constantly changing...With everything changing, everyone is relearning how to teach things, so I think it is harder for beginning teachers.” Another teacher who left the district said, “The standards have changed a lot and that makes it hard to have

consistency with your teaching and lessons. There is so much pressure to teach to the ever-changing curriculum and to have good [standardized] test scores.”

Student needs. Thirteen teachers in the study mentioned how hard it is to meet all of the student needs in a classroom. This challenge pertains to behaviors in the classroom, special needs of students, and the many different levels of maturity, academic readiness, and aspects of home life. A teacher who stayed in the district noted how hard it was to feel unprepared to reach each student and how it left them feeling helpless. As one teacher who stayed in the district shared, “I don’t think I was prepared for the special education population in our classrooms. All of the undiagnosed special education kids...And how do you talk to the parents that you think their child may need to be tested or get autistic support? I didn’t even know who to go to for help without the administrator helping me.”

Distractions from teaching. A third of the teachers within the study discussed their frustrations regarding the distractions from teaching. This challenge was discussed equally between teachers who stayed and who left the district. Teachers who shared this challenge felt like they had to do “pointless tasks” and had no flexible or sense of autonomy regarding what they taught. Several teachers brought up how going to meetings and working with committees during the school day only added to the stress because they were not able to be in their classroom working. One teacher who left education vented her frustration about the many distractions from teaching:

You have to prove that you taught well, that you're doing the lessons as you said, and prove that you're making contact with parents and having that evidence while needing the time to prove that what you were doing is what you *say* you are

doing. And all of that is taking up the time of when you should actually be *teaching* your kids and you start feeling the pressure, and everything you wanted to do is actually what you're *not* doing... which is listening to your students, learning from them, doing what needs to be done, and instead it's all completely going in a different direction.

Balance between school and home life. A third of the teachers within the study spoke about the challenge of balancing what needed done in the classroom with home life. They shared how they could spend all day in their classroom, all evening, and all weekend, and never feel ready for the next school day. These beginning teachers struggled to find the healthy boundaries between work and personal time. Because of this tricky balance, several teachers spoke how hard this was on their own family at home. One teacher who stayed in the district reflected on this challenge, “I struggled, and still do, to balance my work as a teacher with all other areas in my life. So much of my time is spent thinking about my class, working in my room, or planning lessons that other areas of my life begin to get less attention than deserved.”

Positive Pre-service Experiences

As the data were analyzed for positive pre-service experiences, three contexts emerged: quality of the methods courses, quality of the professors, and opportunities to be in K-12 classrooms. The strongest positive pre-service experience was the quality of the methods courses. Sixteen teachers (11 who stayed and 5 who left) believed their methods courses were relevant and provided a balance between pedagogy and experience. The methods classes also prepared them to make lesson plans, manage a class, and handle the expectations of teaching. As one teacher who stayed in education

mentioned, “I feel like I was prepared with ample strategies for managing content and instruction in my classroom. I also feel like there was a good balance of management strategies, and community building techniques.”

Fifteen teachers stated the most positive aspect of their pre-service experience was the time actually spent in a classroom with kids. One teacher who stayed in education shared:

I felt extremely prepared in all areas of the classroom, especially classroom management and reading/writing workshop. The [university] gave me an abundance of real-world experiences, within a classroom, starting my second semester of college. I was able to work with many different educators and get hands on experiences in the field from the get-go.

The more real-world, hands-on experiences the teachers had before graduating, the more confidently they felt leading their own classroom

A fourth of the participants within the study noted the quality of their teachers and professors. “The professors were genuinely interested outside of class and what we were struggling in and I feel like the relationships they built were lifelong. I feel like they genuinely wanted us to succeed,” noted a teacher who stayed in the district. One teacher who left education added, “I feel like the teachers helped to shape my character and prepare me for the classroom.”

Negative Pre-Service Experiences

There were two main areas of concern according to the pre-service experiences of the teachers: not feeling prepared to teach and feeling like the classes and professors were outdated. Twenty-one teachers stated the most negative aspect of their pre-service

experience was not feeling prepared to teach their own classes. Nine of these teachers stayed in the district, and 12 left. The teachers began their careers with their own lofty expectations, only to be rudely awakened by the reality of teaching. “I think some of [the beginning teachers] romanticize the idea of being a teacher and think how amazing it will be, but don't face the realities of how hard it can be.”

A fourth of the teachers reflected on how the methods classes did not always teach what was actually expected of the teacher in the real classroom. Though a majority of these teachers spoke highly of their professors as individuals, some felt “gypped” by their pre-service experience and not at all prepared for leading their own classroom. They did not feel ready to have their own classroom and ended up being blindsided by the challenges of teaching.

Lack of classroom management skills was one of the biggest areas of concern according to ten of the teachers (5 teachers who left and 5 teachers who stayed). As one teacher who left education shared, “I didn’t feel very prepared to deal with classroom management and only learned that through experience my first year of teaching which made that first year very tough...Classroom management is a challenge because you are on your own with hardly anything in your ‘bag of tricks.’” One teacher who stayed in the district said:

I didn’t really feel prepared for all of the classroom management and that a majority of the day is managing kids. I mean, it’s really hard for the professors to teach that and say this is what your job is going to be like, but I felt completely blindsided by the fact that it was completely different than what I expected.

Another area teachers were not prepared for was how to work with other adults. Teachers who struggled in this area mentioned how hard it was to work with other people who have different beliefs, personalities, and working styles. They also mentioned it would have been helpful to learn more about conflict resolution and how to manage challenging parents.

A third of the teachers in the study felt their pre-service program and professors were outdated and not relevant. Several of the teachers who left education felt like many aspects of their pre-service experience had no purpose. As one teacher who left stated:

I don't really feel that my college prepared me for teaching. Time was mostly spent planning fictional unit plans that were never used, and my methods classes all seemed the same. My professors had been out of the classroom so long that they were a bit out of touch with technology and new practices.

Another teacher who left education reflected on her bitter experience:

I just wish I would have known what was going to be on my plate and how to freaking teach. Truly. How to teach the objectives. And that there are 10 ways you could handle this objective and the different ways maybe you could teach it. I wish somebody would have said, 'I'm going to *show* you how to teach.' I feel like [the professors] did a really good job at talking about it but no one, almost *none* of them showed us how to do it. They just showed up at the front of the classroom and would say 'Kids need to work with one another and they need to get up and move around,' but I wanted them to *show* me what that looks like in a classroom.

Discussion

According to the Theory of Teacher Development (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), the “goal of [pre-service and induction] programs is to improve the performance and retention of beginning teachers, that is, to both enhance, and prevent the loss of, teachers’ human capital, with the ultimate aim of improving the growth and learning of students” (p. 4). If this model of teacher development was true, the findings of this study would be organized to clearly differentiate between the experiences of beginning teachers who left education and those who stayed.

Instead, the findings of this study challenge the Theory of Teacher Development model. Before the study was conducted, it was assumed by the researcher there would be a clear division between the pre-service experiences of the teachers who stayed in education and those who left. The assumption was the teachers who left education would have had a negative pre-service experience. Similarly, if the teachers stayed within the field of education, it was assumed they had a positive pre-service experience. Based on the data collected in this study, this was not always the case. There was never a clear separation of experiences between teachers who stayed and who left. In most of the categories there was an even split between the two groups which fails to support the assumptions of the Theory of Teacher Development.

Within the contexts of the larger study, there does not appear to be a causal relationship, as the theory implies, between the retention of a teacher based on his or her pre-service and induction experience. For example, just because a teacher had a negative pre-service experience does not necessarily mean they will leave education. Likewise, a positive induction experience does not always result in long-term retention. According to

the experiences shared by the participants of this study, a teacher who left education did not always have a negative pre-service or induction experience. This implies the quality of the pre-service or induction experiences cannot be blamed for the turnover rates of beginning teachers, which contradicts the conceptual framework used within this study.

Call for Further Research

Based on the results of this study, further research is needed to examine why beginning teachers leave education, despite the support systems in place. Are universities and pre-service programs doing their part to ensure only the best candidates graduate with teaching degrees? Or, is this a matter of recruitment and hiring issues within school districts? Further investigations in these areas will provide answers to these questions and ultimately help school districts retain struggling beginning teachers.

SECTION SIX:
SCHOLARLY PRACTITIONER REFLECTION

Introduction

The dissertation process has been more than a culminating research project; it has had tremendous influence on my practice as an educational leader and as a scholar. As a practitioner in the educational field, it is important for me to reflect on how the dissertation has affected me both as an educator and a scholar. In the following pages, I will reflect first on how the dissertation influenced me as an educational leader, and conclude with how it has influenced me as a scholar.

Influence as an Educational Leader

Though my emotional intelligence has always been a strength for me, the dissertation process only heightened the skills needed to connect to someone on an emotional level. According to Goleman (1996/2011), individuals with a high level of emotional intelligence exhibit qualities of these five skills: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-regulation, (c) motivation, (d) empathy, and (e) social skills. One of the reasons I chose to do a qualitative study was because my love for people and my skills for interacting with others. The areas I grew in the most during this study were self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy.

Throughout the dissertation process, I found myself becoming more self-aware as a leader and how to self-regulate within the contexts of the study. Because I am an employee in the setting of my study, I had to learn to bracket out my experiences in order to look at the information objectively. This means that I had to metaphorically wrap up my own personal experiences regarding the topic and set them to the side. I learned during the interview process this was especially important when the participants shared their experiences within the district's induction program. More than once I had to catch

myself and not let my own experiences influence the direction of the interview. This opportunity to self-regulate was difficult at times, but I believe the participants were able to answer truthfully and not be swayed by my own experiences. It was challenging, but through the process, I have learned to be more self-aware and how to self-regulate.

The ability to empathize with others helped me to truly connect with the participants of my study. During the interviews, I was able to build upon the interview questions depending on the experiences of the participant. If a participant was showing emotions during the interview, I asked questions that helped clarify their emotions. I guided the interview by showing my genuine empathy for their situation or experience. If the answers were abbreviated, I asked smaller questions to explore the topic more in depth. This ability to connect at a deeper level allowed for rich responses from the teachers I was interviewing and ensured them their responses were safe with me.

According to Northouse (2013), leaders exhibit the following traits: (a) intelligence, (b) integrity, (c) self-confidence, (d) sociability, and (e) determination. Through the dissertation process, I was affected especially in the areas of integrity, self-confidence, and determination. As I conducted interviews and gathered information regarding the participants' experiences, I learned that having integrity and being trustworthy is crucial. "Openness is premised on the idea that every voice is precious and that every person has knowledge to impart" (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009, p. 21). Because I have integrity, participants were able to open themselves up and trust that I would protect their words. This was especially important for the teachers who still work in the district. The teachers trusted me and knew I would not put them in a compromising situation.

Probably the biggest area I have grown in throughout the dissertation is my level of self-confidence. Though I exhibited leadership traits during this doctoral program and before, all of them seemed to shine during the dissertation, especially in the area of self-confidence. Because I had to lead the participants through interviews, many of my peers now see me as a true leader. I feel humbled that many of them were able to share their experiences with me, whether those experiences were positive or negative. I had participants in tears as they shared memories from their first years as a teacher and felt they were a part of something big and that their experience would help bring about change in the district. Because of the trust they had in me and because of their willingness to share, I feel more confident than ever this study can make a positive effect on my district and bring about positive change.

Due to this new sense of self-confidence, I am determined to be the voice for those in my study. I have less fears about presenting this information to the leaders of my district. My self-confidence and determination has only heightened the passion I have for the topic of beginning teacher experiences. It has also increased my awareness of the beginning teachers around me. I have a better understanding of the experiences of beginning teachers and am able to be a better support for the new teachers in my school building.

According to Northouse (2013), there are two behavior styles: task and relationship. Typically, I have always been more of a relationally-driven person. And while this area helped me interact and connect to the participants, I think one of my biggest areas of growth was my ability to become task driven. The dissertation process has helped me to set parameters and gave me a specific focus. In order to complete the

dissertation, there are a number of tasks to complete, all of which take incredible focus and time. I have finally learned how to manage my time effectively and meet rigorous deadlines. Before the dissertation, I was worried I did not have it in me to actually finish all of the tasks required to complete the program, but the desire to succeed was bigger than my worries. I believe this whole process has helped me to manage the tasks in my life, which ultimately affects my role as a teacher, educational leader, and coach.

Another way the dissertation influenced me as an educational leader was by giving me several realizations. As I write this reflection, I am in my 11th year of teaching upper elementary students. I began this doctoral program years ago in hopes of one day becoming a college professor, preparing the next generation of teachers for the classroom. Even a year ago, I would not have said I was ready to take the next step in my profession, but with the completion of this dissertation, I am finally seeing that it is time to move forward. I have felt the inklings of discomfort, almost like I have outgrown my role as a classroom teacher. This dissertation has changed me and has shown me how much I am capable of doing.

The actual dissertation may even open up its own doors. Many schools have chosen to address the issue of beginning teacher turnover by hiring mentoring coaches and with the knowledge I now have on the topic, this could be a position to look into. I could also seek induction coordinator positions or even teach at the university level. At this time, I am not sure of what the next step will be, but I know I am finally in a good place to start seeking other educational leadership opportunities.

Influence as a Scholar

The dissertation process has had a great influence on me as a scholar. I have always considered myself a lifelong learner and designing and conducting such an intricate study has been a growing, fulfilling experience. When I began this doctoral program, I took the StrengthsFinder test (Roth, 2015) and discovered my top five strengths were (in order): (a) input, (b) developer, (c) learner, (d) individualization, and (e) harmony. My strengths have helped me to become a better leader and scholar.

As a scholar, the themes of input and learner have been most influenced by the dissertation process. Input refers to my inquisitiveness, my desire to collect information, and my love of sorting new pieces of knowledge (Clifton, Anderson, & Schreiner, 2006). This strength was especially helpful as I coded the qualitative data within the study. As themes and patterns emerged from the data, sticky notes were used to sort all of the information. I was able to organize the information to discover the essence of the phenomenon I was studying.

The learner theme refers to the fulfillment I experience within the actual process of learning, not just the content or outcome, but the journey to acquire that information (Clifton et al., 2006). The dissertation has been a journey, but I have enjoyed every step of the process. I have learned a lot about myself as well as what it takes to conduct a thorough study. This learning process is one that will drive me to seek out new learning opportunities. Even as I worked on this dissertation, I kept thinking of different angles I could possibly take with further research. For example, I would love to interview administrators and mentors to see their perspective on the teaching crisis. It is my hope to have future opportunities to expand the research, and ultimately the study.

One of the greatest ways the dissertation process has influenced me as a scholar is by giving me an authentic opportunity to research and conduct a study, providing a rich learning experience. "...As we age we have a variety of life experiences which can be drawn on in a learning situation, but which also simulate the need for learning. Thus not only do we connect with our past experiences to foster new learning, our ongoing experiences often require new learning. Experience is thus a resource and a stimulus for learning" (Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 106). The experience of the dissertation process was a culmination of everything learned during the two years of coursework. Every class, every lesson, every lecture prepared me for the dissertation.

Taylor (2009) identified three core elements of transformational learning: (a) individual experience, (b) critical reflection, and (c) dialogue. I would not have been as influenced by the experiences of the dissertation if I had not had opportunities for me to critically reflect and have dialogue about the process. Each step of the dissertation I had to reflect to ensure I was following the plan and incorporating the many components necessary. Every decision made in the dissertation process was deliberate and required extreme focus. The process was helped by consistent dialogue with my committee members and advisor. "Education initiates us into conversation, and by virtue of that conversation initiates us into thought" (Bruffee, 1999, p. 133). Having the opportunity to sit down and discuss all of the components of the dissertation was extremely helpful. Knowing I was not alone in the process was encouraging to me as a scholar.

Another way I have been influenced by the dissertation as a scholar is my desire to continue learning. I have even been thinking of other ideas for studies. The first two years of the doctoral program gave me the necessary tools to continue my journey as a

scholar and it is my hope to not let the dissertation be the end of that road. It has been interesting how many of my colleagues have come to me, knowing I am finishing up my dissertation; with issues they would like me to research and study. I would love to use the knowledge I have gained in this process to influence positive change.

Conclusion

It is amazing for me to reflect on how far I have come in the past several years. This doctoral program has absolutely transformed me as a leader and a scholar. The dissertation influenced my practice as an educational leader by improving my levels of emotional intelligence, especially in the areas of self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy. The dissertation also sharpened my leadership traits, most notably my integrity, self-confidence, and determination. I have learned how to be task driven and have had several realizations about my future as an educational leader.

As a scholar, the dissertation influenced me by sharpening my strengths in the areas of input and learner. By completing the dissertation, I have been able to truly experience what it is like to conduct a study and critically reflect. I was also given many opportunities to have rich dialogue in the process. All of these experiences increased my desire to continue learning and to pursue other topics of research. Though I grew tremendously during the coursework of this doctoral program, nothing transformed or influenced me more than the dissertation process.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Script

Dear _____,

My name is Casey Chambers and I teach 6th grade at Buchanan Intermediate. I am currently a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis program at the University of Missouri. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my dissertation and I would like to invite you to participate.

I am studying the effects of the teacher induction program on the retention of beginning teachers in Branson. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to meet with me for an interview regarding your beginning teacher experiences at Branson.

In particular, you will be asked questions about the induction program and your experiences with the mentoring program. The interview will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place, and should last about 45 minutes. The interview will be audio recorded so I can accurately reflect on what is discussed. The recordings will be reviewed, transcribed, and analyzed by me; they will then be destroyed.

Participation is confidential and though the results of the study may be published or presented, your identity will not be revealed.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please email me, call my cell phone, or send a text message. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

Casey Chambers

chamberc@branson.k12.mo.us

417-294-0413

Appendix B

Document Analysis Guide

Type of Document:
Date(s) of Document:
Author of Document: Position of Author:
Intended Audience of Document:
Purpose of Document:
Notes about Document:

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Background Info

1. What grade level(s) did you teach in your time at Branson?
2. When you were hired at Branson, what grade were you hoping for?
3. How long did you teach in Branson?
4. Why did you decide to become a teacher?

Pre-service Programs

5. What college did you graduate from?
6. In what ways did your college teacher prep experiences prepare you for your time in the classroom?
7. What do you wish you had learned during college to better prepare you for your time in the classroom?

Branson TIP and TOP

8. The TIP program in Branson begins with the orientation meetings a few days before school starts. Please tell me what you remember about that experience.
9. In what ways did the TIP and TOP program prepare you for your first two years in the classroom?
10. What do you remember about the TIP program when you think back to your first year of teaching?
11. As you remember, TOP was the second year of the induction process. What did that experience look like for you?

12. Was there an opportunity for you to meet in a group (formal or informal) with other beginning teachers throughout the induction process? If yes, describe this interaction with other newer teachers.

Mentoring

13. Please tell me about your experience with your mentor.
14. Did you teach in the same grade level as your mentor?
15. Why do you think your mentor was assigned to you specifically?
16. How often did you meet with your mentor? What did that time look like?
17. Were you given opportunities to observe your mentor or other veteran teachers? If yes, did you take advantage of these opportunities? Why or why not?
18. In what ways did your mentor or other veteran teachers model techniques or lessons for you?

Administrative Support

19. In what ways, if any, did your administrator support you during your first year of teaching?
20. In what ways, if any, did your administrator welcome you to the building and teaching community?
21. To what extent did you feel able to be open and honest with your administrator about your experience as a beginning teacher?
22. Based on your experiences as a new teacher, what advice would you give to the administration about how to encourage and support beginning teachers?

Reflection

23. What do you think are the biggest challenges affecting beginning teachers today?

24. What were your biggest challenges as you began your teaching career?

For those who stayed

25. What was your biggest motivation to continue teaching?

26. Who or what had the greatest impact on your decision to persevere as a teacher?

27. What factors went into your decision to stay on as a teacher for Branson?

28. Have you been able to use your own experiences as a beginning teacher to encourage or motivate the beginning teachers in your building now? If yes, how?

29. What else would you like to tell me about your teaching experiences and/or mentoring experience?

For those who left education

30. What factors went into your decision to leave education?

31. What was your breaking point as a beginning teacher? Or, at what point did you know you couldn't do it anymore?

32. To what extent were you able to be honest about your reasons for leaving?

33. What did the conversation with the administrator look like when you decided to leave?

34. When you left the district, did you take part in an exit interview with your administrator? If so, please tell me about that.

35. What else would you like to tell me about your teaching experiences and/or mentoring experience?

For those who left Branson

36. What was your biggest motivation to continue teaching?

37. Who or what had the greatest impact on your decision to persevere as a teacher?

38. What factors went into your decision to leave Branson?
39. To what extent were you able to be honest about your reasons for leaving?
40. What did the conversation with the administrator look like when you decided to leave?
41. When you left the district, did you take part in an exit interview with your administrator? If so, please tell me about that.
42. Have you been able to use your own experiences as a beginning teacher to encourage or motivate the beginning teachers in your building now? If yes, how?
43. What else would you like to tell me about your teaching experiences and/or mentoring experience?

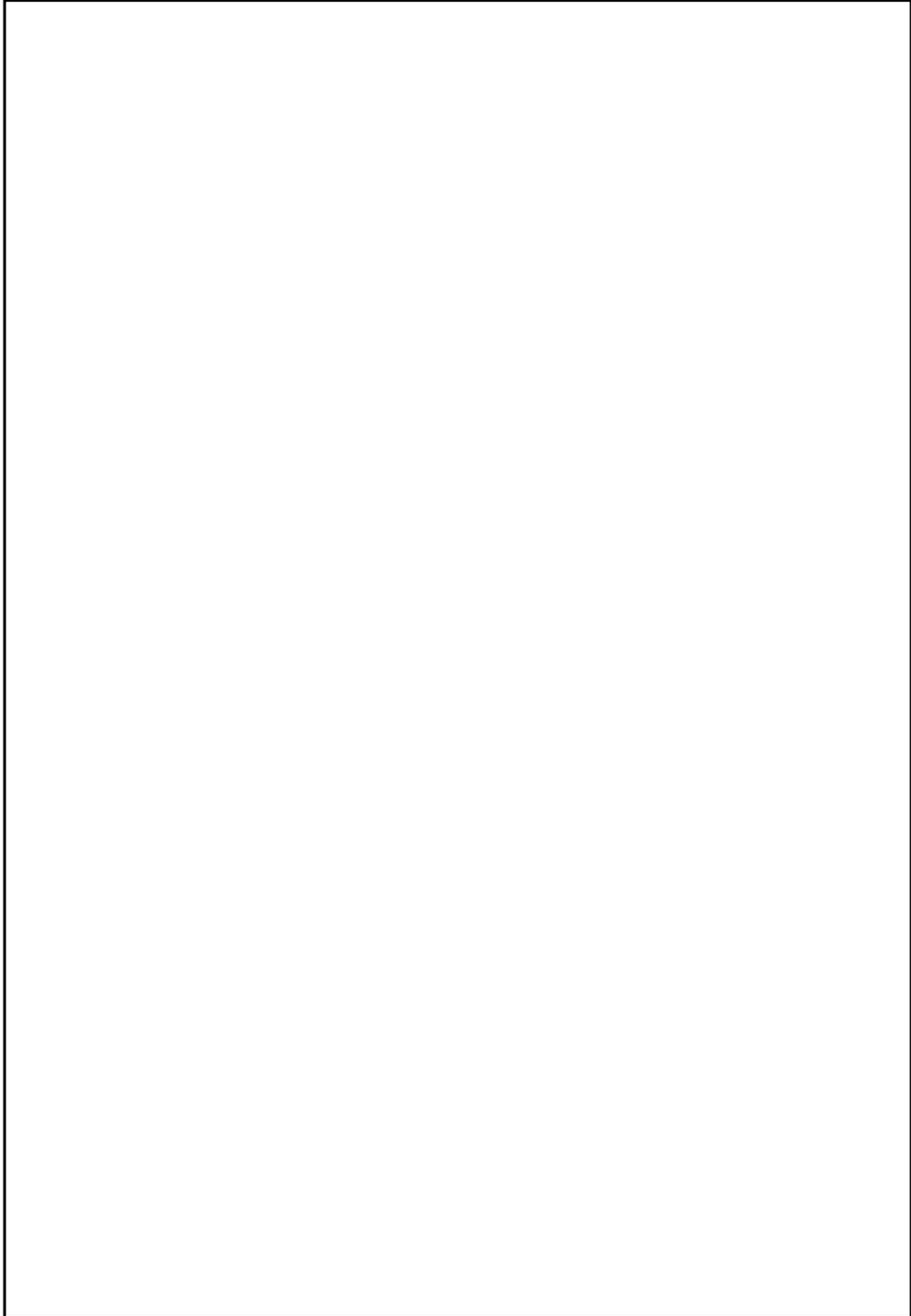
Appendix D

Observation Protocol

Location: _____ Length of Time: _____	
Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes

Appendix D

Observational Sketch



Appendix E
Superintendent Permission



Dr. Brad Swofford
Superintendent

BRANSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
"A Community Committed to Learning"

January 11, 2016

Ms. Chambers,

You have permission to conduct research with Branson school employees for your doctoral study with the University of Missouri. I would ask the you complete all the required documentation with the University and with Branson schools to comply with your doctoral study and program. Thank you and let me know if you need any further assistance.

Respectfully,

Brad Swofford

Brad Swofford
Superintendent

1756 Bee Creek
Branson Missouri 65616
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+173346619
swofford@branson.k12.mo.us

Appendix F

Informed Consent

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

Description of the Study: I am a doctoral student at the University of Missouri-Columbia in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis program, and I am studying the experiences of beginning teachers who went through the beginning teacher induction program (TIP and TOP) in the Branson School District. I am focusing on teachers who either stayed in the district or those who left before finishing five years of teaching.

Purpose of the research: To understand the experiences, perspectives, and challenges faced by beginning teachers in the elementary setting.

What you will do in this research: If you decide to volunteer, you will be asked to participate in an interview. You will be asked questions, some of which will be about your experiences, perspectives, and challenges as a beginning teacher in the elementary setting. With your permission, I will audio record the interview in order to allow us to focus on the conversation.

Time required: The interview or focus group will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

Benefit: To advance the qualitative research practices regarding the perspectives and experiences of beginning teachers.

Confidentiality: Your responses to interview or focus group questions will be kept confidential. **At no time will your actual identity be revealed.** All participants will be given pseudonyms and code names to protect the identity. All notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher. With your written permission below, excerpts from the interview may be included in my dissertation or other later publications.

Participation and withdrawal: Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

To Contact the Researcher: If you have questions or concerns about this research, please contact me: Casey Chambers, 417-294-0413, chambersc@branson.k12.mo.us.

Other Contact Information: You may also contact the faculty member supervising this work: Dr. Cindy MacGregor, MU-MSU Ed.D. Site Coordinator, 417-836-6046, CMacgregor@MissouriState.edu or the Campus Institutional Review Board, University of Missouri, 573-882-9585.

Consent: The nature and purpose of this research have been sufficiently explained, and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without incurring any penalty.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

VITA

Cassandra (Casey) Chambers was born in Springfield, Missouri on June 1, 1983. Raised in Branson, Missouri with her parents and four siblings, Casey attended Branson High School and graduated in 2001. After high school, she attended the College of the Ozarks where she studied elementary education and music. In 2006, Casey graduated with a Bachelors of Science degree in Elementary Education. In the fall of 2006, she began teaching 5th grade in the Branson School District and obtained a Masters Degree in Educational Technology from the University of Missouri in 2009. Casey received a Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University Missouri in 2016.