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## Case Study of a New Teacher Mentoring and Induction Program

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# Case Study of a New Teacher Mentoring and Induction Program

Jennifer S. Collins

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Concordia University–Portland  
College of Education  
Doctorate of Education Program

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Case Study of a New Teacher Mentoring and Induction Program

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Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in  
Transformational Leadership

Sally Evans, Ed.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

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Concordia University–Portland

2018

## **Abstract**

A single case design was employed to explore the implementation of the new teacher induction and mentoring program (NTIMP) from the perspective of new teachers who participated in the program. The district the researcher studied for this single case study had been experiencing a high teacher turnover. To reduce this problem, an NTIMP was implemented in the district. The NTIMP was investigated with a diverse sample of new educators from a semi-rural school district in the western part of the United States. Data sources, including interviews, surveys, and document review, were used in the study to allow for the triangulation of data. Findings indicated that the NTIMP was a beneficial initiative implemented by the study site for helping teachers adjust to the teaching and for reducing feelings of isolation. Responses regarding the NTIMP's impact on a new teacher's development of a positive attitude towards teaching and in developing a sense of professionalism indicated both positive and negative experiences. The responses to the survey questions and the semi-structured interviews reflected the importance of access to professional development and both formal and informal mentoring access for new teachers to help them achieve success in teaching. A support system is critical to new teachers who were grappling with seeking answers to questions and gathering assistance to become a more effective educator. New teachers require experienced teacher support through the development of professional relationships, relationships with students and students' families and caregivers, and additional guidance in professional practice. Future studies should include the long-term impact of the program on participants.

*Keywords:* new teachers, mentoring, induction, relationships, attrition

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation first to my parents who believed in me even at times when I forgot to believe in myself. My dad had always been there to listen to me cry and complain when I doubted myself, and then go on to remind me that I needed to pick myself up and move forward. Although my mother passed away before I embarked on this doctoral journey, she has been that guiding light from heaven when all seemed insurmountable and dark. The feathers from heaven appeared at the best of times. I miss you every day, Mum.

To my students—past, present, and future—I believe in you. I accomplished a “hard thing,” and so can you! Please remember that we only fail when we give up on learning. Hard things take time and sacrifice. Keep moving forward, no matter the speed.

## **Acknowledgements**

This journey would not have been possible without the support of my family and a community of friends. I thank my parents for standing by me from the very beginning and never giving up on me even when they were told that there was no hope. Dad, for all the days I spent writing and revising instead of wandering the countryside or exploring the deep blue with you and for all the trips when we had to stop on the side of the highway so that I could make a meeting without extra car noise in the background, I owe you! Let's go diving! Mom, you were always my biggest cheerleader here, and you still are my biggest cheerleader from heaven. I am the strong woman that I am today thanks to the example you have set.

To my closest friends and best co-workers ever, Jackie Covington and Kathy Wright, thank you. Thank you for talking sense into me when I was stressed about things that bothered me. Thank you for your patience in bearing with my single-mindedness. Most of all, thank you for intervening when people would ask me whether I was "done with that dissertation yet." We can finally go somewhere without my computer and internet!

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Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Bill Luton for being my mentor and sounding board. I cannot thank you enough for all that you have done to help me through this process and for encouraging me to keep going when I felt that the hurdles were insurmountable. Thank you for the super early phone calls and the late-night texts! You are the best mentor ever, even though

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

New teachers' attrition rates have led to a drastic shortage of qualified educators in the United States, with approximately 50% of those entering the K–12 education field leaving within the first five years (Dupriez, Delvaux, & Lothaire, 2016; Gareis & Nussbaum-Beach, 2007; Hong, 2012; Huber, Fruth, Avila-John, & Lopez-Ramirez, 2016). Teachers leave the profession due to various reasons such as inadequate administrative support, difficult teaching loads owing to large class sizes, high number of special-needs students, complex schedules, and low pay. Other reasons include conflicts with colleagues, lack of support from students' families, low self-efficacy, and lack of job satisfaction (Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013; Clandinin et al., 2015; Huber et al., 2016; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

The study site for this single case study was a school district that experienced high teacher turnover. To alleviate this problem, a new teacher induction program was implemented by the district. This single case study explores the implementation of the new teacher induction and mentoring program from the perspective of new teachers. The focus of the study pertained to the mentoring practices that decrease teacher turnover and lead to higher levels of self-efficacy for new teachers.

### **Background of the Study**

Teacher turnover is a significant problem in the study site examined in this dissertation. In this site, 137 new teachers were hired for the 2016–2017 school year, which amounts to 11% of the total teaching faculty. Many of these new teachers hold emergency certifications or are working towards obtaining certification (R. Hay, personal communication, September 22, 2016). Emergency certifications are obtained by individuals who have been offered a teaching position but have not completed teacher training. These certifications are also referred to as conditional

certifications once the individual completes the required paperwork, and the paperwork is cleared through the State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), resulting in the issuance of a conditional certification. The conditional certification status requires an individual to be enrolled in a teacher preparation program; moreover, he/she should be progressing towards becoming fully certified. The emergency certified and conditionally certified teachers have little to no experience in education, and they depend on the district personnel to provide training and support as they pursue a teacher training program. Other new teachers in the district, who have entered with certifications and completed a teacher preparation program but lack teaching experience, rely on the district to provide support for transitioning towards a career in education. Unable to successfully transition into the profession, many new teachers end up leaving after their first year. Mentoring programs are commonly developed to assist new teachers transitioning from other fields into education (Callahan, 2016).

The site selected for this case study developed a New Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program (NTIMP) to address the issue of high attrition rates in new teachers following their first year. The NTIMP was designed to increase the level of self-efficacy and retention rates of new teachers in the study site. However, there is no existing evidence to support the claims for the value of this approach in this site. This study was designed to explore the implementation of the new teacher induction and mentoring program from the perspective of new teachers in order to gain a deeper understanding of the factors leading to teachers' intent to return to teaching and that of their self-efficacy.

### **Statement of the Problem**

New teachers in the study site are most commonly conditionally certified; these educators do not have the required teacher training to be successful in the classroom. Although a support

program was put in place by the site administrators, through a grant, it is unclear whether this new teacher mentoring and induction program provides the support needed to increase levels of self-efficacy in teachers. Without this support, new teachers are less likely to remain in the teaching field. The problem was a vast teacher turnover in the study site in addition to shortages of teaching staff in the state.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this single case study was to explore how new teachers perceived the implementation of the NTIMP. Additionally, teachers' perceptions pertaining to changes in self-efficacy resulting from participation in the program and their intent to return to teaching in the study site or the profession were examined. The reasons teachers choose to leave the profession/study site after their first year were also explored.

The implementation of the NTIMP was explored from the perspective of new teachers with regard to the perception of support they received. This support includes the ability to implement classroom management strategies and communication techniques. Mentoring is another type of support provided by the NTIMP that was examined from the perspective of the new teacher.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions discussed in this study were as follows:

1. What was the perception of the teachers and mentors concerning how well the goals of the program were met through participation in the mentoring program?
2. What were some of the elements of the program that influenced new teachers' decision to return to teaching or the study site in the year following their participation in the program?

3. How did the teacher's perceptions of self-efficacy change due to participation in the mentorship program?

The following variables were examined, as they relate to teachers' perception of program implementation: the participant's intention to return to teaching in the subsequent school year; new teacher participation in the induction and mentoring program; and the teacher's feelings pertaining to self-efficacy.

### **Conceptual Framework**

A mentoring program helps support new teachers through personal interactions and relationship building. Mentorships increase the probability of a new teacher remaining in the teaching field through the creation of relationships with experienced educators or mentors (Callahan, 2016). The importance of relationship building has been supported by Blau's Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964). This theory along with Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy (Bandura, 1994) and Knowles' Theory of Andragogy (Knowles, 1970) form the basis for the conceptual framework. As per the Social Exchange Theory (SET), both participants, mentor and mentee, in a mentorship relationship are invested in and share a sense of responsibility towards the development of the relationship and hold a common vision concerning the positive outcome of the relationship that includes trust (Lawler, Thye, & Yoon, 2008).

Further research of the SET and trust relationships presented that the influence of trust on a professional relationship is primarily a result of intrinsic motivation (Ayree, Walumbwa, Mondejar, & Chu, 2015). The development of a mentoring program by the administration and the facilitation of mentoring relationships signal a shift in the organizational culture of the study site to one where the relationships, as well as the exchange of knowledge that occur as a result, is valued (Majiros, 2013). Blau (1964) delineated that the SET is applicable in relationships where

there is no monetary motivation for the existence and development of such relationships. There is no monetary exchange in the mentor-mentee relationship, but there is an exchange of knowledge that is achieved through the development of relational trust (Lawler et al., 2008).

Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy (TSE) is based on the beliefs held by an individual regarding their capacity to influence events in their life and, further, their ability to self-regulate and self-reflect (Bandura & Adams, 1977; Bandura, 2015). In education, Huber et al. (2016) argue that the TSE is a fundamental tenet of new teacher mentoring programs when the program goals include helping the new teacher develop a personal belief that they can be successful in teaching, assisting the new teacher to reflect upon their practices, and regulating new teachers' actions and responses to certain situations, thereby increasing the new teacher's TSE and sense of empowerment.

Huber et al. (2016) observed that teachers who express a low level of self-efficacy also experience greater burnout and stress than those who identify as having a high level of self-efficacy. Bandura (2015) further explained that individuals who doubt their abilities tend to set lower goals than individuals who believe in theirs. Therefore, mentoring relationships are critical in aiding new teachers to decrease job stress burnout, increase teacher retention, and to also enhance teacher performance (Huber et al., 2013). The TSE is further examined in relation to the disciplines of psychology, counseling, and career counseling when the results of mentor-mentee interactions significantly impact job performance (Lent, 2016).

Finally, Knowles' Theory of Andragogy (TA) states that adult learners must have already developed self-concept, taken ownership of their decisions, become capable of self-direction, formed a willingness and readiness to learn, and have developed a problem- or task-centered orientation to learning (Knowles, 1970). Andragogy has widespread application in studies

focused on university and adult education, lifelong learning, and continuing education in adults (Savicevic, 1999). Andragogy has clearly been applied in the NTIMP, as the adult learner (beginning teacher) has expressed the desire to advance themselves in their job and has committed themselves to a path of participation in the program to achieve success.

### **Research Method and Design**

The single-case study was designed to explore the implementation of the new teacher induction and mentoring program, especially the way it affects teachers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy. The case study method was chosen because this model facilitates deeper exploration into specific cases where the focus is on the applied research and the implementation of a program (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2010). Moreover, case studies that are focused on program evaluation allow for an understanding of the implementation of a program and the nuances of program impact (Paulsen & Dailey, 2002).

This study focused on the perceptions of new teachers surrounding their feelings of self-efficacy and job satisfaction; thus, the research is suited for the case study model. Case studies enable the examination of specific systems over time through interviews, documentation, and reports (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2005). Research has indicated that the use of case studies strengthens the understanding of a program—specifically program implementation and program impact (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Paulsen & Dailey, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). The program impact in this study should ideally include increased self-efficacy in new teachers and decreased attrition rates among new teachers.

This case study is qualitative in nature, since the work is focused on understanding the perceptions that participants in the NTIMP hold with regard to self-efficacy, intent to return to teaching, and how they perceive the program to have met the intended goals. Maxwell (2005)

contended that qualitative research design is required when there is a need to better understand a topic, such as the situation with the NTIMP. Furthermore, qualitative research design, as indicated by Creswell (2013), includes a theoretical lens, exploration of a problem, and data that aids the discovery of themes and patterns, all of which have been included in this study.

Instruments used to complete this study include Perceptions of Success Inventory for Beginning Teachers (PSI–BT), the Beginning Teachers Mentoring Program (BTMP) survey, interviews, and a document review.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

An applicable list of terms and definitions is provided subsequently to assist with understanding the terminology utilized in this study.

#### **Beginning Educator**

In the context of this study, *beginning educator* refers to any educator in their first five years in the profession (Ingersoll, 2012).

#### **Conditional Certification**

In the context of this study, *conditional certification* is the level of teacher certification that a newly certified teacher holds. This includes educators who have emergency certifications and are either enrolled in a teacher preparation program or are in the process of enrolling in a program (OSPI, 2015).

#### **Emergency Certifications**

In the context of this study, *emergency certifications* are granted to new, non-certified teachers while they await the processing of their completed conditional certification application package by the state OSPI (2015).

## **Mentor**

In the context of this study, *Mentor* is a person who receives a stipend from the school district specifically to assist new teachers. The mentor serves as a role model for new teachers, providing encouragement, counseling, and friendship. Furthermore, they assist the new teacher with assimilating a new identity as a professional educator (Salgur, 2014).

## **New Teacher**

In the context of this study, *new teacher* refers to any person who was new to the study site in the 2016–2017 school year, had been charged with designing and implementing instruction, and had a teaching contract, regardless of credential status or type (M. Whitney, personal communication, April 15, 2017).

## **New Teacher Induction Program**

In the context of this study, *new teacher induction program* collectively refers to a group of programs that offer guidance, orientation, and support for beginning teachers as they transition into a community of professional educators (Kearney, 2014; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

## **Self-Efficacy**

In the context of this study, *self-efficacy* is the belief of an individual concerning their capacity to influence other events in their life (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Self-efficacy includes how a person thinks, feels, behaves, and motivates themselves to perform at certain levels (Bandura, 1994).

## **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

There are several assumptions and limitations pertaining to every study, which are based on methodological design. One assumption made for this study is that all participants would respond honestly to the interviews. Another assumption was that the participants would respond

honestly to the surveys. Finally, there was the assumption that participants were willing to fully disclose their perceptions regarding the new teacher induction and mentoring programs.

The first limitation of this study is that it relies on participants' experiences. The findings are based on how participants perceive their experience in the program in comparison to how they believe their experience should have been. The participants may refrain from being completely honest in their responses. The researcher is a peer of the participants and is personally collecting responses and conducting interviews, which may lead to the participants' reluctance to fully disclose information, as they may fear being judged by a peer. Data collector bias may also be a limitation, since the researcher is a peer of the participants and is performing the interviews and collecting data.

Although the insights gained from the study results may be helpful to other districts and mentoring programs, the study cannot be generalized due to the small sample size and the unique characteristics of the study site. The study population is taken from only one cohort of new teachers, employed in the study site for the 2016–2017 school year. The total number of new teachers hired for the year was 137, of which 28 completed the BTMP survey and 15 completed the PSI–BT survey. The small sample size was also evident based on only people agreeing to be interviewed.

Another limitation lies in the lack of an external evaluator. An external evaluator would have enhanced the credibility and objectivity of the evaluation.

Delimitations of this study include the problem selection and the specification of what the study will encompass. Only one site was used for the study, and, therefore, the findings may not be applicable to other sites due to the unique characteristics of the study site. New teachers in the site who had previous teaching experience were excluded from the study population. It was

believed that some teachers may not participate due to the perception that being honest may lead to disciplinary action or repercussions, as the researcher is an employee of the study site (M. Lee, personal communication, September 14, 2016).

### **Significance of the Study**

The results of this study can be utilized to help inform program administrators and teacher leaders concerning the efficacy of the current NTIMP. Therefore, the results of this study will help the site administration and teacher leaders identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program in the way it affects the self-efficacy of teachers and increases their desire to remain in the teaching field and in the study site. By facilitating a thorough examination of the program, results from the study will help administrators and teacher leaders make relevant changes, additions, and omissions to the program.

The results of this study will provide valuable insights regarding the effectiveness of the program, specifically concerning feelings of self-efficacy in teachers and their intention to return to the study site, and that may be used as a framework for NTIMP improvements in the study site.

Additionally, the results of this evaluation will provide information regarding the professional development offerings, the impact of said offerings, and suggestions to enhance the program for future new teachers in the study site. By these means, the results of the study can be considered as a guide for improving the program.

### **Summary**

In Chapter 1, the statement of the problem, conceptual framework, purpose and significance of the study, research questions, methods, research design, definitions of key terminology, limitations, and delimitations of the study were addressed. A lack of qualified

teachers entering education combined with inadequate support for early career educators and other factors has led to an increasing shortage of teachers nationwide. The study site for this research has attempted to fill the shortage of qualified, certified educators by hiring individuals with emergency certifications and providing necessary support to them in the form of a new teacher induction program supplemented with mentors. It is unclear whether the program is effective in meeting the goals of retaining new teachers and increasing their self-efficacy. The implementation of the NTIMP was explored from the perspective of new teachers with regard to the perception of support they received.

The NTIMP is grounded upon the building of relationships and the benefits that new teachers and mentors receive from these relationships. Blau's social exchange theory, Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, and Knowles' theory of andragogy provide the conceptual framework for this single case study. This study will provide insights into program effectiveness and help to shape the program in the future.

Chapter 2, the literature review, presents a discussion of the literature examining new teacher induction and mentoring, job satisfaction, perceptions of self-efficacy, reasons new teachers leave the profession, best practices in induction and mentoring, and research outlining the needs of the new teachers. Chapter 3 comprises the methodologies and procedures applied in the study, including data collection and sources. In Chapter 4, the reports of data collection and the results of the surveys and interviews are covered. Chapter 5 will present the conclusions, summary, and recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

There is a critical shortage of teachers in nations worldwide (Gareis & Nussbaum-Beach, 2007; Hong, 2012; Martin & Mulvihill, 2016). In addition, the factors of new teacher attrition further add to the problem of teacher shortages. New teacher attrition has led to a drastic shortage of available qualified educators, and those who do enter the profession are likely to leave within five years (Dupriez et al., 2016; Gareis & Nussbaum-Beach, 2007; Hong, 2012; Huber et al., 2016). In the United States, it is estimated that there will be a shortage of over 1.7 million teachers in 2018 (O'Connor, Malow, & Bisland, 2011). Although teaching is one of the most common occupations in the U.S., certain states in the union do not have enough teachers available to fill the positions opened by the retirement of teachers combined with the loss of teachers who deflect to other professions (State of Washington Professional Educator Standards Board, n.d.). The shortage in teaching personnel is caused by multiple factors, including retirement, lack of people enrolled in teacher preparation programs, and the revolving door through which teachers are exiting the profession long before they reach retirement age (Ingersoll, 2012). Marker, Mitchall, and Lassiter (2013) indicated that educators are deciding to leave the profession due to inadequate support from school administrators.

Ingersoll's (2012) research on teacher attrition revealed that the apex of teacher retirements has passed, and the number of retirements is expected to continue to decline. Therefore, this created vacancies that are being filled with people who have not undertaken a formal teacher preparation program and have entered the field with emergency certifications; approximately 20–30% of all new teachers in the United States hold emergency certifications (Kee, 2012). New teacher induction and mentoring programs help new teachers bridge the knowledge gap—between entering a classroom with minimal teacher preparation coursework

completed, as in the case of emergency certified educators, and obtaining full certification (Ingersoll, 2012).

One possible solution to this crisis in education is to develop job satisfaction and commitment to the organization through induction programs integrating mentoring relationships (Ingersoll, 2012; Lo & Ramayah, 2011). Well-supported professional development opportunities, including face-to-face mentoring and induction programs, help create job satisfaction, deepen the level of commitment of participants, and have also been proven critical in supporting and retaining new educators (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). This chapter includes a review of the literature related to the induction and mentoring programs, including online and face-to-face methodologies, and the rationale behind induction and mentoring programs.

Research on teacher turnover, characteristics of mentoring programs, educative mentoring, mentoring in other countries, development of teachers' professional identity in addition to the development of teachers' self-efficacy will also be addressed. Existing literature on the conceptual framework of the study encompassing the social exchange theory, the self-efficacy theory, and andragogy will also be presented.

To discover literature relevant to the topic of new teacher induction and mentoring programs, the researcher conducted an exhaustive search by topic using the Concordia University- Portland library website (<http://libguides.cu-portland.edu/EdD>), Google Scholar, and the Mid- Columbia Public Library. The following educational databases were used: (a) Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), (b) ProQuest, (c) Taylor & Francis Online, (d) Wiley Online Library,

(e) Sage Publications, (f) JSTOR, and (g) Leeds. An initial search led to these databases and key terms of *new teachers*, *new teacher mentoring*, *new teacher induction*, and *mentoring*. Established perimeters comprised peer-reviewed journals for all educators at any educational level, all publication types, and all journals and documents.

Subsequent searches were conducted using the following terms: *professional identity*, *self- efficacy*, *teacher* and *attrition*. Established search perimeters were expanded to include work published within the last five years. A third search was conducted adding *alternative routes to certification* and *case study* to the search. A University of Arizona research librarian and a Washington State University research librarian were also consulted during the search, who minimally assisted with the literature search strategy.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Mentoring and induction programs provide new teachers with opportunities focused to direct their intention to return to teaching in the coming school year and additionally with time to reflect upon their feelings of self-efficacy. The overall teacher success is known to increase when new teachers participate in new teacher mentoring programs. Furthermore, Callahan (2016) contended that development of the mentor-mentee relationship is critical to the success of the mentoring program. Therefore, such relationships were a focus of the conceptual framework for this study.

Callahan (2016) posited that the development of the relationships between a mentor and mentee strengthens the new teacher's perceptions of self-efficacy and deepens their commitment to the field of education. These relationships and the interactions between the mentor and mentee are the focal points in the conceptual framework. Blau's social exchange theory (1964), Bandura's theory of self- efficacy (1994), and Knowles' theory of andragogy (1970) all

emphasize the relationship between mentor and mentee and the impact that relationship has on a new teacher's perception of success and commitment towards continuing their development of teaching skills, and these are the bases for the conceptual framework for this study.

According to the social exchange theory (SET), both the mentor and mentee enter into a relationship built on trust and a common vision for a positive outcome (Lawler et al., 2008). Further research on SET and trust relationships presents that the influence of trust on a workplace relationship is primarily a result of intrinsic motivation (Ayree et al., 2015). Blau (1964) clearly delineated that the SET is applicable to relationships in which there is a non-monetary motivation for the existence and development of the relationship. In the mentor-mentee relationship, there is an exchange of knowledge that is achieved through the development of trust in the form of a mutually beneficial relationship (Lawler et al., 2008).

Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (TSE) is founded on the beliefs held by individuals regarding their capacity to influence events in their life and further about their ability to self-regulate and self-reflect (Bandura & Adams, 1977; Bandura, 2015). In education, the TSE is a fundamental tenet of new teacher mentoring, especially, when the goal of mentoring is to help new teachers develop the personal belief that they can be successful in teaching, to assist new teachers to reflect upon their teaching practices, and to regulate their actions and responses to situations.

Bandura (2015) further explained that individuals who doubt their ability tend to set lower goals than those individuals who believe in their ability. The TSE has also been explored in terms of the disciplines of psychology, counseling, and career counseling (Lent, 2016).

The last concept that frames this study is Knowles' theory of andragogy (TA). The theory of andragogy states that adult learners should have already developed self-concept, a willingness

and readiness to learn, and a problem- or task-centered orientation to learning; moreover, they should have taken ownership of their own decisions and become capable of self-direction (Knowles, 1970). The TA is clearly applied in the NTIMP, as the adult learner (beginning teacher) has expressed the desire to improve professionally and has committed himself/herself to participating in the program to achieve success.

The social exchange theory emphasizes the relationships between two people, a person and an organization, or an organization and a community (Blau, 1964). The theory is based on the premise that a relationship exists if it is mutually beneficial to all parties (Blau, 1964; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Through mentoring and induction programs, relationship networks are created through behavioral, cognitive, and affective exchanges; these exchanges typically occur during training or other face-to-face meetings (Lawler et al., 2008). The relationship between mentor and mentee is successful when there is trust and social approval (Blau, 1964).

The flexibility of the mentor-mentee relationship to be both positive and negative is unique to the SET. Positive relationships in Blau's SET (1964) are deemed beneficial and strengthen the relationship, whereas negative relationships are considered costs, and these serve to weaken the relationship. Blau (1964) also contended that moving from a relationship between two individuals (micro level) to relationships that form an organization (macro level) is dependent on the support constituting social approval and authentic intrinsic motivation.

In mentoring relationships, the SET is exemplified by the exchange of valuable knowledge between the involved parties. The knowledge exchange takes place between the mentor and the mentee. In the NTIMP, knowledge exchange includes lesson planning, classroom management strategies, strategies for instructing students with special needs or second-language

learners, communication strategies for parents, instruction for developing assessments, and report card completion (R. Hay, personal communication, September 22, 2016).

Another fundamental premise of the SET is that social exchange is an exchange of power between individuals (Blau, 1964). Power exchange, according to Blau, is not a balanced operation as social theory researcher Emerson maintained; instead, the exchange of power is asymmetrical or unbalanced (1964). In the mentor-mentee relationship, the exchange of power is asymmetrical, as Blau contended to be true, because the mentor is sharing with the mentee and not vice versa.

Another implication of the SET is that while it is possible for the mentor-mentee relationship to be both positive and negative, the negative interactions do not preclude a successful mentoring experience. Eby, Butts, Lockwood, and Simon (2004) found that mentors can overcome costs in the relationship through communicating proficiency and thereby benefit. The mentor may not have extensive expertise in a technical area but can overcome the shortcoming by providing strong psychosocial support for the mentee. Blau (1964) posited that psychosocial support is another fundamental aspect of social exchange.

An additional construct for this study is Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory. Self-efficacy is the belief an individual has concerning their capacity to influence events in their life (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Beliefs about personal capacity influence how a person thinks, feels, and behaves, and how one is motivated to perform at certain levels (Bandura, 1994). In academia, self-efficacy is functional on the student, teacher, and faculty levels (Bandura, 1993). Students' self-efficacy incorporates the ability of a student to regulate their learning, their endeavor towards high goals based on their academic achievement, and also the learner's academic motivation.

Teachers' self-efficacy combines an educator's beliefs pertaining to his/her ability to motivate learners and the ability to create an academic environment that promotes high academic achievement among students. The faculty level of self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1993), is a collective belief rather than a belief of one individual. Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons (1992) observed that perceived self-efficacy influences the difficulty level of the goal-based challenges set, how much effort the individual expends to reach the goal, and the degree of persistence displayed. Bandura (1994) further posited that people with high levels of self-efficacy set challenging goals and maintain the commitment necessary to achieve such goals. According to Bandura (1994), when a new teacher has a low sense of self-efficacy, challenges and setbacks are more likely to lead to experiences of heightened anxiety, stress, and depression.

Bandura (1994) further posited that mastering tasks will enable a new teacher to develop and internalize feelings of self-efficacy. Mastering tasks may also involve a social model where the individual observes another person succeed in a similar environment, thereby enabling the observer to believe that they too have what it takes to be successful (Bandura, 1994). Observing a successfully modeled task can cause the observer to strive for developing qualities similar to the person observed; the acquisition of these skills increases levels of self-efficacy in the observer.

While self-efficacy has been found by Klassen and Chiu (2010) to be a determining factor in the success of beginning teachers in the short term, Bandura (1993) asserts that internalized self-efficacy is a determining factor in a teacher's success over the long-term stage of a career.

The theory of andragogy is a combination of adult learning theory, conditions of learning, and experiential learning (Knowles, 1970). Andragogy requires adult learners to have developed self-concept, taken ownership of their own decisions, become capable of self-direction,

developed a willingness and readiness to learn, and have imbibed a problem- or task-centered orientation to learning. To fully develop this theory, Knowles (1970) determined that adult learners should know why they must learn something and be able to determine the value of the new knowledge before investing the effort and energy necessary to learn something new. In addition, Knowles (1970) posited that adult learners are motivated internally at a greater rate than externally. Internal motivation, according to Knowles (1970), includes the goals of increased job satisfaction, a better quality of life, and a greater self-esteem, whereas external motivators include promotions, higher salaries, and better jobs.

Adult learners can be categorized into the following three subgroups: goal-oriented learners, activity-oriented learners, and learners who are learning-oriented (Knowles, 1973). Goal-oriented learners are individuals who pursue education for the purpose of reaching a goal, having clearly defined objectives such as learning to master a specific task. These learners typically do not begin continued education until a later age, which is frequently the late twenties or more. The activity-oriented learner refers to those individuals who undertake continued education for social reasons, such as developing relationships and joining social groups (Knowles, 1973). Activity-oriented learners differ from the goal-oriented learner, as there is no clearly defined purpose for the pursuit of continued education other than developing a social network. The last type of learner is the learning-oriented learner. This type of learner seeks continuing education simply for the enjoyment of learning. These learners seek employment in careers that offer greater opportunities for further professional development (Knowles, 1973).

The phases pertaining to adult learning are complex and sequential. Adult learners express multiple motivating factors and progress through several phases prior to and during the learning experience (Knowles, 1973). These motivating factors include instant satisfaction that

arises from the completion of an event, the experience of enjoyment from learning, and the sharing of knowledge or skill with others (Knowles, 1973).

The first phase involves the decision to start the learning journey and entails setting a goal, completing an interest inventory, researching opportunities, and estimating the financial cost (Knowles, 1973). In the second phase, the learner chooses the method of learning that is desirable. Adult learners may choose from programmed text, audio recordings, or workbooks from which to glean information. Other adult learners may choose to approach a learning consultant, such as an instructor or counselor, to deliver personalized instruction. A combination of the results from the first two phases leads the adult learner to the final stage that is engagement in learning. In this stage, the learner must demonstrate skill in accessing and maximizing all chosen learning opportunities (Knowles, 1973). These concepts provide the basis for the conceptual framework for this study.

### **Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature**

Research literature and methodological literature will be discussed in the next section. The specific ideas that will be examined include teacher turnover, certification routes, induction programs, mentoring programs, the role of mentoring in education, and benefits of induction and mentoring programs. Other areas that will also be explored are professional learning cohorts, factors affecting teacher effectiveness, development of self-efficacy and professional identity, and reasons for attrition.

#### **Teacher Turnover**

Teacher turnover rates have serious repercussions for students' continuum in learning (Kearney, 2014). High rates of attrition create discontinuity for students and leads to decreases in their academic performance. Furthermore, when student performance decreases, districts

experience more difficulty in recruiting and retaining new teachers (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). The efficacy of the study site's management is impacted by the struggle to fill vacant teaching positions; students, teachers, and administrators feel this strain on performance due to teacher turnover (Hong, 2012). This trend is contrary to the ballooning of the teaching cadre throughout the United States in relation to the growth experienced in student population. In 1988, there were 65,000 beginning teachers, whereas, in 2008, there were over 200,000 (Ingersoll, 2012). The nationwide cost of replacing teachers is over two million dollars annually, and, in Washington State alone, that cost ranges from \$15 million to \$34 million (United States Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education [USDOE], 2015). The high cost of recruiting new teachers also deprives the school district of the financial resources required to provide adequate training and support to both new and veteran teachers (Kearney, 2014; Hong, 2012). Research showed that teacher effectiveness is the single most important factor that impacts student learning (Behrstock-Sherratt, Bassett, Olson, & Jacques, 2014).

### **Alternate Routes to Certification**

A few states have created alternate routes for obtaining full teacher certification to help overcome the deficit (USDOE, 2015). A priority of the alternate certification programs is to attract talented individuals to the teaching profession, with the hope that such individuals with expertise in specific fields will join the ranks of professional educators (USDOE, 2015). It is expected that the cultural diversity of teachers will increase by providing alternate certification options. Alternate options for certification are the programs by which individuals who have not formally pursued a traditional educator preparation program can become educators. The broadening cultural diversity of educators is crucial due to the growing diversity of the student population (O'Connor et al., 2011). Alternative routes to teacher certifications also enable

districts to fill positions in geographical or content-area teacher shortages (Kee, 2012). These alternate teaching certification programs have been found to be most effective when the candidates complete rigorous coursework within an assigned cohort as well as when they work with well-qualified mentors (Teacher Quality, 2009).

### **Induction Programs**

While negative financial expenditure is correlated with high-quality induction and mentoring programs, there is also the related positive ability to increase teacher efficacy, reduce attrition, and improve student learning (Gareis & Nussbaum-Beach, 2007; Podozinski, 2012). When induction programs are mandated on a large scale, the mentoring programs prove to be cost-effective and transformative (Kutsyuruba, 2012). A successful induction program can be achieved in an educational system where there is a culture of trust and collaboration, and the importance of induction is valued. These programs also assign a high value to the development of instructional leadership roles among inductees (Bang, 2013).

A fundamental cornerstone of an effective induction program is the creation of a formal mentoring program in which novice teachers are paired with veteran teachers in the same subject area (Kutsyuruba, 2012). Ideally, the participants in an induction program will be individuals who have completed the basic education requirements and teacher preparation programs (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Not all participants in induction are traditionally trained, therefore increasing the importance of high-quality induction programs. High-quality induction programs have been proven to increase the retention of new teachers (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Several new teachers at present have a diverse preservice history: some have undergone extensive training, while others have completed an intense preparation program over a summer or weekends, and yet others have had no preparation at all (Johnson, 2012).

## **Guidelines for Induction Programs**

The New Teacher Center issued three recommendations for developing high-quality induction programs. The first recommendation is that the program should include clearly defined vision and goals, built-in program assessment, and also both accountability and information pertaining to leader engagement. The second guideline is that structural standards should be established focusing on mentor roles and responsibilities, teacher assessments, and professional development. Finally, a high-quality induction program, as defined by The New Teacher Center, maintains instructional standards, while encompassing pedagogical practices, equity, and open access. Implementing instructional standards will maximize the efficiency and create effective mentoring programs, which elevate the teaching proficiency and efficacy of new educators (Kearney, 2014). The instructional standards implemented are also referred to as best practices by Kearney (2014). New teacher induction programs that embrace research-based best practices are focused on teacher learning and evaluation, which are mandated by the employer, and they include mentoring with structured observations and maximize the use of time by providing a release time for the new teacher to observe exemplary veteran teachers (Kearney, 2014). In an effective multi-year program of induction, beginning teachers should be provided ongoing professional development means such as seminars, networking opportunities, and encouragement to practice frequent self-reflection (Howe, 2006; Kearney, 2014). Effective induction programs also involve mentors who share a common subject area or grade level taught with the mentee (DeAngelis, Wall, & Che, 2013).

Guidelines outlined by DeAngelis et al. (2013) for the monitoring of program impact include collecting information on the perceptions of the program from participants and combining that with teacher retention data. Howe (2006) and Kearney (2014) recommend that

developers of induction programs emphasize professional teaching standards and frequent conversations regarding student performance as parts of the program's scope and sequence. Research has also showed that the most effective induction programs incorporate impact plans that are carried out to help determine the efficacy of the program on participants (DeAngelis et al., 2013). While the focus of the new teacher induction program is on the teachers, administrators also have a role to play in the success of the program and of new teachers. Training and open communication between participants and administrators is imperative to the success of a high- quality induction program. Administrators must be committed to creating time for induction, establishing a positive culture for new teachers and mentors, preventing the feeling of isolation among new teachers, and ensuring collaboration among all stakeholders (Kearney, 2014). Many schools, where these new teachers are hired, are situated in high-poverty communities and tend towards being poorly organized and administered with a deficit of resources. If the administrator creates a favorable work environment for new teachers, the retention rate increases. The conditions that create a favorable work environment are cited as follows: teacher's relationship with colleagues, school culture, and principal's leadership skills (Johnson, 2012).

## **Mentoring Programs**

Mentoring is a means of cost-effective professional development for beginning teachers (Hudson, 2012). The surge in the number of beginning teachers has left the educational community with a teaching population that constitutes a population with the most common teacher being in their first year as compared to having an average of 15 years of experience, which was the case in 1988 (Ingersoll, 2012). In the United States, it is estimated that only 52% of the funding for education reaches the classroom, and the financial burden of training new teachers is increasing (Ingersoll, 2012). The professional development for beginning teachers has been impacted by budget constraints—to counteract the financial outcome of schools employing and training beginning teachers, New Zealand school systems most impacted by the influx of new teachers received a funding increase of two percent (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Furthermore, mentoring can provide professional development opportunities in the form of virtual mentoring, which would incur minimal cost (Hudson, 2012). Virtual mentoring programs allow the mentor teacher to continue teaching while acting as a mentor, therefore reducing the financial outcome and increasing the number of classrooms taught by certified educators (Reese, 2016). Virtual mentoring eases the financial burden for employers, because a virtual mentor is able to work with multiple mentees concurrently (Bagley & Shaffer, 2015).

Providing well-supported professional development opportunities, including face-to-face mentoring and induction programs, have been proven to be critical in supporting and retaining new educators (Darling-Hammond, 2005). The support and guidance for new and beginning teachers encourage collaboration and interaction among participants. Traditional face-to-face mentoring is known to provide more correlation with rigor and assessment as well as assist the development of relationships with colleagues (Liu, 2012). Mentors assigned to early-career

teachers are frequently unable to provide adequate support for the mentee primarily due to time constraints, and, in such cases, additional support is needed (Rodesiler & Tripp, 2012).

### **Factors Affecting Teacher Effectiveness**

New and early-career educators face time constraints, and the face-to-face communications with mentors during the workday, in order to enhance professional development, is limited. While some distributed mentorship models can partially overcome time limitations by holding collaborative meeting over lunch breaks during the workday, such models are not suitable for all individuals (Khasnabis, Reischel, Stull, & Boerst, 2013). Interactive online technology facilitating virtual mentoring relationships eases the time pressure for the new teacher and the mentor (Rodesiler & Tripp, 2012). Virtual mentoring programs (also known as e-mentoring and cyber-mentoring) provide a community of online support and encouragement as well as facilitate the creation of relationships that do not require brick and mortar buildings; therefore, they are less cost prohibitive (Khasnabis et al., 2013; Rodesiler & Tripp, 2012). The online communities also provide teachers with first-hand knowledge of and experience with the technology they will be utilizing in class (Khasnabis et al., 2013).

Virtual mentoring may be synchronous or asynchronous, leading to greater participation from all participants (Ostashewski, Reid, & Moisey, 2011). Online communities must be deliberated and designed with a specific goal in mind. A simple online forum will not develop the sense of relationship and community that a new teacher must experience; therefore, a blend of online and face-to-face mentoring is required (Liu, 2012). Challenges to online mentoring, including limitations of current technology and minimal real-time, face-to-face interaction, must be overcome (Reese, 2016).

## **Mentoring in Education**

There are two types of mentors available for new teachers: formal mentors and informal mentors (Hamburg, 2013). A formal mentor, according to Hamburg (2013), is assigned to a new employee, whereas the informal mentor is selected by the employee. According to Fresko and Nasser-Abu Alhija (2015), the relationship between a mentor and mentee is strengthened when emotional support is provided in a non-threatening environment. This relationship between mentor and mentee becomes strained when the mentors observe the mentee solely for purposes of evaluation or only to provide assistance (Fresko & Nasser-Abu Alhija, 2015).

Mentors and mentees have cited the lack of time invested in the mentorship relationship as a factor for the downfall of the programs (Long et al., 2012). Traditional face-to-face mentors report not being able to interact and observe the mentee, while they struggle to provide appropriate and timely feedback (Reese, 2016). Virtual mentors also experience miscommunications with their mentees due to limited access to visual cues from body language and oral cues contained in the tone of voice (Bagley & Shaffer, 2015). A combination of online and face-to-face mentoring meets the needs of learners by utilizing all learning modalities as well as providing a means of valuable professional development for the mentors (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Reese, 2016).

Virtual mentoring also offers the opportunity to eliminate geographical barriers and reduce biases concerning race, gender, and age if the mentoring is conducted through a chat rather than video forum (Bagley & Shaffer, 2015). Mentoring in any form has been proven to decrease teacher turnover (Guarino et al., 2006).

Characteristics of the mentor are important for building their relationship with the mentee but do not stand out as a critical factor for new-teacher retention in the research. It was clear

from the results that new teachers who met their mentor daily were more likely to leave the teaching profession than those who interacted with their mentor on a less frequent basis (Waterman & He, 2011). The qualities of an effective mentor include teaching expertise, recognition and respect from peers, analytical and reflective capabilities, interpersonal skills, availability and flexibility, openness, and commitment to serve as a mentor (Nasser-Abu Alhija & Fresko, 2014). The qualities of effective virtual or cyber-mentors include a working knowledge of, access to, and ability to facilitate communication using platforms such as Skype, Facetime, YouTube, online forums, and other types of virtual conferencing formats (Reese, 2016).

Types of mentors are also important in the preparation and development of beginning teachers. According to National and State Teacher of the Year recipients, it is critical that the mentor teacher should have received specific training for mentoring, have more than five years of experience in teaching, and have taught in the same subject area as the mentee (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2014). Mentor teachers serve as role models for new teachers, providing encouragement, counseling, and friendship (Salgur, 2014). Mentor teachers also assist novice teachers with assimilating a new identity as a teacher rather than just playing the role. These relationships allow the new teacher to reframe their identity within their school setting (Clandinin et al., 2015).

Effective, high-quality mentoring programs in Massachusetts ensure that all new teachers are assigned mentors who teach at least one block of the same subject as their mentee and are provided a release from specific non-instructional assignments so that they can observe more veteran educators (Johnson, 2012). Further research reported that matching beginning teachers with mentors in their specific area of instruction has more positive outcomes for teachers and

students, but in the United States, mentors are selected primarily based on socio-emotional matches (Achinstein & Davis, 2014).

Research has shown that new teachers enrolled in effective high-quality mentoring programs spend only 15–20 hours a week with students in classrooms and the remaining work week in collaboration with colleagues to define and refine their teaching practices, observe veteran teachers, observe one another, participate in study groups, and conduct an in-depth research of what “good teaching” entails (Darling-Hammond, 2005). A study conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) attempted to study trends in teacher attrition globally. Out of the 23 countries that provided data for that study, 15 reported mentoring as a support integrated in the program (Rikard & Banville, 2010). In the United States, there is no federally required mentoring program for beginning teachers. However, states that have implemented some form of induction and mentoring program have found the program to be effective in retaining first-year teachers (Rikard & Banville, 2010).

Educative mentoring not only provides the emotional and psychological support required by mentees but also the opportunities for these educators to deeply engage in the task of collaboration and reflection with a veteran teacher acting as mentor (Reese, 2016). Distributed mentorship is a form of educative mentorship in which the task of mentoring a new teacher is shared by multiple educators and learning takes place through the overall interactions of the group. Additionally, the distributed mentorship meetings provide opportunities for novice teachers to rehearse the vocabulary for the lessons to be taught in class through approximation in the group setting (Khasnabis et al., 2013).

## **Professional Learning Cohorts and Mentoring Networks**

Mentoring networks include a variety of professionals. These networks may comprise individuals who are experienced veteran teachers, professors, former and current classmates, in addition to experts from across the country (Rodesiler & Tripp, 2012). The creation of professional learning cohorts is especially helpful in virtual mentoring formats, since there are fewer real-time opportunities to mentor new teachers. The development of a relationship between the mentor and mentee must be more deliberate. The virtual cohort provides additional support to all parties, since time can be set aside to interact with and provide feedback to the group (Reese, 2016). Other types of professional communities may include veteran-oriented, novice-oriented, and integrated ones.

The new teachers involved in the integrated community culture were found to be more likely to stay in education, report greater satisfaction with their job, and remain in the same school for more years (Long et al., 2012).

Virtual mentoring provides more time for both parties to reflect upon and conduct meaningful conversations as compared to face-to-face mentoring experiences (Reese, 2016). It is beneficial financially and optimizes the use of existing resources for the school system that can employ the veteran teachers who are nearing retirement as mentors (formal or informal) for new teachers. Some veteran teachers, nearing retirement, have expressed a greater willingness to remain in education if they are given part-time schedules and feel that their experience is valued. By recruiting these teachers as mentors, the school system retains experienced educators, and the new teachers have access to experienced educators as mentors (Coley, 2009). Research has also revealed that early-career teachers (those with 6–7 years of experience) who have served as mentors found that the experience helped inspire their own teaching and learning; moreover, the

development of a stronger sense of professional identity by serving as a mentor is generative, since the role, in turn, contributes to the profession (Long et al., 2012).

Teacher induction programs can be provided in person or virtually. Programs used to support the online programs are web resources such as Virtual Reality Groups (VRG), Wiki Groups (WG), Hand-Held Digital Groups (HDG), and general groups (GG). The examination of induction programs that compare the success achieved utilizing Virtual Reality Groups (VRG), Wiki Groups (WKG), Hand-Held Digital Groups (HDG), and general groups (GG) determined that the participants in the VRG, HDG, and WGs expressed enjoying the process more than those in the GGs.

The VRG model includes the creation of a virtual reality life or “second life,” in which the new teacher and mentors have avatar-to-avatar meetings. VRG participants reported that being part of a mentor-mentee relationship based on an alternate reality was helpful in increasing collaboration. WKG constitute a model where two mentees are matched with an experienced educator, and the communication is facilitated through a word-processing tool in which all participants can comment, revise, and reflect upon experiences. The participants in this model reported that they learnt by sharing resources. HDG participants utilized virtual face-to-face communication through video calls. These mentees reported that using this technology allowed them to experiment with various education-related apps. GG participants did not get an opportunity to utilize technology in their communications with their mentors. Communication was in person and face-to-face, and the mentees reported that they constantly felt that they were trying to catch up to the mentor (Bang, 2013).

The individuals in the groups that have embraced technology also reported that they felt their experience was more applicable to their jobs and their students’ learning than those of the

GGs. The struggle with using technology in mentoring lies in being able to find mentors and mentees who are comfortable using such technology as a tool for feedback in an effective manner (Bang, 2013).

### **Benefits of Induction and Mentoring Programs**

Districts, where new teachers could participate in various types of induction and mentoring programs, experienced the least teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2012). Positive relationships existed between teacher retention and improved teaching practices, higher quality long-term planning, and improved attitudes in new teachers who participated in induction programs featuring a mentoring component (Rikard & Banville, 2010). New teachers who identify with a collective group of educators are more likely to be successful in the classroom and in the social context of professional educators (Podozinski, 2012).

The following are the two most common components of effective support programs for beginning teachers: working with a mentor and engaging in regular and supportive communication with a principal, another administrator, or department chair. These components combined with a common planning time, assistance from a classroom aide or paraprofessional, and smaller course load were found to result in the optimal retention rate of all types of new teacher support programs (Ingersoll, 2012; Salgur, 2014). Mentors stated that utilizing interactive techniques such as co-teaching, coaching, modeling, and stepping in to be valuable in their work with mentees and that they experienced greater success (Reese, 2016). In addition to teacher retention, induction and mentoring programs help provide equitable access to effective teaching regardless of the socio-economic status of the student or community. A group of excellent teachers can overcome the learning gaps that exist between students living in poverty and those more privileged (“On the Path to Equity,” 2014). Effective new teacher induction and mentoring

seminars were organized that focused on dealing with disciplinary issues, building self-confidence, and developing a professional identity. These seminars helped the neophyte teacher to become a more proficient educator, as stress, anxiety, and frustration were all negated (Fresko & Nasser-Abu Alhija, 2015).

### **Professional Identity Development**

The development of professional identity varies on the basis of the grade levels served. A multitude of studies has showed that new teachers struggle to learn the context of the job (students, curriculum, and educational community) as well as to form a professional identity (Long et al., 2012). Secondary teachers tend to develop their professional identity based on the subjects taught, perceived status of the topic, and their relationship with colleagues who teach the same subject.

Teachers of primary and intermediate grade levels develop their professional identity around the relationships created with their students and the impact such an educator can have on the students' life (Watters & Diezmann, 2015). When there is a struggle to establish student relationships, a mentor can facilitate the creation of these relationships. The mentor can also encourage collegial relationships between new teachers and veteran staff. As a result of these relationships, the professional identity of a new teacher is created (G. Jessett, personal communication, August 8, 2016).

Professional identity for new educators has been examined in depth pertaining to the areas of site and learning context or socio-political context, but little research has been conducted to examine teachers' orientations with regard to internal and external competing discourse (Hseih, 2014). The development of professional identity relies on the educators' perception of self-efficacy as well as external, societal constructs (Hong, 2012). New and beginning teachers

who participated in the technology-intensive induction and mentoring groups reported a stronger sense of professional identity as compared to those who participated in traditional face-to-face mentoring and induction (Bang, 2013).

### **Reasons Teachers Leave**

Beginning teachers in their first three years of teaching experience inadequate mentoring, problems with supervision, lack of support in behavior management, excessive responsibilities, failure to recognize and reward professional growth, lack of parental support, difficult teaching loads, conflicts with colleagues, and feeling powerless as the major loci of concern and reasons for which they consider leaving the profession (Clandinin et al., 2015; Rikard & Banville, 2010). Science and special education teachers are most likely to leave the profession within the first year of teaching (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Goldhaber, Kreig, Theobald, & Brown, 2014).

Additionally, Schaefer (2013) believed that there are contextual conceptualizations that address support, living with students, and professional knowledge landscapes and contribute to the high teacher turnover rate of beginning educators. The contextual concepts are addressed effectively by a mentor who is an experienced educator and able to explain some of the nuances of working in public education such as community expectations, political, and religious affiliations of the stakeholders in the district. A mentor can walk the new teacher through the day-to-day experiences and challenges from first-hand experience. Mentors play a major role in the retention of new teachers, as beginning teachers value the emotional and instructional support received from their mentors (Long et al., 2012). Teachers who have shifted from other careers confessed that their concerns are similar to other beginning teachers but tend to be self-reported as more magnified and prone to cause anxiety (Watters & Diezmann, 2015). These teachers present a lack of professional identity. Izadinia (2013) noted that professional identity is not a

stable state but is dynamic and perpetually created and recreated through the process of learning to deliver effective instruction.

Professional identity is multi-faceted, comprising sub-identities such as the tension between a teacher's ability to pursue personally valued goals and the macro-, meso-, and micro-structures surrounding education (Bates, Swennen, & Jones, 2011; Beijaard, Paulien, & Verloop, 2004; Izadinia, 2013).

### **Development of Self-Efficacy**

Positive self-efficacy is a strong indicator of professional identity development (Hseih, 2014, p. 180). Mentors play a role in the development of a teacher's sense of self-efficacy as they assist in creating a personal connection with the mentee and also in creating a social identification and belongingness with other educators (Turker, Duyar, & Calik, 2012).

A teacher's resilience, indicated by their sense of self-efficacy, is a factor of teacher attrition (Hong, 2012). Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute a course of action required to attain specific types of performance (Bandura, 1994; Bandura & Adams, 1977). In an educational framework, self-efficacy is most frequently aligned to the teacher's belief that students can perform adequately despite not being highly motivated (Turker et al., 2012).

Educators with a stronger sense of self-efficacy are more likely to perceive difficulties in teaching as a challenge rather than a threat, leading to an increased effort to solve the problem and diminishing feelings of failure (Hong, 2012). Individuals who are new to education but have had another career reported that with respect to self-efficacy and feelings of satisfaction and excitement, education is more fulfilling and rewarding than their previous careers (Watters &

Diezmann, 2015). The sense of self-efficacy a teacher perceives is directly linked to student achievement in addition to other educational outcomes (Turker et al., 2012).

Students who are enrolled in classes taught by teachers who have entered teaching through alternative certification programs record lower academic performance than students in classrooms taught by traditionally certified teachers, even as late as the alternatively certified teacher's third year of teaching (Kee, 2012). There is no clear difference between perceptions of self-efficacy and feelings of preparedness between first-year teachers coming from traditional or alternative certification programs; however, results have shown that alternatively certified teachers feel less prepared than traditionally certified first-year teachers (Kee, 2012).

### **The Phenomenon of Teacher Attrition**

The phenomenon of teacher attrition is attributable to the person (age, gender, educational background) or the organizational contexts that surround the new teacher. Harfitt (2015) identified three contributing factors to a teacher's decision to stay in education or leave: if a new teacher imagined their life as a teacher as being different than what it proved to be, they were more likely to leave; if a teacher had a personal landscape that was not supportive to professional educator as a career path; and finally, if a new teacher experienced a number of facilitating elements prompting their decision to leave the profession (Harfitt, 2015).

Watters and Diezmann (2015) found that the more highly qualified or the higher the ability of the beginning teacher, the more likely they are to leave the profession within the first five years of their career. Coley (2009) believed it is especially important for new young teachers to experience meaningful collaborations with and receive frequent feedback from mentors, peers, and administrators in order to feel valued and have the will to remain in education. Confidence, as reflected by high levels of self-efficacy, plays a role in the success of a teacher along with

technical knowledge, organizational conditions, levels of perceived emotional support, and self-positioning (Gallant & Riley, 2014). According to Hong (2012), a lack of resilience in teacher was found to be a contributing factor in decision-making regarding staying in or leaving education. Resilience in teachers is defined as the capacity or ability to successfully adapt to challenging situations supported by the mindset that success will be the outcome (Hong, 2012).

Rural schools serving students from penurious populations suffer from the greatest teacher shortage, but urban schools have the highest rate of new teacher attrition. Schools with a high percentage of students of color also experience greater new teacher attrition rates than schools with smaller minority populations (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Goldhaber et al., 2014). The contextual concepts of new teachers, including family background, familial commitment to education, and personal experiences in education, also impact the rate at which new teachers exit the profession (Schaefer, 2013). New teachers who begin their careers in low-performing schools register higher rates of attrition than those teachers who begin in successful schools.

In low-performing schools, the highest rate of attrition is among those teachers who have the highest levels of education and qualifications (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011). In general, science, math, special education, and physical education teachers have higher rates of attrition than teachers in other areas (Goldhaber et al., 2014). Physical education teachers cite the physical isolation in the school building, perceived low status and respect from the school community, a smaller cadre of teachers to approach for support, and the lack of appropriate teaching resources as stress factors and additional reasons to exit education (Rikard & Banville, 2010; Shirotriya & Quraishi, 2015).

Economics also play an important role in new teacher attrition. Wages earned by new teachers is a factor of attrition for those new to the profession with less than six years'

experience (Gilpin, 2011). Low level of earnings is one of the reasons individuals who enter the teaching profession with higher levels of education, particularly in science, are leaving the field at increasing rates in the first few years of teaching (Schaefer, 2013).

The probability of a new teacher leaving the teaching profession increases by 15–25% if their annual household income (excluding that of the educator) is greater than \$40,000, and the support systems available at work and home are not adequate (Gilpin, 2011; Harfitt, 2015). New teachers report concerns about the salary scales that they perceived to not value individual initiative, not provide rewards for raising student performance, and to ignore the extra hours worked by beginning educators (Johnson, 2012).

The culture of education is seen by new educators as one in which they may not feel welcomed and feel like they do not fit in. New teachers perceive themselves to be inadequate and not make a significant difference in their students' learning and growth. These beliefs commonly lead to early attrition from the profession. The early exit of educators not only impacts the students but also has a detrimental effect of lowering the morale of such individuals (Gallant & Riley, 2014). The intellectual and cultural capital is addressed in the examination of teachers' resilience and the organizational environment of schools. The identification of risk factors leading to teacher attrition is necessary, as change will not occur and resilience cannot be developed without identification. A culture where teachers find intrinsic value in the process of attaining a specific outcome must be created and nurtured (Hong, 2012).

### **Synthesis of the Literature**

Literature surrounding new teacher induction and mentoring programs focus on the best practices for the programs and the outcomes of these programs (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Lo & Ramayah, 2011; Rikard & Banville, 2010). The best practices include clearly defined

vision and goals, the establishment of standards focused on mentoring, assessment, and professional development, and a strong emphasis on pedagogical practices and equity (Howe, 2006; Kearney, 2014). Furthermore, Johnson (2012) highlights the need for administrators to dedicate time for induction activities, establish a climate that honors new teachers and new teacher mentors, facilitate collaboration among all stakeholders, and actively prevent new teacher isolation.

Research indicates that mentors are crucial in the success of a new teacher and play a critical role in decreasing new teacher attrition rates (Fresko & Nasser-Abu Alhija, 2015; Guarino et al., 2006; Reese, 2016). A positive relationship between a mentor and mentee is vital in helping a new teacher foster relationships with colleagues, develop a sense of professional identity, and minimize the feelings of isolation that they experience (Clandinin et al., 2015; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Liu, 2012; Rodesiler & Tripp, 2012). Further research exploring the feelings of isolation in new teachers determined that new teachers who are part of a larger cohort of educators are more likely to be successful in the classroom and experience less difficulty assimilating into the community of professional educators (Podozinski, 2012). Guarino et al. (2006) and Salgur (2014) explored different models of mentoring relationships and noted that the style of mentoring is not as critical to new teachers' success as the positive characteristics of the mentor.

Mentors also help a new teacher develop a sense of self-efficacy (Turker et al., 2012). Teachers' feelings of self-efficacy combined with their feelings of satisfaction and excitement enable new educators to face difficulties in teaching as a challenge rather than a threat (Hong, 2012; Watters & Diezmann, 2015). A greater level of achievement is observed in students who are in classrooms with teachers who have a strong sense of self-efficacy (Turker et al., 2012). It

is due to these aforementioned reasons that development of self-efficacy in new teachers is a critical component of a new teacher induction and mentoring program. In addition to self-efficacy, feeling valued by peers and administrators and the perception of emotional support from them were reported as deciding factors in the new teacher's decision to remain in the education field (Coley, 2009; Gallant & Riley, 2014; Hong, 2012). Other factors that contribute to a new teacher's decision to remain in education include contextual concepts such as family background and personal experiences in education in conjunction with the area of focus, the perceived status, and the level of respect in the community (DeAngelis & Presley, 201; Shirotriya & Quraishi, 2015). Induction and mentoring programs for new teachers can help foster cultures within the education community, in which new teachers find intrinsic value in their work and build resilience, thus decreasing the attrition rates among new teachers (Hong, 2012). Studies have examined the reasons new teachers leave the profession and recommendations for retaining new teachers in education (Clandinin et al., 2015; Rikard & Banville, 2010). It is evident from the literature that new teacher induction and mentoring programs are crucial for retaining new teachers and helping them develop into self-assured, competent, and effective educators with a strong commitment towards the profession.

### **Critique of the Literature**

Detailed research has not been conducted of programs that will increase new teacher retention, especially, for those educators who are working with emergency credentials or who have otherwise not completed teacher preparation programs. As many new teachers entering the profession are alternatively certified, there is a scope for studies exploring the best practices of induction and mentoring programs that are focused on these individuals. Further research is also required in the area of long-term mentoring programs for teachers and support programs for

veteran teachers. For the future of education, it is vital to not only retain new teachers but also to sustain veteran educators.

### **Methodical Literature**

According to Creswell (2013) and Stake (2010), case studies are an appropriate method in research works where the focus is on applied research and the implementation of a program. Case studies are applicable in research when the generalizability of the study is less important than answering the specific question of how the program works (Rose, Spinks, & Canhoto, 2015). The use of case studies deepens the understanding pertaining to a program—specifically program implementation and the impact of the program (Creswell, 2007; Paulsen & Dailey, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Researchers conducting a case study on exemplary teachers in order to explore the perspectives of teacher efficacy across the scope of their career was limited by the surveys utilized to gather information (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2014). The perspectives were limited to the choices provided by the survey.

### **Methodological Issues**

Qualitative studies can be undertaken using a variety of designs, including narrative, grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, and case study. An examination of these designs is critical for the researcher in order to answer the research question appropriately. In a narrative study, it is not permitted to present biographical or autobiographical stories. The phenomenological approach is focused on a specific occurrence or phenomenon and is not broad in scope. Ethnography is a study that is based on the cultural aspects of a particular group, and grounded theory seeks to find a theory in events (Creswell, 2013). Case study design allows researchers to analyze an issue thoroughly within a bounded system, while multiple perspectives are considered in relation to an event (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2010).

Conducting interviews for research and data collection provides an insight on participants' experiences and a tool for organizing those experiences. Interviews can be semi-structured. These use questions to guide the interview but give the researcher freedom to probe more deeply into participants' experiences. The inductive analysis model is used in conjunction with semi-structured interviews. This model consists of nine steps, which include the following: identification of the frames of analysis, domain creation based upon the frames, identification and coding of domains, domain analysis, and the selection of data that supports the outline. The sections of the interviews analyzed are the frames of the data analysis (Hatch, 2002).

The grounded theory approach to analyzing data is a process that enables the researcher to explain how a specific aspect of the world functions; this is commonly referred to as coding. Coding data is a process that includes identification of the following: event, setting, phenomenon, or object of interest; process or structural features; and principles or concepts. Furthermore, decisions regarding the initial collection of data are made—this frames that any later data collection and comparison groups are selected to foster emergent categorical groups. The grounded theory utilizes the coding of data into categories (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

### **Summary**

The results of this study will contribute to the current knowledge by thoroughly examining an implemented new teacher induction and mentoring program for the efficacy of meeting the goal of retaining new educators in the field and in the study site. The conceptual framework for this study provides a structure between formal established theory and research (Eisenhart, 1991). The framework for this study is based on Blau's social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994), and Knowles' theory of andragogy (Knowles, 1970). The social exchange theory is applicable when there is a relationship and an

exchange of knowledge through the development of trust such as that in a mentee-mentor relationship (Lawler et al., 2008).

Bandura's theory of self-efficacy is fundamental in a mentoring program, since the goal of mentoring is to help new teachers develop personal beliefs that they can be successful, reflective, and respond to any situation appropriately (Bandura, 2015). The knowledge and application of Knowles' theory of andragogy is also critical for the success of a mentoring program, as the adult learner (beginning teacher) has shown a desire and commitment to improve professionally and participate in the mentoring program to achieve success.

The high cost incurred to replace teachers is over two million dollars per year in the United States; in Washington State, the cost ranges from \$15 million to \$34 million (USDOE, 2015).

Research has shown that the high cost of recruiting new teachers is detrimental to school districts, because the financial allotment is changed to meet this expenditure (Kearney, 2014; Hong, 2012). Alternative teaching certification programs have been developed to address the need for large numbers of new teachers (Kee, 2012). With the increasing number of newly recruited teachers entering the profession, there is a need for high-quality new teacher induction and mentoring programs; on a large scale, these programs prove to be cost-effective and transformative. Successful programs have an integrated formal mentoring system in the framework itself (Kutsyuraba, 2012). These programs have evidentially increased the retention of new teachers and have strong guidelines to follow for success (Callahan, 2016; Howe, 2006; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

A critical component of new teacher induction and mentoring programs is the choice of mentors. In successful programs, it has been noted that the mentor teachers are individuals who

have received specific training, have had more than five years of successful teaching experience, and have been involved in the same subject area as their mentee (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2014). Mentors serve as role models for new teachers, help them assimilate into their new identity as educators, and allow teachers to reframe their identity within their new schools (Clandinin et al., 2015; Salgur, 2014). In addition to the mentor-mentee relationship, it is fundamental that the new teacher receives regular support from an administrator or department chair, and that they have common planning time, assistance from classroom aides or paraprofessionals, and have smaller class strengths than experienced teachers (Ingersoll, 2012; Salgur, 2014).

Moreover, the participation of new teachers in a professional learning cohort is of importance in their retention. The teachers who participate in professional cohorts report greater satisfaction with their jobs and are more likely to remain in the same school for multiple years and in education (Long et al., 2012). Developing a new teacher's sense of professional identity is based on the teacher's sense of self-efficacy in addition to external societal constructs (Hong, 2012).

Mentors have a hand in the development of a new teacher's sense of self-efficacy when interactions include developing relationships with other educators and a sense of belonging in the profession (Turker et al., 2012). Educators who have a strong sense of self-efficacy are more likely to perceive difficulties in the classroom as challenges rather than threats and are more likely to solve the problems than their peers, who have not developed a sense of professional identity (Hong, 2012). Lack of professional identity is an indicator of increased anxiety and makes a teacher more likely to exit the profession (Watters & Dietzmann, 2015).

Teacher attrition is attributable to the context of both the person and the organization surrounding the teacher. Three contributing factors to a decision to continue in the education

field or to exit are as follows: if the teacher imagined being in the profession would be different than the reality; a personal landscape that is not supportive for a professional educator; and a combination of other components, including the lack of feelings of self-efficacy and professional identity (Harfitt, 2015). Working in a low-performing school is another factor of teacher attrition. Educators who work in low-performing schools but have high levels of education and qualifications are most likely to leave the profession (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Goldhaber et al., 2014). Another indicator for new teacher attrition is economic inequity as compared to peers in other professions, and that is particularly evident in new teachers with higher levels of education (Gilpin, 2011; Schaefer, 2013).

Case studies are appropriate for the analysis of new teacher induction and mentoring programs (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2010). For analyzing a program, a case study will broaden the understanding of the program and enable an in-depth analysis of the how and why of a program rather than the generalizability of the program (Creswell, 20017; Paulsen & Dailey, 2002; Rose et al., 2015). This chapter included the rationale behind using the case studies, the conceptual framework for this study, and an exploration of the literature surrounding new teacher induction and mentoring programs, best practices, and reasons for teacher attrition.

Chapter 3 presents a detailed description of the methodology used in this study. Research questions that guide the study are explained in detail, along with the target population, study site, and details of the program. The explanation of instrumentation, the method of data collection, and data analysis procedures are also included. Finally, the chapter presents the limitations, credibility, and trustworthiness of the procedures employed, and the ethical considerations of the study.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

High attrition rates among educators within the first five years of teaching has led to a drastic shortage of qualified educators. According to Hong (2012), among the teachers entering the field, approximately 50% leave the profession within the first five years. In order to help teachers learn the skills required for teaching and receive the support needed to sustain them in the early years of teaching, new teacher mentoring programs have been implemented. The lack of skilled teachers due to high turnover rates is especially disadvantageous to students in penurious areas (Marker et al., 2013)

The site under investigation for this case study has a prevailing high turnover rate. During the 2016–2017 school year, 137 new teachers were hired by the study site, which was approximately 11% of the total teaching faculty. Many of these individuals hired are conditionally certified or are working towards certification (R. Hay, personal communication, September 22, 2016). In response to the issues pertaining to new recruits in the site, a new teacher induction and mentoring program (NTIMP) was developed and implemented. This case study is designed to explore the implementation of the NTIMP from the perspective of the new teachers participating in the program.

In this chapter, the research methodology, the purpose and design of the study, research questions, target population, site of the study, and program details are explained. Additionally, the chapter includes an explanation of the instrumentation, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. Finally, the chapter is focused on the limitations of the study, credibility, and trustworthiness of the procedures, and the ethical considerations of the study.

## **Research Questions**

The following were the research questions for this study:

1. What were the perceptions of the teachers and mentors on how well the goals of the NTIMP were met through their participation in the program?
2. What were some of the elements of the program that influenced new teachers to return or not return to teaching or the study site in the year following their participation in the NTIMP?
3. How did the teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy change due to participation in the NTIMP?

## **Purpose and Design of Study**

The purpose of this single case study was to explore how new teachers perceived the implementation of the NTIMP. Additionally, teachers' perceptions of changes in self-efficacy as a result of participation in the program and their intention to return to teaching in the study site or the profession were examined. The reasons teachers choose to leave the profession/ study site after their first year were also explored.

A case study is an appropriate approach to use for a study, such as this one exploring the NTIMP, when an organization, policy, program, or relationship is being explored (Stake, 2010). Historically, case studies have been utilized in anthropology, sociology, medicine, psychology, political science, law, and education (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). Case studies are believed to lack rigor; however, case studies can deepen the understanding of a program, specifically the implementation and impact (Paulsen & Dailey, 2002; Stake, 1995). The case study method allows the researcher to delve deeper into specific cases where the focus is on applied research and the implementation of a program (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2010). In addition, case studies

focused on program evaluation facilitate an understanding of the implementation of a program and the nuances of program impact (Paulsen & Dailey, 2002). The results of the program evaluation when shared with administrators provide a basis for implementing changes that shape the future of the program.

Qualitative methods of data collection were used in this study. The data compiled through the surveys and interviews were analyzed applying open coding techniques such as the following: categorical aggregation to find issue-relevant meanings, discovering patterns to find correspondence between two or more categories, and finally developing naturalistic generalizations to facilitate the widespread application of findings or to enable others to learn from the findings (Creswell, 2013).

The following variables were examined, as they relate to teachers' perception of program implementation: a) the participant's intention to return to teaching in the coming school year, b) new teachers' participation in the induction and mentoring program, and c) the teacher's self-efficacy.

### **Study Site**

The study site was a semi-rural school district in the Western part of the United States. The study site has a student population of 17,441 ([Research site redacted], n.d.). Among the students, 8974 in the district are male, and 8467 are female. The study site serves a student population constituting 70.5% Hispanic, 24.7% Caucasian, 1% African American, and the rest are Native Americans and Asians. Within the site, 74% students qualify for free or subsidized lunches ([Research site redacted], 2016). While the student population in the district is predominantly Hispanic, the teachers do not mirror the same diversity. Out of the 1109 classroom teachers in the site, 19% identify as being Hispanic, 78% as Caucasian, 1% as African

American, and the rest as Native American and Asian (Office of xxxx, n.d.). The study site's community is heavily dependent on agriculture and has a large migrant population. There are some students from the migrant population who need and receive bilingual services in the classroom, while others are taught in English classrooms. Students enrolled in bilingual education equate to 35% of the total student population. According to the study site's website, 56% of students live in non-English speaking or bilingual homes.

The majority of the bilingual students are Spanish speakers; however, programs are also offered in the Russian language. Support is also provided for students and families who speak other languages with smaller populations in the study site. English language learners (ELL) comprise 40% of students in the study site. Students who are determined to be transitional ELL comprise 19% of the student population, and 12% of the students receive special education services ([Research site redacted], 2016).

The large industries in this area include nuclear science and research, viticulture and research corresponding to it, alternative energy source development, and alternative energy research. There are other scientific laboratories located in the area as well. This proximity to the nuclear industry and other scientific industries has led to students and families from all over the world to relocate here for employment. There is some impact on the site as a result of an influx of international professionals and their families, but the effect is not as great as other local districts, since the study site is more directly impacted by agricultural workers than scientists.

In response to the area's industrial needs and the national movement to increase science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, the study site has built three K–6 STEM elementary schools, one K–2 STEM elementary school, one 3–6 STEM elementary school, and one STEM high school. In addition to these STEM schools, the study site has ten K–

6 elementary schools, three middle schools, two high schools, and one alternative school. The general area also has one community college, a major state university, a branch and remote campuses of two private universities, and a medical school.

The teaching staff in the study site has relatively fewer years of experience; the average number of years of experience for teachers is 10.8 as compared to the state average of 13.3 (OSPI, 2015). The relative lack of experienced teachers can be attributed to a number of factors, including a state-wide shortage of teachers, the aging teacher population that has resulted in higher rates of retirement, low pay, and societal stigma that surrounds education as a career (Clandinin et al., 2015; Rikard & Banville, 2010; Schaefer, 2013; Theobald, 1990). Although the teachers have comparatively little experience as educators, 62.9% of the teachers hold at least a master's degree. Teachers working with an emergency teaching certificate comprise 0.3% of the teaching staff, and 3.3% are working with conditional certificates as compared to the state's 0.1% teaching with an emergency certificate and 0.3% with a conditional certificate (OSPI, 2015). Due to the inadequate experience of the teaching staff, new teacher support resources have been extended to all teachers who request the assistance.

Certification requirements for school teachers across the U.S. were modified in the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reenactment legislation. The Act defines highly qualified teachers as those who meet the state guideline requirements ("ESSA," 2016). Within the state, 95% classes taught by educators who meet the federal ESEA highly qualified (HQ) standards, whereas, in this study site, only 91.1% are HQ. The number of HQ teachers employed in schools of high- poverty areas is even lower; statewide, highly qualified educators in such schools comprise 86.6% of all teachers. Within the study site's high-poverty schools, 85.2% of classes are taught by HQ educators (OSPI, 2015).

## **Research Population and Sampling Method**

The target population for the study comprised 137 teachers recruited by the study site for the 2016–2017 school year. Among those teachers, 109 are new to teaching, 94 of whom are conditionally certified, and the remaining 15 have full certification (xxxx, personal communication, September 22, 2016). In an attempt to fill these teaching positions, the state has permitted individuals with various levels of qualifications to teach while working towards obtaining a full teaching credential. Teachers participating in the new teacher mentoring program are working with initial certificates, conditional teaching certificates, and emergency teaching certificates.

Teachers with initial teaching certificates are fully certified and have graduated a university's teacher preparation program; conditional teaching certificates are obtained by individuals who have not completed a teacher preparation program, and emergency teaching certificates are provided to individuals who have not yet started a teacher preparation program and are awaiting paperwork clearance from OSPI.

The method for selecting the sample for the case study entailed first obtaining a list of all newly hired first-year teachers. This list of teachers in their first year of teaching in the site and participating in the mentoring program was provided by the human resources office. This list also included the new teachers' email addresses. The researcher sent an email to all new teachers, describing the study and requesting their participation in the study. All participants who volunteered were asked to sign an informed consent form. Each participant was informed that the study was voluntary, and there would be no repercussions for opting out or not choosing to participate.

## **Instrumentation**

The instruments used to collect data included the PSI–BT survey and the BTMP survey (Appendix C). Document reviews were performed for websites, handbooks, and communications between the mentors, the office overseeing the program, and new teachers. Finally, face-to-face interviews (Appendix D) were conducted.

### **Perceptions of Success Inventory for Beginning Teachers (PSI–BT)**

The PSI–BT used for this study, with permission, was created by researchers Corbell, Reiman, and Neitfeld (2008) at North Carolina State University. This instrument, comprising 78 Likert scale questions, is designed to measure eight identified factors that can be attributed to a beginning teacher’s perceptions of success. The factors are the following: resource support, administrative support, mentor support, colleague support, assignment and workload, commitment, student outcomes, and professionalism and efficacy.

Corbell et al. (2008) determined the reliability of internal consistency for the PSI–BT by analyzing the Cronbach coefficient. Content validity was explored and assessed through a literature review and through consultation with experts on the subject of new teacher support. The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale was used to assess concurrent validity for teacher efficacy. The PSI–BT was then approved by North Carolina State University to be a valid instrument when internal reliability, content validity, and concurrent validity were measured (Corbell et al., 2008).

### **Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program (BTMP)**

The BTMP survey, developed by Flanagan (2006), was used to determine the participants’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the mentoring program at the study site (Appendix H). This BTMP survey focuses on evaluating the support provided by the mentors in

addition to the overall facilitation of the program. The BTMP survey is being utilized with permission from Flanagan (Appendix G). Flanagan (2006) developed a table of content representativeness to assure content validity to a reasonable degree. The BTMP was determined to be a valid instrument when internal reliability and content validity were ascertained (Flanagan, 2006).

The BTMP survey was distributed to the participants online through a program called Qualtrics. Questions pertaining to age, gender, grade level taught, teaching experience, and the type of teacher preparation program completed are elements included in the demographic data solicited by the survey. In addition to the demographics, the survey also probes for answers to questions that determine the levels of support provided by the mentors in the program and the overall facilitation of the NTIMP.

## **Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted. The researcher met the interview participants in a private location, so that the conversation was focused and remained private. To encourage the participants to share more information, open-ended questions based on research questions and sub-questions were asked (Creswell, 2013). This type of open-ended questioning is generally used in qualitative research. The semi-structured questions are established in advance, but they are open-ended (Given, 2008). The open-ended type of questioning provides the participants with an opportunity to share more information and to further clarify their thoughts. With the consent of the interviewees, the conversations were audio-recorded using a password protected program for later transcription. After the transcription, member checking was performed. The recordings were deleted after the completion of member checking.

These semi-structured interviews were designed to obtain as much information as necessary to understand the participant's experiences in the NTIMP. The questions for the semi-structured interviews have been provided in Appendix . Creswell (2013) suggested that the researcher use interview guides, so that notes can be taken during the interview; the use of interview guides enables the researcher to organize his/her thoughts during the interview and ask any additional questions that may arise along the course.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The following procedures were followed for the 10 teachers who volunteered for interviews and survey participants.

#### **PSI–BT Survey**

The PSI–BT survey link was sent to all the participants through their work email account one week after obtaining their consent to participate in the study. The PSI–BT survey was administered through Qualtrics and was entirely carried out online. The survey was open to responses for two weeks. After the survey window closed, the results for the PSI–BT were sent to researchers at North Carolina State University, who, in turn, forwarded the results to the researcher. This step was necessary, as it was a condition for the approval from North Carolina State University researchers, to utilize the survey. The results of the survey were downloaded to a password encrypted thumb drive and stored in a secure location for future analysis. Each participant was assigned a numeric identifier to maintain confidentiality. The numeric identifiers were also stored on a password encrypted thumb drive kept in a secure location. This survey took each participant no longer than 30 minutes to complete.

## **BTMP Survey**

The BTMP survey link was sent to all participants on their work email account. The BTMP survey was administered through Qualtrics. The survey was left open to responses for two weeks. Once the survey window closed, the results of the survey were downloaded to a secure, password encrypted program for future analysis. This survey took no more than 30 minutes to complete.

## **Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 10 volunteering participants. These interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission and transcribed by an online transcription service called Rev.com. Following the completion and transcription of the interviews, member checking was performed. The member check provided the participants with an opportunity to review interview transcripts, and any required changes that were identified could be made. The window of time for member checking was one week after the completion of interview transcription. Interview transcripts were destroyed after member checking and data analysis.

Interviews were conducted until saturation was reached. It was determined that saturation was reached when collecting new data did not reveal any new information on the issue being investigated (Mason, 2010). Fusch and Ness (2015) observed that a failure to reach saturation negatively impacts the validity of any qualitative research, and therefore, all attempts to reach saturation must be made. However, another factor to consider when determining saturation, as suggested by Mason (2010), is when a further collection of data becomes excessive and counter-productive to the study.

## **Operationalization of Variables**

The surveys that the participants received were designed in a manner that could determine their feelings of self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and intention to return to teaching in the following school year. Self-efficacy is the belief an individual has concerning their capacity to influence other events in their life (Bandura & Adams, 1977). This belief includes how a person thinks, feels, behaves, and motivates themselves to perform at certain levels (Bandura, 1994). A teacher's perception of self-efficacy impacts their desire to continue teaching. If a teacher believes that they are good at their job, they are more likely to remain in the field. The interviews uncovered the participants' experiences with the induction and mentoring program that influenced their success and decision regarding employment in the following school year.

## **Data Analysis Procedures**

The qualitative data analysis for the interviews was performed utilizing open, axial, and selective coding that could establish patterns and connections between the categories identified (Creswell, 2013). First, open coding was used to discover concepts and categories within the data. Open coding was initially employed, because it facilitates the identification of common experiences and the significant statements that emerge thereon.

Subsequently, axial coding was implemented. Axial coding, according to Creswell (2013), is the process of connecting categories to subcategories. During the axial coding phase, data was assembled in a manner that facilitated the development of categorical relationships in order to formulate a theory. Axial coding was performed, considering one category at a time. At this point, a schema was constructed to discuss the relationship of the codes to categories. Finally, selective coding was executed to posit an explanation for the categories and their interrelationship that emerged during the axial coding (Creswell, 2013).

Descriptive statistics were applied to analyze the Likert scale data gathered from the surveys. The items investigated include mentoring meetings, current experience with mentor interaction that included topics discussed, self-efficacy as a result of program participation, and participant demographics. The data for the Likert scale items was summarized in a frequency table. A content analysis was performed for the document review. Content analysis is a research technique that aids an objective and systematic description of the documents' contents (Bengtsson, 2016).

This process began with the examination of the information held in the documents, deciphering of the meaning of the information, and the discovery of relationships and themes in the meaning derived from the documents.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this study was that it relied on participants' experiences. The findings are a measure of how participants perceived their experience in the program compared to how they believe the program should have been. A second limitation is the lack of an external evaluator.

Employing an external evaluator may have been better, because it would increase the credibility and objectivity of the evaluation. Third, the data collector's bias can be considered a limitation. Since the researcher is a peer of the participants and is conducting the interviews and collecting data, the participants may not be completely honest in their responses. Some respondents may not be completely honest due to the reluctance to be judged by a peer. Finally, although the insights gained from the study results may be helpful to other districts and mentoring programs, the study cannot be generalized owing to the unique characteristics of the study site.

## **Delimitations**

The delimitations of this study include the choices that were made in order to complete this research, including the choice of the problem as well as the specifications of what the study will cover. This study only explores one site and due to the unique characteristics of the site, may not be duplicable at other sites. New teachers in the study site who have previous teaching experience were excluded from the sample population. Moreover, the reasons for leaving the study site at the end of the school year that are not directly related to the NTIMP were not investigated. There may be the issue of teachers not being completely honest in the interviews and surveys due to the erroneous beliefs that there may be professional repercussions as a result of such honesty (xxxx, personal communication, September 14, 2016).

## **Study Reliability**

In order to increase reliability of the study, validated instruments were used. In addition, the study was described in depth. This would allow for replication of the study. Described further below are the methods used to achieve dependability and confirmability as well as the process for member checking.

### **Dependability**

In this study, triangulation was applied to the data to increase the reliability of the study. Creswell (1998) specifies the need for triangulation to increase the trustworthiness of the data. Triangulation requires the availability of more than one type of data in the analysis. Surveys and interviews will be utilized to achieve the triangulation of methods. Through method triangulation, the data will be verified, and the interpretation and conclusions drawn from the data can be deemed trustworthy. After the interviews, rigorous member checks will be performed

to verify data interpretation (Carlson, 2010). Triangulation will also prevent bias from altering the interpretation of data.

The steps involved in this study were described in detail, so that the study could be replicated. The dependability is achieved through reliability and by showing that a repetition of the study, applying the same methods, can produce the same results. A thorough description of the study's methodology is included to enable repetition of the study, thus creating an audit trail. According to Shenton (2004), the manifestation of dependability is reflected through the thorough description of the methodology of the research, with special attention being placed on adopting a methodology that overlaps, such as individual interviews and focus groups. Shenton (2004) further posited that sections devoted to research design and implementation, operational detail of data gathering, and the reflective appraisal of the project are included in the written research, which reflects dependability.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is achieved in research through the triangulation of data to reduce or eliminate researcher's bias. Moreover, the use of an audit trail provides a clear description of the steps followed throughout the research project, and attention paid to reflexivity can address the inevitable personal bias of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). The researcher is employed by the same study site as the study participants. Since there is a shared experience, bias must be addressed, and steps should be taken to reduce and eliminate bias. In this study, bias is reduced through the anonymity of the surveys and carefully performed member check of interview data. The confirmability of a research allows the reader to follow the research methods step-by-step, and that may include either data-oriented or theoretical approaches. The subsequent sections

provide the reader with insight into the thought process of the researcher while developing the methodology (Shenton, 2004).

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Internal validity is a positivist research approach that determines whether or not the study has measured what it was originally designed to measure (Shenton, 2004). This study aimed to measure the perceptions of success that new teachers experienced as a result of the new teacher induction and mentoring program as well as the influence of the program on the intention of the educator to return to education. The success of the mentee and their perceptions of their success while enrolled in the program was largely reliant on the relationship between the mentor and mentee. The threats to validity that exist in studies involving relationships arise from instrumentation, maturation, mortality, morality, causal-time order, compensation, and demoralization (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990). The instrumentation threat exists, because there is only a post-program evaluation. The maturation threat emerges from the fact that the program was only examined in one school year. The study site experienced a large turnover in administration during the summer, and that resulted in teachers being recruited after the beginning of the school year. This was a threat to the study, since it impacted the teacher's ability to fully participate in the induction programs and early training opportunities and derive the full benefits of the NTIMP. The causal- time threat exists, because the surveys will be completed within a short duration. Compensation is not a threat to this study, because the participants are not receiving compensation for their participation in the study. For this study, the triangulation of data is gained from surveys, individual interviews, and informal conversations.

### **Expected Findings**

The expected findings are that the participants' perceptions of self-efficacy would increase, and the new teachers would remain in the profession/study site in the coming year. It is expected that the professional development seminars offered through the NTIMP would meet the needs of the participants, and this will have a positive impact on their self-efficacy and intention to return to the profession/ study site.

### **Ethical Issues**

The methodology of this proposal was submitted to the IRB at Concordia University-Portland for approval. A letter of approval from the study site administration was also obtained. The superintendent gave permission to conduct this study, based on the belief that the results of this study will assist in the development of high-quality teachers and the sustenance of these teachers in the field of education. It can be beneficial to others as well who, after the study has been conducted, may enter a newly revised mentor program that has received valuable evaluation input from the study.

The researcher is a teacher in the study site and does not serve as a mentor or instructional coach on a formal or informal basis. As a fellow educator, there are many times when collaboration is expected among teachers, and the researcher participates in the professional learning communities. However, there are no beginning teachers who are members of the researcher's professional learning community. The researcher will not benefit from this study in any manner, nor is there any financial connection between this study and the researcher. There is no conflict of interest or deception involved in this study. As a teacher, the researcher does not evaluate other teachers in any manner.

The participants were informed that participation in this study is voluntary and all responses will be kept confidential. Once the data from the surveys and interviews has been analyzed, the collection tools will be kept in a safe place to prevent tampering or the invasion of any participant's privacy. All participants were identified by a number rather than their name or school site. The researcher will be honest and truthful in reporting the findings of the study, will be trustworthy, and will provide an accurate account of all information. The participants were provided with the contact information and procedures for withdrawing their participation from the study; their data will not be included. They were informed that there are no repercussions for not participating in the study, for not answering any question that they wished not to, or for withdrawing from the study at any time.

### **Summary**

The major components of the evaluation research were reviewed in this chapter using a case study design. The purpose of this chapter was to explain the type of data that was collected and the process used to examine the data. The case study design was chosen for the research, since a deeper understanding of the program being examined (Stake, 1995). The data sources included were the PSI– BT survey, the BTMP survey, document reviews, and interviews. Coding will be used to analyze interview data, and content analysis will be performed for the document review. Furthermore, trustworthiness of the study, instrumentation, and expected results were included in this chapter. In the next chapter, the data findings of the case study, including data from the PSI–BT, BTMP, interviews, and document review have been covered.

## **Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results**

The purpose of this single case study was to explore how new teachers perceived the implementation of the NTIMP. In this section, a review of the research questions and discussion of participants in the study are presented. The findings from the PSI–BT and BTMP surveys have been included as well as those of the review of the new teacher handbook, program guidelines, and welcoming information published on the official website. The themes that emerged from the interviews are included along with a table of the findings. Findings related to the research questions have also been reported.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What were the perceptions of the teachers and mentors on how well the goals of the NTIMP were met through participation in the mentoring program?
2. What were some of the elements of the program that influenced new teachers to return or not to teaching or to the study site in the year following their participation in the NTIMP?
3. How did the teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy change due to participation in the NTIMP?

### **Description of the Sample**

The target population of this study included 137 teachers recruited and hired by the study site in the 2016–2017 school year. There was a total of 33 teachers who volunteered for the study. Interviews were conducted with 10 volunteers, 15 teachers completed the PSI-BT survey, and 27 completed the BTMP survey. Some participants were included in interviews as well as both surveys. The demographics of the study participants are described below and a summary of the demographics is included in Table 1.

Table 1

*Demographics of Study Participants*

Gender	PSI–BT	BTMP	Interviews
Female	10	17	6
Male	5	10	4
Not indicated	0	1	0

**PSI–BT Participants**

The participants who completed the survey comprised 5 male teachers and 10 female teachers. Among the participants, 10 responded that this is their first year of teaching but not their first year with a job in the education field. The 10 who had been previously employed by the study site served in capacities such as paraprofessional, student interventions/campus security, early childhood workers, and substitute teachers. At the time of the survey, nine of the participants had not completed a formal teacher preparation training through a university.

**BTMP Participants**

The teachers who participated in the BTMP survey comprised 17 female teachers and 10 male teachers. One teacher did not indicate a gender. These teachers were completing their first year of teaching.

**Interview Participants**

The teachers (identified using pseudonyms to protect confidentiality) who participated in the interviews were the following:

*Amy*, a second-grade general education classroom teacher, who is currently working towards earning her teaching credential;

**Rick**, a high school special education teacher, who is working to find a credential program that fits his needs, previously employed as a student interventionist in the study site;

**Lisa**, an elementary music teacher school, who holds a preliminary teaching credential, teaches all grade levels from Kindergarten through sixth grade, all special education students, and all bilingual students;

**Bill**, a special education teacher at a high school, who is currently enrolled in a certification program;

**Jeff**, a special education teacher at a high school, who is not currently enrolled in a credentialing program and has not made a decision whether to remain in education, thereby necessitating earning the credential;

**Juan**, a fourth-grade elementary bilingual teacher, who is currently enrolled in a credentialing program;

**Tana**, a second-grade elementary general education teacher, who completed her credentialing requirements during this school year;

**Sofia**, a fifth-grade elementary general education teacher, who is not currently enrolled in any credentialing program but is looking to find one that is a suitable for her needs; **Sarah**, a fifth-grade elementary bilingual teacher, who holds a preliminary teaching credential, previously employed by the study site as a paraprofessional and as a substitute teacher;

**Erika**, an elementary music teacher, who holds a preliminary credential, teaches all grade levels of Kindergarten through sixth-grade, additionally teaches all special education students and all bilingual students.

## **Research Methodology and Analysis**

Several methods were used to analyze the data. These are listed below.

### **Interviews**

Content analysis was performed to analyze the interview transcripts and documents collected for review. Computer program software for data analysis, NVivo, was utilized for coding the interview data. First, the interview transcripts were inserted into NVivo, and nodes were created. Nodes are the topics that were revealed in the interviews. All the transcripts were read, and information was then sorted into these nodes. The nodes created from the interviews were as follows: additional support needed, building mentor, ideal mentoring program, mentoring program v. growth as a teacher, mentoring program—remain in teaching, non-assigned mentor, observing other teachers, professional development—helpful, relationship with mentor, strengths of the mentoring program, types of support from mentor, and weaknesses of the mentoring program. Each transcript was read multiple times, and all the responses were copied and pasted in the appropriate node. From the broad topics of the nodes, the responses were further analyzed and sorted according to themes. The topics with the highest number of responses received were thus considered as the themes from the interviews. All interview transcripts and documents were organized, read reflectively multiple times, and coded for themes.

### **Surveys**

Descriptive statistics were applied to analyze the data from the PSI–BT and BTMP surveys. Using descriptive statistics facilitates the explanation of the raw data in meaningful ways

that derives patterns from the data. The survey data was examined and relationship patterns between the input and the output were explored.

### **Document Review**

All documents that related to the NTIMP were read multiple times and important information was noted. The documents were annotated and highlighted, then summarized for identification of critical information. The information was then organized into categories that allowed for thorough processing of the data and determination of relationships within the study.

### **Summary of Findings**

The results of the document review of study site documents and websites that pertain to the NTIMP have been provided subsequently. In addition, the results from the PSI–BT and BTMP surveys are given. Finally, the interview results are presented.

### **Document Review Results**

Study site documents and websites related to the NTIMP were reviewed for this study. The materials reviewed included the new teacher handbook, mentor pages on the study site’s website, and communication from mentor teachers to mentees. Further, the BEST grant information on the OSPI website and training materials provided to mentors from the BEST grant training team were reviewed. Finally, materials that were utilized for new teacher professional development trainings and New Teacher Institute were reviewed in order to assess the extent the goals of the program were addressed in these trainings. The results of the document review are provided below. They include documentation for the NTIMP, documents relating to the goals of the program, new teacher institute, and new teacher professional development seminars.

## **New Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program (NTIMP)**

The NTIMP has been designed on the basis of the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) grant guidelines. The BEST grants were an initiative of the state for the funding of beginning educator support programs. This is the third consecutive year that the study site has applied for and received the BEST grant, which has been designed to help fund training of mentors and professional development for new recruits.

As indicated in the document review, the purpose of the NTIMP is to provide a support system that is focused on developing instructional practices in a collaborative environment, with an emphasis on student achievement. New teachers are defined by the study site as educators who are in their first year of employment with the site regardless of prior teaching experience elsewhere.

The program outline on the site's website forwards that "district leadership believes that the newest professionals deserve a comprehensive support system consisting of a building mentor, district mentor, and administrators" (Research site redacted, 2016). The NTIMP was developed for a cohort of individuals who are new to the profession and/or new to the study site.

As a part of the mentoring program, new teachers receive hard copies of the new teacher handbook, access to professional development seminars delivered by mentors and held at the study site's training room, opportunities to observe established teachers, and coaching after mentor observations. In addition, new recruits receive a welcome letter written by the mentor, the teacher on special assignment (TOSA), with whom they engage in personal interactions such as coaching, one-to-one meetings, and discussions. The TOSA has been recruited by the study site administrators to promote professional training and support new teachers.

## **NTIMP Goals and Responsibilities**

As I determined through the document review, the program's goals for the NTIMP are simplified according to goals and responsibilities for teachers, mentors, administrators, and program leadership. These goals and responsibilities function as guidelines for the implementation of the program. The goals of the program and responsibilities of the involved staff members are provided as follows.

**Goals and responsibilities for teachers.** The program goals for new teachers are as follows: to identify needs, concerns, and growth areas with the help of the TOSA and mentor teachers; to develop their instructional competence through observations of instruction and non-evaluative feedback by mentors and TOSA; to develop their knowledge and skills necessary to increase student learning; and to receive feedback and evaluation as required by school administrators. Through a welcoming letter, the TOSA invited teachers to approach the TOSA for one-on-one coaching, including modeling lessons and non-evaluative feedback. It is the new teacher's responsibility to initiate contact with the TOSA.

**Goals and responsibilities for building-level mentor teachers.** Building-level mentor teachers are defined as those individuals who have been nominated by or received recommendations from at least two current certificated colleagues. All building mentors are required to have at least five years of successful teaching experience in the study site (Appendix R). Building mentors participating in the NTIMP have the following goals: to help teachers become more reflective educational practitioners, to assume the role of a teacher leader, to encourage enthusiasm and motivation for the teaching profession, and to equip the new teacher with knowledge and skills of effective classroom practice. Building mentors are also responsible for fostering a trusting and confidential relationship with the new teacher, meeting the new

teachers at mutually agreed upon times, teaching effective instructional techniques through modeling, and encouraging the new teacher to identify needs, concerns, and areas of growth.

Building mentor teachers have specific roles in the NTIMP, including serving as a professional role model, providing a variety of resources to the new teacher for the development of effective teaching practices, maintaining a continued involvement in professional growth opportunities, and participating in training modules that assist the mentoring process. In addition, the building mentors assist new teachers to obtain contact information for building/classroom needs, including information regarding who to contact for requesting a substitute teacher. The mentor ensures that the new teacher has been introduced to staff members such as education specialists, paraprofessionals, teaching team members, and building administrators and further orients the new teacher to building and study site policies.

**Goals and responsibilities for the TOSA.** The TOSA guides building mentors in understanding and executing their roles and responsibilities. Moreover, the TOSA is expected to facilitate monthly professional development seminars and collaborate with new teachers to observe them and provide non-evaluative feedback about their teaching. The TOSA provides support through co-teaching or by modeling lessons for the new teachers to imitate. In addition, the TOSA provides additional assistance for understanding the use of data and assessment to guide instructional practices, guidance with instructional planning and delivery, support during the professional evaluation process, and help with other topics as needed. The TOSA is responsible for observing new teachers for the purpose of providing supportive and constructive feedback. The focus is on collaborative conversations that aid the reflection on the purpose and techniques of the lesson.

It is also the responsibility of the TOSA to facilitate conversations between building mentors and new teachers if conflicts arise in that relationship. There is no set schedule for contacting each teacher or visiting each school site. Instead, the new teachers or building administrators can request visits from the TOSA as and when required. However, there is a set schedule for professional development trainings with topics such as classroom management, use of assessment and data, instructional planning and delivery, communication with families, the teacher evaluation process, and other topics that may be requested (Appendix K). The notification informing participants of seminars is sent through email from the professional development office, in postings on the study site's professional development calendar, through personal contact between mentors and new teachers, and via announcements by building administrators.

**Goals and responsibilities for building administrators (Principal).** The program goals for building administrators entail supporting the efforts to create effective teachers by promoting positive profession growth and encouraging collegial partnerships. The responsibility of the building administrator also includes facilitating the mentoring process and supporting new teachers and mentors participating in the program. The building administrator should also observe and evaluate all new teachers in their building in accordance to the state and study site administrative requirements (Appendix R).

### **New Teacher Institute (NTI)**

New teachers are invited to the New Teacher Institute (NTI) organized by the program administrators. The NTI is the first component of the NTIMP and is a multi-day event, which serves as the introduction to the monthly professional development seminars. The sessions of the

NTI begin with an intensive day-long introduction and training in the adopted English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum (Appendix P).

The second day of the NTI is an intensive all-day introduction and training schedule in the adopted math curriculum. Both the ELA and math trainings are divided into different tracks depending on the grade level bands of participants. The third day of the NTI involves a training session for the teacher evaluation system, facilitated by administrators from the study site's central administrative office. The fourth day of the NTI is a day-long training session for the NTIMP, and that is an opportunity for the new teachers to meet the mentors and gain an understanding of the program. Finally, the last day of the NTI includes a briefing by the school superintendent that is followed by a bus tour of the community with a special emphasis on the schools and housing areas.

The teachers who are recruited after the initial NTI training are provided a brief overview of the program and are referred to the mentors and NTIMP by building principals. The building principals are also responsible for facilitating the connection between the building mentor and new teacher at this point. The building mentor is responsible for explaining the NTIMP process to the new teacher and the roles and responsibilities the new teacher must assume in the program. Depending on the building, either the building administrator or the building mentor introduces the new teacher to the instructional coaches in their building, and the coaches, in turn, provide the overview and introduction to the curriculum.

### **New Teacher Professional Development Seminars**

The professional development seminars are held once a month, on a Tuesday, at the study site's central office, and the notification of the seminars is sent to all new teachers via email. All

seminars are held after contract hours. The schedule and topics for the seminars are posted on the study site's website and in the professional development calendar (Appendix P).

The topics covered in the new teacher professional development seminars include general induction topics, grading and report card completion, classroom management and discipline, parent- teacher communication and conferences, strategies for increasing learner engagement, curriculum implementation, and certification.

### **PSI–BT Results**

The Perceptions of Success Inventory—Beginning Teachers (PSI–BT) survey was developed by the College of Education, North Carolina State University. This survey was designed to explore experiences with mentor meetings and how those experiences affected the teachers' perceptions of success. It comprised 78 Likert scale questions. The survey questions were designed to explore the mentor meetings. The participants were asked to report how many times they met their mentor (TOSA), building mentor, and also any other experienced teacher who was not an assigned mentor. Table 4 presented below indicates that participants accessed the TOSA fewer times than they consulted with building mentors or other experienced teachers. Often times, the participants stated that during the school year, they did not meet a mentor regardless of the mentor's level (study site or building). A majority of the participants did not meet a mentor at all (53%).

However, the participants did report that they had collaborated with teachers other than the TOSA or building mentors more than nine times throughout the year (87%). During the interviews, the participants spoke about not wanting to bother the TOSA or building mentors with their concerns and expressed the lack of perceived availability of the mentors. The participants frequently accessed the teacher next door, a teammate, or the instructional coaches

in the building for assistance when required. The participants believed that the non-mentor teachers would be less busy and would not judge them for their questions. There was a perception shared during the interviews that a few mentors had evaluative roles and would communicate the concerns or struggles shared by the new teachers with the building administrators.

Table 2

*Number of Mentoring Meetings*

Mentor	Never	1–2	3–4	5–6	7–8	>9
District	20%	13%	27%	27%	7%	7%
Building	33%	--	7%	7%	--	53%
Other	--	--	--	7%	7%	87%

The participants were asked to respond to items on the survey that determined the degree to which they felt that the new teacher induction and mentoring program helped them understand that they were effective teachers. These results have been indicated in Appendix V. The concept of effective teaching included whether new teachers believed that they were better able to motivate a variety of diverse learners in their classrooms, including students with disruptive behaviors, learning disabilities, limited English proficiencies, and students from diverse backgrounds.

The majority of participants in the NTIMP stated that due to their participation in the program, they were able to defuse disruptive behaviors (53%), teach a variety of skill levels (60%), effectively communicate with parents/caregivers (87%), and teach students with learning disabilities (53%). However, 67% of the participants indicated that as a result of participating in the NTIMP, they were not able to effectively teach students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), effectively teach students from diverse backgrounds (60%), nor were they able to

motivate all their students (67%) or take instructional decisions pertaining to student learning (74%). The study site has a large population of students who are classified as LEP (35%) and are from diverse backgrounds, including the following groups: migrants (7.1%), those in foster care (0.5%), or those classified as being homeless (2%) (xxxx, n.d.).

### **BTMP Results**

The Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program (BTMP) survey was utilized to determine the participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the mentoring program at the study site. This survey focuses on the support provided by the TOSA in addition to the overall facilitation of the program. The BTMP survey was completed by 28 individuals. The response rate to this survey was low, and this affects the validity of the results. Therefore, these findings may not be representative of the population.

As shown in Appendix U, the majority of participants (71%) indicated that the interactions with their mentors provided the amount of help that they needed with their teaching. Data also shows that a majority of participants (63%) felt that they had a clear channel of communication with their mentors. However, the results also indicated that regular feedback was not consistent for all participants. Only 34% of the participants agreed that they received regular feedback, whereas 52% of participants responded that they did not receive regular feedback. Feedback was provided to 37% of participants only when the participant requested feedback; however, 52% of participants received feedback regardless of inquiry.

### **Interview Results**

As a result of coding, themes emerged from the data collected. The themes were as follows: mentor support pertaining to practice, communication issues, support other than the assigned mentor, influence of the program on intention to continue teaching, and impact of

support on teachers' reported self-efficacy. There was a combination of positive responses, negative ones, and some with both elements. A snapshot of the program coding results is included in Appendix R.

### **Presentation of Research Question Results**

The research questions and the finding related to the questions have been listed below. The data triangulating method was implemented to collect data from surveys, document reviews, and interviews. By triangulating the data and through the development of themes and descriptions, credibility and accuracy of results has been achieved.

#### **Research Question 1**

RQ 1. What were the perceptions of the teachers and mentors on how well the goals of the program were met through their participation in the NTIMP? To answer this research question, the PSI-BT and BTMP surveys were conducted. Further clarification concerning the data was derived from the interview responses. The responses to questions regarding the interactions between participants and mentors reflect that 37% of the participants perceived that their mentors encouraged self-reflection about their teaching. Clear communication with and feedback from the mentors was not provided consistently to all participants, as shown by the 19% of participants who reported that they received regular feedback from the mentor, whereas 33% reported receiving feedback only when requested for (Table 6). In the surveys, the majority of participants reported that their mentor provided the help they needed to be successful (52%); yet during interviews, many participants expressed that they did not receive the help from the TOSA that would have enabled them to feel successful as a teacher.

Participants in the NTIMP reported that as a result of their participation in the program, their feelings of isolation were reduced (52%) and they could adjust to teaching more easily

(59%) than if they had not participated. A majority of the teachers (74%) responded that participation in the program was a key factor for their successful adjustment to teaching.

Whereas goals of the mentoring program included assisting new teachers develop feelings of self-efficacy and confidence in their teaching abilities, only 37% of participants indicated that the mentoring program actually helped them develop a positive attitude with respect to teaching, and only 26% stated that the program helped them develop a sense of professionalism. Another goal of the program is to provide the new teacher with an experienced mentor, who they can discuss classroom concerns with, yet only 26% of participants said that they were provided with such opportunity. Refer to Table 7 below. These factors were discussed further during the interviews.

Table 3

*Program impact on first-year teaching experience*

Mentoring program impact on participants' first-year teaching experience	Agree-Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree-Strongly Disagree
1. Key Factor in Adjusting to Teaching	59%	15%	11%	15%	19%
2. Reduced Feelings of Isolation	52%	15%	7%	7%	22%
3. Helped Develop a Positive Attitude About Teaching	37%	19%	33%	11%	4%
4. Helped Develop Sense of Professionalism	26%	30%	30%	19%	7%
5. Provided an Opportunity to Discuss Classroom Concerns	26%	37%	15%	11%	11%

An analysis performed to answer the research question indicated that there was a mixed response to the mentorship support provided. Support, communication, and building and non-assigned mentors emerged as themes, resulting from the interview questions that address this research question.

**Theme: Support.** Amy indicated the areas of support provided by a mentor on the staff who was there to hear her concerns. “I had someone else I could ask questions to... that support was super helpful because my team helped me too, but they’re all busy teaching their own

classes and there was someone who didn't have her own class to teach so had some time to come in and do that.”

Jeff also reported a positive experience with support through the program, “By in large, I feel it's been supportive, but it is overwhelming once you realize. ‘Oh gosh, there's all this stuff I have to do.’” He continued to say, “She did come to the classroom, did go over some things, and was very much willing to help and be available.”

With Erika's experience of the mentoring program, she felt it lacked someone with experience in specialty to confer with for instructional concerns and support. “It was nice knowing I had a resource. At least I had her to ask any questions that I had. It was a bit different because I know she didn't teach music so I kind of felt like a lot of the questions I would ask, she wouldn't really know the correct answer.” Bill expressed that there was initial support from the mentor that did not continue by stating, “At the beginning of the year they had some of those first-year teacher type stuff with the district mentor, I went to a few of those and they were helpful in organizing your stuff and doing that kind of stuff but it didn't seem like it translated into the classroom very well.” He further said, “It's like, ‘Here you go,’ close the door, ‘good luck.’ Kind of. There is definitely a disconnect.”

Juan described a similar experience, “I don't feel like we have that support. I feel like we're kind of just thrown in, like, ‘here you go’.”

In contrast, Rick's experience was not at all positive. He felt that the program did not provide the support he needed to be successful as a first-year classroom teacher. He stated, “I struggled with the program. It didn't seem to really apply to me. I found myself like, ‘I'm not getting anything out of this but I'm here because I want to show that I am supportive of the

program' and I just sat there sometimes, and it was like, 'I don't get it.' The program honestly didn't do a whole lot for me... The help I felt I needed, I didn't feel like I got."

**Theme: Communication.** Lisa referred to communication issues in accessing the NTIMP. "I remember receiving an email that was kind of hidden in my email, but nobody sent me a specific email asking me if I would like to participate. I didn't know that was an option until later in the year and I was like, 'Oh, that would've been real helpful.'"

Juan had a similar experience as well, "I think I just found out that you could actually go and ask to monitor (other teachers) towards the end, these last couple months, and like, what's the use now?"

Sofia also experienced problems in learning about the program. "I never got the invite for the very first meeting. By the second meeting I knew I wasn't on their mailing list but I found out about the meeting and went anyway." Tana also faced issues while communicating with and accessing the TOSA; she stated, "So, I virtually never saw her."

**Theme: Building mentors and non-assigned mentors.** Lisa and Juan reflected on their experiences with other teachers in their buildings, including their respective building mentors. Lisa said, "Talking with other teachers did help me build confidence." Juan stated that in the building, "I just like the fact that I've had someone to be able to go to and ask questions. There's lots of stuff I don't know, like report cards, even the first week of school, things that you're never taught unless you've been doing it for a while. So just having someone you can go back to and refer to and ask questions and they're available makes it really good, and it makes it less stressful on you, because being a new teacher, sometimes it's like you don't have the necessary materials, you don't know what you're doing, and you feel like you're all over the place at all

times, so having that one person to go to is kind of useful.” In contrast, Bill stated, “Even our in-school program wasn’t super helpful.”

## **Research Question 2**

RQ 2. What were some of the elements of the program that influenced new teachers to return to teaching or the study site in the year following their participation in the NTIMP?

**Survey responses to research question 2.** The PSI–BT and BTMP surveys were utilized to answer this question as well. The majority of participants reported that participation in the program helped them acclimatize themselves to teaching and reduced their feelings of isolation. Participation in the program also helped most participants develop a positive attitude with respect to teaching and helped them develop a sense of professionalism. Having a clear channel of communication with the mentor was also an area that a majority of the participants agreed was important. The program also provided opportunities to discuss concerns that new teacher had regarding classroom issues, and most of them also reported that to be important. A summary of the data is presented in appendix G.

**Interview responses to research question 2.** The following themes began to emerge from coding the data for the interviews: the program positively influenced the decision to stay in the teaching field; the program did not impact the decision to stay nor did it influence a decision to leave, and the program could have influenced the decision to leave. The participants presented the three options pertaining to the impact that participation in the program had on their decision to stay in teaching. The responses were also reflective of the participants’ decisions to continue teaching in this study site.

**Theme: Positive influence.** Amy stated that the program indeed influenced her decision to remain an educator and return to her current position in the following school year, “I am coming back.”

**Theme: Neutral influence.** Juan, Sofia, Erika, and Sarah all indicated that they will return to the study site in the subsequent school year, but that their decisions were not based on their participation in the program.

Sofia indicated that it was her personal commitment that was the driving force behind her intent to return, “I had intended to stay because once I commit to something, I kind of just go with it, but it definitely makes it more manageable to know I can go in and bother somebody. I’m not going to say it changed my opinion, but I would say that it helped support the opinion that I had, which was to stay all along.”

Erika did not base her decision to return on her participation on the program as well.

However, the program was not a negative influence either on her decision to remain in the study site, “Yeah, I think it’s kind of just neutral…”

Juan stated that there were other factors that influenced his decision to continue teaching in the study site, “I don’t know if it made a difference as to whether I’m coming back or not, I guess I’m kind of neutral on that aspect, I think my decision was more based on if I can get into the master’s in teaching program, and the different testing, if I can get through those hurdles. I mean, it helps, but my decision was basically more on the testing and program itself, the master’s program.”

When asked if the program influenced her decision to remain in teaching, Sarah replied, “Not so much for me, but I’m vested. The program, in this case for me, not so much.”

**Theme: Possible influence.** Lisa was the only participant who indicated the intention to remain in the teaching field but leave the study site in the following school year. She stated, “I think that if I would have been a part of the mentoring program, it would have helped me a lot through the year. But, I still think I would have chosen to leave.”

### **Research Question 3**

**RQ 3.** How did the teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy change due to participation in the NTIMP?

**Survey responses to research question 3.** To answer this research question, the PSI–BT and BTMP surveys were used once more. As a result of the mentoring program, a majority of the participants reported that their current experience allows them to effectively teach students of varying ability levels, including students who have learning disabilities or those with disruptive behaviors. The summarized data has been included in Appendix T. Among the teachers who responded, 47% reported that they currently feel that their current experience was not impacted positively or negatively when teaching students with limited English proficiencies due to participating in the program. Teachers did not feel that participating in the program helped or hindered their ability to effectively teach students coming from diverse backgrounds.

**Interview responses to research question 3.** The themes that emerged from coding the data from the interviews presented the influence of the support offered by the mentoring program on the participants’ feelings of self-efficacy and confidence in their ability to teach as well as the impact of the professional development opportunities offered by the program on the participants’ feelings of self-efficacy and ability to teach.

**Theme: Influence of support on self-efficacy and confidence.** As a bilingual teacher in a school that serves a clientele that constitutes students from low-income families, Sarah

appreciated having a mentor that had experience in teaching a similar population but would have preferred a bilingual mentor. “Sometimes there are different challenges, not always, because good teaching is good teaching, but again, there are some challenges that we come across in bilingual classrooms that maybe the mainstream English teachers don’t really deal with.” Sarah confessed that without the support offered by the mentoring program, “I would not have been able to successfully manage the challenges I faced this year.” She also felt more effective, because the building mentor and coaches, “shared resources with me.”

Sofia also felt that the mentors helped her become more effective as a teacher by helping her manage daily situations: “I could pop in to the classroom and the teacher would tell me if I needed to just let the situation go or if it was important to address... As a new teacher, I did not know what was important and what wasn’t. I was perseverating on unimportant things and my mentor helped me stop doing that. Once I stopped, I could actually teach content rather than worry about behaviors.”

Amy approached several staff members for assistance in addition to the mentor.

Approaching these teachers helped her with implementing the curriculum and being able to effectively deliver instruction: “Both instructional coaches are on my grade level team, The ELA coach and the Math coach were super helpful with a lot of knowledge of teaching.”

In contrast, Jeff stated that in order to feel effective as a teacher, he needed “more front loading of the basic stuff that you need to have. I need to see things in action. I was given lots of ideas but did not have the ability to implement them.” He continued. “Normally, I don’t think you would need this when a teacher is coming out with their teaching degree and all that stuff.”

Rick also felt that his effectiveness as a teacher did not increase as a result of the mentoring program. He stated, “I still don’t know how to write an IEP and that is a big part of my job.”

**Theme: Support through interactions between mentors and new teachers.** Personal interactions between the TOSA and the new teacher were scheduled on the basis of requirement, with the appointments being set at the request of the new teacher. The major themes of discussions during individualized meetings between mentors and teachers include discussions pertaining to classroom management (53%); instructional concerns such as content delivery (47%); and communication with parents or caregivers of students (40%). New teachers reported that the TOSA displayed empathy towards the new teacher (67%), and that participation in the program was an overall positive experience (53%). Refer to Table 2 below.

While the new teachers agreed on their mentors being empathetic (67%) and that the mentoring program was an overall positive experience (53%), It is notable that most teachers either disagreed or were neutral regarding instructional concerns being addressed with their mentors (53%). During the interviews, new teachers expressed the lack of instructional concerns being addressed and stated that they would have felt more effective as new teachers had those instructional concerns been addressed. The NTIMP sufficiently helped teachers feel positive about their experience as educators but did not provide adequate training with instructional concerns and the ability to communicate with parents effectively.

Table 4

*PSI–BT Type of Interaction Focus for Teachers by Mentors*

Interaction Focus	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Disagree to Strongly Disagree (1–2)	Neutral to Slightly Agree (3–4)	Agree to Strongly Agree (5–6)
1. Classroom management	4.20	1.93	27%	20%	53%
2. Instructional	4.30	1.83	13%	40%	47%
3. Communication	4.13	1.94	20%	40%	40%
4. Mentor showed	4.73	1.83	20%	13%	67%
5. Encouraged	4.27	1.94	27%	13%	60%
6. Overall positive	4.06	2.18	27%	20%	53%

Note: \*= Mentor addressed issues.

### Summary

The results indicated that interactions with mentors varied. Some teachers had positive experiences with the mentors, while others did not. During the interviews, teachers who had the highest levels of interaction with the mentors expressed that they found the program to be most effective in helping them increase their self-efficacy and teaching ability, while those with little interaction felt that the program did not provide them much support. Without the requested assistance from mentors, teachers who had reduced contact with the TOSA relied on other teachers for assistance and advice.

In the surveys, teachers stated that the mentoring helped them become better teachers and develop confidence. However, the teachers did not feel that the mentoring program assisted them in increasing their ability to work effectively with English-Language learners, students with learning disabilities, or with those students who come from diverse backgrounds. The next

chapter will present findings associated to the relevant research, an elaboration and interpretation of the results, implications of findings, and recommendation for future research.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion**

High rates of attrition for educators in their first five years of teaching have led to a shortage of qualified teachers. Nearly 50% of educators in the first few years of their career leave the profession (Hong, 2012; Moore, 2016). Educators continue to exit the profession primarily due to the inadequate support and low job satisfaction (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Lo & Ramayah, 2011). High rates of teacher attrition are especially detrimental to students' academic success, especially of those from poorer backgrounds, as is the case in study site (Marker et al., 2013). As a result, study site management is impacted by the struggle to fill vacant teaching positions. Students, teachers, and administrators feel the strain on performance due to high teacher turnover (Hong, 2012). In an effort to increase rates of teacher retention, improve job satisfaction, support new educators, and strengthen teachers' commitment to the profession, school systems have implemented new teacher induction and mentoring programs (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

The NTIMP was enacted by the study site to improve the efficacy of program participants and to increase the retention rate through mentoring and professional development opportunities tailored to meet the needs of new teachers. The purpose of this single case study was to explore how new teachers perceived the implementation of the NTIMP. The research that was conducted for this has been summarized in this chapter. The methods of research are recapped in addition to the findings from data analysis. The conclusions and implications are discussed and compared to previous research in this area. Finally, recommendations for improving the NTIMP and ideas for future research have been presented.

## Summary of the Results

A single case study was conducted at a semi-rural school district in the Western part of the United States. The opportunity to participate in the NTIMP was provided to 137 new educators to the study site, including those with emergency, conditional, and full teaching credentials. The population studied included only first-year educators who were enrolled in the NTIMP. The target population comprised 137 teachers who had been hired during the 2016–2017 school year and were new to the study site. For this study, 15 teachers completed the PSI–BT, 27 completed the BTMP, and 10 participated in the interviews.

This study was guided by three research questions. The research questions were as follows:

1. What were the perceptions of the teachers and mentors on how well the goals of the program were met through their participation in the NTIMP?
2. What were some of the elements of the program that influenced new teachers to return or not to return to teaching or to the study site in the year following their participation in the NTIMP?
3. How did the teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy change due to participation in the NTIMP?

The data collected included semi-structured interviews, systematic document review, and results of the PSI–BT and BTMP surveys. The data from interviews was coded using the NVivo coding program, and that included open, axial, and selective coding to allow the researcher to establish patterns and identify connections between the identified categories (Creswell, 2013). The survey results were analyzed applying descriptive statistics. The data collected from surveys and semi-structured interviews were together used to answer the research questions and examine the perceptions of the new teachers in the NTIMP.

## Discussion of the Results Related to Research Questions

Listed below is the analysis of the results as they relate to the research questions.

### Research Question 1

This research question was designed to discover new teachers' perceptions of how effectively the goals of the NTIMP were met. In general, teachers felt supported by the NTIMP. In fact, more than half of the participants indicated that their relationship with their mentor (TOSA or building) provided the help required to be successful in the classroom. Data from the BTMP and PSI-BT surveys and semi-structured interviews were utilized to answer this question. Follow-up questions in the interviews yielded both positive and negative responses regarding the amount of support provided as being adequate.

Sarah stated that the TOSA was always very enthusiastic and supportive—“(The mentor) reached out to me, even individually.” Sarah's experience with the TOSA was positive, largely, due to the fact that the TOSA told her, “I'm not here to judge you. I'm not an evaluator, I want to help you grow.” Sarah's experience made her feel it was completely safe to ask questions as she indicated, “I wasn't going to be berated or put down for not being able to solve the problem. We would come together and collaborate.” The TOSA created an atmosphere of collaboration. Based on Sarah's responses, the mentoring program was successful in meeting the goals set forth.

Tana was not deeply involved in the mentoring program but the TOSA came to observe her teach on a few occasions. She said, “I don't know that I found her feedback particularly helpful.” Tana was finishing a master's degree in teaching and was scheduled to engage in student teaching. Tana felt that her experience with the teacher preparation program that she was enrolled in was more beneficial to her success as a teacher, than the NTIMP and stated, “It's been interesting. But, I did go do my co-teaching which is a good piece of mentoring to have.”

Tana did not access the building mentor; she said, “I virtually never saw her.” Tana’s responses indicated that she did not feel that the program was successful in providing the support she needed as a new teacher, which failed one of the program goals.

With regard to having the support required to be successful as a teacher, Juan stated that “I don’t feel like we have that support.” Rick also felt that he did not have the support needed to be successful in the classroom as a first-year teacher: “The help I felt I needed, I didn’t feel like I got.” Thus, it was found that Juan and Rick did not feel that the program goals of providing adequate support to be a successful teacher were met.

Results indicated that teachers had mixed perceptions regarding the goals of the program being met. As indicated by Sarah’s responses, she perceived the goals of the program were met. However, Tana, Rick, and Juan indicated that they felt the goals of the program were not achieved.

## **Research Question 2**

Research question 2, which was designed to determine the elements of the NTIMP that influenced new teachers’ intention to remain in education and in the study site for the following school year, was investigated through the surveys and semi-structured interviews. The elements of the program, such as mentor interactions, professional development seminars, opportunities to observe experienced teachers, and demonstrations performed by the mentor teacher, were analyzed.

Professional development seminars were offered monthly by staff members from the professional development office, including the TOSA, other instructional coaches, and administrators. The topics covered in these included general indication topics, grading and report card completion, classroom management and discipline, parent-teacher communication and

conferences, strategies for increasing learner engagement, curriculum implementation, and certification. The notification informing participants of the seminars was sent via email and was posted on the study site's professional development calendar.

The survey results indicated that out of the nine professional development seminars offered through the NTIMP, 0% of the new teachers attended all seminars, 13% attended 6–7 seminars, 20% attended 4–5 seminars, 20% attended 2–3 seminars, 33% attended 1 seminar, and 13% attended none of the seminars organized. Through the follow-up questions in the semi-structured interviews, the reasons behind this disparity emerged. The participants confessed to not attend the seminars after the initial trainings, because they felt that the information and strategies presented were not applicable to their classroom settings. Erika stated, “I like the new teacher training a lot. I thought they gave us tools that were helpful for the general classroom but for my classroom, not as much. Certain activities, they would say that you could do these things but, in my setting, in a music classroom, in 30 minutes or whatever, it doesn't work.” Bill stated, “I went to some of those at the beginning of the year. They gave you lots of ideas about how to organize your stuff and doing that kind of stuff, but it didn't seem like it translated into my classroom very well.” Jeff further said, “A lot of it just did not apply to my classroom, as a special ed. teacher.”

Other reasons cited for not attending or discontinuing attendance at these new teacher professional development seminars included feelings of being overwhelmed with other commitments, not having enough time, and not knowing about the offerings. Juan stated, “Looking at it, I was just overwhelmed.” He went on to state, “I wish it was set at a different time. Because there's just so many trainings going on that it was just too chaotic to go to all of them, and then you had to pick and choose which ones you wanted to attend and which ones

were more useful for the time. Cause she would tell you ahead of time what the class was going to be about. I just went to a couple because of the classes I am taking and stuff.” Rick stated, “It is overwhelming once you realize there’s all this stuff you have to do. In addition to having rigor in our curriculum and put in these grades and build relationships with students, like authentic relationships...it’s overwhelming.” Bill stated, “I just don’t know that I had enough access to it and all that it potentially could have offered.”

From the interviews and surveys, it was determined that some professional development opportunities were helpful to some educators and not to others. The seminars that were task-specific were expressed as more helpful, such as the beginning of the school year classroom management and set-up seminars. Otherwise, the teachers indicated that there were only specific seminars they desired to attend. Specifically, the beginning special education teachers requested more training on the creation and implementation of IEPs, and beginning specialists (e.g. music teachers among many others) desired more classroom management classes that were focused on their unique needs.

### **Research Question 3**

Research question 3 was, how did the teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy change due to participation in the NTIMP?

The survey responses indicated that 63% of participants “somewhat agreed” to “strongly agreed” that the mentoring program provided them with the opportunity to discuss classroom concerns. However, in their responses to the follow-up questions in the semi-structured interviews, new teachers reflected on the lack of instructional concerns being addressed and stated that they would have felt more effective as a new teacher had those been addressed. Juan stated that as a bilingual teacher, “There’s additional material you need to cover but nobody tells

you when and where. There's not a breakdown of it." He continued, "knowing when to incorporate the different materials for the Spanish portion and then the English, cause as far as I know they say that you're supposed to have at least 45 minutes a day of instruction in Spanish and then the remaining in English, but all day long we're doing Spanish because some of my kids aren't fluent enough. So that was a struggle." Tana said, "it would have been helpful for ELA if I had much more training on how to do the small group stuff." Lisa stated, "it would have been helpful to have someone with experience in my specialty watching me and just helping me. The mentors don't have experience in my specialty and couldn't help me with instruction."

The NTIMP sufficiently helped teachers feel positive about their experience as educators. The surveys carried out indicated that 59% of new teachers "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the NTIMP was a key factor in their adjustment to teaching. Their participation in the NTIMP reduced the feelings of isolation for 67% survey participants. Sarah stated that the mentor was extremely supportive while she worked through the process of trying to figure things out on her own but seemed to know when to intervene and provide guidance.

According to Sarah, the TOSA worked with her to build a partnership that would lead to her success. "It helped me to feel better about my teaching and know that I had people I could reach out to." While Lisa did not utilize the NTIMP mentors, she did have unofficial mentors in her building, with whom she discussed the issues she faced, and those experiences helped develop her confidence in teaching. She stated, "Talking with other teachers did help me build my confidence. Especially talking with those teachers who have been teaching for a really long time... Being a brand-new teacher, I had no idea what I was doing. Student teaching can help you as much as it can but when you get tossed into your own program, it's scary." As a specialist, she felt that no one who quite understood how to help her achieve success except the

other specialists. “Sometimes you just need time to go talk to a teacher and just breathe. The year was hard because I wasn’t able to talk with other music teachers as much.”

In the surveys, the participants indicated that the mentoring helped them become better teachers, develop confidence, and increase perceptions of overall self-efficacy. New teachers agreed that their mentors were empathetic (67%), and that the mentoring program was an overall positive experience (53%). However, the teachers did not feel that the mentoring program improved their perceptions of self-efficacy pertaining to their ability to work effectively with English-Language learners—those students who come from diverse backgrounds—nor did the program provide adequate guidance in accomplishing instructional decision-making with regard to student learning.

### **Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature**

Research has revealed that new teachers need to feel supported in their new profession (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Researchers have also found that new teachers benefit from a support system that includes mentor teachers. According to Fresko and Nasser-Abu Alhija (2015), new teachers also benefit from professional development seminars focused on the stress, anxiety, and frustration experienced by educators. The NTIMP provided seminars on these topics. Hong (2012) posited that teachers who have a strong sense of self-efficacy and resilience perceived difficulties as challenges rather than as failures. In this study, The NTIMP seminars combined with the relationships of the TOSA, building mentors, and unofficial mentors with the new teachers were demonstrated to have helped the participants develop resilience and cause them to view problems as challenges to overcome rather than as failures. Achinstein and Davis (2014) determined that mentors who work in the same specific field of instruction are more effective in assisting their mentees than those who have specialized in different academic areas.

This study also reflected this to be true with participants who are specialists or teach special education; they reported that their experience in the NTIMP would have been more effective if they had been matched with a mentor in their specific subject area.

### **Limitations**

While this study was carried out in one specific school district in a western state, there are many similar districts with teachers who are not fully certified and have not completed a teacher preparation program. This study can contribute further by performing similar studies in other districts across the country, particularly where concerns have been raised concerning the effectiveness of the current orientation program for non-certified teachers. This study, being limited in scope, only examined one district and one set of participants; therefore, expanding the scope of the study to include other first-year educators in other districts will add further information that can help program facilitators improve the program. This research examined one cohort of first-year teachers, and extending the research to include other cohorts of first-year teachers will enable researchers to determine whether the results were programmatic or specific to this specific cohort of teachers.

### **Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory**

This study revealed several recommendations for the study site's implementation of the NTIMP moving forward. These recommendations pertain to professional development, observations, mentor staffing requirements, and communication with participants. Professional development opportunities were generalized for educators and, according to participants, did not provide adequate support for those participants who are specialists, bilingual educators, or those who teach special education. Participants also reported the desire to observe other teachers in their subject area during the NTIMP. The NTIMP operates with one TOSA serving all 137 new

teachers in the study site. Building mentors and unofficial or informal mentors helped meet the needs of new teachers. The communication between the TOSA, program administrators, and the participants was also an area requiring improvement according to many participants. The NTIMP is grant-based, and thus, all future program implementation depends on funding from the grant.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development offerings for new teachers are critical to successful program implementation. As indicated by participants, the professional development offerings were adequate in the areas of basic classroom management, daily procedures, induction into the study site, and specific instructional strategies for general education classes. However, specialized professional development for content area teachers and special education teachers, in-depth instruction on strategies to assist ELL students, and strategies to improve parent-teacher communication were missing. Bilingual teachers also expressed the need for further professional development of instruction specific to teaching and meeting the specific needs of bilingual students. The participants also identified education vocabulary as an area where teachers are in need of assistance. New teachers who have not graduated a teacher preparation program expressed a struggle to understand the acronyms used by educators. For program facilitators and mentors to better meet the needs of the participants, surveys to discover the ongoing needs of new teachers is recommended to facilitate the customization of professional development offerings. This measure may also prevent the decrease in seminar participation as the school year progresses.

The program's participants stated that they felt there was not enough time to attend professional development seminars in addition to organizing professional development seminars and credentialing classes. Therefore, it would be beneficial to provide an online platform for

professional development seminars. A web-based professional development seminar platform will provide a flexibility that can enable more new teachers to participate.

### **Observations**

Participants also expressed through the surveys and interviews that they could not observe experienced teachers. Teachers who taught specialized classes were probably the only teacher of that subject in their building and, therefore, could not approach experienced teachers for support when doubts arose. In addition to observing other experienced teachers, participants expressed the need for opportunities to be observed by mentors and experienced teachers. The participants expressed the desire to be observed by an experienced teacher who was knowledgeable in their subject area in order to receive meaningful feedback and critique for improving instruction. A few other participants indicated the need for feedback on their classroom management techniques and strategies.

### **Mentor Staffing**

The NTIMP was staffed with mentors both for the entire study site and in each building. Many participants indicated that they felt having one TOSA mentor for 137 new teachers was inadequate and did not permit all new teachers to have equitable access to the mentor's assistance and support. Each school with new teachers had one building mentor. The participants indicated that having a building mentor was helpful, but they also felt that they were imposing on the mentor's time when asking for assistance. Staffing concerns for the program led many new teachers to seek mentoring from professionals other than the official mentors. Many new teachers stated that they relied on other teachers at their grade level or in their speciality for assistance and support. The perception of limited staffing of mentors prevented some participants from seeking assistance.

Thus, the program facilitators need to recruit for the mentoring program with this information in mind. New teachers are requesting mentors in specific specialities such as music, art, and physical education; special education; and also, bilingual education. New teachers in the program have also requested that there be a mentor who has expertise in credentialing and working through university programs.

### **Communication**

The NTIMP was a program designed to provide support for new educators in the study site. The levels of communication between program mentors and participants varied drastically. Some participants reported having full knowledge of the program and being deeply involved; there were others who stated that they were not aware the program existed until the end of the school year. The communication needs to be increased to promote the efficacy and reach of the program with the intended participants.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the findings of this study, several potential areas for future research have emerged. Since there is a teacher shortage and the site studied attempted to address this problem by hiring individuals who are not fully certified and have not completed a teacher preparation program, it is imperative to explore ways to support these teachers while they develop their teaching skills. New teachers, in this study, recommended a more coordinated effort between the study site and surrounding universities. The program participants felt that this would reduce the amount of time and resources required to fully participate in both a teacher preparation program and the NTIMP concurrently. Other school districts have used this coordinated approach with success, and it would be beneficial to research this option as an alternative to the NTIMP as a standalone program.

Another area for future research is to examine similar studies across the country and determine the feasibility of amending the NTIMP in a manner indicated by the success of other programs.

### **Conclusion**

The focus of this chapter was on the findings, conclusions, and implications from the single case study. The findings indicated that the NTIMP was a beneficial initiative implemented by the study site for helping teachers adjust to teaching and reducing feelings of isolation. The results were mixed concerning the NTIMP's impact on a new teacher's development of a positive attitude towards teaching and in developing a sense of professionalism. The responses to survey questions and semi-structured interviews reflected the importance of access to professional development and both formal and informal mentoring for new teachers to help them achieve success in teaching. The support system was found to be critical to new teachers who were grappling with seeking answers to questions and gathering assistance to become a more effective educator.

Participants in the NTIMP also indicated that they were better able to diffuse disruptive behaviors in the classroom from participating in the program but did not feel that they were "in control" of their classroom. The participants also indicated that participation in the NTIMP neither had a positive or negative impact on their ability to motivate students. The survey results also presented that new teachers felt neutral about their ability to use a variety of teaching strategies that they learned from the program. However, the participants did feel that as a result of the NTIMP, they were more effective in communicating with parents and caregivers.

New teachers participating in the NTIMP, who could connect with a mentor, stated that the relationship with their mentor was critical to their experience in the first year of teaching.

Mentors encouraged self-reflection most of the time, and most respondents reported that there was clear communication with their assigned mentor. However, many participants confessed that they did not receive regular feedback from their mentor or had to request feedback.

Communication was problematic for many participants, since not all new teachers were aware of the existence of the program and available mentoring resources. Some new teachers had regular contact and frequent feedback from their mentors, while others were unaware they had a mentor assigned to them and did not receive feedback or assistance through the NTIMP. These teachers reported having informal mentors as a support system.

The results of this study indicated that the NTIMP did increase new teachers' feelings of self-efficacy as a result of the interaction with mentors and through the professional development course offerings. All the new teachers interviewed stated that they would be returning to teaching in the coming school year. Of the participants, all but one said that they would be returning to this study site.

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## Appendix A: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously- researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

### **Statement of academic integrity.**

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

### **Explanations:**

#### *What does “fraudulent” mean?*

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

#### *What is “unauthorized” assistance?*

“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

### Statement of Original Work (Continued)

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University- Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*

Jennifer S. Collins

Digital Signature

Jennifer S. Collins

Name (Typed)

February 24. 2018

Date

## Appendix B: Interview Questions

Name\_

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Grade/Content Area\_

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Email\_

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Cell Phone\_

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### PERTAINING TO THE NEW TEACHER INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAM

In what ways did the mentoring program help you grow as a teacher? (want to follow up) specifics? Can you tell me a specific thing you did in the program that was more valuable than others in helping your grow as a teacher? Tell me about the best mentoring experience you had in the program. What happened in that encounter?

How did participating in the mentoring program affect your decision to remain in teaching and or in the district? A specific encounter? What was it that happened that helped you? Details to jog their memory. Tell me about the worst experience you had as a teacher this year. How did the mentor help you?

In what ways did the mentoring program help build your confidence in your teaching abilities? Specifics. Was there a time when you felt the lowest or with the least amount of self-confidence as a teacher?

What types of additional support would you like to see in place as a new teacher coming into the district? Tell me about a time when or one specific thing you think should be added to the program.

What type of support did you receive from your mentor/ How did that help you in your teaching? Tell me the best thing your mentor did, which was valuable for you? How did that play into your teaching?

What type of relationship did you build with your mentor? Clarifier—Give me some traits of your mentor that helped you build a rapport. What aspects caused you to build a positive relationship? Is it accurate to say that you did not have a relationship at all?

What practices did you learn in your professional development that you were able to use in the classroom? Can you give an example?

What do you consider the strength of the mentoring program? Bite sized. Some of the strengths.  
Characteristic standpoint.

What do you consider as the weakness of the mentoring program?

King/Queen for the day. What would you add or subtract from the program?