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The Impact and Implications for Teacher Induction Programs

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The Impact and Implications for Teacher Induction Programs

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The Impact and Implications for Teacher Induction Programs

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Acknowledgement

Abstract

Teacher induction programs are meant to provide beginning teachers with support and guidance during their first couple of years within the profession. In this study, novice teachers were asked to analyze different components of the two year induction program they were enrolled in. Through the use of a Likert-scale survey and personal interview, key findings from participant responses were: 1) Mentors are an effective component of the induction program; 2) professional development courses help beginning teachers increase pedagogical strategies; 3) the modules assigned within the induction program are ineffective because there is minimal transfer of knowledge into the classroom. The data revealed that only the components that helped support beginning teachers in increasing their pedagogical skills and improved their teaching practices were considered effective.

THE IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAMS

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the past years, the educational system has been faced with multiple problems, one being the high levels of turnover rates amongst beginning teachers resulting in lower levels of student achievement within schools (Wong, 2004). To remedy the situation, states have established different methods towards increasing teacher retention rates in order to increase student achievement scores (Ingersoll, 2011). In this regard, within the United States, federal initiatives such as the No Child Left Behind legislation have created great interest in induction and mentoring programs that help and provide support to novice teachers (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2008). Through such programs, there has been a reduction in attrition rates within many states and within school districts; however, these success rates vary due to the differences within induction programs (Ingersoll, 2012). Due to the differences in the curriculum used within induction programs, it becomes a challenge for all beginning teachers to receive equal support. For this reason, in order for beginning teachers to receive effective help, it is necessary to analyze the curriculum of different induction programs and determine what practices are effective in supporting teachers and which ones are not.

Problem Statement

A problem arose within the educational world when data demonstrated an increase in teacher attrition rates concluding that a rising amount of beginning teachers were leaving the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2011). National data states that 11% of beginning teachers leave the profession after one year of teaching, and another 16% change schools (Ingersoll, 2011). Beginning teachers report that the lack of support causes them to feel isolated and overwhelmed that has resulted in their departure. Without the proper support and guidance, novice teachers

will continue to leave the profession (Ingersoll, 2011). Due to this problem, states like California have made it mandatory for beginning teachers to complete a two year teacher induction program with the objective of supporting beginning teachers and increase retention rates within school districts. Although many states like California are participating and establishing induction programs as a mean of support, the programs aren't universal and differ within states, cities, and school districts creating a discrepancy in the curriculum and strategies used (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2008). Within California, there are over 169 approved BTSA Induction Programs who must abide by the state standards imposed by California, but districts may create the curriculum for a new program upon approval by the state (State Policy Review: Teacher Induction, 2011). Although the state standards are the foundation of induction programs within California, the differences in curriculum and the overall implementation, may or may not be effective in supporting beginning teachers during those first two years of teaching.

It is important for school districts to review the different ways in which effective induction programs are structured and implemented to meet their objective. Even more, the work that beginning teachers have to complete within induction programs should be analyzed to determine whether the workload is suitable and necessary to adequately support beginning teachers within and out of the classroom. If a school district is not effective in creating and establishing a program that assists beginning teachers where they really need the help, then it could lead to their departure (Ingersoll, 2011). In order for districts to prevent an increase retention rates, it is crucial that induction programs implement practices that are helpful to beginning teachers giving them the help that equips them to meet the demands of the profession (Ingersoll, 2011). If beginning teachers do not receive specific support, then student achievement

may be affected because teachers may not have acquired the assistance they needed to develop and increase their pedagogical strategies within the classroom. (Breaux & Wong, 2003).

Within the literature review, research presents the differences amongst various induction programs within the United States. Data is provided that demonstrates how some induction programs were successful in increasing retention rates. Based on the data attained by many researchers such as Henry Wong, Robert Bullough, Richard Ingersoll etc., it seems that induction programs are effective when they provide certain types of activities and collaboration opportunities to aid beginning teachers. The various levels of support are what make induction programs different from one another (Matsko, 2010). In order to properly aid all novice teachers within all districts and states, it is crucial that effective practices are implemented within all induction programs.

Purpose of the Study

Within California, it has become a mandate that beginning teachers have to participate and complete a two year induction program within the district that they are working in (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2008). However, depending on the district, induction programs differ in activities, workload and mentor training (Kang & Berliner, 2012). This creates a problem when beginning teachers do not get the same support as other teachers in different districts which can cause a discrepancy in retention rates (Kang & Berliner, 2012).

The present study is designed to bring forth a depiction of effective and ineffective practices among various induction programs. By doing so, a clear illustration can be brought forth regarding how induction programs are implemented using similar and different curriculum to support beginning teachers. Based on these activities and support systems, induction programs can prove to be effective or ineffective in their retention of novice teachers. Additionally, a study

will be conducted within the Greenfield Union School district giving second year teachers in the induction program an opportunity to analyze the curriculum and workload assigned to them during the two years within the program. They will then share their perspectives on the overall effect that the curriculum had on their teaching practices. The goal of this study is to identify areas that require improvement to better support and retain beginning teachers within the district. If the goal of school districts is to retain novice teachers, then the input of those participating is extremely important for the development and refinement of an effective induction program.

Research Questions

My action research project seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What constitutes an effective induction program?
2. What activities demonstrated in the induction program contribute to increased knowledge base and practical classroom application?

Theoretical Model

Upon entering the teaching profession, beginning teachers are faced with demands that can be overwhelming. For many novice teachers, the challenges they encounter during their first year can be extremely difficult and isolating (Ingersoll, 2011). These challenges can cause novice teachers to lose confidence in their abilities and to become disillusioned by the teaching profession altogether (Wong, 2004). Without the proper support and guidance, many beginning teachers have resorted to leaving the job and profession creating a shortage of credentialed teachers within school districts (Ingersoll, 2011). The following theories help explain the formulation process of induction programs and why many of these programs have certain

similarities such as mentors, high levels of collegial support, and professional development courses.

Albert Bandura's (1993) social cognitive theory focuses on self-efficacy which is defined as the perception that individuals hold about their own capabilities (Bandura, 1993). An individual may have a good perception about what he or she can accomplish or *vise-versa*. As stated by Bandura, "Efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave" (Bandura, 1993, p. 2). A person that perceives positive outcomes based on their previous actions is a person that is said to have high self-efficacy; in contrast, a person that perceives negative outcomes as a result of their previous actions is said to be a person with low self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993). These pessimistic and optimistic self-perceptions determine how individuals deal with important tasks and how they behave in regards to self-correcting their actions and manner of thinking (Bandura, 1993). Perceptions about individual potential can influence the choices people make in regards to the actions they pursue. Individuals are more inclined on pursuing tasks that they feel confident in and stay away from those that they perceive to lack skills in (Bandura, 1993).

This social cognitive theory of self-efficacy is crucial in the formalization and establishment of induction programs. Beginning teachers are aware that their first year of teaching is the most difficult, yet they are willing to undertake this challenge because of the confidence they have in their own ability. However, the unperceived challenges that arise within the school year can lead to lower levels of confidence within the novice teacher's ability to cope with the difficult and challenging tasks of the profession. For this reason, many school districts have sought to create induction programs that help increase the self-efficacy of teachers by providing guidance and assistance such as professional development and different forms of

collegial support that help novice teachers succeed (Breaux & Wong, 2003). Professional development can help beginning teachers learn new pedagogical strategies and can assist to improve their overall skills leading to higher levels of confidence. In doing so, novice teachers will pursue and hold an optimistic view of the tasks they are required to perform on a day-to-day basis. Through a formalized and structured induction program, teachers can gain higher levels of self-efficacy which can result in an increase of retention rates.

Another theory that is a fundamental part of most induction programs is regarding the effectiveness of mentoring. Within the last 25 years there has been a greater emphasis of mentoring within organizations such as business and education (Kram & Isabella, 1985). A traditional perspective of mentoring held by Kram and Isabella (1985) is that if an individual with seniority status works along with a protégé to assist him or her with professional development, then the work effectiveness of the protégé increases and enhances at a greater level (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Additionally, the mentor provides a great amount of professional and psychological assistance as the mentee assimilates and learns the new profession (Kram & Isabella, 1985). This theory suggest that if new employees are given an opportunity to be guided and taught by a mentor, then they will be more effective employees (Kram & Isabella, 1985).

Many of the induction programs that have been implemented, such as those in California, provide novice teachers with a mentor. The aim of this pairing is that the mentor, usually a veteran teacher who has taught for several years, will guide and support the novice teacher during his or her first two years of teaching (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2008). Mentors should have constant communication with the mentee and provide support to help the mentee grow as a professional. By doing so, mentors seek to accomplish the programs goals in helping novice teachers achieve success and feel supported which can lead to an increase in

retention (Wong, 2004). This type of assistance can also help novice teachers gain knowledge, confidence, and a greater ability to perform tasks assigned to them at a higher rate than on their own making them more efficient within the profession (Wong, 2004). Of course, most of the time, the mentor and mentee relationship is something that is formalized from the beginning of the school year, meaning that veteran and novice teachers are paired up without either's input or even knowing each other beforehand (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2008). On this aspect, Kram and Isabella (1985) suggest a relationship between mentor and mentee is better developed informally.

The two theories on self-efficacy and mentoring, has helped inform my research on induction programs in the way that it allows me to see the ideas used to formalize the program itself. Two of the major goals that many induction programs have are to support and to retain novice teachers. For this reason, various induction programs have used mentors to help guide and support beginning teachers during their first years of teaching which in turn helps higher the mentees self-efficacy.

Researcher Background

I have been teaching for the past four years and am currently finishing up my last year within the induction program. My first year of teaching was challenging because I had no previous experience within the teaching field, but I received a lot of support from a veteran teacher that taught the same subject and grade level as I did. This veteran teacher supported and guided me through the next two years of teaching, and due to her teaching experience, I was able to gain a lot of knowledge and new strategies to use within my classroom. However, my third year of teaching became very stressful and overwhelming because I was now part of the induction program. During this year, I had to complete many assignments from September

through May with specific deadlines for submission. If dates were missing or minor errors were present, the work had to be corrected and re-submitted. Several meetings were held throughout the year to inform us of how to complete the assignments and their due dates. The amount of work was time consuming, many times irrelevant to my needs as a teacher, and repetitive. There were many times of which I had to devote more time to completing the assignments than developing my lessons for the class. Through the year, I spoke to many other teachers who had completed the induction program in the past and who were presently in the program, and their feelings were very similar to mine. Most of them had the same response, "It is all busy work". It was unbelievable to me that my third year was far more overwhelming than my first year because of the workload assigned by the induction program. It seemed to me that the program was a contradiction to its objective which was to support and retain new teachers. For this reason, I chose to do my study on the induction program set in place within my district and the overall effects that it has on beginning teachers.

Definition of Terms

- **Attrition:** The loss of teachers to other occupations (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

- **Collaboration:** Working with others to achieve a common goal.

- **Induction**: An educational intervention that addresses new teachers' learning needs while helping develop a principled teaching practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

- **Involuntary Attrition:** The loss of an entrant because the employer deems him or her to be unsuitable (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

- **Mentor:** Within a teacher induction program, a mentor is an individual who is formally assigned to a mentee based on specific eligibility criteria and for a specific duration of time (Gless, Wagner, & Ownby, 1995).

- **Modules:** Assignments given within Induction Programs.

- **Novice teacher:** A new teacher who is making his or her initial entry into the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2011).

- **Professional Development:** Activities to enhance professional career growth.

- **Retention:** The act of keeping a teacher in the teaching profession, school, or job assignment (Ingersoll, 2011).

- **Self-Efficacy:** The perception that individuals hold about their own capabilities (Bandura, 1993).

- **Voluntary Attrition:** The loss of new entrant as a result of the newcomer's choice to leave (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Summary

This chapter provides the purpose of the study which is to identify effective components of teacher induction programs based on the level of support they provide for beginning teachers. This chapter also contains the researcher background to provide insight for the chosen study. Additionally, relevant theories are encompassed to provide insight regarding the ideas that have helped the formulation of induction programs.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter seeks to analyze different induction programs within the United States and determine what effective practices are utilized to effectively support and retain novice teachers. The data collected by researchers reveals how and why some induction programs have achieved high levels of teacher retention rates in comparison to others. The data suggests that induction programs achieve high success rates when the program provides beginning teachers with different means of collaborative support, when professional development is instituted to help teachers increase their pedagogical practices, and when beginning teachers receive the support from school administrators such as principals. This review will focus on analyzing the components of effective induction programs along with the activities that contribute to increasing knowledge base and practical classroom application for novice teachers.

Leaving the Teaching Profession

There are many reasons why teachers leave the profession so early on in their career. There is involuntary attrition where the employer does not consider the teacher to be effective so they are let go (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Then there is voluntary attrition where the employee, in this case the teacher, decides that they do not wish to continue to work at that specific location (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

According to research one of the reasons that teachers choose to leave the profession is because they are dissatisfied with the lack of support and preparedness during those first few years of teaching (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). The lack of support may cause feelings of isolation and difficulties in overcoming challenges that may arise (Wong, 2004). Other causes may be dissatisfaction with the pay that new teachers receive for the amount of work that they do (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

The Role of a Mentor

Mentoring has become a common component of induction programs who are assigned to novice teachers for the purpose of providing them with support and guidance during their first few years of teaching (Wong, 2004). Mentors are viewed as a crucial component of induction programs because they are required to work closely with novice teachers to help them resolve challenges and provide them with knowledgeable skills that help them develop their pedagogical practices (Boreen, Niday, & Johnson, 2003). However, the role of a mentor is not universal within all induction programs and in some cases mentoring is more of a "buddy" system where mentors are more of a friend that provide emotional support and friendly assistance (Wong, 2004). According to researcher Henry Wong (2004) this type of mentoring has proven to be ineffective in increasing retention rates.

In a survey conducted within the Chicago Public School District, Matsko (2010) found that both Elementary and High school teachers perceived certain mentoring activities more helpful then the "buddy" type of mentoring. Mentors that provided guidance and suggestions on teaching strategies, classroom management, and helped in assessing student learning provided novice teachers with effective help that they were able to implement within their classroom (Matsko, 2010). Additionally, researchers Stanlis and Floden (2009) found that intensive activities such as close work in the classroom where mentors observed, co-planned, analyzed student work and collected and analyzed teaching data together were effective methods used by mentors to promote professional development and guidance for beginning teachers. Further research suggests that in order for teachers to improve their pedagogical practices formal mentor observations are necessary. Mentors should observe new-teachers during a teaching period and through a post-conference discuss what was observed. Through such discussions novice teachers

can receive non-threatening advice regarding improvements on current strategies and suggestions for new strategies to be implemented within the classroom (Villani, 2002).

On the contrary, some researchers have suggested that a single mentor is not enough for an induction program to be effective. A study done by Ebanks, Hellsten, and Prytula (2009) suggest that an induction program is most effective when beginning teachers have multiple mentors. When induction programs provide novice teachers with one mentor, the mentor may not be able or willing to provide the support and guidance that novice teachers need which can cause novice teachers to feel isolated and unsupported during their time of need (Ebanks, Hellsten, Lai, & Prytula, 2009). In this regard, it is best to provide them with more than one mentor that they can collaborate with and receive guidance from when one is unavailable to them (Ebanks, Hellsten, Lai, & Prytula, 2009).

Whether induction programs provide one or multiple mentors, research suggests that mentoring practices such as co-planning, observations, and analyzing students work, are mentoring activities that are most effective in helping novice teachers. Even more, the frequent collaborative time between mentors and new teachers can promote a positive learning experience for beginning teachers and create a personal and professional relationship (Villani, 2002).

California standards for mentors. According to state policy, California Education Code 44279 requires that all induction program within the state assign mentors to new teachers within the first 30 days of participating in the induction program (State Policy Review: Teacher Induction, 2011). These mentors must be properly trained through ongoing professional development to ensure that they know their responsibilities as mentors and to develop their knowledge and skills to support beginning teachers (Induction Program Standards, 2008). The effectiveness of these mentors must be continually assessed t through well-established criteria.

Additionally, clear procedures should be established in cases where either the beginning teacher or the mentor is dissatisfied with the pairing (Induction Program Standards, 2008).

Challenges of Mentoring

According to the research done by Bullough (2012) novice teachers do not necessarily need to have multiple mentors in order to receive all the support that they need, but rather, the mentor that they do have must be properly trained and given time by the district to adequately support the novice teacher (Bullough, 2012).

Additional research suggests that the lack of training creates ineffective mentors which can negatively affect beginning teachers and the effectiveness of induction programs (Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010). Such was the case in a study conducted within the Illinois school districts which revealed that 15 % of beginning teachers met with their mentors daily, yet 46% of new teachers interacted with their mentors less than once a week, and those that met weekly, reported that they did not interact for the entire hour required by the state which is at least 1.5 hours of contact per week (Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010) . According to the survey, mentors reported that they were unaware of the state requirements regarding the time they had to spend interacting with their mentee, while others stated that they had other obligations to attend to and did not have enough time to attend to the needs of the novice teacher they were assigned to (Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010). The study further revealed that when mentors and novice teachers did meet together, there was a lack of differentiated activity between the two such as meeting to observe each other teach a lesson, plan lessons together, analyze student work, or to discuss student assessments (Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010). These types of mentoring activities have high potential for improving instructional practices within beginning teachers, yet they are often less practiced

(Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010, pp. 10-11). The fact that mentors are not consistently meeting with novice teachers seems to be detrimental in the professional growth of novice teachers and to the support they need. Research suggests that this becomes a vital problem when induction programs utilize mentoring as their major component of support (Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010).

In addition, Feimen-Nemser (2001) suggests that sometimes mentors promote ineffective teaching practices which can cause a cycle of traditional norms in teaching instead of encouraging new strategies to be used within the classroom (Nemser, 2001, p. 1031). The research clearly suggests that mentors need to be properly trained in different aspects such as pedagogical practices that are current and proven to be effective along with coaching skills to support novice teachers in different situations (Matsko, 2010).

Mentoring is not induction but merely a component of induction; therefore, other components need to be practiced and implemented within induction programs in order to create an effective program that successfully supports and retains beginning teachers (Wong, 2004).

Support beyond Mentoring

According to Matsko (2010) when different types of support is provided within induction programs along with mentoring it can prove to be more effective in increasing and improving teacher satisfaction and retention rates. Matsko analyzed the effects of support beyond that of mentoring by comparing novice teachers that lacked a certain amount of support to those that received a wide range of induction support. The data revealed that novice teachers were twice as likely to report good teaching experiences if they received encouragement and assistance from their principals, along with scheduled collaboration time with others, and opportunities to participate in a collaborate network (Matsko, 2010). According to researcher Wong (2004)

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scheduled collaborations, and an opportunity to network with other teachers is possible when there is a strong and effective leader to establish the intensive professional development program. The role of this leader should be to create a support driven professional learning program were teachers get the opportunity to teach each other, collaborate with one another, and progress towards improving their teaching practices (Wong, 2004). Professional development activities have the potential to teach new skills and empower new teachers within the classroom (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Beginning teachers may not have the time to seek and learn new strategies or even to reflect on practices currently in place, so it becomes crucial or collaborative opportunities to be established in order for them to learn from others (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

Johnson and Kardos (2005) also argue that administrators such as principals should decrease the work load imposed on novice teachers, reduce the class size, and provide more time for collaboration. In the Homewood-Flossmoor School District, new teacher retention rates have improved dramatically taking them from a loss of 64% in 1999, to a zero net loss in 2002 because the district implemented a professional development course that emphasized collaboration and network cohorts (Wong, 2004). Wong (2004) states, "Good teachers do not choose to remain at schools where administrators perform poorly" (Wong, 2004, p. 53). In order to retain beginning teachers, principals need to play an active role within induction programs. Researchers Thomas, Goe, Paek and Ponte (2004) found that principals need to be aware and supportive of novice teachers and work with mentors to ensure that enough time is allocated to meet with novice teachers. Further study also suggests that creating a teacher network and study groups within an induction program is far more effective than having a single mentor (Bullough, 2012). This is due to the fact that beginning teachers are provided with an opportunity to learn

from more than one experienced teacher through collaborative conversations (Bullough, 2012). Teacher retention rates were high when the induction program included teacher networks and consistent interaction with school administrators (Bullough, 2012).

Other induction activities that have been found effective according to Kang and Berliner (2012) came from the Teacher Follow-up Survey 2000-2001 consisting of 1,536 teachers. The analysis revealed that four prominent activities actually helped decrease the probability of novice teachers leaving. These activities consist of seminars, common planning time, and receiving extra classroom assistance (Kang & Berliner, 2012). Receiving seminar or classes in which beginning teachers participated in reduced the probability of leaving by 33% (Kang & Berliner, 2012). Additionally having common planning time with teachers that taught the same subject was associated with a 27% reduction rate (Kang & Berliner, 2012). The activity that had the highest impact was receiving extra classroom assistance such as a provision of a teacher's aide. This was associated with a 43% reduction rate (Kang & Berliner, 2012). This study supports the fact that retention rates increase when induction programs provide more assistance than that of mentoring (Wong, 2004).

Other Induction Components

Most novice teachers enter the teaching profession with theoretical knowledge based on college courses previously taken, yet they lack practice with actual teaching skills (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007). These novice teachers enter the teaching profession, and a lot of the times, they are confined within their own classroom struggling to figure out the best teaching practices (Ingersoll, 2011). Andrews, Gilbert, and Martin (2006) revealed that the most frequent request from novice teachers in this situation was providing them with opportunities to observe other teachers teaching (Andrews, Gilbert, & Martin, 2006). It was also revealed that

only 41.9% of these new teachers were given the opportunity to observe other teachers while the rest never got an opportunity to see anything else besides their own teaching practices (Andrews, Gilbert, & Martin, 2006). Research suggests that it would benefit beginning teachers a great deal if they were all given the chance to observe other teachers that taught similar grade level and subject in order for them to acquire new teaching skills and reflect on old ones.

Summary

Chapter 2 includes the literature that provides different data regarding components that have made induction programs effective in supporting beginning teachers within different districts. Mentors seem to be a major component of many induction programs, yet research suggest that these mentors are most effective when they are properly trained and when they use different strategies to help beginning teacher improve their teaching practices. Along with mentors, different support systems should be established within the school to provide beginning teachers an opportunity to improve on current skills. Chapter three will provide an over view of the procedures taken to undergo the action research. Along with this, description of the participants and setting will be provided.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In order to make effective changes and implementations within the teacher induction program, input from beginning teachers have to be taken into consideration when developing the curriculum of the program. It is crucial for induction programs to be an effective means of support for beginning teachers because of the many challenges they are faced those first few years. If the program is effective, school districts may see higher levels of retentions rates due to teacher satisfaction. For this reason, I will be using grounded theory research that will help collect data to answer the following research questions:

1. What constitutes as an effective induction program?
2. What activities demonstrated in the induction program contribute to increased knowledge base and practical classroom application?

Second year teachers will be participating in a mixed method study where they will share their input on the work and overall curriculum of the induction program that they were a part of. The perspectives gathered will provide data regarding the effects of the program on teaching practices within and out of the classroom. Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected through a Likert-scale survey and personal interviews.

Action Plan

Overall research design. I will commence my grounded theory research by collecting data from the participants. Participants will be asked to complete a ten item Likert-scale survey where they will provide their input of different components of the program. Following the survey, second year teachers will participate in a personal interview that will consist of seven

open-ended questions focusing on specific assignments given by the program along with the overall effects of the program. These responses will be audio-recorded and transcribed at a later time. Afterwards, responses will be analyzed and condensed into codable units to acquire conclusive themes. This research design is intended to yield different perspectives regarding various aspects of the program. The personal interviews conducted will seek to acquire more in-depth answers regarding different components of the program while the survey will seek to gather a percentage on specific aspects of the program.

Setting

This research will take place in a small farming community with a large population of Hispanics. It is located at the heart of the Salinas Valley where agriculture is the major source of labor. Due to the high demand in crop harvest, there continues to be a great influx of Spanish speaking immigrants whose primary source of income comes from this type of labor. Additionally, there is a growing population of students within the school districts each year. In order to accommodate the growing student population within the area, there are three elementary schools and one middle school. For this reason, the schools within this district have a cumulative need for credentialed teachers to teach the growing student population. One of the major challenges that teachers face as they teach within the area is the large percentage of English Learners who, for the most part, are not proficient in English. Also, many of these teachers have to either move to the area to teach or have to commute to work. This reason along with others has presented challenges for the district because of the continual loss of teachers within the area.

Participants

The participants of this study will be based on convenience sampling consisting of teachers that will be completing their second year of the teacher induction program within the

same school district as the prior year. Two of the participants teach at the elementary school while the other two teach at the middle school. The participants have been selected because they are in the process of completing their second year within the induction program and have completed most if not all the assignments, along with all the other requirements of the program. They will be able to analyze and reflect on the previous assignments from both years and provide their thoughts regarding the effectiveness of the work in increasing their pedagogical skills within the classroom. Additionally, they will be able to reflect on the overall effectiveness of the program and determine the most and least effective components.

Study Location

This study will be conducted in the participant's classroom. This is to accommodate their needs and to set a comfortable and well-known environment.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to the personal interviews, the seven open-ended questions will be created along with the ten items on the Likert-scale survey. Participants will provide written input on the Likert-scale survey where they will rate the items based on their satisfactory level (see Appendix B). On the day that the personal interview is scheduled, I will personally go to the participant's classroom and conduct my research there. This is to accommodate their needs and to help them feel the most comfortable when answering the questions. To eliminate any distractions, only the participant and I will be present within the classroom. For the personal interview, there will be seven open-ended questions that will seek to elicit different responses from all participants regarding the overall effectiveness of the induction program (see Appendix A). The open-ended questions will allow all participants to share their own perspectives without being coerced toward one particular answer. Participants will be expected to orally provide their responses and

will be audio-recorded so that they can share as much of their thoughts as they want to. This will allow me to review and analyze their responses at a later time. Participants will be allowed as much time as they need to respond to these questions and as the facilitator of the interview, I will not provide any of my personal input regarding the induction program in order to prevent the contamination of the study. In both the personal interviews and survey, the names of participants will be excluded for confidentiality purposes.

Both inquiries will aim to acquire data that establishes the impact that different components of the induction program had on them as beginning teachers. This is important because their perceptions and thoughts are crucial to the success of induction programs because ultimately these novice teachers and future beginning teachers are the ones that are the most impacted.

Data Collection and Sources

Data will be collected through an audio-recorder that will record the oral responses participants give during the personal interviews. In order to collect accurate data, participants will all be asked the same questions and be given as much time as needed. The questions for the personal interview will be open-ended so that participants can give a wide-range of responses and not feel compelled to answer a certain way. The Likert-scale survey will provide further data regarding different aspects of the induction program that were not specifically collected during the personal interview. These questions will not be open-ended and are more structured in the manner that participants will only provide a rating regarding their level of agreement for the particular statement being made. Through this mixed method of research, data will be collected in order to analyze the different components and impact that the induction program had on participants.

Data Collectors: I will be collecting the data for this research.

Data Analysis

Following the recordings, I will transcribe responses unto a word document making sure that all that was said is written out. Following the transcriptions, I will re-read through the responses multiple times and analyze them to gain a greater understanding of what was said. Through this analysis process, I will begin to code responses into thematic categories in order to determine similar patterns amongst the responses. As responses are coded, I will continue to add, revise, and combine redundant categories in order to formalize conclusive data. The results from the survey will be displayed through a statistical graph that will provide numerical representation of the participant's responses. The results will help answer the questions for the overall research and will provide a greater understanding of the effects that the induction program had amongst these second year teachers, and which components of the program were the most and least effective.

Limitations

- Limitations within the study will be the small number of participants. Many novice teachers left the district at the end of the first school year; therefore, the number of novice teachers that remained and are part of the second year induction program has decreased. Even more, the number of teachers that will choose to participate in the study may be very small.
- Lack of diversity: Most of the participants are females; therefore, there is not a wide range of perspectives in regards to gender.

- Lack of time: Some participants may not spend the adequate time to properly answer the questions during the personal interview. The answers may be vague, so I will strive to ask for explanations or clarifications to elicit in-depth and complete responses.

- Experimenter Bias: The fact that I am second year induction participant can create a bias when creating and asking questions to other participants. I will try to minimize these biases by asking open-ended questions so that participants are not lead to answer a certain way. Even more, I will exclude any personal input from the study.

Summary

This chapter provides a description of the participants, study location, and procedures that will be taken in order to complete the action research. By using grounded theory research, data will be collected regarding the effects of an induction program on beginning teachers. The following chapter will focus on analyzing the responses given through the questionnaire and to provide concluding data regarding the effects of the induction program.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the data for my grounded theory research which aimed to answer the following questions: 1).What constitutes as an effective induction program? 2).What activities demonstrated in the induction program contribute to increased knowledge base and practical classroom application?

To answer these two questions, qualitative and quantitative data were collected through personal interviews and a Likert-scale survey. Second year induction teachers were asked a series of questions regarding different aspects of the induction program that they currently completed within a specific school district. The purpose of this research was to determine the overall effect the program had on beginning teachers, and which components of the program were essential in supporting and increasing knowledge applicable to the classroom.

Effective Induction Programs

Through the use of personal interviews and a Likert-scale survey, different perspectives were brought forth regarding what components of the induction program were considered effective. The responses seem to answer both research questions simultaneously due to the fact that the effectiveness of the induction program depends on how the components helped increase the pedagogical skills of the beginning teacher.

Mentors. All five participants that contributed responses within the Likert-scale survey reported having effective mentors during their two years within the program. According to participants, their mentors supported them in challenging times and helped them with more than just the completion of modules. Even further, through the personal interviews conducted, the

four participants made it clear that having a mentor was the most important component of the induction program. These participants all faced different challenges during their first two years of teaching such as setting up their classroom procedures, developing and implementing new curriculum, figuring out the new technology, and some faced a lack of administrative support concerning student discipline. All reported that their mentor was able to effectively help them through the different challenges that arose during the school year.

During these two years, participants had a different mentor each school year. All participants reported having one mentor that was more knowledgeable in regards to the content and pedagogy than the other. The mentor that was able to effectively help the most seemed to be the one that was teaching the same subject and that had been teaching for a longer period of time. Those that had mentors teaching different subjects, especially at the middle school level, struggled to receive instant support in regards to curriculum development. Even further, one participant reported that her first mentor, although helpful, was hard to get a hold of due to the various other obligations the mentor had. Also, this same teacher asked for a new mentor during her second year because there was a lack of communication and lack of connection with the new mentor assigned to her. A new mentor had to be provided which resulted in a better match because the new mentor was willing and able to communicate with her.

Mentors help increase pedagogical skills. According to participants, mentors were effective components of the program because they helped increase their pedagogical knowledge. All participants reported gaining new skills from the conversations and feedback their mentors provided which was then transferable to their classroom. From classroom management ideas all the way to the development of curriculum, these mentors strived to support and help beginning teachers during their time of need. In doing so, beginning teachers were able to improve their

teaching practices. Data suggest that mentors are an effective component of the induction program if they are knowledgeable in different areas of the profession. It is necessary for the mentor to have prior teaching experience within the same subject as the mentee because many of the questions that beginning teachers have concern curriculum. Additionally, the availability of these mentors is crucial for beginning teachers. If the mentor has too many responsibilities within the school, then it will be hard for them to provide enough time to help the beginning teacher during the school year. Too many obligations for the mentor could make the mentee feel isolated and without guidance. This was reported by one of the participants whose first year mentor had too many obligations within the school to properly support her. In this case, the beginning teacher had to request for a more available mentor because of the strong impact that a well-trained mentor can have.

Table 1 Participant Responses to Question 2	
Was your mentor able to effectively help you overcome or find solutions to these challenges? Explain	
Participant A	• Mentor provided a lot of feedback and helped me see things in a different perspective. • She quickly answered my questions.
Participant B	• New mentor was willing to help me with whatever I needed for the classroom. • She gave me strategies to help students.
Participant C	• Helped with technology and different things I needed. • One good thing about the program was that there was always someone there to help me.
Participant D	• Last year my mentor had to go elsewhere for answers, but she always tried to provide me with help. • This year support provider immediately knew the answer to my problems.

F*igure 1*. *Responses for Likert-scale survey*

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1. The modules (assignments) were meaningful in purpose.	2		1	2	
2. The modules (assignments) helped me implement new strategies within my classroom.	2			2	1
3. The reflective portion of the induction program served to improve my teaching practices.	2		1	2	
4. My mentor was effective in supporting me with the challenges I faced as a beginning teacher.				3	2
5. My mentor helped me with more than just completing the modules.				2	3
6. Overall, the induction program helped me gain new pedagogical skills to use within my classroom.	1		2	1	1
7. Completing the modules (assignments) was stressful.		1	1	1	2
8. I would recommend the program to future beginning teachers.	2	1	1	1	
9. I would have **not** been equipped to meet the demands of teaching if it weren't for the induction program.	3		1	1	
10. I am glad to have participated in the induction program.	3		1	1	

Professional development courses. Another component of the induction program that was considered effective because it helped new teachers increase their pedagogical skills within the classroom, were the professional development courses that were offered through the county. During the first year in the program, teachers had to select a certain amount of professional development courses to attend. The purpose of these PD's was to help teachers gain new knowledge and skills to implement within their classroom. All of these courses were after school

or on Saturday's. During the personal interviews, there were no questions in relation to this component of the program, but when teachers were asked to add any further comments, three reported that they highly benefitted from the professional development seminars that they were able to attend. The fact that they were allowed to choose which courses would best meet their needs really helped them focus in on what they thought they needed support in. The three participants stated that after learning new skills from the professional development seminars, they were then equipped to implement the newly acquired knowledge within their classroom. However, some of the negative comments made regarding this component of the induction program were that they were mandatory. Some of these teachers felt that the courses should be optional due to the lack of time they have during that first year. One participant felt that although beneficial, the number of hours devoted to these courses were too much, especially during the week..

Ineffective Components of the Induction Program

It is important to note, that aside from mentors, the major component of this particular induction program are the various assignments, also known as modules, which are assigned to beginning teachers throughout the entire school year. The focus is so grand, that two hour seminars are conducted throughout the school year to review what is required for each assignment during that first and second year. The assignments are very similar both years, with less documentation that second year. All first and second year teachers are given the same amount of time and the same deadlines for the assignments. These assignments have to be completed and submitted on an online program called Live-Text in which the program directors within the district, review and grade them. If anything is missing from these assignments, they get re-sent to the beginning teacher to fix, revise, or add to it before re-submitting it once more.

The following responses are given in regards to specific assignment known as Module A and Module C, along with an overall perspective of all the assignments given by the program.

   Assignments and documentation. Question seven in the Likert-scale survey asked whether participants considered completing the modules stressful. Responses varied: One disagreed, one remained neutral, one agreed, and two strongly agreed. In relation to this, statement eight asked whether participants would recommend the program to future beginning teachers. The responses seem to depend on how stressful the participants perceived the assignments to be. The participant that did not consider the modules stressful agreed that they would recommend the program to others, the one that remained neutral in the previous question remained neutral for question eight, and the three that did consider completing the modules stressful stated that they would not recommend the program to future teachers. Even more, one of the participants that considered completing the modules stressful actually felt that the modules helped her implement new strategies within her classroom and that they were meaningful in purpose (as stated in question 1 and 2 of the survey), yet did not consider this a sufficient reason to recommend the program to others. There seems to be a connection between the responses given for questions seven and eight, within the Likert-scale, in the manner that if beginning teachers were stressed out by the assignments given, they did not consider it sufficiently effective to recommend it to future teachers and *vise-versa*.

   However, during the personal interview, all participants reported that besides the mentor provided, the program was not essential in supporting new teachers due to the amount of work assigned to them. Even the participant that reported recommending the program to beginning teachers stated that there really was no benefit from the modules. Responses suggest that the only

part that teachers would recommend would be the assigned mentors, but aside from that, not much else.

During the personal interview participants had similar responses regarding the effectiveness of the modules assigned to them during the two years in the program. I presented Module A: A-1.1 Class Profile, and A-4 Home/ School Communication which were to be completed during the first two months of the school year that first year. Module A-1 pertained to information about students that participants had within their class. Module A-4 required documentation on specific contact made with a student's parent. This entire A module segment consisted of 5 other assignments relating to the community, and resources that were available within the area for beginning teachers. Assignments were due two months after the school year began.

When I presented the participants with these two assignments, I went over the documents once more, making sure that they knew what they had completed that first year. After analyzing the documents participants confidently reported that these two assignments were busy work, unnecessary, and time consuming to complete. All reported not benefiting from the assignments especially because it was towards the beginning of the school year when they were just getting to know their students, establishing rules, procedures, and the overall curriculum for the school year. There were simply too many things to focus on during that particular time frame.

Additionally, these two specific assignments were considered ineffective because there was no applicable knowledge that could be transferred into the classroom. Participants admitted that it is very important to get to know all students, but the assignments themselves seem to put a deadline on getting to know them. At this point in time, these participants were starting their first

year of teaching and transitioning from the credentialing program into a real classroom of their own; therefore, participants were focused on what they considered to be more important matters than the modules assigned to them. These two assignments, along with the other five that were due two months after the commencement of the school year, created more work for these teachers during that transitional time. For this reason, all participants reported falsifying much if not all the information given within these two assignments due to the lack of knowledge they had about their students, and due to the lack of time they had to communicate with all parents before the deadline of the assignments. One participant reported making the entire information up because she was too focused on more important things.

Table 2	
Participant Responses to Question 3	
How do you perceive the effectiveness of these two assignments in supporting you as a teacher during your first year of teaching?	
Participant A	• I did not get any benefit. I thought it was busy work, and unnecessary • I made up the dates and the comments. I felt bad, but it's unrealistic for them to expect us to do this as a first year teacher because that first year you're drowning in curriculum, you're trying to remember your students names, what you will teach, how to work the promethean board, so many things.
Participant B	• I don't see the purpose why we have to prove that we communicate with parents. • Most of the parents work in the fields, so it's hard to communicate with them • I felt bad having to make things up but we had to complete the assignments there's no way around it, so I did what I could.
Participant C	• I don't think they benefitted me. • It's good knowing their CELDT scores and who has an SST, but comments are a waste of time. • Made up the home school communication portion.
Participant D	• A-1 would have been better as an ongoing assignment because in the first month of teaching, I didn't pay too much attention to different aspects of my students. • I didn't know them that well, so I probably made up some of the things that I wrote.

Module C: Inquiry. To gather further input regarding the assignments given by the program, I decided to focus on Module C which was referred to as the inquiry that beginning teachers had to complete during their first and second year in the program. The inquiry allowed participants to choose a focal question and determine what strategies would best help increase student learning. For this module, participants had to complete five different assignments that focused on researching strategies, creating lesson plans, choosing three students to focus on, and assessing students prior and after the implementation of the new strategy. All of these different steps had to be documented through the various questions within Module C.

Participants agreed that the inquiry process helped increase their pedagogical skills because they had to challenge themselves to try a new strategy within their classroom. As a beginning teacher, these participants reported already doing research and trying new strategies to use within the classroom. Additionally, they were already collecting and analyzing data to monitor the progress of students and modifying their teaching accordingly, so much of what the inquiry asked them to do was already being done. However, all the documentation that had to be recorded and submitted seemed to be a detriment towards the overall benefit of the process. Participant's responses suggest that they were more focused on answering all the questions for this module than actually focusing more time to fully develop the newly acquired skill. During this process, participants felt overwhelmed by the amount of questions they had to answer about the strategies they were using for the specific lesson they chose to focus on. All reported that the documentation was unnecessary towards the development of their pedagogical skills because they considered the focus question and implementation of new strategies as enough. Participants did not feel that there was real need to provide a rationale for everything they did because it was sufficient enough for them to know their reasoning without having to write it all down.

Table 3 *Participant Responses to Question 4*	
How effective was the inquiry process during your first and second year within the induction program in helping you increase your pedagogical skills within the classroom?	
Participant A	• Inquiry was helpful. It helped me learn more about my students and what they were able to do. • The researching was hard. I didn't do a lot of it because I didn't have a lot of time
Participant B	• I liked the inquiry because it challenged me, but it was draining trying to keep up with everything. • If they gave us less of the documentation to write then it would be good especially because a lot of the questions were repetitive
Participant C	• The first year was kind of effective since I was already doing that. • Typing it all up and explaining is extra work that we shouldn't have to be doing because we already have a lot to do.
Participant D	• Portions of the inquiry were fine. It's important to assess student to see if they're learning. • Writing out my reasoning is a waste of my time. I need to actually be planning to re-teach it rather than explaining my rationale to someone behind a desk.

These responses suggest that even the assignment that was considered effective in helping new teachers further develop their pedagogical skills was overbearing due to the documentation and explanations they had to provide during the entire process. Beginning teachers are already trying new strategies and analyzing student work during their first two years that it becomes too much when rationales are expected for each step taken.

Overall Effect of the Assignments on Teachers

All participants perceived the assignments to be ineffective in supporting them and helping increase their knowledge and skills. However, this differs from the responses given in the Likert-scale survey where three of the participants agreed that the modules helped increase their pedagogical skills. From the personal interview, it is evident that participants were

specifically referring to the inquiry completed both years within the program. In addition, two participants mentioned Module E which was the self-assessment portion of all the modules. Module E required participants to document their strengths and weaknesses at the beginning and end of the school year. The purpose of this was for the participants to reflect on their teaching and to reflect on the growth they made during the school year. Two out of the four participants made reference to this module and stated that no benefit was attained. Although participants agreed that reflecting on teaching practices is good for the purpose of improvement, they felt that documenting it was time consuming and unnecessary. Both reported falsifying information just to complete the assignment. Overall, all participants reported the assignments to be the least effective practice within the induction program due to the large amounts of time spent to complete them.

Table 4
Participant Responses to Question 5

Think back on the different assignment you've had throughout your first and second year within the induction program, what is the overall effect that it has had on you as a new teacher?	
Participant A	• It did not have a lot of effect on me. Did not learn any more than I already did. • I felt that the majority of the work was just to keep us busy.
Participant B	• All the documentation didn't help me become a better teacher. • I don't feel that I put enough time in the classroom because I had to worry about those assignments.
Participant C	• I don't feel that I gained any extra skills. • These assignments are not benefiting me or my students. • Overall, when I think of BTSA I think negative because it's just extra work
Participant D	• The negative of the program is how much time they want you to devote to these documents because if you're really struggling it takes time away from that."

Seminars. First and second year teachers participating in the induction program had to

attend two hour meetings during their first and second year. During their first year, participants

had to attend five seminars, and only four seminars their second year. If the beginning teacher

missed a seminar, they had to make-up the missed meeting by attending a seminar at a different

school district. During the personal interview, three of the participants stated that these seminars

were an ineffective use of their time because for the majority of the time, these meetings were

devoted on explaining the assignments that had to be completed before the deadline. These

Seminars did not teach or help increase the pedagogical skills of beginning teachers, but rather, it

was to ensure that everyone knew how to locate the documents on Live-Text along with

completing each question thoroughly. Participants, especially those with long commutes home,

reported feeling extremely exhausted at the end of the two hour long meetings held afterschool.

Table 5 Participant Responses to Question 9	
Is there anything that you would like to add about the induction program that was not discussed? *Regarding Seminars during First and Second Year*	
Participant A	• I didn't get a lot out of them at all. I don't know why we had to go. I was tired.
Participant B	• I felt that it would have been better if they explained what we had to do and let us work on the documents there. I felt that working on doc was more important than all the talking they did.
Participant C	Did not mention the seminars.
Participant D	• I am fully capable of reading. I don t need someone explaining the assignments to me for two hours.

Suggestions to improve program. One of the last questions that I asked participants was

"If you could change, improve or eliminate anything from the program itself, what would that be

and why?" All participants stated that they would get rid of most of the modules and documentation required during that first year It is quite evident from their responses that although it is one of the major focuses of the program, it is the least effective due to the lack of applicable knowledge towards the classroom and the time it takes to complete them. Participants also stated that the seminars should not be centered on the explanation of modules, but rather, induction meetings should focus on collaborative learning where new strategies are taught and learned. If the program continues to center seminars on the explanation of modules, then the time should be shortened.

Summary

Several themes are worth noting from the Likert-scale survey and personal interviews conducted. Overlapping themes surfaced for questions one and two in regards to the effectiveness of the program and the activities that contributed in increasing knowledge that was applicable to the classroom. It is evident that all participants perceived mentors to be the most effective component of the program because mentors supported teachers during difficult times throughout the school year. Even more, mentors were a source of knowledge in regards to providing new strategies that beginning teachers could use within their own classroom. A second component that was considered effective was the professional development courses that participants had to attend. This was considered effective because participants were able to gain applicable knowledge that could be transferred into the classroom. The last component that was considered partially effective was Module C, known as the inquiry. The implementation of a new strategy to increase student learning was considered effective because it allowed participants to research and gain new knowledge to use in teaching. However, all the documentation required for this module lessened the impact that it could have had on participants.

Responses also revealed ineffective components of the program. All participants reported that most of the assignments, excluding parts of the inquiry, were non-beneficial because there was no knowledge attained that was applicable to the classroom. Another ineffective component were the seminars conducted by the district of which participants reported were time consuming due to the content presented.

Based on responses, it is clear that participants consider components of the program effective when new skills and knowledge are learned to help them implement and improve their teaching. The following chapter will provide my thoughts and an overall discussion regarding the data presented in chapter four.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter will provide a discussion of the overall study including the findings and my personal thoughts regarding responses on the following research questions: 1).What constitutes as an effective induction program? 2).What activities demonstrated in the induction program contribute to increased knowledge base and practical classroom application? The discussion will include key ideas from Chapter 2 that are relevant to the study. Limitations of the study will be discussed along with an action plan to improve the current induction program.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to attain perspectives of second year teachers on the effectiveness of the induction program that they were currently participating in. This study examined different elements of the program such as mentors, assignments, and other components focused on supporting teachers during a two year time frame. It is clear that beginning teachers face many challenges those first few years within the profession. Many of these teachers feel over-whelmed by the various obligations bestowed upon them that go beyond the classroom. According to research, many novice teachers are disillusioned by the teaching profession during the first couple of years that many choose to leave the profession altogether (Ingersoll, 2012). For this purpose induction programs were created to support and retain new teachers within the profession. Although induction programs are mandated in many states, there is no universal curriculum to implement within all districts, so many create and implement their own program. Participants within this study analyzed and provided perspectives on the support and overall effectiveness of the program established within their school district.

Various researchers have presented data concerning effective components of induction programs set in place within other school districts. According to Matsko (2010) mentors are effective in supporting and guiding beginning teachers when they are able to offer teaching strategies that can be used within the classroom. Mentors can help promote professional development and growth within beginning teachers through diverse collaborative activities including co-planning, analyzing student work, and observing each other's teaching (Stanlis & Floden, 2009). Due to the value mentors have within induction programs, it is essential for them to receive the proper training to effectively support novice teachers in different aspects of the profession (Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010). Although mentors are a great component of an induction program, it should not be the main source of support for beginning teachers (Wong, 2004). Other effective practices consists of professional development programs where all teachers have an opportunity to collaborate, teach one another, and progress towards improving their teaching practices (Wong, 2004). This allows beginning teachers to gain new knowledge transferable to the classroom instead of trying to figure out the best teaching practices on their own (Ingersoll, 2011). For this reason, one of the most requested forms of support from novice teachers was to receive time to observe other teachers teaching. Most beginning teachers are continuously observed during their first and second year, yet many of these teachers never get an opportunity to observe others teach. Research suggest that providing this opportunity would help beginning teachers acquire new teaching skills and reflect on the ones currently used (Andrews, Gilbert, & Martin, 2006).

Findings Restated

Through the use of personal interviews and a Likert-scale survey, my findings revealed that beginning teachers completing the induction program did not consider it an effective

program. Participants stated the modules created more work for beginning teachers that were already overwhelmed by the various demands of the teaching profession during that first and second year. Although two of the participants reported that the modules were meaningful in purpose within the survey portion of the study, during the personal interview, all reported that the least effective component of the program were the modules due to the time it took to complete them, the repetitive questions, and the amount of documentation required to demonstrate growth within the profession. Only one of the modules, Module C, was considered somewhat effective due to an increase in pedadgocial skills that participants attained. However, even this module was considered too much extra work because of the amount of documentation participants had to provide to prove the implementation of the new skill. Along with this, the seminars were also considered ineffective due to the content presented during the two hour time frame. Since the content was focused on informing participants of how to successfully complete the assignments, it was considered a waste of time that could have been used to gain new skills to improve teaching practices. According to all participants, the most effective and important part of the program was the mentor that they received their first and second year. This was due to the large amounts of support that mentors provided for the beginning teacher in and out of the classroom. Beginning teachers felt supported and were able to gain new knowledge from their mentors. Another effective component of the program, were the professional development courses offered through the county. Three of the participants reported gaining new knowledge that they later applied into their teaching. Since they were able to choose which professional development courses to attend, they were able to focus in on the area they felt they needed help in. Findings suggest that the most effective components of the program are those that provide new knowledge transferable to the classroom.

Personal Thoughts on Findings

Responses gathered through the qualitative and quantitative data seem to differ. The data from the personal interviews seem to provide more in-depth responses concerning which components of the induction program were effective and why. Within the survey, one participant reported that they would recommend the program to others; however, during the interview all stated that except from mentors, the program itself was not essential in supporting new teachers. Through this, the data suggests that providing mentors for all beginning teachers is a recommendable aspect of the program as long as they continue to be properly trained. Professional development courses should also be utilized by the program, because it allows new teachers an opportunity to learn the skills that they deem important. Overall, from the responses that I heard during the interview, participants seem to respond in a similar manner to the open-ended questions. They continually commented their frustration and dissatisfaction with the program that they were mandated to complete in order to clear their credentials. The findings presented suggest that there is a strong need to eliminate much of the documentation required. Three of the participants suggested that mentors should be the only component assigned to new teachers that first year. If documentation is necessary, then the second year would be preferable rather than the first year. This would allow new teachers time to transition and adapt to the profession without feeling the pressure of completing more work by a certain deadline. All participants also mentioned that they felt that the work they submitted was not carefully reviewed; otherwise, the graders would have noticed all the mistakes, incomplete sentences, and copying that was submitted as "college" level writing. It was interesting to hear such input from participants when the questions were open-ended and responses could have widely varied, yet

participants, having been through the program, knew exactly what helped support them and what did not.

As the data reveals within the literature review, induction programs cannot rely on mentors to be the major component of support (Wong, 2004). There are various other activities that can be established and incorporated into a program that provide additional support for beginning teachers. Beginning teachers are constantly seeking after new teaching strategies and practices to apply into their classroom in order to improve and progress within the profession, yet the induction program that these beginning teachers were enrolled in, seem to be the opposite of what was needed. It increased the amount of work for teachers, and it took time away from developing lesson plans and curriculum. The modules and documentation do not seem to coincide with the literature presented in chapter 2.

Despite the assigned mentors, the program seemed to lack opportunities for beginning teachers to develop their pedagogical skills. There was a lot of documentation that had to be filled out, and according to participants many of the questions were redundant and unimportant towards the development of new and applicable knowledge towards the classroom. Rather the questions were focused on asking documentation on the teaching practices that participants were already using which was perceived as unnecessary to document. It seems that they would have preferred for the program to provide them with resources to help them improve their lesson, help them overcome challenges, and most importantly help them gain new knowledge that would benefit students.

Participants mentioned that their mentors observed them and provided feedback, but not one of them received an opportunity to observe their mentor teach a lesson because that was not part of the programs requirements. Data within the literature states that it is crucial for new

teachers to observe others teach in order to acquire new skills and reflect on the ones currently used (Andrews, Gilbert, & Martin, 2006). For this reason, the professional development courses were of great help for them because they were able to gain new insight and knowledge that could be transferred into their teaching and classroom. However, it seems that observing someone that teaches the same subject and grade level and seeing how students react to the teaching is far more valuable for new teachers.

Limitations

One of the major limitations to this study was the number of participants. There were ten second year teachers within the induction program, yet only four were willing to participate within the study. Although their responses are very similar, it cannot be generalized for all teachers participating within the program.

Additionally, only the perspectives of second year teachers completing the program were gathered which excluded first year teachers that were part of the program during that same school year. The reason for this selection process was that second year teachers would be the only ones able to analyze all the components of the induction program after they had completed most if not all the requirements. Second year teachers would be able to provide perspectives on both years and the overall effects that it had on them as a beginning teacher. However, if the program changed in any way for first year teachers, there is no mention of that within this paper.

Originally my plan was to conduct a focus group interview in which participants would have gathered together in groups of four or five and responded to the questions the facilitator asked. The focus group interview would have allowed participants to hear each other's responses and extend on the responses being made. If one participant commented on professional

development, then everyone would have had the chance to input their own thoughts regarding professional development. However, due to the workload that teachers have after school, only one was willing to participate, so instead of a focus group, I had to change it to personal interviews to accommodate the needs of those willing to participate.

Another limitation of the study was that all four participants were female. Even if all participants would have chosen to participate, this would have still been a limitation because of those completing the induction program; there is only one male teacher. It would have been interesting to gather a male's perspective on the program.

Implications and Recommendations

It is clear that the first year of teaching is one of the most challenging times for novice teachers. Transitioning from student-teaching where minimal responsibilities as a teacher are given, to an actual classroom where these new teachers are given all the responsibilities entailed by the profession can be overwhelming. As participants mentioned time is required to adjust, develop, and master different aspects of the teaching profession such as implementation of new strategies, developing curriculum and procedures for the classroom, and learning to use new technology etc. These beginning teachers need all the support and guidance that they can get to be able to cope with the many different challenges presented to them during the first years of teaching. For this reason, induction programs were created. To help beginning teachers implement what they learned within the credential program and help them develop new teaching strategies in order to become effective teachers (Education, 2014). Within the Greenfield Union School District, second year teachers reported that mentors were the most effective component because they were able to help with many if not all the challenges that participants were presented with. This implies that mentors are being properly trained as mentors and abiding by

the guidelines as stated within the California Standards. However, the extra workload that was imposed upon them through the modules simply added to the challenges they faced within the profession. The components and work assigned by the program seem to contradict with their overall goal which is to support and retain beginning teachers. At a time when so many things are new to beginning teachers, adding more work does not logically seem effective. According to all participants, the main reason why these assignments were ineffective in supporting them was because the assignments and questions were irrelevant to their needs within the classroom. Besides the inquiry, the majority of the modules had no applicable transfer to the classroom. Data suggests that the assignments had limited effect on the pedagogical growth of participants causing them to continue to seek other sources of help that could have been provided by the program through more effective means.

Action Plan

The recommended action plan for those in charge of the curriculum of this established induction program is

- Reduce the workload and documentation that beginning teachers receive during that first year of teaching.

- The work that is assigned should be meaningful in purpose and should help increase knowledge that is applicable to the classroom and overall improvement of teaching skills.

- Questions within the assignments should be reduced and simplified. Only what is relevant to the improvement of pedagogical skills should be used.

- Professional courses should continue to be offered, but not mandated due to the lack of time beginning teachers have after school.

- The inquiry process should continue to be a component of the induction program, but the questions and work should be minimized. The lesson plan should be enough to demonstrate implementation of new skills.

- Seminars should be used for more than going over the assignments and deadlines. More time should be dedicated for networking and collaborative conversations regarding strategies used within the classroom.

- Well trained and knowledgeable mentors should continue to be a major component of the induction program, but should not be the only support beginning teachers get.

- Beginning teachers should receive opportunities to observe other teachers teach in order to reflect on current teaching practices and gain new ones.

Conclusion

Induction programs can prove to be effective if different components are used to help gain, develop, and increase new knowledge applicable to the classroom and to the overall profession. By doing so, an increase in retention rates within districts can be attained. Collaboration with other teachers, professional development to help increase pedagogical skills, and mentors can help new teachers be more efficient within their classroom. When induction programs provide them with different tools and support systems, beginning teachers are better equipped to meet the challenges presented to them throughout the school year.

The major emphasis of this research is that induction programs should implement components that help beginning teachers develop current skills and attain new ones. The induction program analyzed within this study has established mentors and professional development courses which are perceived as effective components of the program by the

participants of the study. Beginning teachers reported being positively impacted by these two supportive measures because through them, they were able to increase their knowledge that was applicable to the classroom. However, improvements to the program were also suggested by the participants of the study. These second year teachers considered the modules as an ineffective method of support due to the lack of knowledge gained, lack of transferable skills into the classroom, and due to the large amounts of time spent to complete the assignments. Much of the work assigned was regarded as overbearing during the first two years of teaching because of the other demands of the profession.

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Appendix A

Likert-scale Survey

Directions: Read the statements below and provide your input on the scale below. The responses on this survey will be confidential and is in no way associated with the induction program currently in.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1. The modules (assignments) were meaningful in purpose.	O	O	O	O	O
2. The modules (assignments) helped me implement new strategies within my classroom.	O	O	O	O	O
3. The reflective portion of the induction program served to improve my teaching practices.	O	O	O	O	O
4. My mentor was effective in supporting me with the challenges I faced as a beginning teacher.	O	O	O	O	O
5. My mentor helped me with more than just completing the modules.	O	O	O	O	O
6. Overall, the induction program helped me gain new pedagogical skills to use within my classroom.	O	O	O	O	O
7. Completing the modules (assignments) was stressful.	O	O	O	O	O
8. I would recommend the program to future beginning teachers.	O	O	O	O	O
9. I would have **not** been equipped to meet the demands of teaching if it weren't for the induction program.	O	O	O	O	O
10. I am glad to have participated in the induction program.	O	O	O	O	O

Appendix B
Personal Interview Questions

Opening Question:
1. What are some challenges that you have faced during your first two years of teaching?
2. Was your mentor able to effectively help you overcome or find solutions to these challenges? Explain

Introductory Question:
3. How do you perceive the effectiveness of these two assignments in supporting you as a teacher during your first year of teaching? (Show and explain both assignments).

Transition Question
4. How effective was the inquiry process during your first and second year within the induction program in helping you increase your pedagogical skills?

Key Question
5. Think back on the different assignment you've had throughout your first and second year within the induction program, what is the overall effect that it has had on your profession as a new teacher?
6. If you could change, improve or eliminate anything from the program itself, what would that be and why?

Ending Question
7. As you finish up the induction program this upcoming month, do you feel that the program is essential to support new teachers and help them progress within the profession? Explain your reasoning.