2011

Assimilation versus survival: A case study of beginning teachers; preparation, expectations, and survival in a new diverse environment

Ericka Dolores Shuss

ASSIMILATION VERSUS SURVIVAL: A CASE STUDY OF

BEGINNING TEACHERS; PREPARATION,

EXPECTATIONS, AND SURVIVAL IN

A NEW DIVERSE ENVIRONMENT

_____

A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Educational Administration

_____

by

Ericka Dolores Shuss

September 2011

ASSIMILATION VERSUS SURVIVAL: A CASE STUDY OF

BEGINNING TEACHERS; PREPARATION,

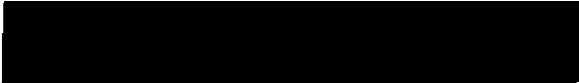EXPECTATIONS, AND SURVIVAL IN

A NEW DIVERSE ENVIRONMENT

_____

A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

_____

by

Ericka Dolores Shuss

September 2011

Approved by:

_____   _____
Dr. Louie Rodriguez, First Reader   Date 8/23/11

_____
Dr. Susan Jindra, Second Reader

ABSTRACT

New teachers are not receiving enough support to make
their first year a transition of professional development.
They are given requirements, procedures, expectations, and
goals that are expected to be implemented immediately with
effective results. They are expected to be proficient at
classroom management, lesson planning, instruction, student
assessment, student relations, and professional
collaboration. New teachers are also expected to contribute
to the school site. All of the duties can overload and
stress a new teacher to the point where they regret their
teaching decision or regret accepting their position at
that site. This mixed-methods case study examines the
stressors and pressures that make or break a new teacher
during their assimilation to a new environment - their
profession. Assimilation is directly connected by the
traditional concept of adapting to a new environment and
its expectations. On the other hand, the concept of
survival is the basic idea of getting through with or
without losing sight of one's goal, in this case,
continuing in the field of education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my family, thank you for the constant reminder that anything is possible, the encouragement and support you have given me is priceless.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND INSIGHT

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Assimilation versus Survival

The focus for this research will revolve around these main questions: Are new teachers adequately prepared for their new teaching position, school culture, demographics, environment and expectations? And what is available to assist new teachers to assimilate to their new work environment and how do they survive?

The new teacher retention rate is dramatically decreasing in California. Many new teachers leave the education field within the first five years of entering as teachers. Beginning teachers have many pressures guiding their entrance into the teaching field. As stated by McCann and Johannessen (2004) the first five years are a "vulnerable time" for new teachers entering the field (p.138). Federal, State, district and site mandates are overwhelming these beginning teachers to give up and find new employment. New teachers are not prepared to deal with issues; they do not know what to do or who to go. They are not given adequate support from their interdisciplinary· team, departments and school support systems and have

pressures from site procedures, new experiences and district requirements. Teacher to teacher relationships should be more supportive for new teachers to increase collaboration and trust.

As discovered by Parker, Ndoye, and Scott (2009), "beginning teachers who received 'a lot' of support versus 'some' support were more likely to stay in the profession" (p.337). New teachers are not receiving adequate support to make their first year a successful transition to the education profession. They are given requirements, procedures, expectations, and goals that are expected to be implemented immediately. They are expected to be good at classroom management, lesson planning, instruction, student assessment, student relations, and professional collaboration and contribute to the school site. The expectations of a new teacher overload the teacher to the extent that the school site is a stressor and constant pressure producer. New teachers melt away with insufficient support, no days to prepare with experienced teachers, lacking or no classroom management support for the first week, many new routines to learn, many school procedures to master, and expectation to contribute as a team and department member.

Induction programs such as "BTSA," Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment, are not enough for our new teachers. The information from this case study may assist the District, Principals, and Academic Coaches to become aware of missing links or provide additional support through professional development and BTSA for new teachers. We can find out what new teachers need to own their new challenge, and not become a survivor. Conderman and Johnston-Rodriguez explain how "providing beginning teachers with seamless support through individualized professional plans and mentoring programs as they transition from their role of student to teacher" is a key element to ensuring teachers are prepared (p.241).

Districts can help develop programs or modify programs in place to enhance the abilities of the new teacher before they are thrust into a new environment without "guided practice." This disconnect can help relieve the stress of new teachers and encourage these new teachers to be great teachers and become an asset because of the support they can receive. This issue can give insight to all stakeholders as to why teachers do not last, give up, or lose hope within the first year or first few years of teaching.

This research will produce useful information to districts, sites, and others regarding new teacher experiences, improve areas to assist new teachers, trigger new professional development foci to enhance skills and strategies to adequately prepare new teachers for the classroom, and provide ideas to enhance the survival of these new teachers through the use of their professional learning communities. We need to provide meaningful support to new teachers and acknowledge their efforts and hard work to assimilate to the established school culture and work environment.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review

For this research I consulted three bodies of

research: Induction programs, Site Support through

Collaboration, and Professional Development guided by

personal experiences. Trends in previous research show that

induction programs are necessary to adequately prepare new

teachers for the expectations of the district, site support

systems must be present for collaboration, and personal

experiences with professional development expectations and

opportunities guide the positive or negative experiences

beginning teachers have in their first years.

Induction Programs

Induction programs are the first key to possible

success for beginning teachers. Induction programs are able

to set expectations, goals and a support system in place

for beginning teachers. According to Loewenberg and Forzani

(2010), "we still lack a well-defined curriculum of

practice for prospective teachers," the current teacher

preparation programs that provide new teachers to

districts, along with induction programs within the

5

district are not enough to prepare new teachers for a proficient start (p.11). The process of induction programs uses mentors as a focused academic coach that must service new teachers through reflective observations and reflective discussions in order for new teachers to understand what to do and not to do.

The Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment, BTSA, induction program consists of the process explained above by providing probationary teachers with a support provider. The support provider is able to develop a coaching relationship with the beginning teacher to enhance understanding, reflection, and instructional practices. BTSA establishes goals and requires teachers to complete assignments to analyze their teaching practices.

This is significant because new teachers are thrust into the teaching profession with guidance once the process has started rather than guidance before the process begins. The process of teacher preparation before an induction program is a crucial element because it is then that a person can truly understand the expectations and experience the role of a teacher.

Simply completing a teacher preparation academic based program without the realistic experiences that may be

encountered in the future does not prepare our future teachers for their assimilation to their new career. Most employers require lengthy training for their employees before they allow them to take control and independently conduct any life threatening device or machine that may affect the lives of others. Teachers are required to complete a program that may not provide adequate experience and support and are then entrusted to educate our future. Loewenberg and Forzani (2010) states this "cannot be the foundation for preparing novices for a profession of the size of teaching, a profession with grave responsibilities for children's lives and education" (p.12). The teaching profession cannot rely on the fact that all teachers must complete a teacher preparation program; therefore, they are fully prepared to take on all of these new responsibilities. Teachers need an induction program as a transition into teaching and should start the program before they are given the responsibility of students.

The following quote best describes the reasoning behind the information provided by Gilles, Davis, and McGlamery (2009), "teachers must have perfected all the skills and abilities on the first day that they will have five years later" (p.42). Beginning teachers are expected

to implement ideas learned through textbooks as of their first day and not many new teachers are up to the challenge. Due to the high expectations beginning teachers experience, the use of mentors via induction programs are the key element to support and success in the classroom. Induction programs specifically target continuous collaboration as the indicator of progression for new teachers. Some induction programs are able to provide constant mentoring, continued education opportunities that benefit new teachers personally and professionally. Consistent and continued professional development are key factors that allow beginning teachers to understand and master expectations held by sites, districts and universities. Induction programs are meant to be comprehensive programs that focus on knowledge, skills and overall preparation to have a self-sustained classroom.

In research conducted by Moir (2009), "New teachers are traditionally assigned to the most challenging classrooms in the hardest-to-staff schools" (p.15). The fact that beginning teachers are placed based on vacancies and staffing needs, according to what they say they know, it is important that sites assess their beginning teachers to provide transitional support. The purpose of an

induction program is to effectively plan, set realistic goals, and strive for successful outcomes. It is crucial for programs to use many tools to assess and assist beginning teachers to understand and reflect upon the high expectations they are given. In order for induction programs to work districts must use highly qualified mentors as coaches for their new teachers. This allows mentors to develop professionally and assist in developing high quality teachers. The process of mentoring through induction follows the professional learning community model; it enables mentors to bridge the gap between new and experienced teachers. The use of professional development is enhanced by communication, support and guidance in a larger group of professional support. These skills are able to assist new teachers when working with others.

Another key component to the induction process is the support from the administration. Support from administration provides credibility that the mentoring or support program is successful and new teachers will receive the assistance needed in their beginning years. Administrators are aware of the shared goals and expectations via constant communication. According to Jones and Pauley (2003), the establishment of a mentoring program

9

can provide a positive school environment in which administrators can fully support their staff. The involvement of administrators supports collaborative efforts and professional growth. It is crucial that new teachers are able to access and communicate with support providers, administrators, colleagues and any other sources of assistance. Everyone is held accountable in an induction program, all of the workload and requirements are shared responsibilities.

This is connected to assimilation vs. survival because the true testament of how strong a teacher is or can be is judged by their capabilities experienced by others. Mentors are given the responsibility to support the beginning teacher through reflection and expectations, administrators must evaluate new teacher's progress, and colleagues are involved with their obligations. In order for these components to work together, accountability via collaborative support is necessary.

Site Support through Collaboration

In order for induction programs to be successful there must be site support and consistent collaboration amongst colleagues. This site support system is usually visible through the use of mentors and/or academic coaches.

10

According to Parker, Ndoye and Imig (2009), mentor matching is necessary for successful mentoring. The ability for sites to implement a support system that involves matching new teachers with experienced teachers, in same content or grade level, enhances the mentoring process. Mentors should be in close proximity in order to effectively mentor the beginning teacher according to their necessary needs. The needs of the beginning teachers should be addressed by conducting reflective conversations to enhance the learning process for new teachers. Parker, Ndoye and Imig (2009) explain the requirements of North Carolina mentor expectations: "successful teaching in the area of licensure; willingness to participate in ongoing annual professional development related to mentoring; and experience in the district norms, culture, and mission" (p.332). These mentor requirements provide beginning teachers with experienced and skilled mentors that will be there to assist them and address concerns. It is not a secret that we learn from people with experience.

Conderman and Johnston-Rodriguez (2009) give insight to the fact that collaboration at sites, as a support system, is not always a given. Beginning teachers may find themselves at sites where collaboration is not the priority

and support is not easily accessible. There are, however, many sites that thrive off of their collaborative culture. A downside to collaborative sites is the fact that new teachers "must depend on others, such as veteran teachers or mentors, to provide access to insider information" (Conderman and Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009, p.242).

Site culture may or may not be a positive experience in regards to site support; such as the use of mentors and collaborative groups (what we may refer to as professional learning communities, PLCs). Depending on the area of expertise, new teachers may be considered outsiders to the collaborative group. They may not get the adequate amount of information or feel welcomed. This is when mentors are able to bridge the gap between norms and new teachers. The use of positive mentors and peer relationships as the main components of site support are crucial elements to collaboration. Mentors are peer models and the key to the site's social culture; they can easily assist new teachers in the process of assimilation. But, mentors are not always the answer to site support interventions. Not all mentors volunteer for the role, and not all mentors are positive influences and/or supportive to new teachers.

Another obstacle beginning teachers face is when experienced teachers refuse to collaborate with new teachers. Beginning teachers may encounter experienced teachers that do not provide assistance or a collaborative culture. It is important to surround beginning teachers with supportive colleagues that provide motivation, support, and can challenge the new teacher to professionally develop without pressure (Jones and Pauley, 2003). There are many resources available for new teachers through many sources of professional development opportunities on and off campus. Many teacher preparation programs provide these additional sources or resources. The focus ultimately returns to the fact that teacher preparation programs should prepare beginning teachers for difficulties they may experience and for the reality that collaboration is not an easy process.

These findings are crucial to understanding the previous research on the assimilation or survival of beginning teachers because these are the policies implemented in schools across the nation to assist new teachers. Site support is the main vein that provides collaboration and support opportunities on a daily basis. District and County collaborative support services are not

always readily available or effectively incorporated at many sites. These obstacles lead to questions about the importance of professional development and how personal experiences can determine whether a new teacher will assimilate or survive.

Professional Development

Once induction programs and site support systems are implemented continuously professional development opportunities that enhance personal experiences are the final key component. According to Stanulis, Fallona, and Pearson (2002), pressures on beginning teachers in regards to accountability lead to self-doubt. The lack of communication and inability to anticipate issues are detrimental components of anxiety that lead to personal doubt. New teachers are unsure of collaborative expectations, which lead to personal experiences of isolation and abandonment. The goal of professional development is to heighten personal awareness and improve practices. Stanulis, Fallona, and Pearson (2002) explain that teacher preparation program experiences require collaboration, and first year teachers are thrust into an environment that isolated them. They do not have the experience or expertise as others, and they are not able to

14

adequately communicate their needs or weaknesses because of the pressures of being a new teacher. Beginning teachers may experience the development of personal boundaries with colleagues. These personal boundaries may prevent new teachers from asking for assistant and professional guidance. These instances can negatively affect personal experiences with professional development in an informal setting because beginning teachers are not sure of professional norms. It is affirmation from colleagues and administrators that can slowly replace the negative experiences of a new teacher; ultimately this will lead to feelings of effectiveness. Also, it is crucial that support from experienced educators be used as a learning experience to expand professional development experiences for new teachers as individuals.

Grant (2006) proposes the theory of self-efficacy through persistence; this idea can guide beginning teachers to deal with the issue of assimilation versus survival. Grant views persistence as commitment which guides people to learn from mistakes and grow from experiences. The ability for teachers to understand the pressures they will experience, learn from support provided and implement the best solution is self-efficacy at its best. New teachers

are only able to deal with situations in which they are familiar. In order for beginning teachers to feel comfortable with their abilities and potential they must have self-efficacy. Grant describes self-efficacy as: accomplishment, guidance, feedback and emotional support. New teachers must live by the idea that things can be overcome in order to survive and assimilate. If negativity envelops the new teacher, they will have negative experiences guide their future experiences. As teachers develop professionally, they must understand that comparing themselves to others without trying to change their personal experience will not be beneficial. Grant expresses that support and guidance are necessary from others to enhance the positive personal experiences a new teacher needs to professionally develop. Beginning teachers must understand that professional development is a process that must be accepted and followed, just as the theory of self-efficacy must be to succeed in personal experiences.

According to McCann and Johannessen (2004), the disconnect between a new teachers' expectations of their new position and the reality of what their position entails is a major component as to why personal experiences overshadow the success of professional development for new

teachers. Adequate professional development is not being provided to support the personal experiences of the beginning teachers, thus, the teachers feel their needs are not being met. It is a necessity for teachers to share experiences and horror stories to build camaraderie with colleagues and develop a connection for personal support. This type of bonding will allow new teachers to assimilate rather than enter survival mode.

It is during this difficult time that teachers must be supported through professional development and guidance to ensure assimilation. When new teachers feel personally supported and guided to develop professionally they tend to assimilate and grow from experiences. Furthermore, McCann and Johannessen (2004) explain that everyone involved must acknowledge and support the fact that first year teachers are experiencing a new environment; these new teachers are the new student in a huge class of proficient or advanced students. A school must build trust through personal experiences and those experiences will enhance the effectiveness of professional development. It is important to assist new teachers in the process of making connections to the staff culture, school culture and student culture.

Smethem (2007) writes that this is "a time of increasing accountability" (p.465). New teachers are experiencing so many pressures regarding their preparation, intentions, and career ladders that the teachers lose focus and do not consider teaching a possible long term career. Smethem (2007) explains how "professional identity" is a result of personal experiences in conjunction with professional development. Professional development focuses on being efficient and productive; if those are not met a teacher is not doing their job. These expectations can make or break a new teacher. The culture shock many teachers experience when they first enter education can set them up for assimilation or survival. Professional development requirements and opportunities affect the intentions teachers have to remain in the profession. If beginning teachers have a difficult time assimilating to a new diverse environment their negative experiences will guide their future and they will focus on surviving. And on the contrary, if beginning teachers have a positive view of their professional development and they have positive views of assimilation in their career, they will assimilate and promote to higher responsibilities. Ultimately, teachers must have strong beliefs about themselves and their

abilities and they must be committed to professional

growth, no matter what obstacles they may encounter. It is

only then that they can personally survive the first years

of teaching and develop a career in education.

This last component links all bodies of research

because these are the components that are crucial pieces to

the fact that beginning teachers are either assimilating or

surviving. The literature available provides insight into

the reasoning for assimilation or survival of beginning

teachers. This trend in research is intertwined to provide

a general basis of explanation. The trends in research show

that beginning teachers need formal and informal induction

programs, site support systems with constant collaboration,

and professional development that will be positive personal

experiences. Also research provides support to explore the

underlying effects of assimilation and survival in regards

to the adequate preparation and expectations beginning

teachers may hold.

Conceptual Framework

```
                  ┌─────────────────┐
                  │   Literature    │
                  │     Review      │
                  └────────┬────────┘
         ┌─────────────────┼─────────────────┐
┌────────┴────────┐ ┌──────┴──────────┐ ┌────┴────────────┐
│    Induction    │ │  Site Support   │ │  Professional   │
│   Programs on   │ │                 │ │ Development via │
│     Teacher     │ │     Through     │ │    Personal     │
│   Preparation   │ │  Collaboration  │ │   Experiences   │
└─────────────────┘ └─────────────────┘ └─────────────────┘
```
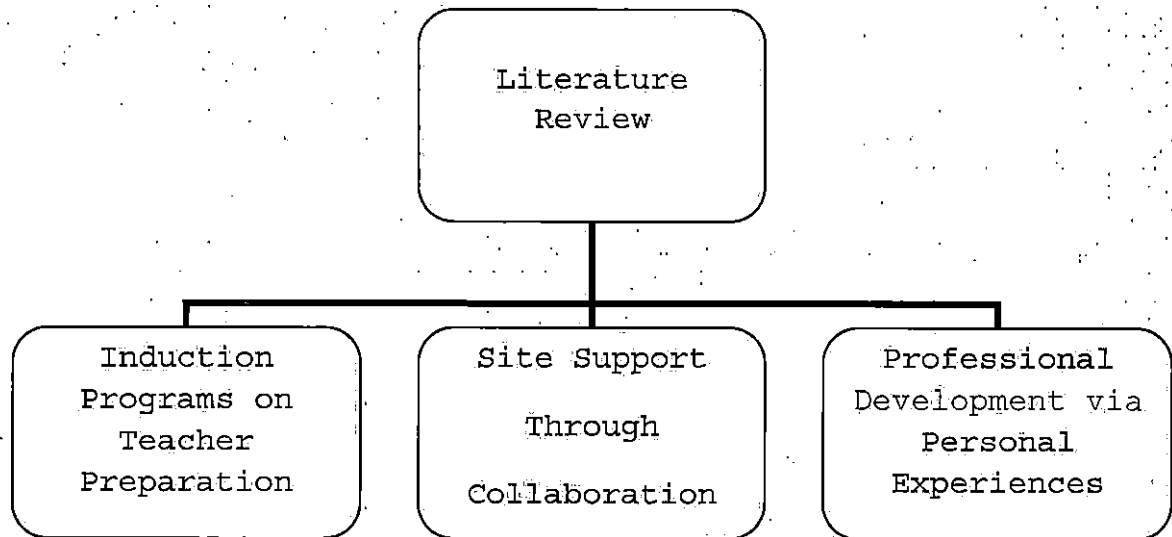
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

After having reviewed the literature available regarding beginning teacher preparation, expectations and survival I will use three lenses to review the data (*Figure 1.* Conceptual Framework). The lenses consist of: the effect of induction programs on teacher preparation, the use of site support through collaboration, and the effect of professional development regarding assimilation or survival in the teaching field.

The effect of induction programs on teacher preparation is the first lens that provides information regarding how well beginning teachers are expected to be

20

prepared. There is a pattern of misconstrued ideas that teacher preparation programs are sufficient and new teachers are fully aware of what they will experience in their first job. Induction programs are able to further prepare and guide beginning teachers throughout their first years.

The use of site support through collaboration is the second lens that provides information regarding the ability for beginning teachers to assimilate rather than survive through their first years of teaching. The ability for sites to provide mentors and collaboration time is crucial to assimilate a new member into the present culture. Adequate support should provide collaborative support within the site to ensure beginning teachers are not trying to survive on their own.

The effect of professional development in regards to assimilation or survival is the third lens that provides insight into the effects of personal experiences. The perceptions of professional development and the relevance or assistance it provides to a new teacher determines the impact it makes upon their professional development. If there is no impact to professional growth a beginning

teacher may lose hope and not progress. Personal

experiences guide the outcome.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Methodology

The focus for this research will revolve around these
main questions:

1. Are new teachers adequately prepared for their new
   teaching position, school culture, demographics,
   environment and expectations?

2. And what is available to assist new teachers to
   assimilate to their new work environment and how do
   they survive?

I used a mixed-methods case study approach to this
research and data collection. I was able to incorporate the
use of qualitative and quantitative data gathering to
assist in my research based on Strauss and Corbin (1998),
Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory revolves around the idea
that the data leads to the theory, rather than the theory
guiding the data. It is from this pool of data that
information was analyzed and categorized to assist in
answering the questions above regarding beginning teachers.

A brief twenty question survey was used along with a
ten question interview with a selected group from the

participant pool (Appendix A and B). Participants are
Certificated Educators at one of the top ten largest
unified school districts in California. According to the
district demographics, about 35% of students are English
Learners and 85.5% receive free or reduced lunch in an
urban setting in Southern California. The large school
district services over 52,000 students at 72 schools
ranging from elementary to adult schools, including seven
district run charters. Student population statistics below
for the school district closely mirror the student
population at most sites. Student demographics below
(*Figure 2.* Student Demographics) give into possible teacher
culture shock.

Student Demographics
- Hispanic - 68%.9
- African American - 15.7%
- White - 10.5%
- Asian - 1.8%
- American Indian, Filipino, & Pacific Islander - 1.7%
- Multiple/ No Response - 1.4%
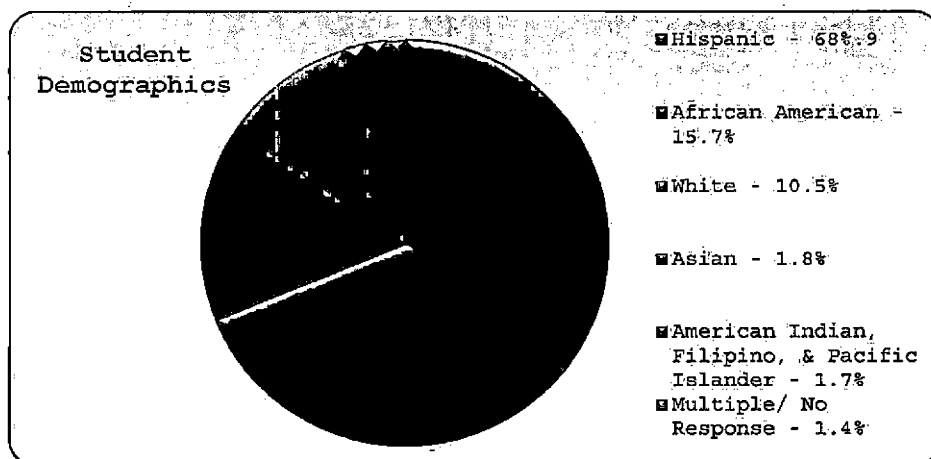
Figure 2. Student Demographics

The study was conducted at a mid-sized middle school (grades 6-8) in a low socioeconomic city in Southern California. This middle school ranked as one of the lowest 5% achieving schools in California. The site was subsequently put on a drastic school improvement plan geared for district-charter takeover. During the summer of 2010 the district established the school as a turnaround school. Due to State requirements the school needed to implement a comprehensive school improvement plan to enhance all sub-group proficiency levels. The implementation plan also required 50% turnover of teachers in the previous three years. The school met those criteria without losing current teachers, and was able to supplement the staff with additional teachers to meet the current school improvement plan. About twenty-five percent (13 of 51) of the teachers were new to the site, this year alone, as of March 2011. The school plan required implementation of new programs school-wide and increased teacher responsibilities.

All Certificated Staff at the site were asked to participate in a survey and nine Educators at different levels of experience were asked to complete the survey and an additional interview. The nine Educators were chosen to

participate in the main portion of the research according to their teaching experience. Three Educators with 1-2 years Certificated Teaching experience (beginning), three Educators with 3-5 years Certificated Teaching experience (experienced), and three Educators with 6 or more years of Certificated Teaching experience (veteran) (Appendix C).

The objective of the research will determine whether beginning teachers are adequately prepared for their new teaching positions and if they are receiving adequate support to assimilate to their new work environment at this site. The concept of assimilation in this study is directly connected to the traditional meaning of adapting to one's environment. New teachers come from different personal and educational backgrounds and it is a major adaptation to become a part of a site. Some may say it is acculturation and not assimilation, but new teachers must adapt to everything at a site, and then as time goes on they bring in their own perspectives and assets. As a new teacher they must conform to what the site deems to be the expectations, procedures, routines and priorities. It is not just the culture that the new teacher must conform to. And if they were to transfer to a different site, they must assimilate to that site environment of expectations and not only the

26

site's cultural environment. In regards to survival, new teachers are literally trying to survive day by day, and at times, class by class. Information regarding these ideas was gathered through multiple research methods.

Participants were given surveys and interviewed regarding their views, experiences and expectations concerning their preparedness, expectations, and assimilation of beginning teachers at the school site. Surveys and interviews were conducted to establish a pool of information to be analyzed and determine the causes, effects, and needs of beginning teachers at the site. Data was reviewed for trends, focus areas of improvement and ideas to enhance the chances of new teachers assimilating rather than surviving their first years.

A brief 20 question electronic survey was distributed to all certificated staff to complete anonymously via SurveyMonkey. The survey consisted of: basic demographic information to understand the composition of certificated Educators, preparation through credentialing programs and induction programs, support from various sources on campus, stressors that may affect personal growth, values of the site, collaboration within the site, expectations of new

teachers, administrative expectations, and aspirations of individuals.

The interview portion of the research consisted of ten questions focused on: personal experiences regarding adequate teacher preparation, changes to the current system of teacher preparation, issues and pressures experienced by new, recently tenured and veteran teachers, support and involvement within the professional learning community, the value of collaboration, each person's future in teaching and future at this site (Appendix B).

The purpose of surveying all Certificated Educators and interviewing a select few at different levels of experience allows enough data retrieval to reveal the concerns at the site and site improvements that could enhance the school culture for new teachers. The interviews allowed in depth analysis of information and an abundance of information that can be linked to make correlations between each teacher, their experiences, and the years of experience teaching. Interviews are able to provide direct information that provides key improvement areas, ideas for reform in any routines or procedures, and to establish a list of expectations beginning teachers should be prepared for before entrance into the classroom. This list of

expectations provides insight into what it takes to actually take new teachers out of survival mode and into successful assimilation.

Interview results were tallied and analyzed for patterns and correlations in regards to the frequency and importance of issues and concerns. A table of categories was developed to understand and evaluate the responses. All results were taken directly from the data and all identifying information was kept anonymous. The focus was on the findings and how they correlate to the current literature findings. Lastly, the use of interviews as the qualitative data gives validity to the research and provides credibility to the outcomes.

The use of quantitative data via a survey were tallied and analyzed for patterns according to the frequency of responses. Survey results were tallied and analyzed for patterns and correlations in regards to the frequency certificated staff believed was an important issue. A table of categories was developed to understand and evaluate the responses. All results were taken directly from the data and all identifying information was kept anonymous. The focus was on the findings and how they connect to the current literature findings. The survey was

a set of questions posed to the entire teacher staff for input on topics, issues, and concerns they experienced that could possibly affect the issue of retaining new teachers because of difficulty assimilating to the teaching profession. The survey allowed participants to respond anonymously to questions and participants were able to provide enough information to conduct a trend analysis and establish an idea what the teachers are experiencing. The following chart (*Figure 3*. Research Topics) identifies the topics covered during the interview and survey process. Each topic provided information that directly illustrated the ease or difficulty with each component of the teaching profession as a beginning, experienced or veteran teacher.

Research Topics:

-PREPARATION   -CHANGES TO PREPARATION PROGRAM

-INDUCTION PROGRAM   -TEACHER PREPARDEDNESS

-PRESSURES   -STRESSORS

-COLLABORATION   -FEELING OF VALUE

-FUTURE AT SITE   -ASPIRATION

Figure 3. Research Topics

Validity

The survey and interview questions posed to the participants were objective questions that elicit reflective responses from each participant about their experience.

Participants were able to respond according to experiences that personally affected them throughout their career. The interview questions were given to participants to reflect upon in order to gain insight into their experiences and feelings. The questions were kept confidential, as were the written responses to the prompts when completed. Educators at the site were able to respond to questions that could provide insight to the problems that face education and teachers today. The teachers were randomly selected from a list of all Certificated Educators at the site and categorized depending on their years of teaching experience. The rationale regarding interviewing a random group centers on the concept that if an idea or concept is truly valid it will manifest through a large group and small group, and specific examples will be found from a smaller focus group.

The ability to link the questions: Are new teachers adequately prepared for their new teaching position

31

regarding position, school culture, demographics,
environment and expectations? And what is available to
assist new teachers to assimilate to their new work
environment and how do they survive?, to survey results and
the interview responses will provide the triangulation
necessary to adequately determine the main findings at this
site. Information would be invalid if the focus group was
interviewed as a whole group, and not individually to
ensure confidentiality. Also, information obtained would be
invalid if the survey was given publically and the large
group of participants were allowed to speak to each other,
and then expected to submit the survey. Group discussions
tend to sway opinions away from an individual focus and
belief. The requirement of all information being
confidential and an individual reflection will keep the
validity at a high value.

Limitations

Validity questions the limitations. Educators are not
always willing to speak their true opinion publically or
via a response system that may hold them accountable for
their opinions and responses. Due to the nature of the
survey, an online survey system "SurveyMonkey," is able to
calculate responses on an anonymous level. Because of the

survey being conducted via computer based technology, participants may not answer openly or provide enough feedback regarding the topic. The survey is truly limited to the prompts (Appendix A) that are asked of the participants. The amount of participants solicited, compared to the amount of actual participants that completed the survey within the timeline, may limit the amount of information gathered for data analysis. Lastly, the case study was focused on one site; therefore, the use of interviews could expand and/or limit the responses given by participants because of personal feelings and hesitations regarding the sensitive topics of the study (Appendix B).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis

Demographic Results

Participant Demographics

Age:	%	Gender:	%	Ethnicity	%	Years Experience:	%
21-25	12.9	Male	36.7	African Am	16.1	1-2 years	19.4
26-31	12.9	Female	63.3	Asian	06.5	3-5 years	25.8
32-38	38.7			Latino	25.8	6+ years	54.8
39 +	35.5			Multi-Racial	03.2		
				White	48.4		

Figure 4. Participant Demographics

A large number of the staff, 31 of 51 eligible

Educators, 60% of the Certificated Educator staff were

surveyed for this study. The majority, 54.8 %, surveyed

through SurveyMonkey are an experienced educator with 6+

years of experience, 25.8%, are educators with 3-5 years

experience and closely behind are new teachers, 19.4%, with

1-2 years experience. The school site age brackets are 39

and above (35.5%), 32-38 (38.7%), ages 26-31 (12.9%) and

21-25 (12.9%). Most teachers are female and White at this site. Thirty-two percent of teachers surveyed teach eighth grade, 29% teach seventh grade, 29% teach seventh and eighth grade, and about 10% teach sixth grade (*Figure 4. Participant Demographics*). The highest numbers of respondents were Math and English teachers. The site has a high number of both subjects due to the fact that each team has two English teachers and Math teachers.

Teacher Preparation Results

The reality is that new teachers, whether they are new or beginning at a new site, do not receive enough preparation time prior to their teaching responsibilities. In regards to teacher preparation, most of the teachers, 57.7% felt they were adequately prepared through their University preparation program to start teaching, 42.3% felt they had adequate District orientation/preparation, and 26.9% felt they had adequate Site, department, and class management preparation (*Figure 5. Teacher Preparation*). According to the interview data, teachers feel adequately prepared after their Teacher Preparation program within their content, but they do not feel adequately prepared for site expectations or obligations.
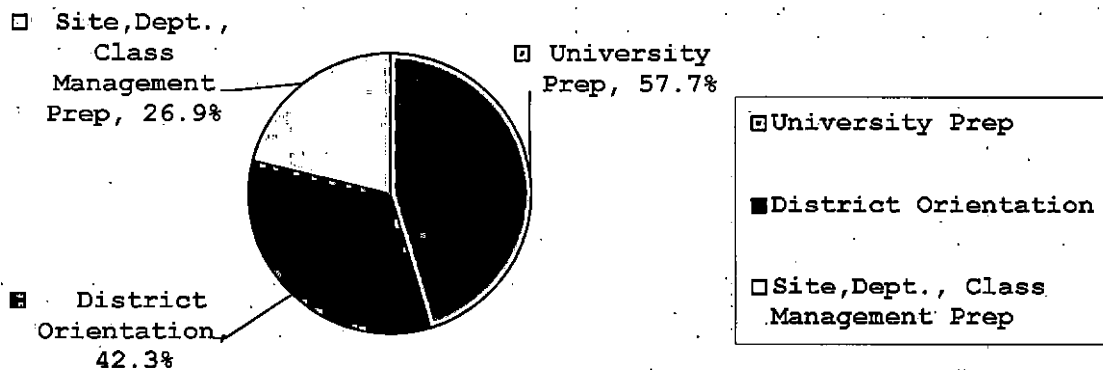
*Figure 5.*Teacher Preparation

Teacher Preparation programs give teachers a solid academic base with a varied hands-on experience to support their first actual teaching position. Many teachers cited observations and classroom experience prior to teaching as the key to preparation for the classroom. It is the lack of independent classroom experience, and lack of varied experiences in difficult situations that do not prepare teachers for their pending teaching position, or long term career in education.

Teacher A (personal communication, March 2011), a veteran teacher, explains the sentiments they have in regards to preparation and the feelings new teachers are continuing to experiences their first year.

36

[Teacher A: "Everything that I was taught was theoretical. It wasn't until I was in the classroom, when I had to think outside the box and implement other strategies that would work."]

Teacher preparation is a general term that encompasses pre-teaching credential education, and actual preparedness to enter the classroom ready to teach up to 36 students per class and up to 144 students a day. Not all student teaching or pre-service teaching experiences are able to provide future educators with the experiences needed to sustain their ambition to enter their teaching career.

Induction Program Results

The teachers were asked to share their experiences with the induction program provided by the district. Thirty-two percent said the induction program did not apply to them when they began their teaching career. The absence of an induction program was because the program was not fully implemented at the district level and/or the teacher was required to complete the induction program later in their career, rather than their first years of teaching. Twenty-nine percent said yes, it assisted them when necessary, but not a major resource of support, 26%

mentioned that yes, it substantially made a difference in the support they felt their first years of teaching and 13% said that no, adequate support and guidance was or has not been evident from the program. (*Figure 6*. Induction Programs)

No, 13%

Program did not apply, 32%

Yes, substantial, 26%

Yes, when needed, 29%

Program did not apply
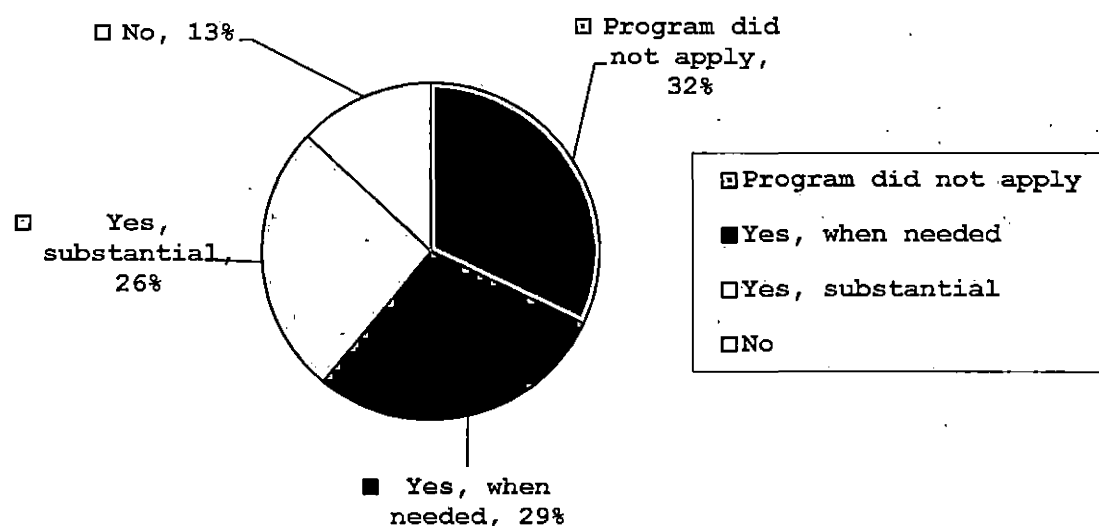Yes, when needed
Yes, substantial
No

Figure 6. Induction Programs

According to interview data, most teachers acknowledge that the structure is beneficial and provides strategies for new teachers. But, there are added pressures and stressors to beginning a teaching career because of the induction program requirements and expectations. Teacher H (personal communication, March 2011), a new teacher,

explains how the induction program is not helping
assimilate to the current reality.

[Teacher H: "I think the support sessions should
occur prior to the start of the school, or
shortly after it begins. The new strategies are
helpful, but when the BTSA meetings are in
January and February, it makes it hard to
implement any new strategy effectively.
Especially when it's regarding classroom
procedures, it's rough to change your current
procedures halfway through the year."]

The downfall of implementing induction programs after
the year has begun is not beneficial to the new teacher
because as the year progresses the teacher does not get all
the strategies necessary to start the year right. The time
constraints cause more work and stress on the teachers, and
there is not enough time to self-reflect. Teachers are
rushed to complete assignments and cannot concentrate on
all tasks, requirements and expectations to improve quickly
and feel successful.

Another factor that is source of stress regarding the
induction program is the meetings after school and in the
evening. Even though the beginning teachers only need two

39

years of the induction program, the time involved in completing the process without feeling the benefits in their classroom is a sacrifice for them personally.

Teacher A and Teacher G (personal communication, March 2011) expressed that the obligations to attend the meetings after school and to have all paperwork complete has been more of a burden than a benefit. They feel as if they do not have enough time to complete site expectations and requirements along with district mandated requirements to clear their credential. There is not enough support for the teachers to effectively benefit from the program in order to improve their teaching capabilities.

Teacher Support Results

Teacher support is a key factor to success, according to the survey, most teachers, 67%; obtain their support from individuals, 29% from their department, 26% from their interdisciplinary team, and about 10% from school-wide resources. (*Figure 7.1.* Teacher Support)

Legend:
- Individual Support
- Department Support
- Interdisciplinary Team Support
- School-Wide Support

Pie chart labels:
- School-Wide Support, 10%
- Interdisciplinary Team Support, 26%
- Individual Support, 67%
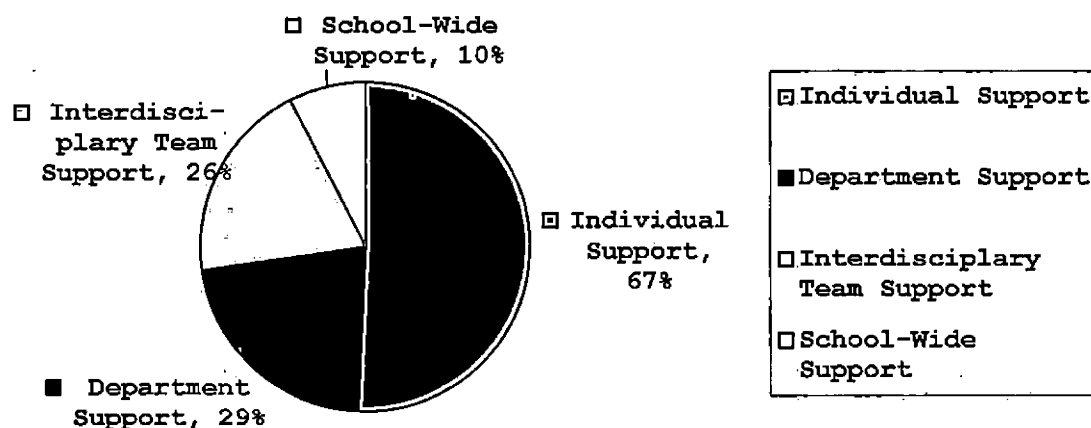- Department Support, 29%

Figure 7.1 Teacher Support

Teachers mentioned in the survey that 52% of useful support is obtained through site-based professional learning communities (PLCs). Twenty-nine percent cited off-site colleagues or groups, 26% mentioned induction program support providers, and 23% mentioned District Professional Development as a key factor. (*Figure 7.2.* Teacher Support)

Legend:
⊡ PLC Useful Support
■ Off-Site Support
☐ Induction Prog. Support
☐ District Prof. Development

- ⊡ , PLC Useful Support, 52%
- ☐ , District Prof. Development, 23%
- ☐ Induction Prog. Support, 26%
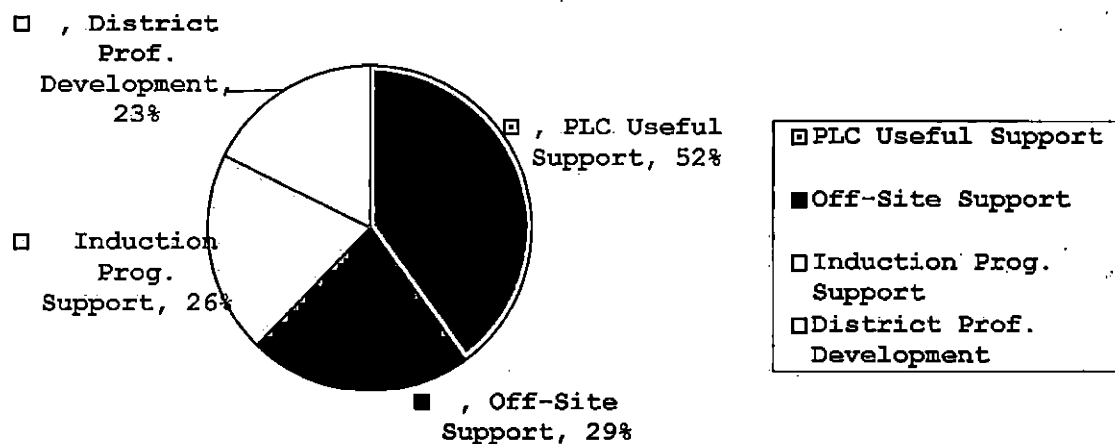- ■ , Off-Site Support, 29%

Figure 7.2 Teacher Support

According to interview data, teachers felt misled
about what exactly teacher support encompassed. Teachers
encountered unknown responsibilities, lack of teaching
support in the classroom, lack of support in all
transitions to teaching at that site with the established
teacher expectations, and not enough collaboration as a
support system for the teacher as a professional. The
following are excerpts from teachers regarding teacher
support experiences (personal communication, March 2011):

[Teacher G: "I felt prepared in my content area. I was

placed in an interesting situation and I don't feed as

if I was prepared for it."]

[Teacher C: "I was highly prepared with content

knowledge. Although I possessed these elements, there

42

was a lack of support to assist me in the transition of teaching. I was thrown in a class and learned on my own what teaching strategies to employ."]

[Teacher A: "I thought I was prepared when I came to this site, however, it's totally different when you're in the classroom. I feel as though I didn't have a lot of support."]

There is an abundance of expectations from all levels of the school that are required obligations and teachers obtain their support from individuals that can provide the insider information on how to complete all the required tasks. Teachers must take on the role of finding their own support when meaningful support is not easily accessible or automatically provided. This can be linked to the idea that a mentor is not enough when there are an abundance of requirements and the mentor may not be adequately informed about those requirements.

Pressure Results

Pressures as a new teacher are a key component that can steer a new teacher in the direction of assimilation or survival. According to the survey, over 67% of teachers believe the main pressure is teacher compliance, over 35% cite teacher preparedness, over 25% cite teacher

involvement and about 23% say teacher quality are the main sources of pressure for new teachers. All pressure is on teachers to raise their test scores and close the achievement gap. There are too many obligations outside of the classrooms that are teacher requirements and those expectations make the pressures to the perfect teacher even higher. (*Figure 8.* Pressures)

□ Teacher Quality, 23%

Teacher involvement, 25%

Teacher Compliance, 67%

■ Teacher Preparedness 35%

Legend:
- □ Teacher Compliance
- ■ Teacher Preparedness
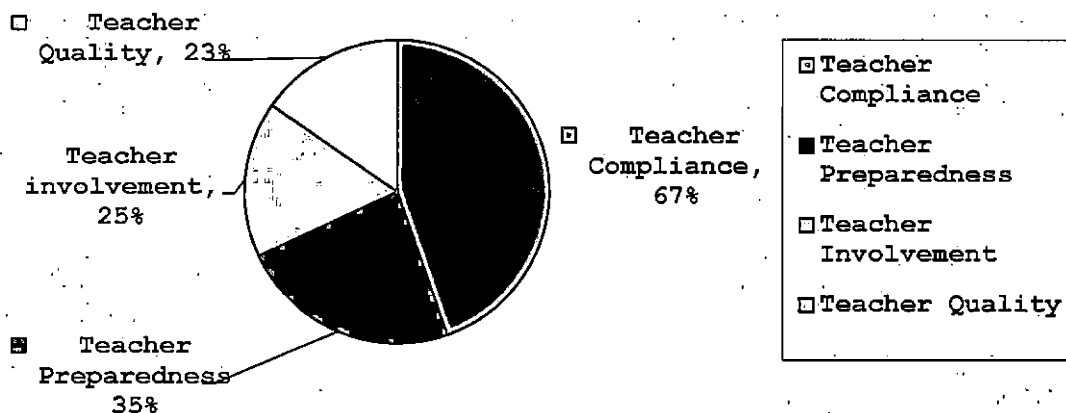- □ Teacher Involvement
- □ Teacher Quality

Figure 8. Pressures

According to the interviews it is the constant guidelines, timelines and requirements on top of teaching that make this career easy to dismiss after the first years. Teacher D (personal communication, March 2011), a veteran teacher, summarizes the responses of the 9 of 9 interview participants by stating:

44

[Teacher D: "The sheer overwhelming schedule, the pressure to manage the class really well in the first six months, the tasks that are required, and the nagging depression that you haven't done it right. I see a lot of frustration in the eyes of our new teachers."]

In addition to daily expectations and requirements from all teachers, new teachers are entering the current education field that is focused on data and data analysis. There is significant emphasis on data analysis of test scores to assist in the prediction of future test scores, and to assist with instructional practices and modifications. Unfortunately, there is not enough time to reflect upon meaningful instructional strategies when beginning teachers are overwhelmed. Beginning teachers are overwhelmed with analysis of test scores, and the added expectations to quickly implement a plan of action to assist the students falling through the cracks. These new teachers do not understand how to fix problems if the problems are overwhelming them. There is no concept of starting with minimal pressure and then increasing it over time for new teachers. New teachers are thrust into the same environment and expectations as seasoned teachers. It

was mentioned in the interviews by many teachers at all levels of experience that with such pressures occurring at this site, it is the frequent department support and personal motivation that allows them to work through the stress and continue to teach. The only way to survive is to rely on colleagues to teach you how to be a teacher.

Teacher G (personal communication, March 2011), a first year teacher, explains how pressures become constant sources of stress and Teacher E (personal communication, March 2011), an experienced teacher, gives insight to additional pressures.

[Teacher G: "Because there has been a lot of changes this year [with multiple programs] the students aren't held accountable. The kids know they are not graded for this class and there is not as much incentive and more behavior issues."]

[Teacher E: "Overwhelming amount of pressure to succeed! The school does not have the best program in place, as we are trying many new things, but if you are not doing everything perfect you may experience backlash."]

All teachers are expected to implement the programs in place and keep all students engaged, learning and performing well on tests to ensure mastery of standards. There is not a specific professional development seminar on how to deal with these behaviors and accountability of the students you end up teaching. Teachers are always under pressure to keep everything controlled and organized, especially beginning teachers, perfection is the goal.

Stressors Results

Stress causes teachers to get overwhelmed and turn to survival rather than assimilation efforts. Stress makes the assimilation process harder and takes more effort to overcome. The main cause of stress according to survey results was Requirements and Expectations, at 67.7%. Classroom management (25.8%) and School Culture (25.8%) were held as a significant source of stress and Student Relationships was ranked last at 3.2% stressful. (*Figure 9. Stressors*)

Student Relationships, 3.2%

School Culture, 25.8%

Classroom Management, 25.8%

Requirements and Expectations, 67.7%

- Requirements and Expectations
- Classroom Management
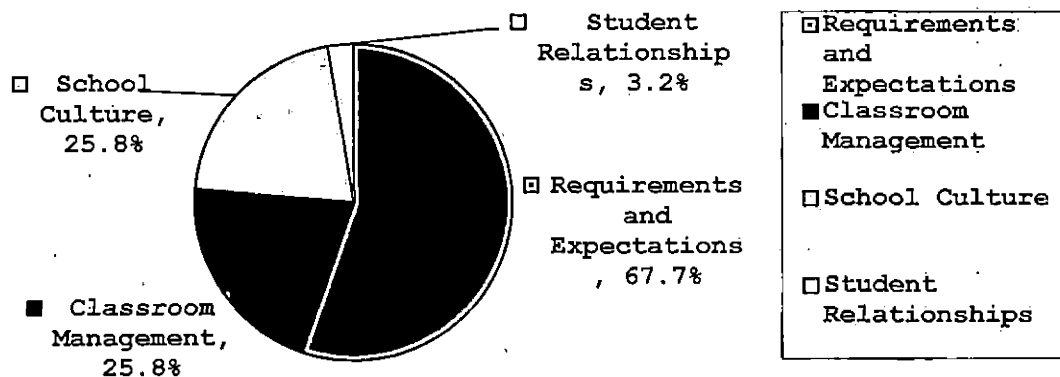- School Culture
- Student Relationships

Figure 9. Stressors

According to interview responses, the number of obligations, the heavy work load, expectations of perfection, not enough student accountability, and constant requirements make the teacher life stressful. The following accounts from Teacher G (personal communication, March 2011), a beginning teacher, and Teacher B (personal communication, March 2011), a veteran teacher illustrate the stress:

> [Teacher G: "Sometimes I don't completely understand what is expected of me. This is stressful because I don't always feel as if I'm doing the best I can."]
>
> [Teacher B: "Lesson planning to specific requests from administration is stressful, also being observed on a daily basis by more than one administrator can cause

48

any teacher to feel edgy. Having to do ALL the requirements given by administration such as word walls, language objectives, implementing reading strategies, etc. it is too much for new teachers to apply immediately."]

The method of survival and goal of assimilation is cushioned by frequent colleague support. Administration is deemed the last method of support, due to the fact that they are the ones implementing the requirements and expectations set for the staff. Frequent Department Support, 54.8%, was surveyed to be the area that alleviated stress from teaching pressures. Team Support was second in line as a stress reliever at 35.5%, improving personal preparation practices came in third at 38.7% and Administration Support came in last at 16.1%. (*Figure 10. Stress Support*)
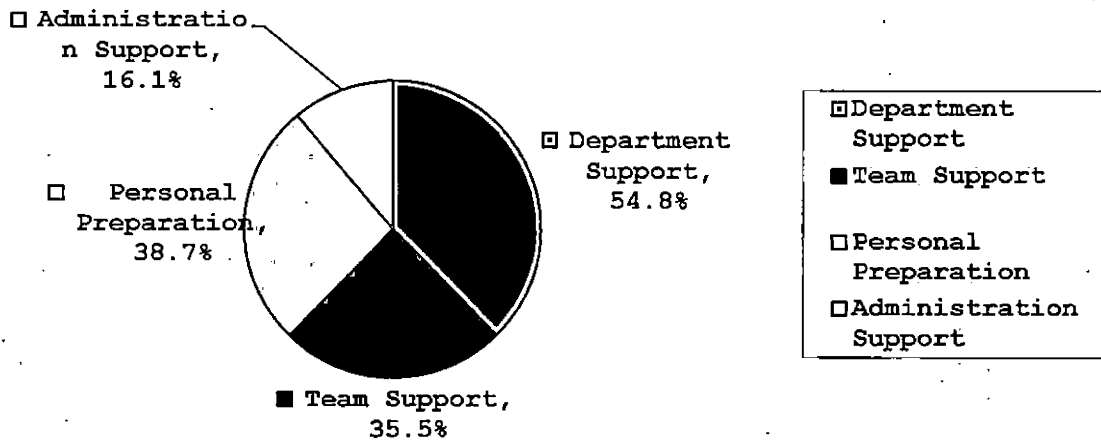
Figure 10. Stress Support

All teachers interviewed recognized the importance of
collaboration, but regard participation within the staff
culture as a major stress reliever.

Administration and Teacher Value Results

The first step to feeling valued is communication. If
communication is not established a person will not receive
acknowledgement or praise, thus feelings of inadequacy and
frustration of expectations sets in. This is not a positive
experience when administration is considered be to the main
source of teacher value, and are mandating specific
requirements and expectations be met. Of the teachers
surveyed, 71% believed that new teacher quality is a key
area focused on by administration. Administration is

usually the source of evaluation and recognition on campus. All teachers are aware of the importance of new teachers receiving adequate support, feedback, and recognition. The focus on new teachers by administration stresses the fact that if there is not open communication between beginning teachers and administration, the self-esteem, professional practices, and professional development of a teacher may suffer.

The staff was also surveyed if they believed the relationship you establish with administration makes a difference in your professional development and assistance at the site, 54.8% responded yes, most of the time, about 23% said yes, some of the time, 12.9% said it depended on the situation and 9.7% have not established a relationship with administration on site. (*Figure 11*. Administrative Support)
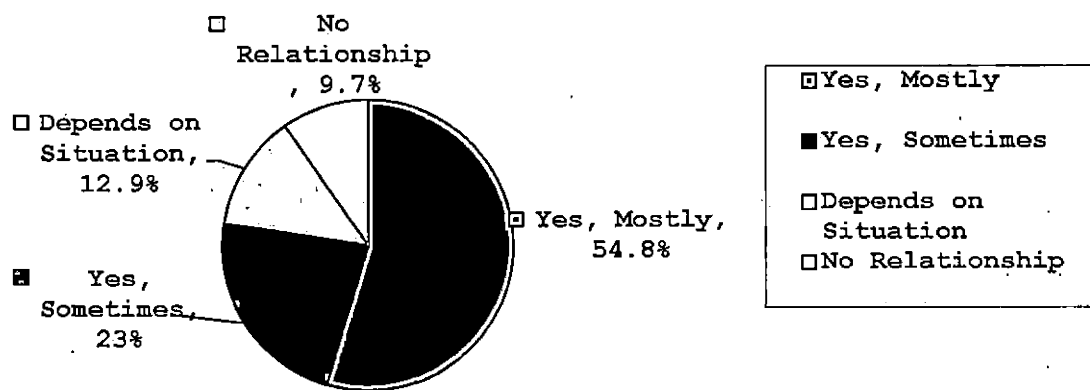
Figure 11. Administrative Support

I would believe it safe to state, that those that have

not established a relationship with administration have not

because the thought of going to administration could be a

source of pressure and stress. This is illustrated by

veteran Teacher A (personal communication, March 2011):

[Teacher A: "impressing administration and putting on

a front as though you know what you're doing. New

teachers want to seem as though they know what they're

doing, when really, they don't know what they're doing

and they feel as though, that if they ask, it makes

them look weak."]

Six of nine teacher interviews state that they do not

feel valued. The lack of communication and emphasis on

expectations lessens the will to assimilate and the

52

personal motivation to survive. Teacher B (personal communication, March 2011), a veteran teacher, explains the sentiments in an all-encompassing perspective:

[Teacher B: "Once in a while I do feel valued at this site, but for the most part we are not rewarded for our efforts. Many times we're reprimanded for one or two things with no acknowledgment for all the other positive things we do. It does affect our personal motivation and at times leads us to question whether this profession is what we want. We have enough to deal with at home, with our students, but to deal with personal issues with staff and administration should not add to our stress."]

Lack of communication and inadequate efforts to recognize valued efforts regarding the constant pressures put upon the staff leads to discontent and survival. On the opposite end of the spectrum, three of the nine interviewed participants felt valued at the site. Communication regarding teaching practices, receiving constructive criticism and teacher development were the main sources of value. A key component to that feeling of value may be because their values are geared toward

improving teacher quality, which was deemed the key focus

of administration from the survey.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND INSIGHT

Conclusions

The three main findings from the data analysis led to the ideas of collaboration, workload, and communication. These findings shed light to the questions; Are new teachers adequately prepared for their new teaching position, school culture, demographics, environment and expectations? And what is available to assist new teachers to assimilate to their new work environment and how do they survive?
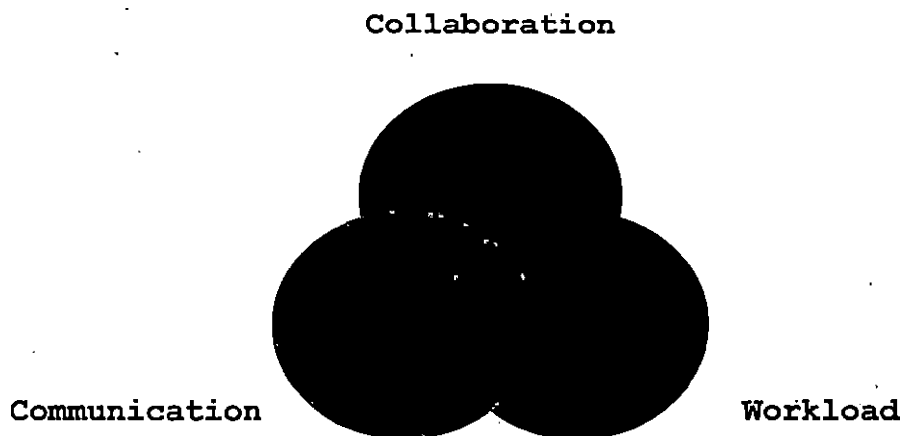
Collaboration

Communication   Workload

Figure 12. Areas of Concentration

The best way to understand the concentration of information would be to comprehend this case study from the Grounded Theory point of view (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The information gathered and analyzed has led to the proposed model (*Figure 12*. Areas of Concentration), to enhance assimilation rather than survival by incorporating three major concepts. Grounded theory according to Strauss and Corbin (1998) revolves around the idea that the data leads to the theory, rather than the theory guiding the data. It is from this pool of data that steps can be taken to increase our teacher retention and provide the support necessary to increase the professional capabilities of beginning teachers from the start of their career.

The topic of collaboration was reviewed by Parker, Ndoye and Imig (2009) and Conderman and Johnston-Rodriguez (2009) in regards to the use of mentors as the key to site support to new teachers did not apply to this study. The research conducted for this study focuses on the fact that teachers are depending on their colleagues for useful knowledge rather than a mentor. Mentors are not always matched by content and are not always an adequate match for the new teacher. Previous research understands the variables at every site, but it was frequent department

support (54.8%) and team support (35.5%), via the Professional Learning Communities model, that has assisted in the assimilation and survival of expectations and requirements at this site.

The finding that derived from the lens of Induction Programs is simply the workload new teachers are experiencing. New teachers are overwhelmed, 67.7% of teachers surveyed and all teachers interviewed expressed that requirements and expectations or obligations are too stressful. Loewenberg and Forzani (2010), Moir (2009), and Gilles, Davis, & McGlamery (2009) provided support for this study by expressing that new teachers are not prepared, they need time to develop and they cannot deal with the pressures without assistance through an induction program. Teachers are dealing with constant pressures and stressors that are not easily resolved.

Even though induction programs are helpful it is how beginning teachers deal with obligations, responsibilities, school norms, and the school culture. There are a myriad of roles that are expected and required. Smethem (2007) explained that teachers are experiencing so many pressures regarding their preparation, intentions, and career ladders that they lose focus. Smethem was able to explain the

purpose of professional development through her research perspective, but her research supported information regarding workload and the detriment of teachers. Overload, overkill, overwhelming to-do lists and responsibilities derail the objective of new teachers in the field. It is only by communicating with other teachers that they are able to survive and ultimately assimilate, if they survive long enough.

In regards to the research on professional development, it was found through this study that communication of expectations and requirements have a bigger impact than professional development. This survey statistic of 71%, that believe administration focuses on teacher quality, is a large indication of what teachers are focusing on when trying to communicate to new teachers how to assimilate or survive their first years of teaching. According to Stanulis, Fallona, & Pearson (2002), lack of communication and inability to anticipate issues are detrimental components of anxiety that lead to self-doubt. On the other hand, Leslie W. Grant (2006) and McCann and Johannessen (2004), explain how the personal perspective and motivation of an individual will allow them to succeed or fail, depending on their experiences. That is true, but

when requirements and expectations are rigid in a high expectations environment, survival may be the only component of sanity. If teachers are not able to learn what to expect from administrators and school culture, the pressures and stress take over. Education is losing teachers because the lack of communication delays positive reinforcement which could be the missing element to retaining capable teachers.

One last finding that encompasses are three findings is that all teachers are experiencing difficulties assimilating and surviving in the current education system. This is significant because new teachers are dealing with the pressures and stressors to become a successful educator and experienced and veteran teachers are dealing with pressures and stressors that are motivating them to leave their current position. The constant culture shifts experienced by the site on a regular basis cause more stress and pressures to meet the expectations that are being put upon the experienced to lead the novice teachers. This finding illuminates the facts that all teachers need collegial support at all levels. The workload that teachers experience is intense and needs to be reviewed and revised

for effectiveness and communication is the key to acknowledge success and areas of need as a support system.

Implications

This research shed light on areas of need for all sites to consider in these times of high-stake expectations and requirements within the education system. This study could be used to inform sites about key school culture components that may be affecting their teachers. If key cultural elements regarding teacher expectations and requirements are acknowledged and improved, teachers at all levels of experience may commit to the school mission and work as a collaborative Professional Learning Community (PLC) to meet high expectations and requirements.

New teachers should not suffer their first or second year in constant fear of failure or disappointment. It is crucial to guide new teachers to become a part of the school culture by modeling and guiding them through the process of becoming a teacher. All people in the field of education are aware that the first day in the classroom does not make you a teacher. It takes time.

Allowing further reflection into the collaborative process in regards to new teachers and experienced teachers at different levels must occur. It is important to promote

the school culture via inventory of workload, teaching

effectiveness, and communication to establish a culture

shift that will lead to heightened staff morale.

Reassess
current
induction
program
timing

Evaluate
Site
Culture

Allow
reflection
time to
improve
teaching

Implications

Ensure
Collabora-
tive
PLC

Provide
guidance to
Beginning
Teachers

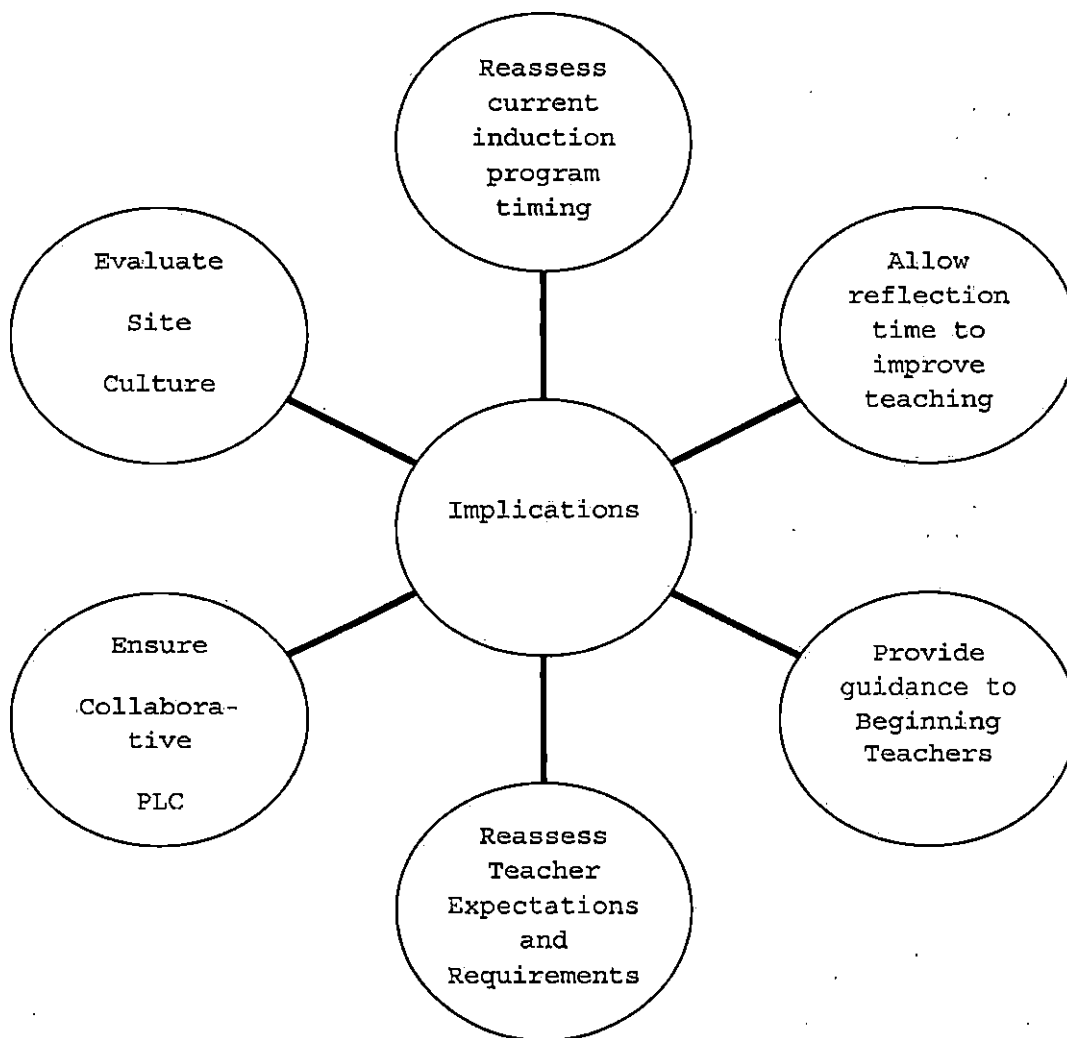Reassess
Teacher
Expectations
and
Requirements

Figure 13. Implications

This research can also assist in the reassessment of

the induction program timeline. A week to prepare teachers

for what they may experience in the classroom is not a realistic goal for teacher preparedness. A week is not enough. Giving a person a job and expecting them to be an advanced employee, is unrealistic.

As a future administrator, it is important that we have realistic and attainable goals for new teachers in order to allow them to grow and professionally develop over time. Forced assimilation leads to survival and teachers in survival mode are not effective, efficient or employed after their first years of teaching. Developing new teachers is a gradual process that will eventually lead to complete assimilation to the site and development as a quality teacher.

As an administrator, I would hope that further thought is put into giving: new teachers a thorough orientation, a presentation to model expectations of instruction, procedures for all expectations, a department based mentor for support and information regarding other areas besides the content, staff development truly used to develop the teachers to become the highly qualified teachers they should be, and that support and communication be established from the beginning. This should allow new

teachers to be given special attention, to guide them to
assimilate slowly and purposefully (Appendix D).

Beginning teachers are our students. They make the
biggest impact with hundreds of children each day and it is
necessary that we make the biggest and best impact with
them to be great teachers. We must always be aware of their
needs to successfully support and retain them.

Future Research Insight

Future research could shed more light upon the curiosities
regarding:

1.   Are other schools experiencing the same situations?
New teachers do not have much of a voice and feel as though
their opinions could jeopardize their job and/or position.
Do other schools have successful new teacher interventions
and support programs to make their transition successful?

2.   Which types of schools are best for new teachers?
New teachers are exposed to the low achieving, low socio-
economic sites because they have a high turnover rate, and
vacancies. But, is it the school population? Or is it the
school culture that makes a site better for a new teacher?

3.   Are there other programs that provide support for new
teachers that the district can provide? And are they
rigorous and research-based?

Besides the induction program, how can the district provide assistance to the new teachers they hire without pulling them out of their classes and requiring more hours of professional development? Also, does a district make a point of monitoring their new teachers and discussing their progress with administrators to assist with assimilation or survival? New teachers should be given professional readings or subscribed to journals to enhance their professional reflection and understanding.

4. Are districts aware of these misconceptions that allow the "sink or swim" idea?

Districts must take steps to keep potential quality teachers and mold them to be great career teachers for their district. Do districts realize that new teachers are not adequately prepared and that they are striving to survive in the classroom? Do they realize that they have content knowledge but are affecting the learning of students by being overwhelmed, stressed, and unable to cope with classroom issues?

Lastly, I would like to analyze the Human Resources Department of a district and uncover what their specifications are which they believe make a good, retainable teacher. Which teacher backgrounds are most likely to succeed, and which teacher backgrounds are more likely to leave the profession or get released.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Age?
a) 21-25
b) 26-31
c) 32-38
d) 39 and above

2. Gender?
a) Male
b) Female

3. Ethnicity?
a) African American
b) Asian
c) Latino
d) Multi Racial
e) White
f) Other: Please specify

4. Number of years teaching?
a) 1-2
b) 3-5
c) 6 and above

5. What grade(s) do you currently teach?
a) 6th grade
b) 7th grade
c) 8th grade
d) 7th and 8th grade

6. What subject area do you currently teach?
a) Multiple Subject Areas
b) English
c) Math
d) Social Studies/History
e) Science
f) Visual and Performing Arts
g) Physcial Education
h) Special Education

7. How prepared did you feel when you started teaching at this site?
a) I had adequate University preparation
b) I had adequate District orientation/preparation
c) I had adequate Site orientation/preparation
d) I had adequate preparation with my department
e) I had adequate class management professional development

8. Did BTSA assist in your assimilation to your teaching position?
a) Yes, substantially made a difference in the support I felt my first years teaching
b) Yes, assisted me when necessary, but not a major resource or support
c) No, adequate support and guidance was or has not been evident
d) No, BTSA did not apply to me when I began my teaching career

9. Where do you obtain most of your support from?
a) Individuals
b) Department
c) Interdisciplinary team
d) School-wide

10. Where do you obtain most of your useful support?
a) District Professional Development Trainings
b) BTSA support provider
c) Site-based Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
d) Off-site colleagues or other groups

11. What do you experience the most stress (issues)?
a) Classroom management
b) School culture
c) Requirements and expectations
d) Student relationships

12. What have you felt you have been valued most for?
a) effort you put into your career
b) as a teacher
c) in your interdisciplinary team
d) in your department
e) by students

13. What is the goal of collaboration at this site?
a) Participation
b) Contribution
c) Support as an individual
d) Support from interdisciplinary team
e) Support from department

14. How do you feel concerning your classroom instruction expectations at your site?
a) Prepared
b) Feel supported and take advantage of professional development
c) Have been assisted in the classroom by modeling or coaching
d) Can easily collaborate about any instruction questions
e) Need to be given more guidance

15. Which pressures do you believe are stressed at this site?
a) Teacher quality
b) Teacher preparedness
c) Teacher involvement
d) Teacher compliance

16. Which area do you believe alleviates stress from your teaching pressures?
a) Frequent Department support
b) Frequent Team support
c) Frequent Administration support
d) Improving personal preparation practices

17. What do you believe is the focus of administration regarding new teachers?
a) Teacher quality
b) Support for teachers
c) To be actively involved with teachers
d) To be accessible when needed
e) To have open communication

18. Do you feel that the relationship you establish with Administration makes a difference in your professional development and assistance at this site?
a) Yes, most of the time
b) Yes, some of the time
c) No, it depends on the situation

d) I am not sure, I have not established a relationship with Administration

19. What are your aspirations concerning your future?
a) I have aspirations regarding my current position
b) I have fewer aspirations and question my current position
c) I have aspirations to continue in the field of Education
d) I have aspirations to leave the field of Education

20. What option would you potentially consider?
a) Surpass high quality teacher expectations
b) Enhance current skills to meet higher expectations
c) Obtain the support necessary to gain the skills needed for my position
d) Finish this year and reconsider a consecutive year of teaching

Survey Questions developed by Ericka Shuss March 2011

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

1. Where did you complete your teacher preparation program? And what was most beneficial about your teacher preparation program?

2. What changes would you recommend regarding your teacher preparation program to prepare you for your current job position?
3. Did BTSA assist in your assimilation to your teaching position? What suggestions do you have to improve this process?

4. How prepared did you feel when you started teaching at this site? Were you given enough support to start your position? Please explain.

5. Which New Teacher pressures do you believe are a cause of stress at this site (overall from your experience)?

6. Where do you experience the most stress (issues) regarding your position? Are they required or implied?

7. What is the goal of collaboration at this site and how does it assist you?

8. Have you felt that your efforts at this site are valued? Does this make a difference in your personal motivation to continue working as an Educator?

9. Do you see yourself teaching for the next 3-5 years at this site? Why or Why not?

10. What are your aspirations concerning your future? If you continue at this site what do you hope will change, and what do you hope to accomplish? If you move on to a different site, what do expect will change?

Interview Questions developed by Ericka Shuss March 2011
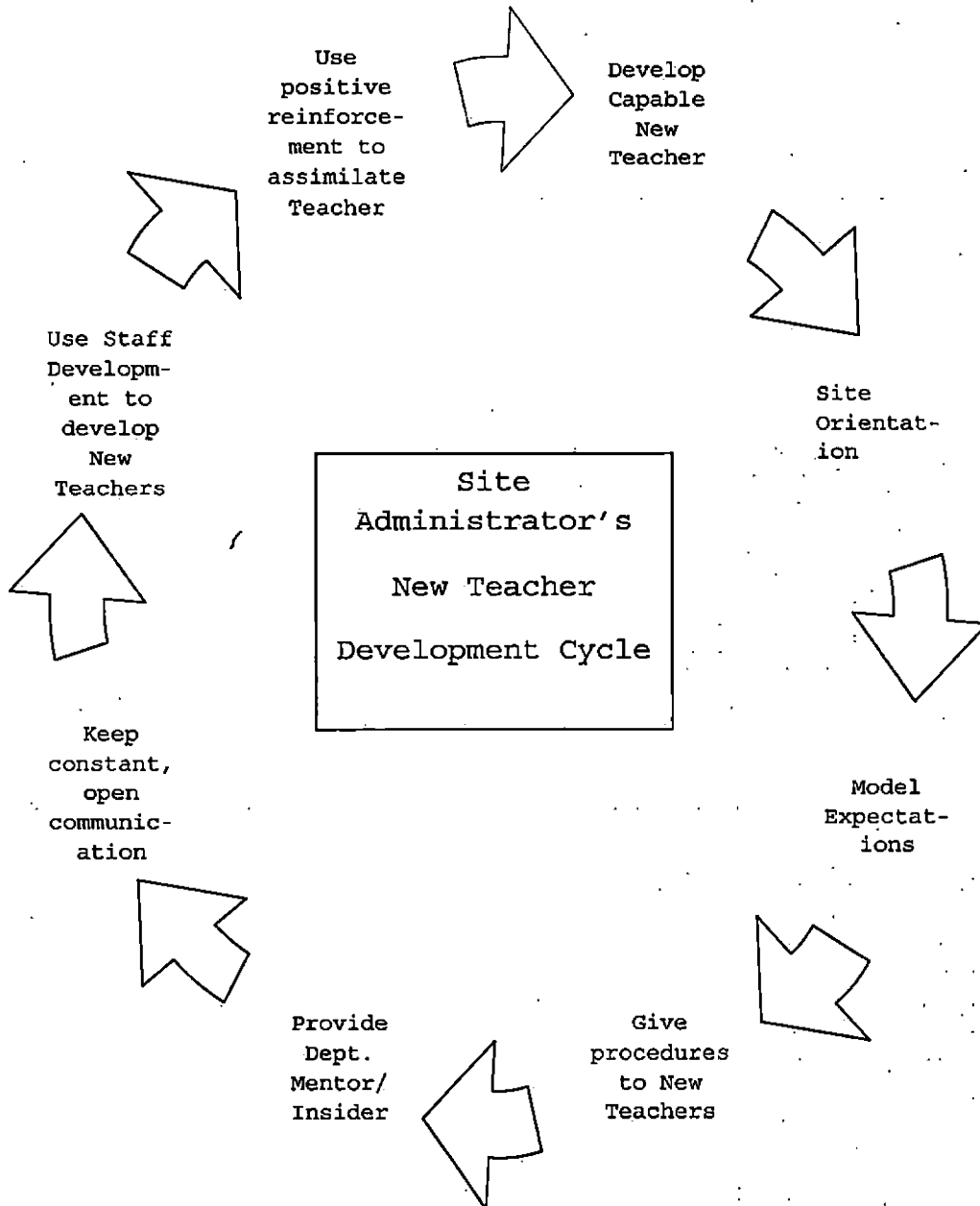
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

TEACHER PARTICIPANT NAME:	YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE
TEACHER A	VETERAN 6+
TEACHER B	VETERAN 6+
TEACHER C	EXPERIENCED 3-5
TEACHER D	VETERAN 6+
TEACHER E	EXPERIENCED 3-5
TEACHER F	EXPERIENCED 3-5
TEACHER G	BEGINNING 1ST YEAR
TEACHER H	BEGINNING 1ST YEAR
TEACHER I	BEGINNING 2ND YEAR

*TEACHER PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION GIVEN IN ORDER OF
INTERVIEW SUBMISSION.

**Participants randomly chosen by Ericka Shuss March 2011

APPENDIX D

IMPLICATIONS

IMPLICATIONS

Use
positive
reinforce-
ment to
assimilate
Teacher

Develop
Capable
New
Teacher

Use Staff
Developm-
ent to
develop
New
Teachers

Site
Orientat-
ion

Site
Administrator's

New Teacher

Development Cycle

Keep
constant,
open
communic-
ation

Model
Expectat-
ions

Provide
Dept.
Mentor/
Insider

Give
procedures
to New
Teachers

* Developed by Ericka Shuss April *2011*

REFERENCES

Conderman, G, & Johnston-Rodriguez, S. (2009). Beginning

   teachers' views of their collaborative roles.

   Preventing School Failure, 53(4), 235-244.

Gilles, C, Davis, B, & McGlamery, S. (2009). Induction

   programs that work. *Phi Delta Kappan, 91*(2), 42-47.

Grant, L.W. (2006). Persistence and self-efficacy: A key to

   understanding teacher turnover. *Delta Kappan Gamma

   Bulletin, 72*(2), 50-54.

Jones, M.S, & Pauley, F.W. (2003). Mentoring beginning

   public school teachers. *Adult Learning, 14*(1), 23-25.

Lowenberg Ball, D, & Forzani, F.M. (2010). What does it

   take to make a teacher?. *Phi Delta Kappan, 92*(2), 8-

   12.

McCann, .M, & Johannessen, L.R. (2004). Why do new teachers

   cry?. *Clearing house, 77*(4), 138-145.

Moir, E. (2009). Accelerating teacher effectiveness:

   Lessons learned from two decades of new teacher

   induction. *Phi Delta Kappan, 91*(2), 14-21.

Parker, M.A., Ndoye, A, & Scott, R. (2009). Keeping our

   teachers! Investigating mentoring practices to support

   and retain novice educators. *Mentoring & Tutoring:

   Partnership in Learning, 17*(4), 329-341.

Smethem, L. (2007). Retention and intention in teaching

    careers: Will the new generation

    stay?. *Teachers & Teaching, 13*(5), 465-480.

Stanulis, R.N., Fallona, C.A., & Pearson, C.A. (2002). Am I

    doing what I am supposed to be doing? Mentoring novice

    teachers through the uncertainties and challenges of

    their first year of teaching. *Mentoring & Tutoring:*

    Partnership in Learning, 10(1), 71-81.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative*

    research: techniques and procedures for developing

    grounded theory. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage

    Publications.