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The Impact of Self-Efficacy, Teacher Mentoring and Administrative Support on Teacher Retention in Title 1 Schools

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by
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Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Holly L. Cwiklinski under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

I have read the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility as described in the *Student Handbook* of Nova Southeastern University. This applied dissertation represents my original work, except where I have acknowledged the ideas, words, or material of other authors.

Where another author's ideas have been presented in this applied dissertation, I have acknowledged the author's words by using appropriate quotation devices and citations in the required style.

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Holly L. Cwiklinski
Name

8/2/2020
Date

Acknowledgments

To my mom, you have always seen the best part of who I am and encourage me to follow my dreams, no matter what they may be. I will always strive to make you proud.

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Abstract

Investigating the Impact of Self-Efficacy, Teacher Mentoring and Administrative Support on Teacher Retention in Title 1 Schools. Holly L. Cwiklinski, 2020: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: self-efficacy, teacher mentoring, administrative support, teacher retention, title 1 schools, new teacher

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of new teachers in Title 1 schools to discern if the intervention areas of new teacher mentoring and administrative support affect teacher retention. This study used a qualitative research methodology to provide gather data from new teachers working at Title 1 schools, and teacher training programs were analyzed in relation to the self-efficacy they provide as new educators are immersed in the field of education. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What is the impact of in-school mentoring programs on the retention of teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level?

2. What is the impact of self-efficacy on the retention of teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level?

3. What are the aspects of support provided by the administrator(s) which provide effective support for teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level?

A phenomenology approach was used for this study, as it allowed participants to share their personal experiences during each semi-structured one-on-one interview. Interviews took place on an online platform and were conducted to gather data from new teachers working at Title 1 schools. Research questions were designed to provide the researcher with data that could be analyzed addressing research questions in each focus area centered on interview data.

A qualitative analysis of the data revealed shortcomings within the areas of new teacher mentoring and administrative support, which can correlate with lower numbers of teacher retention. Analysis of the data also revealed high levels of self-efficacy, which is most impactful on new teacher retention. Shortcomings for this study include small sample size and the use of an online platform for data collection as a result of a national pandemic at the time of this study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The following chapter is an introduction to the proposed research that was conducted to examine the possible impact of teacher mentoring and administrative support on new teacher retention within Title 1 schools. The research problem is identified and the phenomenon of interest is presented. A brief statement of the problem will be discussed, along with the background and significance of the problem, deficiencies in the evidence, and a description of the targeted audience and setting for the study. The chapter concludes with the definitions of key terms within this study and an explanation of the purpose of the study.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher retention is an on-going issue prevalent in many schools. This issue is increasingly apparent in high-needs schools, where the majority of students live in low-income situations (Hirn, Hallow & Scott, 2018). These children come to school without the basic tools needed for success (such as parental support and sufficient nutritional needs met), and schools serving this population see a decrease in attendance rates and an increase in misconduct, as well as a lack of support from home and classroom motivation (He et al, 2015). As of 2018, the United States Census Bureau documented that 12.4% of the population at the target school district lives at or below the poverty range (United States Census Bureau, 2018). Florida's Department of Education (FLDOE) identified new teacher retention as an issue at the state level, and as a result teachers who started teaching in Florida during the 2010-2011 school year were tracked to see where they were 5 years later. Thirty-three percent were teaching at the same school, 32% were not teaching or working as an administrator in a Florida public school, 25% were working

within the same district, and 10% were working in a different district (Florida Department of Education, 2014, p.7).

Phenomenon of Interest

The impact of self-efficacy was examined to determine the possible impact on teacher attrition. Self-efficacy is an important component for self-worth and achievement. Bandura (1986) conducted extensive foundational research that supports teacher self-efficacy and academic success in the classroom. Educators who believe in their work show a strong work ethic, which will be evident in all areas of the classroom. Self-efficacy becomes an important part of this study when determining what factors aid in teacher retention. Extensive research has been conducted to identify a connection between self-efficacy and teacher effectiveness, which has the capability of influencing the impact teacher success has over personal perception (Clark & Newberry, 2019, p. 32-34). Aloe et al. (2013) reported that up to 25% of educators within the United States leave the teaching profession, and an increase tends to occur regarding teacher attrition within an educator's first 3 years in the field. They attributed this to teacher burnout, emotional exhaustion, and more stress identified as underlying factors. Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013) concluded that new teachers across the United States are leaving the teaching profession with 30% exiting within the first 5 years, whereas Raths (2014) stated that this number is higher, with 40 to 50 percent leaving the profession within their first 5 years of teaching. When considering school demographics this rate is greater, with Title 1 schools losing new teachers at a much higher rate than non-Title 1 schools.

Aloe et al. (2013) described how effective teachers are able to manage instruction, behavior, and student concerns fluidly throughout the day. They have a set of procedures

and rules in place that are understood, and as a result students recognize their role within the classroom. Self-efficacy for classroom management is identified as "the extent to which a teacher feels that (s)he is capable of gaining and maintaining students' attention, and dealing with disruption and misbehaving students (Aloe, Amo & Shanahan, 2013, p.105). O'Neill and Stephenson (2011) have expanded self-efficacy for classroom management to six areas: classroom organization, routines and expectations, gaining and maintaining student attention, cooperative learning, maintaining respect and order, and general classroom management. This can be used to measure self-efficacy within the classroom, and can be a tool for new teachers to use when determining personal levels of teacher burnout.

Many new teachers are leaving the teaching profession within the first 5 years. The first few years in the teaching profession are being defined for the purpose of this study as teachers with 5 years of experience or less. According to Kutsyuruba (2012), this is happening with new teachers who have recently completed a teacher training program, as well as those coming into the teaching field from other professions. If strong mentoring programs and administrative support were in place, it is possible that many of these teachers could be retained. "Teachers who do not receive adequate support in their first years leave schools and abandon teaching in favor of other professions" (Kutsyuruba, 2012). The problem that was investigated in this study is the impact of new teacher self-efficacy on teacher retention.

Sass, Seal and Martin (2011) examined the relationship between the number of teachers who leave certain schools or the teaching profession and the degree of job dissatisfaction. They proposed that job satisfaction appears to be intrinsically motivated,

while dissatisfaction occurs when the individual is influenced by factors out of their control. They concluded that the factors that teachers can control are those that make them feel satisfied in their job, but those that are mandated outside of teacher control can bring have a negative impact on how teachers view their position in the classroom and within the school community. Aloe et al. (2013) proposed that teachers have several factors that lead to teacher burnout, including interactions with students, parents, work colleagues, and administrators within their school district. Individual job demands are an additional factor when considering the workload of a classroom teacher, and has the potential to be another factor that could lead to teacher burnout.

Mentoring is a strategy which offers teachers an opportunity to receive the support they need while beginning their teaching career; the availability of a high quality support system in place throughout states, districts, and schools could have a positive impact on new teacher retention. A mandated mentoring program could help new teachers understand the expectations of their role as an educator. Furthermore, Kronholz (2012) provided evidence to suggest the benefits of using data from students to determine the effectiveness of teacher-training programs within schools. Kronholz (2012) determined that teacher modules on various topics can be beneficial in training teachers to become successful. The topics identified were classified as basic classroom procedures and big-picture subjects. With changes continuously occurring within the field of education, additions to teaching standards and requirements (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d.), and a lack of knowledge related to what is expected as a classroom teacher has the potential to create an overwhelming struggle with self-efficacy for teachers new to the profession.

Background and Justification

Once the interview process was complete the data was analyzed by the researcher utilizing the voice-recording of each interview. Written narrative responses were analyzed and charted to determine patterns within each school and across the schools participating within the study.

Teachers working in Title 1 schools have a set of challenges that those in more affluent schools do not face in their day-to-day interactions, and many teachers within Title 1 schools are leaving due to the complications within the population that they are serving (Jain et al, 2013). Freedman and Appleman (2009) discussed that many new teachers are unaware of these additional obstacles, and an overwhelming sense of failure can arise. If a strong mentoring system is not in place, these teachers will either leave the teaching career or find a new position in a more affluent school. This study will aide in the understanding of support that can impact teacher attrition within high-needs schools.

Deficiencies in the Evidence

While we have seen numerous studies earlier in this study which concluded that new teacher attrition is a concern nation-wide, a qualitative study using the interview process is not a prominent tool for examination in these studies. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) outlined tips to use within qualitative research, and explain, "skilled interviewers can gain insight into lived experiences, learn the perspectives of individuals participating in a study, and discover the nuances in stories" (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012, p. 1). In addition to the lack of interviews within the current research identified, using data from high-needs schools within the area of teacher attrition to address gaps in the existing body of literature has not been fully examined. New teachers are leaving the field due to low

job satisfaction, but little evidence supports the impact teaching at a Title 1 school has on new teacher self-efficacy to aid in teacher retention. Simon and Johnson (2013) explained that teacher retention within Title 1 schools is a persistent problem. Their research findings suggest that research focused on teacher turnover readily identifies educators at low-income schools are more likely to leave the classroom, but the focus was on next steps after leaving the teaching profession, not what could be done to help retain these teachers. The retention of highly effective teachers within these schools has the potential to impact the teaching environment, and a closer examination of methods to improve teacher retention is necessary for further understanding. Simon and Johnson (2015) identified the need for teacher retention in Title 1 schools, which have a high rate of teacher turnover. This can impact the capability to retain quality mentor teachers, and schools are forced to use funding to recruit and cultivate new teachers. Bressman, Winter and Efron (2018) discussed the need for teacher retention within high needs schools, but took a different path with their research, addressing a need to retain not only new teachers but veteran teachers who leave the teaching profession due to a lack of support (Bressman et al, 2018, p. 162). This idea not only suggests a lack of awareness for teacher retention issues, but identifies a problem in the infrastructure of Title 1 schools. Freedman and Appleman (2009) shared, "little is known about effective programs for preparing teachers who stay in the profession, regardless of the type of school they choose" (Freedman & Appleman, 2009, p. 325), and acknowledged that findings were inconsistent or difficult to understand.

Audience

Those affected by this study include teachers new to the profession students,

administrators, and experienced teachers. New teachers would benefit from this study because the results may help their first few years of teaching become successful. Students and the school community in schools may benefit if the findings provide effective strategies to increase retention rates for teachers new to the profession within the target districts. Administrators may benefit by helping to provide new teachers with a clear understanding of the school vision, culture and goals, while providing opportunities for new teachers to share their knowledge and skills. Administrators in the field of education may benefit as a result of the identification of effective mentoring programs designed to retain new teachers.

Description of the Setting

The target school district is located in central Florida, and is one of the largest district nationwide (BPS, n.d.); it provided education to over 73,000 students during the 2018-2019 school year. Within the school district are 105 schools and centers, which employ over 9,300 educators across 17 municipalities. Charter schools are also part of the target district but have an independent, non-profit governing board. All of the teachers within this district hold state certification, with a school board and administrative team providing services at a central office.

Within the target school district there is currently a mentoring program in place, and all teachers new to the county take part in the New Teacher Induction Program. This program includes a 3-day New Teacher Academy, where each participant is given a handbook and an in-depth training occurs. Topics from the New Teacher Academy include the target school district's policies and procedures, helpful links and technology tips, information regarding benefits and retirement, the Multi-Tiered System of Supports

(MTSS) process which documents and supports at-risk students, dimensions of engagement and diverse learners, classroom management and discipline plans, and classroom procedures. CHAMPS training is a separate three-day training component that teachers may attend, and this training takes a deeper look at managing students in the areas of conversation, help, activity, movement, participation, and success. An observation checklist tool is used to determine key elements of classroom management, and the areas addressed are broken down into eight categories: Physical setting, scheduling, routines/procedures/transitions, classroom reinforcement system, instructional strategies, classroom expectations, instructional assistants, and social climate/rapport building strategies. New teachers are given the opportunity to fill this out themselves, have the instructors from the course complete the form, and can choose to have a school or district based coach complete an additional observation. After each observation the new teacher has the opportunity for discussion on what was seen, can discuss with the coach or instructor next steps, and can have an open-ended conversation regarding their classroom. Each school has a school-based mentor who guides mentor teachers and is a support within the building. These mentor teachers provide support for new teachers that includes weekly meetings, observations with feedback on teaching practices, lesson planning, classroom management, and the other areas of need throughout the year.

The Researcher's Role

The researcher has worked for the target school district for the past 10 years within the elementary school setting, has spent 6 of those years working at 2 separate Title 1 schools, and now works at the district level focusing on K-2 instruction at low

performing schools. The researcher has had the opportunity to see multi-faceted aspects of the mentoring program in place within the target school district from the view point of a teacher new to the school district at the beginning of her career in Florida over 10 years ago, and again in recent years as a mentor for new teachers or those new to the school district. This has allowed the researcher to gain insight on the topics of self-efficacy, teacher attrition, and mentor programs, as well as watch the growth and development of the mentor program currently in place.

Definition of Terms

Administration. This term refers to the principal and assistant principal at each school where study participants were located within the target school district.

Administrative Support. This term refers to professional support provided for new teachers from administration in the form of fostering strong teacher leadership, supporting a mentoring program, using two way communication, and defining what is expected for new teachers.

Low-income situations. This term refers to situations where students are living at or below the poverty level.

Mentoring programs. This term refers to programs schools and school districts have in place to support new teachers.

New teachers. This term refers to those teaching in the public education classroom for 1-5 years.

Self-efficacy. This term refers to a person's belief in their ability to succeed. It can be further defined as, "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the sources of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1986).

Teacher retention. This term refers to teachers staying within the teaching profession, and not leaving the education field to pursue other interests.

Teacher burnout. This term refers to as feelings of exhaustion and ineffectiveness due to stress and job overload.

Title 1 Schools. This term refers to schools within the targeted school district identified as a Title 1 Schools when 65% of the students receive free and reduced lunch.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of new teachers in Title 1 schools within the target school district to discern if the intervention areas of new teacher mentoring and administrative support affect teacher retention. A qualitative research methodology was selected for this study as it will provide direct insight as to what training has been beneficial or is still needed for new teachers. Interviews was conducted to gather data from new teachers working at Title 1 schools, and teacher training programs were analyzed in relation to the self-efficacy they provide as new educators are immersed in the field of education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to gather information related to perceptions of new teachers within Title 1 schools to determine the impact teacher mentoring and administrative support has on self-efficacy and new teacher retention. This review of literature provides an overview of the theoretical framework for this research study. Additionally the review will include information regarding Title 1 schools, related literature on new teacher retention, self-efficacy, mentoring programs, and administrative support in relation to new teachers. The research questions which guided this research study will be presented at the end of the chapter.

The research conducted analyzes the major themes addressed within this study. Title 1 schools have been identified as an area of high need for quality teachers. Research provided shows these schools continuously lack the capability of retaining new teachers, which eliminates the possibility of quality educators for the students with highest need. The retention of teachers within these high needs schools would benefit students with the greatest academic need. Research provided late in this chapter identifies mentoring programs and administrative support as beneficial methods for building teacher self-efficacy, which in turn aides in new teacher retention.

Theoretical Framework

The framework for this qualitative research study focuses on Bandura's theoretical framework on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy was defined by Bandura (1977) during his studies on social cognitive theory in which his theoretical framework was established as the "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required produce given attainments" (Berkant & Baysal,

2018, p. 165; Bandura, 1977). This was taken a step further by Moulding, Stewart and Dunmeyer (2014) when they established that self-efficacy was a personal belief for each teacher on their performance as a teacher (Moulding et. al., 2014). Understanding Bandura's (1977) theoretical framework on self-efficacy for this research study will provide information related the overarching topics which will be outlined within this study. Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy beliefs include mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and the role of emotions, although Williams (2009) notes that the role of emotions should have less emphasis as self-efficacy is a personal experience.

Title 1 Schools

Within the target school district, 12.4% of the population lives at or below the poverty range according to population estimates for July 1, 2018 (United States Census Bureau, 2018). Hirn, Hollo and Scott (2018) had slightly elevated numbers within their research, which stated that 20% of children living in the United States were living at or below the poverty range. They also identified 25% of public schools meet high needs status (Hirn et al., 2018, p. 37). Within the target school district, Title 1 schools are high needs schools where 65% of the student population qualifies for free or reduced lunch. These schools are the neediest in a school district, and the extra funding provided creates the opportunity for continued professional development, programs, and materials to benefit each child, and events for the families of enrolled students. Simon and Johnson (2015) concluded that teacher turnover within Title 1 schools occurs at a high rate, and the "low-income and minority students… are routinely taught by the least experienced, least effective teachers" (Simon and Johnson, 2015, p. 117). They further stated that the

majority of effort to combat this issue is focused on teacher recruitment when a focus on teacher retention could create higher levels of school improvement. Within this study, the most important component to teachers for job satisfaction include the areas of the school culture, administrative support, and collegial relationships (Simon and Johnson, 2015).

Due to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), additional funding is provided to support Title 1 schools, which demonstrates an awareness of the needs for children living in poverty. Hirn, Hallo and Scott (2018) identified the funding, but noted that even with this additional support the academic achievement gap continues to grow within Title 1 schools. Jackson (2012) identified the need for hiring and training new teachers, addressed the cost that arises as a result of this continuous hiring and training, and addressed that these negative impacts "are levied disproportionally against schools serving primarily non-White and economically underprivileged students and communities" (Jackson, 2012, p. 879).

Harrell et al. (2019) investigated teacher retention with a focus on a teacher tendency to transfer to a low needs school from that of a higher-needs population, and to suburban schools from urban or inner-city schools (Harrell et al., 2019, Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). This study addressed a teacher's decision to stay impacted by student performance, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (poverty), and these topics became focus of the research conducted. Poverty was noted as negatively impacting teacher retention in correlation with higher levels of students in poverty. In a similar pattern, teachers also migrated to lower minority schools where students performed academically at a higher level (Harrell et al., 2019). Schools of a higher-need were identified as frequently managing severe student discipline, which influenced teacher retention. This

area was identified as a key component that would benefit from further research to fully understand the impact of the impact of a poorly implemented discipline process on new teacher retention.

He et al. (2015) identified that almost half of new teachers at urban schools leave their schools within five years, and that "teachers in high poverty, urban schools are even more likely to quit" (He et al, 2015, p. 49). According to Freedman and Appleman (2008), urban schools are in "dire need of a committed group of teachers who are willing enough to make a difference" (Freedman & Appleman, 2008, p. 109). Jain et al. (2013) explained how school climate can have an impact on teacher satisfaction, which directly aligns with teacher retention. A lack of support, unsafe learning environments, and meaningful participation were identified as reasons why dissatisfied teachers were leaving (Jain et al, 2013,). Adversely, satisfied teachers who were retained cited staff relationships as the main factor for their feeling of belonging. A positive school climate, leadership support, and collaboration were additionally "strongly associated with student proficiency in math and reading" (Jain et al, 2013, p. 239; Sherblom et al., 2006). A positive school climate was further addressed as a factor to combat the socioeconomic gap in correlation with academic success. Freedman and Appleman's (2009) perception of academic success was broadened to include that "our neediest students have little chance of being taught by teachers with 5 or more years of experience" (p. 324). They listed the primary reasons teachers are leaving as discipline levels, limited input in teacher decision making, inadequate support from school administration, and interruptions during teacher time. Freedman and Appleman (2008) additionally addressed an approach to new teacher retention in which graduates at the University of California,

Berkeley attained a Master's Degree in Multicultural Urban Secondary English (MUSE). This program was developed to prepare new teachers to work at high-needs schools with students who are living in poverty. This study found that 96% of graduates from this program were still teaching after one year, with 4% moving to a different schools. After five years, 69% of these educators continued to teach at high-needs schools and overall 73% of the MUSE graduates were still working for the schools in some capacity.

Ellison and Mays-Woods (2019) discussed the resilience of physical education teachers within high-poverty schools. The background given identified that motivation to teach and educators who remain confident, focused, and optimistic while striving for self-improvement are important characteristics when working in high-poverty schools (Ellison & Mays-Woods, 2019, p.59). A case study was conducted using interviews and teacher shadowing to have a deeper understanding of the behaviors of physical education teachers working within high-poverty schools.

At the conclusion of this study, it was determined that resilience among educators is stronger when administration facilitates a strong support system. Resilience in this capacity is seen as the ability to bounce back, and is identified as three layers including identifying the resources for self-preservation, attaining and utilizing these resources when deemed necessary, and using previous negative trauma to reintegrate one's self (Ellison & Mays-Woods, 2019, p. 62). Four psychological factors were found that sheltered those within the study from negative stressors included: "(a) positive personality, (b) motivation, (c) focus, and (d) perceived social and administrative support" (Ellison & Mays-Woods, 2019, p. 65). Focusing on these factors has the

capability to increase resilience within teachers at high-poverty schools and can have a positive impact on new teacher retention.

New Teacher Retention

Teacher retention has been studied for many years, with different groupings of teachers analyzed based on various situations that occur. Dassa and Derose (2017) stated that within the first five years, 30-50% of teachers new to the profession leave year after year (Dassa & Derose, 2017). Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978) was addressed within their study as a means to understand how adults can use cognitive growth to guide conversations between new and veteran teachers, which "could be considered scaffolding, allowing preservice teachers to begin the cognitive transition from student to teacher, and eventually the beginning of a professional teacher identity" (Dassa & Derose, 2017, p.104). This scaffolding has the potential to build a framework for a relationship between a new teacher and a mentor teacher. This supports the thought process that a new teacher needs guidance to move forward successfully within the teaching field, and has the potential to create stability needed for high levels of self-efficacy.

Teacher turnover can cost up to $7 billion annually (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007), which increases the need for improved teacher retention rates across the country (Jamil et al., 2012). Other studies have shown this cost is much lower, at $2.2 billion per year, which is a high cost that could be avoided with teacher retention (Haynes, 2014). Jamil, Downer and Pianta (2012) stated, "Retention efforts are especially important among novice teachers, those who are in the first five years of their teaching career, because they leave the profession at higher rates than their

more experienced counterparts" (Jamil et al., 2012, p. 119; Keigher, 2010; Ingersoll, 2003).

Clark and Newberry (2019) discussed new teachers observing veteran teachers, and the reflection of this experience that occurs as they prepare for a classroom of their own. This *apprenticeship of observation* (Clark & Newberry, 2019; Lortie, 1975) has the possibility of inflating personal judgement on readiness to feel capable and prepared before the job has begun (Clark & Newberry, 2019). Once the preservice teacher has taken on the role of a new teacher, many embedded job aspects arise that cannot be seen through an observation, which can influence self-efficacy.

Swanson (2010) investigated the efficacy of foreign language teachers, specifically Spanish teachers, with respect to a link between the perception of teachers in relation to their teaching abilities and the percentage leaving the teaching field. The focus was mainly on beginning levels of student language learners, with success an implication of personal accomplishment.

Hancock and Scherff (2010) explored the attrition levels with English speaking teachers new to the profession. Teacher perception on personal teaching ability, working conditions, salary, and support systems in place were taken into consideration. Teachers who were at the highest risk of leaving their job were those who had little experience or support. Shockley, Watlington and Felsher (2011) described how teachers are finding themselves lost within the profession, and researchers are alarmed that they are unable to effectively navigate an early teaching career. Kardos and Johnson (2010) explain that novice teachers are unfamiliar with how and what to teach, understanding the professional workings of the school, and keeping a balance in their classroom.

Considering that high needs and Title 1 schools hold a higher number novice teachers is also a factor when considering the amount of preparation and behavior management skills utilized each day, considering "one of the most common problems is an inaccurate view of teacher responsibilities, that is, a disconnection between perceived and actual teacher duties" (Watson, 2018, p. 28). When considering new teachers, Watson addressed that the teachers with the least experience and more academically able tend to leave the profession at a more rapid pace.

Understanding how new teachers perceive support being given can make a difference when considering new teacher retention. Support from a mentor teacher, administrative team, and colleagues can help new teachers develop a model for future teaching success. New teachers coming into the teaching profession better prepared for the school climate can have a positive impact on teacher retention (McNulty & Fox, 2010). Bieler (2009) discussed five categories that were identified to have an impact on teacher retention. They include teacher qualifications, school resources, school organizational characteristics, student body characteristics, and teacher demographics.

Goh et al (2017) developed a study in which the perspective of new teacher competency was addressed, with a focus on performance evaluations. Data collection was conducted through open-ended interviews with 18 new teachers. Five conceptions of competency were established, and included classroom management, teacher preparation, learning facilitation, teacher understanding of students, and professional awareness. It is stated that while classroom management and teacher preparation are important phases for a new teacher, "too much emphasis will deflect the teacher from being more innovative in the learning environment" (Goh et al., 2017, p. 29). This study concluded with the idea

that teacher preparation programs will be strong if they build programs that support the development of reinforcing teacher practice and preparation opportunities.

Ebner (2018) addressed teacher retention occurring among encouragement from other teachers, and identified the celebration of positive experiences can outweigh challenges that occur to balance the work within a classroom. In addition, valuing and supporting fellow teachers is a beneficial practice for teacher retention from within the classroom. Finally, taking a pause or mental break when needed to find a new perspective can be positive aspects for self-care and can possibly impact a teacher's level of self-efficacy.

Self-Efficacy

Jamil et al. (2012) investigated pre-service teachers performance aligned with teacher self-efficacy, and found that at the end of their pre-service program new teachers have a greater sense of self-efficacy; individual experiences and personality traits influenced the level of preparedness during the onset of their teaching career. The need for constructive, accurate feedback guided new teachers as they analyzed personal teaching performance, and a lack of feedback can lead to a negative impact on perceived self-efficacy. (Jamil et al., 2012, p. 132-134).

Beltman, Mansfield and Price (2011) described teaching as a very stressful career choice, and implied that a teacher will have a higher percentage of surviving their first few years of teaching with community support as this has not changed over time. Community support has been identified to include students, colleagues, and those in administrative positions.

Berkant and Baysal (2018) analyzed several variables when researching the self-efficacy perceptions of future teachers enrolled in a pre-service program. They expected to find an increase of self-confidence and success, and determined that new teacher self-efficacy beliefs are higher for those who have no experience in the teaching field. They found that a teacher becomes more aware of what skills they do not possess once they step into a classroom and therefore has a lower level of self-efficacy (Berkant & Baysal, 2018, p. 176).

Clark and Newberry (2019) addressed the issue of new teachers participating in the observation of veteran teachers, and are able to reflect upon this experience as they prepare for a classroom of their own. This apprenticeship of observation has the possibility of inflating personal judgement on readiness to feel capable and prepared before the job has begun (Clark & Newberry, 2019, p. 33-34). Once the preservice teacher has taken on the role of a new teacher, many embedded job aspects arise that cannot be seen through an observation, which can have a negative impact on self-efficacy. At the conclusion of this study, educators who had opportunities during their teacher training to learn from failure and experienced high-stress situations had a positive effect on self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an area that spans across all grade levels within the school system.

Infurna, Riter and Schultz (2018) investigated self-efficacy at the preschool level, and examined which characteristics could be used as a predictor factors in association with self-efficacy. It was concluded that job satisfaction and experience within the birth to Grade 2 range created higher teacher self-efficacy, but experience outside this range did not have the same results. As a result of this information, researchers recommended

the school district to put a policy in place that would prohibit a teacher who is teaching above the birth-grade 2 range the ability to transfer into a preschool classroom. (Infurna et at., 2018, p.5). This information adds an additional layer to the domain of self-efficacy, where the age of the student may have an impact on job satisfaction if the teacher is not comfortable or familiar with the needs of the student.

He et al. (2015) explored teacher education in high-needs schools, and determined that the students were the teachers' primary reason for remaining at urban schools. A sense of greater purpose, relationships, and self-awareness are all important components of teaching, and in these teaching areas self-efficacy becomes a critical component of teacher retention (He et al., 2015; Nieto, 2003). Teaching becomes more than just the content in the classroom, as the role encompasses facilitator, role model, and advocate for all students (He et al., 2015). According to Freedman and Appleman (2008) new teacher identity changes over time, and this identity development occurs in all sociocultural perspectives. Interactions between new teachers and their networks, new teacher peers, and within the schools they work and their previous experiences within a teacher training program impact the development of beginning teachers.

Taylor (2013) outlined a different model to retain teachers. She described that resiliency in teachers could be associated with six factors, including clear and consistent boundaries, positive connections, purpose and expectations, life guiding skills, nurture and support, and meaningful participation (Taylor, 2013). When in place, these six factors have the potential to contribute to teacher resiliency as "when teachers are resilient, they are better able to assess adverse situations and determine options for

coping, in addition to implementing appropriate solutions" (Taylor, 2013, p. 2; Bobek, 2002).

Anderson (2009) explained that to overcome adversities new teachers face during their first few years in the teaching profession, they must believe that they were born to work in the field of education, and understand that this struggle is not one that needs to be faced alone. Hasselquist et al. (2017) identified teacher self-efficacy as "the extent they feel competent to compete their duties as a classroom instructor", which is further described to impact higher classroom performance and professional persistence (Hasselquist et al., 2017, p. 269; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Along these same lines, Bebas (n.d.) recognized how self-efficacy is strongly influenced by the ability to persevere, and that higher levels of teacher retention is more likely if the connection between self-efficacy and new teacher training is established in the beginning stages of teacher training (Bebas, n.d., p. 19; Yost, 2006).

Ponnock et al. (2018) identified teacher motivation as a subject with lesser known variables when focusing on the self-efficacy of teachers throughout stages of their career, beginning with a teacher training program and tracking self-efficacy levels throughout their career. Klassen & Chiu (2010) identified that self-efficacy increased at the beginning of an educator's career through mid-career before noticing a decline. This is surprising as Ponnock et al. (2018) described the most difficult time for teachers can be found during their first five years where 30-50% of new teachers are leaving the profession, which aligns with the lowest levels of new teacher retention (Ponnock et al, 2018, p. 28; Hanna & Pennington, 2015; Ingersoll, 2012). Stressors in the profession during the first five years are identified as a lack of professional development, individual

classroom responsibility, additional paperwork and documentation, and curriculum changes, all of which has the potential to impact satisfaction, lower motivation, and quickly create teacher burnout (Ponnock et al, 2018, p.28).

Korte and Simonsen (2018) targeted self-efficacy within agricultural education teachers. They identified that culture shock to a major transition occurs when a teacher begins a career within the teaching field, and when this isolated position is combined with self-comparison increase health-risks to the point of seeking a position outside the field of education (Korte & Simonsen, 2018, p. 100-101).

Low self-efficacy is a prevalent factor for leaving education, and this trend is noted as being specific to teaching. Korte and Simonsen (2018) analyzed new teachers within their study, and noted, "education has not adopted the philosophies of the corporate world in respect to onboarding practices with new or early career employees" (Korte & Simonsen, 2018, p. 102). New teachers are expected to thrive and grow within their first few years of teaching, but without proper support teacher retention becomes difficult. This study analyzed social support and perceived support a new teacher received and the impact on self-efficacy. The study found that new teachers found the greatest amount of support in teachers within their district, and while they felt the greatest amount of support from friends or a spouse outside of work these types of support systems were only viewed as occasionally available. Findings from this study provided information to support mentoring programs as a positive attribute when seeking to retain new teachers.

Helms-Lorenz and Maulana (2016) analyzed job satisfaction, with a focus on and discontent, stressors, and self-efficacy for new teachers. They identified teacher stress to

include factors of poor relationships, large class sizes, student misconduct, teaching preparation, time utilization, and the need for professional recognition. This study identified self-efficacy as a mediator between the situations listed above and the ability to move past any discontent, with burnout occurring during periods of low levels of self-efficacy (Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016). For the purpose of this study, eight sessions were developed to aid in creating a mentoring program for the 3 years of the study. At the conclusion of the study, it was found that reduced stress and higher self-efficacy levels were important components for teacher retention within the field of education.

Mentoring Programs

Callahan (2016) indicated that a beginning teacher needs 3 to 7 years of teaching experience to be a highly qualified instructor, and stated that within the first 5 years more than one-third of new teachers leave the profession. This becomes a difficult issue to overcome as teachers are not spending the time needed within the classroom to be confident and seasoned within their profession. New teachers who are given the opportunity to work with a mentor teacher will be more successful in the classroom, which in turn has the potential to increase new teacher retention rates (Callahan, 2016). Dorner and Kumar (2017) describe the importance for mentor teaching as it improves problem-solving and classroom management skills, teacher confidence, and the understanding of grade level content (p. 284).

A case study by Lambeth and Lashley (2012) deepened the understanding of the difficulties new educators face within urban schools, reinforcing the point that one-third of new teachers leave within the first five years of their teaching career, but add that these numbers increase when high needs schools and a low support system is a part of the

equation (p. 36). They reiterated the importance of support for new teachers within urban schools.

Mullen (2011) found that mentoring programs between veteran and new teachers included positive and negative connotations on many levels. Both required and optional mentoring programs were considered, and schools of different backgrounds (including private and public) were investigated. Mullen (2011) outlined a plan to redistribute low performing teachers and place them at Title 1 schools to level the playing field among students. Mentoring, in the school capacity, can be defined as "a practice where a more experienced educator offers support, guidance, advice and encouragement to someone who is a beginning or less experienced educator with the intended purpose of enhancing teaching or learning" (Bressman et al, 2018, p. 163). Mentoring has the capability of offering new teachers the opportunity for self-reflection and adjustment within their personal classroom with the guidance of a more experienced educator.

Kutsyuruba (2012) collected data to investigate whether new teacher programs throughout Canada had an effect on teacher attrition. Teacher induction and mentoring programs were both addressed, and school settings in different provinces and territories throughout Canada were investigated. The concept of a teacher induction program lasting a year or longer was addressed, as well as if this type of program should be voluntary rather than required. The study found that mentoring programs varied throughout Canadian provinces and territories, and as a result of this data a unified mentoring program was created that matched teachers new to the province or territory with an experienced mentor. Further investigation of this study would support the determination

of whether teacher success was due to the mentoring program or successful teacher training programs.

Vierstraete (2013) defined mentorship as a system that explores the relationship between a guide and a companion, as the mentor is setting an example as they guide a new teacher in developing his or her personal craft. Mentoring is identified as a favored strategy for beginning teachers, and is cited as a must when trying to retain the "nearly 30% of beginning teachers" who "will leave the profession within the first 6 years of their career" (Vierstraete, 2013, p. 1; Boreen et. al., 2000). Martin et al. (2009) continued this thought by identifying new teacher support as an important resource to be used with new teacher retention. They approximated 14% of new teachers leaving within the first year of teaching, with 46% leaving within the first 5 years (Martin et al., 2009, p.25; National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 2003). They attributed new teachers staying to connections with others in the teaching field, having the opportunity to plan with teachers who teach the same grade and/or subject, and having the opportunity to collaborate with experienced teachers.

Hallam et al. (2012) indicated that mentors in various careers (not solely education) have positive impacts when there is a focus on support and training. This is seen in the education field as a transition occurs over the years between the first few years in a classroom and being an experienced professional (Hallam et. al., 2012). They found that teachers with mentoring support had higher levels of retention due to an increase in job satisfaction, which will eventually lead to a faculty that is more experienced and has an impact on student achievement.

When focusing on research available on mentoring, Kardos and Johnson (2008) found that while there is evidence of mentor programs being created and offered within the field of education, there is little information regarding the experiences of new teachers who participate in mentor programs. Further questions arose when considering the various conditions of mentoring situations, including mentors teaching different grade levels or subjects and the number of interactions between a mentor and mentee.

Administrative Support

Support provided by school administrators is a component of new teacher retention, as an administrator can influence new teachers and has the potential to aide in their personal self-efficacy. Grissom (2011) discussed the impact principals have on the schools they lead, but noted how they have a critical role within schools that have higher percentages of a population in poverty. The effectiveness of an administrator in the areas of decision-making, instructional leadership, and school management has the ability to change the tone for the school depending on how situations are handled, and these interactions have the ability to impact new teacher self-efficacy. In addition, Falk (2012) discusses that new teachers will need a well-designed mentoring and induction program for increased levels of retention (p. 105). In many cases, administrators would be responsible for creating and carrying through mentoring programs of this capacity.

Administrative support can be perceived in various ways. House (1981), Littrell et al. (1994), and DiPaola (2012) conducted studies by which specific elements were categorized. Four social support behavioral domains were initially acknowledged by House (1981): emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal, with emotional support domain recognized by the researcher as the most important (p. 24). Littrell et al.

(1994) applied the four behavioral domains from House (1981) to their study on education and administrative support. Their research characterized a combination of emotional and informational support for administrators to communicate with teachers. DiPaola (2012) altered the research shared by House (1981) and Littrell et al. (1994) by determining that the four domains could be simplified to two categories: expressive and instrumental support. He described expressive support as means for administrators show support, trust, and confidence in teachers. Administrators provide instrumental support by offering equal tasks and resources, providing ample planning and collaborative time for grade level teams, and helping teachers through evaluating student needs and offering teacher feedback and support.

Greenfield (2015) conducted a study in which relationships between teachers, colleagues, school leaders, family and friends were identified as a key component to teacher resilience (p. 63). This support system protected the new teacher from the stress of the teaching profession, and adult relationships were identified as the main area of support. Teacher mentoring programs and professional learning opportunities were again identified as an important avenue to aide in teacher retention. Furthermore, collaboration with school leaders can increase teacher retention (Greenfield, 2015, p. 67).

Administrative support is critical to the retention of new teachers; the same holds true for teacher turnover and those who decide to leave. Curran, Viano and Fisher (2019) found that working conditions are a strong factor when considering teacher retention. For the purpose of their work, working conditions included school leadership decision-making, the overall safety for staff and students within the school, and the safety and condition of the facilities. Their study identified teacher working condition as the lead

predictor for teacher retention, and described the importance of implementing strategies that would reduce attacks and threats against teachers. As these attacks and threats come from the student body, administrative support would be the key component to implementing and addressing this need.

Whipp and Geronime (2017) outlined several factors that are important in the decision making factor when leaving a school, and they include a combination of school culture, leadership, and collegial relationships. When remaining at a school, factors for staying were motivated again by school leadership, but additionally by mentor programs and professional development within the school. A common theme was that of school leadership, specifically when the quality of school leadership indicated future teacher retention, and dissatisfaction with school administrators holding the largest influence. This becomes an alarming fact when analyzing Lochmiller & Chesnut's research (2017), which noted that many administrative preparation programs do not provide adequate experiences for leadership, and especially so when working within struggling schools. Their analysis included indications that effective administrative leadership includes a combination of leadership styles and behaviors, and mentioned that leadership training for those within struggling schools will need support and training that is different than those at other schools.

Curtis (2012) conducted a study of middle and high school teachers with results showing more than 30% of teachers intended on leaving the profession within the first 5 years, with a lack of administrative support given as their main reason for departure. Within the study, it was addressed that many would reconsider if they had an administrative team that was accessible, fostered a positive relationship with teachers,

and encouraged professional development opportunities. This closely related to a study conducted by Pogodzinski et al. (2012) which addressed the needs of relationships between new teachers and administration, but discovered teacher retention was more frequently determined by the perception of the climate of administrators within the school.

Urick (2016) addressed how differences in school leadership can be defined by leadership styles, including instructional, shared instructional, transactional, and transformational. These differences are important when considering school leadership, as the role of the principal has the potential to impact teacher retention. "School administrators play a significant role in providing the supportive environment needed for the development of new members of the organization, thus increasing the likelihood of retaining these individuals and improving the stability of the organization" (Hallam et. al., 2012, p. 244). This support includes the implementation of a mentor program, where the administrator is responsible for monitoring, assisting, and changing the program as needed depending on teacher need. Vierstraete (2013) stressed that the administrator responsible for the mentoring program is responsible for selecting teachers with commonalities, and changes should be made as needed to insure the quality of the program and mentor matches.

Effective mentoring also includes other instructional leaders, as appointed by the administrative team (Boyce & Bowers, 2017). Lochmiller & Chesnut addressed effective leadership in relationship to the planning of effective programs, and found that a combination of managerial leadership, instructional, and transformational leadership styles and behaviors. When relationships are enhanced and strategies are in place for the

framework of a strong mentoring program, the highest potential for new teacher retention has the opportunity to develop (Minarik et al., 2003). Mentoring has the capability to have a lasting impact on teacher retention.

Methodological Designs

A qualitative research study was selected for this study due to the nonexperimental nature of qualitative data analysis. Edmonds and Kennedy (2012) referred to the qualitative research method as a way to examine human behavior, with an understanding of data "within a particular context without attempting to infer any type of causation" (Edmonds & Kelly, 2012, p. 112). This establishes guidelines for a study that has the potential to provide the researcher with an in-depth look at the reasoning behind patterns occurring within human behavior, and can lead to an unbiased analysis of research.

This qualitative research study relied on semi-structured interviews with new teachers at Title 1 schools within the target school district as the primary means of data collection. These interviews were utilized to determine the effectiveness of mentoring programs and administrative support on individual self-efficacy and new teacher retention.

Summary

Title 1 schools experience higher rates of teacher turnover, and mentoring programs and administrative support are both areas that can have an impact on teacher retention, which is important with the elevated cost of new teacher training (Simon and Johnson, 2015; Jackson, 2012). The capacity of mentoring programs and administrative

support have the potential to improve self-efficacy, which can impact new teacher retention (Callahan, 2016; Falk, 2012). An exploration of why new teachers are leaving the field of education can guide stakeholders to an understanding of this phenomena, and the method of the interviewing process can impact knowledgeable and forthcoming responses from study participants (Glesne, 2011, p. 102).

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative dissertation is to understand the lived experiences of new teachers in Title 1 schools, with a central focus on the impact of self-efficacy, teacher mentoring, and administrative support on teacher retention. Three questions were established to guide this study, and are as follows:

1. What is the impact of in-school mentoring programs on the retention of teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level?

2. What is the impact of self-efficacy on the retention of teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level?

3. What are the aspects of support provided by the administrator(s) which provide effective support for teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Aim of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of new teachers in title 1 schools within the target school district to discern if the intervention areas of new teacher mentoring and administrative support affect individual self-efficacy and teacher retention. This study provided the opportunity to deliver insight as to what training has been beneficial for new teachers, as well as training that is needed from the new teacher perspective. This chapter will discuss the instruments and procedures that will be followed for the purpose of the study, methods that will be used for conducting research, and an analysis of the data that will be collected.

Qualitative Research Approach

When determining the methodology for this study, the researcher analyzed and considered several qualitative approaches for inquiry. These approaches are all nonexperimental approaches for qualitative research, and lend support for various research study designs. The qualitative approaches for inquiry that were examined by the researcher include the grounded theory approach, the ethnographic approach, the narrative approach, and the phenomenological approach. At the conclusion of this examination, the researcher chose to focus on the phenomenological approach with a focus on semi-structured interviews as a means of data collection.

The first qualitative approach that was analyzed was the grounded theory approach. This approach was first utilized by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a process where a theory emerges from data as it is being collected, and the apparent theory is continuously compared to new data throughout a process called the “constant

comparative method" (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2012, p.115). There are 3 grounded theory approaches: Systematic design, emerging design, and constructivist design. The systematic design uses 3 stages of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to produce a visual model for the design. The emerging design focuses on the fit, relevance, workability, and modifiability of the design, and allows the theory to emerge throughout data collection. The constructivist design relies on researcher interaction with the data being explored. This design follows an intensive coding system of initial coding, focused coding, axial coding and theoretical coding, while incorporating memo writing, theoretical sampling, saturation, and sorting for a thorough analysis of data.

The second qualitative approach that was analyzed was the ethnographic approach. It was developed to describe and analyze the ideas, values, and beliefs to describe cultures and cultural groups. Data is collected with the researcher being embedded in the culture, and is based on personal observations. The 3 designs outlined for the ethnographic approach include the realist design, the critical design, and the case study design. The realist design provides the researcher's perspective of reporting, narrating, and reproducing the views of participants in a report generated at the conclusion of the study. The critical design provides the researcher the opportunity to critique a system in place with an end goal in mind. The case study design provides the researcher with a framework to analyze a number of events or conditions within the cultural reference, which guides the development of a phenomenon taking place.

The third qualitative approach that was analyzed was the narrative approach. The narrative approach is a way for a researcher to gather information, through the use of interviews or storytelling, to understand an issue taking place. There is an interaction

between the researcher and each participant, and this interaction takes place through a series of steps to gather information in the data collection process. The three designs in place for the narrative approach are a descriptive design, an explanatory design, and a critical design. The descriptive design begins with a phenomenon being identified and a group of people identified for data collection, which leads to the collection of stories which can be retold as needed for clarification purposes. A story is written on the stories collected, and the information is then validated for accuracy by the participant. The explanatory design differs from the descriptive design in that it is used to explain why something happened. The critical design is used in the same way, differing through its' purpose of connecting the individual experiences to a larger political or social issue.

The last qualitative approach that was analyzed was the phenomenological approach. This approach was created from the position of German mathematician Edmond Husserl (1859-1938), which stated, "the starting point for knowledge was the self's experience of phenomena" (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2012, p. 136). This view was expanded upon in the field of education by Tesch (1988) and van Manen (1990). The goal of this approach is to understand how reality is constructed among individuals. Creswell (2013) described the basic purpose of phenomenology as a means to "reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to describe the universal essence" (Creswell, 2013, p 76). The existential design, the transcendental design, the hermeneutic design and the case study design can be used throughout this approach. Phenomenology is best used when researching to understand people's experiences, relationships between people and the understanding of life events, and exploring commonalities in individuals. Challenges with the phenomenological approach include this being too structured of an approach for

some qualitative studies, and the difficulty that can be assumed when writing about abstract concepts when incorporated with human experiences.

The qualitative research methodology selected for this study was the phenomenological research approach. Creswell (2013) discussed the defining features of phenomenological studies, which include collecting information on the lived experiences of participants, and focusing on what participants have in common. For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were used as the primary source of qualitative data collection. Individual interviews between the researcher and the participant took place using an online platform due to the world-wide Covid 19 pandemic. Stewart and Mickunas (1990) identified phenomenological philosophical perspectives within their work, and for the purpose of this study the perspective that will stand as a basis for research and analysis includes "the refusal of the subject-object dichotomy. This theme flows naturally from the intentionality of consciousness. The reality of an object is only perceived within the meaning of an experience of an individual" (Creswell, 2013, p. 78).

Edmonds and Kennedy (2012) describe phenomenology simply as the immediate experience of an individual. They identify research conducted with an individual or small group is best suited for this type of data-collection, and that this is a strong case-study design for exploring a focused lived experience of a group of individuals.

Creswell (2013) identified two types of phenomenology, hermeneutical phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology. Hermeneutical phenomenology (van Manen, 1990) consists of research conducted through lived experiences, in which one reflects on essential themes and interprets the meaning of their personal lived experience. Transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) requires a researcher to focus on a

phenomenon, from which data will be collected from individuals with like experiences. Data is then analyzed by the researcher, who develops a textual description of the information by desegregating the data into themes and like experience, a structural description of collected experienced, and an overall essence of the information (Creswell, 2013, p. 80). Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology will be the focused method for the research to be conducted within this study.

Phenomenology has the potential to have challenges as a study framework, and this can occur if the data-collection process is too structured for the qualitative researcher. It may be difficult to gain a deep understanding of a broad philosophical idea, and the individual perspective within the content collected may be lost when assimilating the data.

This strategy allowed participants within the study to share their personal experiences during a semi-structured interview. The purpose of this qualitative dissertation was to understand the lived experiences of new teachers in Title 1 schools, with a central focus on the impact of self-efficacy, teacher mentoring, and administrative support on teacher retention. Three questions were established to guide this study, and are as follows:

1. What is the impact of in-school mentoring programs on the retention of teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level? Responses to Interview Questions 1-3 within Part 4: Mentoring was used to answer this research question.
2. What is the impact of self-efficacy on the retention of teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level? Responses to Interview Questions 1-5

within Part 3: Self-Efficacy was used to answer this research question.

3. What are the aspects of support provided by the administrator(s) which provide effective support for teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level? Responses to Interview Questions 1-4 within Part 5: Administrative Support was used to answer this research question.

Participants

Participants for this study were selected from the lowest academically performing 14 Title 1 schools within the target school district. Teachers from these selected schools were identified as eligible for the study if they began teaching during or after the 2015-2016 school year. Common characteristics will include working at a Title 1 school, access to a mentor within their school site, and spending less than 5 years in the teaching field.

Selected participants who met the criteria listed above formed a sample of 8 participants, who were representative of different Title 1 schools throughout the target school district and a variety of grade levels within the elementary school setting. The sample demographics were representative, with 2 participants from school A and 6 participants from school B. Access to the sample of participants was granted by the data performance analyst at the target school district, and later by building principals where the sample participants are located.

Informed consent. Eligible participants were determined based upon their schools' demographics and Title 1 status, as well as their years of teaching. After study approval by the data performance analyst at the target school district, each principal within the lowest 14 Title 1 schools was contacted to approve consent for communication

between the researcher and possible study participants. A recruitment letter that explained the study and the interview process was provided, and later consent forms were signed by each participant for their consent to participate in the study. A request to conduct research application was submitted to the school board office where research was conducted, and after approval a memo was carried at all times and was presented during any electronic communications and face-to-face meetings, per district requirements.

Data Collection Tools

An interview protocol was used to gather data, which was analyzed to determine the possible effectiveness of mentoring programs and administrative support on individual self-efficacy and new teacher retention. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) laid out guidelines to follow when conducting qualitative research, and these were used when designing the framework for the interview process (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Interview questions were selected and analyzed by the researcher's colleagues at the school board office prior to use in the study for alignment, validity and reliability. No changes were suggested, which determined that the protocol did not need to be revised and further reviewed. Interviews were held one-on-one using an online platform at a time that was convenient for each participant. The consent form (Appendix) was electronically shared with each participant, who signed and returned the form through e-mail prior to the scheduled interview time. At the start of each interview, the researcher answered any questions, and explained that data was to be collected through both notes on the interview guide and a voice recording. The interview guide led the researcher through the data collection process in each interview, and kept the focus on the research and the thoughts of the interviewee.

Procedures

In this qualitative study, the researcher attempted to understand the lived experiences of new teachers in Title 1 schools, with a central focus on the impact of self-efficacy, teacher mentoring, and administrative support on teacher retention.

The researcher interviewed 8 teachers within Title 1 schools who have been working as classroom teachers for less than 5 years. After speaking with the target school district's data performance analyst to determine target schools to contact for use in the study, principals were contacted to obtain consent to conduct research with their school. Each principal identified those teachers who were candidates for the study, and an invitation letter was sent out by e-mail correspondence. Teachers who volunteered to be a part of the study signed a consent form before their interview with the researcher occurred (Appendix).

The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis with a one-hour time slot scheduled with each participant, and took place using an online platform at a time that was convenient for each participating teacher. Responses to each question were hand-written and voice-recorded for the purpose of data analysis. A semi-structured interview format was used, which allowed the researcher a framework for questioning and flexibility for participant answers. Each school was identified with a letter (School A, School B, School C, etc.), and each participant was identified with a number (Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, etc.). At the end of each interview, the transcript was shared with the participant to verify that the intent is as intended. At the conclusion of this study, transcripts will be deleted to ensure the confidentiality of study participants.

Data analysis. Once the interview process was complete the data was analyzed

by the researcher utilizing the voice-recording of each interview. Written narrative responses were analyzed and charted to determine patterns within each school and across the schools participating within the study.

Ethical Considerations

The objective of this study is to explore the experiences of new teachers in Title 1 schools to discern if the intervention areas of new teacher mentoring and administrative support affect teacher retention. When considering what ethical issues might arise during this study, the researcher addressed possible scenarios. Before research was conducted, approval was granted from the data performance analyst within the target school district, school principals at each selected school, and the university's Instructional Review Board. After approval in each area, the researcher e-mailed each principal to determine possible study participants. These individuals then received an e-mail that explained the study and asked to seek their participation within the study. The researcher set up individual online interviews at the convenience of each participant. Participants signed and e-mailed a consent letter back to the researcher to participate in the study, which was stored in a locked filing cabinet. Each participant verbally acknowledged their agreement to allow the researcher to voice record the interview. Once the recorded interviews were complete, the researcher reviewed the transcript of the interview to confirm that the message was recorded with the appropriate intent of the participant. All interview documentation will be destroyed once the data has been analyzed to maintain confidentiality for each participant, as well as confidentiality within the school district.

Trustworthiness

A qualitative research study includes several indicators for credibility of the

study. Creswell (2003) established eight verification procedures that align with qualitative research: peer review/debriefing; clarifying research bias; member checks; negative case analysis; prolonged engagement/observation; external audits; and rich/thick descriptions. It is recommended that qualitative researchers use two of the procedures listed within a study, and three can be found within this study: peer review/debriefing, clarifying research bias, and member checks. Participants answered questions in the interview, and later read the transcript of their individual interview in detail to check for accuracy through the process of member checking (Creswell, 2003). To ensure relevance for the study, the researcher established the understanding that participants were able to voice changes to the transcription of their interview if deemed necessary. The researcher used multiple sources and methods to establish credibility, and multiple indicators for the quality of this research study were established through data checking.

Researcher Bias

In any research, it is important that the researcher shares their experiences and biases brought into the study for an understanding of the background the researcher brought to the study. The researcher is currently preparing to begin her 16th year in the field of education, and will be returning to the classroom to teach Kindergarten. In recent years, the researcher worked as a literacy coach at the school level and an early childhood instructional coach at the district level. These positions offered the researcher an in-depth analysis of research and data behind student achievement, teacher training, and administrative support.

The researcher did not have any involvement in the creation or implementation of a teacher mentoring program at the school or district level. While she did hold a role

outside of the classroom, she was not an administrator at a school or had any impact on the administrator support given to teachers. This study was derived as the researcher observed mentor programs in place and the relationship between administrators and new teachers, as well as previously experiencing the stressors a new teacher undertakes when beginning a career in the field of education.

Anticipated Outcomes

At the conclusion of this study, it was anticipated that study subjects who believed they have strong support through their administrative team and the mentoring system in place at their school will show higher levels of self-efficacy and less desire to leave the teaching profession.

Limitations

Limitations in this study included a small sample size and interviews that were conducted using online platforms. A small sample size did not provide extensive data for analysis within this study. Additionally, the participants in this study do not know the researcher. This had the possibility of limiting the comfort level of participants and in turn their willingness to share in-depth answers to the interview questions.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of new teachers in Title 1 schools within the target school district to discern if the intervention areas of new teacher mentoring and administrative support affect teacher retention. A phenomenology approach was used for this study, as it allowed participants to share their personal experiences during each semi-structured one-on-one interview. Interviews took place on an online platform and were conducted to gather data from new teachers working at Title 1 schools. Research questions were designed to provide the researcher with data that could be analyzed in relation to the differing levels of self-efficacy new teachers' face as they are immersed in the field of education.

After attaining IRB approval from NOVA Southeastern University and research approval from the data performance analyst at the target school district, the researcher contacted principals who approved consent for communication with possible study participants. A recruitment letter was e-mailed to possible study recruits, and a sample of eight participants was secured for participation in the study. Informed consent letters were obtained from all participants, and one-on-one interviews were conducted using Skype sessions. The researcher voice recorded and collected notes for all interviews, which took place at the convenience of each participant and lasted approximately 30 minutes. At the completion of each interview, participants were informed that an e-mail would arrive to check the accuracy of each transcription. The researcher typed out a transcription of each interview, sent personal interview transcriptions to each interviewee, and had confirmation of accuracy by each participant with no changes needed.

Sample

This study was made up of eight teachers who were public school teachers in the target school district. To be eligible for participation, each teacher needed to be working at a Title 1 school with less than 5 total years of classroom experience. In the end, two schools were used for this study (School A, School B), with two participants from School A and six from School B. Of these eight participants, all were Caucasian women, with the exception of Participant B2, who was an African American woman.

Interview Data

The researcher used a seven part interview guide when collecting data for the study. Part 1 consisted of collecting personal information to have a deeper understanding of the demographics for each participant. Information from Part 1 can be found in the Table, and is important for a deeper understanding of each participant.

Table

Teachers' Information

Teacher	School	Grade Level	Years of Experience
1	A	Kindergarten	2
2	A	3rd Grade	1
1	B	2nd Grade	4
2	B	Kindergarten	5
4	B	3rd Grade	4
5	B	Kindergarten	5
6	B	3rd Grade	3

Part 2 consisted of pre-teaching information, and is a critical part of comprehending background information that shaped the foundation for each new teacher. Question 1 asked if participants felt they were well prepared for their position in the

classroom. There was a mixed response to this question, with some stating they did not feel prepared for their position, some stating that they were somewhat prepared, and an overall consensus that there were weak areas that could have been strengthened to make the first year easier.

Question 2 was a multi-part question with an over-arching emphasis on the each participant's college preparatory program. Many participants shared that as new teachers they were weak in the area of classroom management, and that the internship component of their program was the most useful part of the process.

Part 3, self-efficacy, part 4, mentoring, and part 5, administrative support are an embedded portion of this study, and are discussed in depth where their correlation aligns in the research questions below.

Part 7 was a question for teachers with more than 1 year experience, which included seven out of eight study participants. The question asked if the responses given during the interview would have changed if they would have been asked during the first year of teaching. In response to this question, all participants who have taught more than one year felt that they would have answered the questions to this interview differently during their first year of teaching. Participant 4B elaborated that she was not as comfortable in the classroom during her first year, and Participant 6B stated that she would have answered the questions in the interview differently had they been asked by her administrators.

Research Question 1

What is the impact of in-school mentoring programs on the retention of teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level? Responses to

interview questions 1(a-e), 2(a-c), and 3 within Part 4: Mentoring were used to answer this research question.

Part 4 Mentoring: Interview question 1. Do/did you have a mentor? In response to this question, participant B1 stated that a mentor attempted to visit her during the first year, was told by the teacher that she was not needed, and didn't return to her classroom. Participant B5 had an unofficial mentor that took her under her wing when she began teaching. Participants A1, A2, B2, B3, B4 and B6 all recalled that they had mentors, but did not elaborate further with the exception of B3, who shared that her mentor was at a different school.

Part 4 Mentoring: Interview question 1a. How long will/did you have a mentor? In response to this question, participant B1 did not have a mentor, participant B2 had a mentor for 1 year, participants A2, B3 and B6 stated they had a mentor for 2 years, and participants B4 and B5 had a mentor for 3 years. Participant A1's experience with a mentor was different than other participants in that she had a mentor the first year who was on leave for a portion of the year, and it was a struggle for Participant A1 not to have this support. During her second year a different mentor was assigned, and Participant A1 felt that she was a tremendous support.

Part 4 Mentoring: Interview question 1b. Who selected this mentor? In response to this question participants B1 and B3 stated that their mentors were selected by the district. Participant B5 had a self-selected mentor within her grade level. Participants A2, B2, B4 and B6 had mentors selected by their administrators.

Part 4 Mentoring: Interview question 1c. Do/did you feel they were a good match? In response to this question, all participants who had a mentor stated that their

mentor was a good match. Participant A2 felt that her mentor was very kind and loving when providing feedback. Participant B4 elaborated that it would have been more beneficial to be working with someone within her grade level, and Participant B6 shared that she had two different mentors and that the latter was a better match due to her familiarity with the school.

Part 4 Mentoring: Interview question 1d. Is/was your mentor helpful? In response to this question, all participants who had a mentor, with the exception of participant B4, stated that their mentor was helpful. Participant A1 credits her 2nd year mentor with helping her to grow on her own. Participant B5 mentioned that her mentor was very helpful, and felt that it was due to her being in the grade level. Along the same lines, participant B4 stated that she wished he mentor was someone within her grade level.

Part 4 Mentoring: Interview question 1e. When do/did you meet with your mentor? In response to this question, all participants shared varying amounts of time spent with their mentor. Participant 2B stated that she formally met with her mentor one or two times, but that she could plan and ask any questions as needed. Participant A2 shared the same sentiments, adding that weekly meetings at the beginning of the year strengthened her skill set for her mentor to slowly start spacing out their meetings. Participant 3B had a mentor off campus, and would leave school in the afternoon during the school day to meet with her mentor. Participant 4B met with her mentor every 1-2 weeks, and participants 5B and 6B met with their mentors on typical planning days or as needed.

Part 4 Mentoring: Interview question 2. What kind of training/professional development has been provided since you began teaching? This question included 3 sub-questions, which elaborated on interview question 2 by asking if the training was required or optional, if the training was useful, and whether the participant took part in any trainings at the district office. Participant 1B only participated in district professional days at the school, which were required and not useful. She did not participate in any trainings at the district office, and mentioned that she has not attended due to a lack of substitute teachers during the school year and a lack of childcare during the summer. Participant 2B has attended many professional development opportunities both within her school and at the district level, and specifically mentioned Restorative Circles as a key training to help her in the area of classroom management. Participant 3B attended New Teacher Academy at the district office when she began teaching, and shared that while most of the training was useful she could easily incorporate what she learned from sessions on social emotional areas in the classroom within her classroom. Participant 4B had a differing point of view when she shared that the information shared for training and professional development is useful, but that the school day is so structured that it makes it difficult to find time to implement it within the classroom. She also mentioned that specific district trainings such as New Teacher Academy and CHAMPS did not exist when she began teaching. Participant 5B echoed this statement, and additionally included that the most useful trainings she has attended have been those held for the early childhood contact at each school site. Participant 6B stated that she has not attended any additional professional development outside of what is offered when teachers have their

beginning of the year trainings, and felt the information shared at those sessions was minimally useful.

Participants from School A had extensive training at the district and school-based level. They both attended New Teacher Academy, CHAMPS, Teaching with Poverty in Mind, Teaching in a Trauma Sensitive Classroom, Mental Health, iReady and Eureka math support, and Kagan Day 1 training (classroom management). They both found these trainings to be useful in the classroom, but Participant A2 voiced her opinion that New Teacher Academy was long and not all of it was useful.

Part 4 Mentoring: Interview question 3. Is there anyone in your professional life (not necessarily your mentor) who helps to support and develop you as a teacher? In response to this question, two teachers from School B discussed an assistant principal who left their school to take a principal position at a different school in the district as someone who supported and developed them as a teacher. Participant 1B added that she created an environment to motivate conversation in deep ways, and that she thoroughly considered and discussed what to do with each individual struggling student. This administrator also inspired Participant 1B to want to do better professionally within the field of education. Other participants discussed fellow teammates, family in the field of education, and former teachers as important individuals who helped to support and develop them as teachers. Participant 1A discussed that her closest teacher support was a fellow teacher in a different grade who had previously been an Instructional Assistant. Participant 1B felt that the support of her team was an important part of her success, and added that your team can be a make or break situation at a school.

Research Question 2

What is the impact of self-efficacy on the retention of teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level? Responses to interview questions 1-5 within Part 3: Self-Efficacy were used to answer this research question.

Part 3 self-efficacy: Interview question 1. How would you describe yourself as a teacher? In response to this question, all of the teachers in the study discussed different aspects of themselves as teachers. 1B and 2B described themselves as fun and laid back, 3B and 4B used terms such as organized and structured, and 5B mentioned being a firm teacher who is fun and wants to see excitement in her students and their learning. All participants mentioned their enjoyment in seeing the growth of their students throughout the year. Participant 1A views herself as new, but not floundering. She knows that there is always something new to learn from someone else, and said that as a teacher you are always going to keep learning. Participant 2A described herself as new to teaching, but receptive and open to seasoned teachers modeling in her classroom and providing feedback from which to grow.

Part 3 self-efficacy: Interview question 2. What do you like about being a teacher? Why? In response to this question, all participants discussed the relationships that they form with their students and watching the growth that occurs throughout the year. Participant 2A interpreted this question at a personal level, and shared that she enjoyed the children coming into her classroom and releasing everything going on in their personal lives, and that her class can then focus as a team on their academics.

Part 3 self-efficacy: Interview question 3. What do you dislike about being a teacher? Why? The responses for this question varied by participant. All participants brought up classroom behavior and a lack of respect both inside and outside the

classroom, as well as how behavior issues were dealt with by administration. Participant 3B added that behavior issues tend to escalate, and that administrators handle these situations poorly. Participant 1B discussed the negative aspects of being micro-managed and poor teacher pay.

School A had a slightly skewed year in terms of administration, as they were without a principal for half of their school year. They had two assistant principals on campus, but there was a sense of leadership and direction missing until a new principal was hired.

Part 3 self-efficacy: interview question 4. How do you feel others view you (administrators, other teachers, students)? The majority of participants stated that they thought others viewed them as a fun teacher, with Participant 4B sharing that her team seemed to enjoy working with her, as she is flexible and easy going. Participant 6B included that although she appears to be easy going, this can be a downfall for her as administration has used this to take advantage of her ability to work with students with behavior issues, and she feels that due to her lack of complaining on the issue it is assumed that it is fine. Participants from School A spoke on how they believed to be viewed as receptive, positive teachers who are compassionate and put the kids first.

Part 3 self-efficacy: Interview question 5. Why did you become a teacher? In response to this question, Participant 1B stated that her mom is a teacher and her parents told her that she had to get a degree that would provide an immediate job if she wanted them to pay for her college education. Participant 2B shared that she has always been a big kid, and as a teacher she has the opportunity to continue with this frame of mind. Participant 3B stated that she simply wanted to make a difference in the lives of children.

Participants 4B, 5B and 6B shared that they simply always wanted to be a teacher. Participant 2A has always wanted to be a teacher, and stated that her grandfather instilled in her the thought that no one can take away your integrity, faith, or education. Some days she does question her career choice, but she puts the bond with her students above all else in the classroom.

Research Question 3

What are the aspects of support by the administrator(s) which provide effective support for teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level? Responses to interview questions 1, 2, 3(a), and 4(a-c) within Part 5: Administrative Support will be used to answer this research question.

Part 5 administrative support: Interview question 1. Do you have a working relationship with your administrator? In response to this question, teachers at school B voiced that they will have a new principal in the fall. Participant 1B added that although she thinks a new principal will be great, she, personally, was close with the former principal but not the assistant principal. Participant 4B was the only teacher who voiced a relationship with the assistant principal, and Participant 6B felt that she had a relationship when administration was available during her first year but that her second year was more challenging. Participant 1A struggled her first year with her principal and one of the assistant principals, and felt that damage that had occurred during that year needed repair before they can move forward. She said this created uphill battles within her grade-level team, and it has created a difficult atmosphere for the second year. Participant 2B felt supported by her administrative team, and felt as though the new principal appointed will be amazing for future growth.

Part 5 administrative support: Interview question 2. Do you feel you can go to them with any concerns? In response to this question, Participant 1B shared that it was apparent that the previous principal at school B was easily offended and did not appreciate voiced concerns on her leadership style, and she felt more comfortable with the previous assistant principal. Participant 4B felt as though this relationship was a better match with the assistant principal, but Participant 6B knew she could always go to her principal as she told her she had an open door policy and could come in with concerns at any time.

Part 5 administrative support: Interview question 3. Do you feel supported by your administrator? In response to this question, Participants from school B felt supported by their administrative team. Participants from school A differed in their opinions on this topic, as participant 2A felt fully supported and appreciated all administrative feedback. Participant 2B felt supported by the administrator, who she had a working relationship with, and felt more secure moving forward with the new principal in place.

Part 5 administrative support: Interview question 3a. How has your administrator supported you as a new teacher? In response to this question, Participants had varied reactions when considering the area of new teacher support. Participant 3B did not feel a lot of support during her time as a new teacher, and Participant 6B voiced the concern that there needed to be more support for new teachers as she frequently felt as though she was in a sink or swim situation.

Part 5 administrative support: Interview question 4. Does your administrator visit your classroom? This question continued through 3 sub-questions, and included

additional inquiry on the frequency of classroom visits, how the teacher reacted, and if there was an administrative relationship with students. The data gathered showed administrators at school B infrequently visiting classrooms, and coming when there were observations scheduled or if they were called down for a behavior concern in the classroom. Participant 4B stated that she would shut down when administrators would visit her classroom during her first year of teaching, but that she became more comfortable with the occurrences from year 2 on. Regarding sub-question Part 5 Question 4c, Participant 4B made the statement that she sees somewhat of a relationship between administrators and students, but that it was mostly with the students who act out on a frequent basis. Participant 6B felt as though this area could use a lot of work, and that the principal didn't appear to know what was happening in the classroom outside of classroom behaviors. Participant 1B expressed concern with this specific area being the most concerning as there doesn't appear to be any relationship or student fostering occurring. Mirroring the responses from School B, School A generally receives visits from their administrative team when they have observations or behavior issues within their classroom. Participant 1A responded that her classroom is visited once a month and she is very nervous when someone walks into her room, and Participant 2A is visited every 2 weeks and is comfortable with anyone who comes into her room. Participant 2A also responded that her administrative team has a strong, positive relationship with her students and knows them all by name, but Participant 2B stated that the relationship is merely okay and that the administrators know who her students are.

Findings Related to Themes

Themes related to this study emerged when analyzing answers given to each area

of interview questioning, and the results of these interviews can be easily identified when looking at the themes within each research question. The first theme to emerge from the data is in the area of mentoring. Although there were several challenges experienced by study participants, a common response emphasized the significance of having a mentor at the same school location and teaching on the same grade level team as the new teacher. Throughout the study the importance of having time to plan, meet, and share common teaching understandings was a reoccurring need to help new teachers feel most supported.

The second theme to emerge from this study was rooted within the area of new teacher self-efficacy. All participants expressed the importance of relationships with students and how sharing and seeing student growth has an impact on the enjoyment participants felt toward teaching. As representatives of Title 1 schools, finding a way to bond with students and feel joy as they learn and grow has the potential to change the attitude and perception of new teachers within the target school district.

The third theme to emerge tied student behavior with administrative support. The researcher was able to identify a common theme that was reiterated throughout the study highlighting the negative impact poorly handled behavior situations can have on the administrative and teacher relationship. An additional concern voiced by study participants emphasized a lack of classroom visits by each administrative team, and an absent administration and student relationship. It is interesting to note that a new principal has been appointed at both schools that participated in the study, with school A receiving a new principal in the second semester of the 2019-2020 school year and school B receiving a new principal for the 2020-2021 school year.

Summary

Chapter 4 was composed of research acquired through responses to a 7 part interview that collected data using a semi-structured, online format. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of new teachers within the target school district at Title 1 schools to determine if teacher mentoring and administrative support affect teacher retention. The participants in this study were currently teaching at Title 1 schools and had been in the classroom for 5 years or less. The researcher voice recorded and collected notes for all interviews, which took place at the convenience of each participant and lasted approximately 30 minutes. At the completion of each interview, participants were informed that an e-mail would arrive to check the accuracy of each transcription. The researcher used the transcriptions to identify common themes in the research, which then were used to discuss findings related to themes identified in the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of new teachers in Title 1 schools within the target school district to discern if the intervention areas of new teacher mentoring and administrative support affect teacher retention. A qualitative research methodology was selected for this study as it provided direct insight as to what training has been beneficial or is still needed for new teachers. Interviews were conducted to gather data from new teachers working at Title 1 schools, and teacher training programs were analyzed in relation to the self-efficacy they provide as new educators are immersed in the field of education.

This study was conducted to have a deeper understanding of new teacher self-efficacy in relation to mentor programs and administrative support. The researcher sought to obtain the perceptions of study participants with the hope of helping stakeholders understand what measures could be implemented to support and retain teachers in Title 1 schools. Once the interview process was complete, the researcher thoroughly analyzed participant responses to find themes within the research. The emerging themes were addressed to identify specific areas for growth within mentoring, self-efficacy, and administrative support. This chapter provides a thorough look at this study and the themes that developed as the research concluded and the interviews were completed. First, a discussion on study findings and the researcher's interpretation on the data collected will be included for each research question. Study limitations will be presented, followed by recommendations for further research. This chapter concludes with a summary of the study and the researcher's closing message.

Discussion and Implications

The research in this study was designed to examine new teacher attrition in the areas of self-efficacy, mentoring and administrative support focusing on teachers at Title 1 schools. This section presents a discussion based on the findings from Chapter 4, addressing research questions in each focus area centered on interview data. Conclusions were drawn to expand current practice and improve future research.

Research Question 1. What is the impact of in-school mentoring programs on the retention of teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level? Answers to the qualitative, semi-structured interview comprised of questions 1(a-e), 2(a-c), and 3 within Part 4: Mentoring were used to explore this research question. Study participants' collective responses varied depending on the lived experiences of each teacher, but a common theme that arose was the need for a mentor teacher to be at the same school site and in the same grade level as the new teacher. This provides additional time for planning with common schedules, and the mentor teacher has the potential for frequent collaborative and supportive opportunities. A mentor teacher on a different campus hinders both the mentor and the new teacher, and infrequent scheduled time is more likely to occur. Martin et al. (2009) elaborated the idea of teacher retention, and shared that collaboration and common planning with experienced teachers can a positive influence on impact teacher retention.

Other concerns from study participants include a sporadic meeting schedule and a lapse for assigning new mentors when a partnership is not the right fit or a mentor takes an extended leave of absence. Meetings that are scheduled by administrators or mentor leaders would be more beneficial if scheduled on a regular basis, then adjusted as needed

throughout the year. This provides the new teacher with an understanding of the expectations and certainty in the basic framework for the year. Proactive administrators understand when there is a possible issue or concern with a partnership and take appropriate steps to ensure the best possible experience for the mentor and new teacher before concerns that are detrimental to the new teacher have an impact on the teacher's self-efficacy and teacher retention.

An additional concern was the apparent lack of a strong mentor program in all schools. The two study participants from school A had a very different mentor experience, and it shows in their responses and the way they view both their administrators and their interest in having a mentor. The majority of school B participants had like experiences with mentors, with the exception of one mentor being off campus and one teacher who asked her mentor to leave at the beginning of her teaching career and never had a mentor from that point forward. The 6 participants at school B also had a varying ideas of how long they were to have a mentor, and a lack of leadership taking the lead and mandating any expectations is apparent. Loschert (2016) reported that at the time of her publication 26 states required some form of new teacher induction or support, but only 15 required this support to continue for two years.

Research Question 2. What is the impact of self-efficacy on the retention of teachers new to the profession within Title 1 schools at the elementary level? Answers to the qualitative, semi-structured interview comprised of questions 1-5 within Part 3: Self-Efficacy were used to explore this research question. This study intended to explore the possible impact of self-efficacy on teacher retention. Aloe et al. (2013) addressed areas of concern to be teacher burnout and emotional exhaustion. Bressman et al. (2018)

supported the claim that burnout is a common reason teachers leave the profession, and shared specific aspects of teacher burnout, including drudgery, exhaustion, and cynicism. The researcher was able to determine that the teacher and student relationship was the largest factor in determining self-efficacy, and this appeared to negate any negative feelings toward the profession. Issues such as a dislike for micro-management, low pay, and poor student behavior were discussed by study participants, but all of the teachers interviewed shared that their love for teaching comes from their connection with the students (one even going as far as to say she is driven by a passion for student success). The way teachers saw themselves as educators varied, with responses such as fun, outgoing, organized, firm, and flexible being used as a personal description. The researcher was able to collect data on what this select group of new teachers disliked as a teacher, and one alarming area of concern is the pressure teachers feel relating to data and student achievement. This was more obvious in the higher grades than primary classrooms, but the pressure for student success was voiced in all representative grade levels. Sass, Seal, and Martin (2011) discussed job satisfaction as an intrinsically motivated factor, with dissatisfaction occurring when issues are outside of a teacher's personal control. This has the potential to quickly turn in a negative manner considering the pressure teachers feel toward student achievement. Regardless of each participant's personal viewpoint, as representatives of Title 1 schools within public education it was apparent that the teacher fostered and cultivated a relationship with the students above all else.

Research Question 3. What are the aspects of support provided by the administrator(s) which provide effective support for teachers new to the profession within

Title 1 schools at the elementary level? Answers to the qualitative, semi-structured interview comprised of questions 1, 2, 3(a), and 4(a-c) within Part 5: Administrative Support were used to explore this research question. Participants in this study reported a difficult relationship with at least one of their administrators. Each school in this study had a principal, with school A additionally having 2 assistant principals and school B having 1 assistant principal. Issues with administration stemmed from inconsistent perceptions of what new teachers at these buildings thought administrative support would look like compared to the reality. Classroom visits by the administrative team were inconsistent, and the majority of the study participants found their administrators to be unreliable in regard to responding and handling student behavior situations in the classroom. A relationship between administrators and students was rare, and although study participants each had one administrator by whom they felt supported, there appeared to be a lack of trust and communication between teachers and their administrators. Greenfield (2015) acknowledged that a strong support system is needed to protect new teachers from the stressors of the teaching profession, and that collaboration with school leaders can increase teacher retention. A sense of distrust and a lack of true leadership seemed apparent throughout the interview process. Participants consistently voiced their concern with their administrative team only coming to their classrooms when called for behavior issues among students, and the importance of administrators having a relationship with both teachers and students outside of these behavior issues was an accentuated concern. Time and again study participants emphasized issues with student behavior and a lack of accountability for students from administrators. This is a perceived challenge as teacher retention relies heavily on the support and communication from

administrators, and at least one administrator at each school location in this study was not meeting the expectation of new teachers. The researcher was able to identify that the principal at each school had been replaced mid-year during the 2019-2020 school year or was set to begin this new position for the 2020-2021 school year. The majority of study participants referenced these changes with a positive, hopeful attitude for the coming year. These administrative changes appear to have a positive impact on new teachers who participated in the study. Boyce and Bowers (2017) investigated methods by which principals positively impact schools, and found administrators who place an emphasis on instructional leadership behaviors as a means to impact their school will have a stronger positive impact than other leadership styles. The new administrators at both of the schools involved in this study have the opportunity to create new relationships with both their staff and students to impact both teacher retention and student achievement.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is the time frame during which the study took place. The majority of the research process occurred during the late winter and early spring, at which time a national pandemic of Covid-19 was occurring. As a result, teachers were forced to work from home, administrators were trying to juggle their responsibilities remotely and away from their staff, and the unknowns for the future made a commitment of any kind difficult. As a result, the researcher had a difficult time obtaining a large sample size. The data was collected through interviews that had to take place using a recorded online platform instead of the initial study plan using face to face interviews, and a lack of a shared space for the interview led the researcher to believe that the study participants were not as open with responses due to these changes.

Considerations for Future Research

The purpose of this qualitative study was to have a deeper understanding of new teacher self-efficacy in relation to mentor programs and administrative support. It is recommended that future researchers replicate a study of this nature with a larger population after the national crisis is under control. For example, once Covid-19 shows lower numbers, a larger sample size could be created to test the themes that occurred within this study. Additional studies could be performed with teachers who have been in the classroom longer than 5 years to determine if an increase in the number of years within the field of education has an impact on teacher self-efficacy and retention. A different approach to this study would be to use a sample of teachers from non-Title 1 schools and private schools and compare research data to identify further trends and themes. Furthermore, this study focused on new teachers at the elementary level, and a contrasting study using high school teachers could show a different data set than what is presented in this study.

Conclusion

The findings of this study placed significance on new teachers in Title 1 schools to determine if the areas of teacher mentoring and administrative support had an impact on self-efficacy and teacher retention. The research questions focused on aligning interview questions with the experiences of new teachers to discern if new teacher training, mentor programs, and administrative support have an impact on teacher retention. Participants identified perceived challenges in each research area, including a lack of a set mentor program and a lack of leadership at the administrative level. These challenges have the potential to create a detrimental impact on new teacher self-efficacy

and in turn teacher retention, but the teachers' self-efficacy was higher than the researcher was anticipating. All study participants placed significance on student well-being and fostered relationships with their students. In turn, this has shown that it will continue to correspond with higher levels of new teacher self-efficacy and teacher retention within Title 1 schools.

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Appendix

Interview Guide

Interview Guide

School: _____ School Identification Letter: _____

Participant first name: _____ Participant Identification Number: _____

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Share with me information about yourself and your job.
    a. How long have you been teaching?
    b. Is this the first school you have taught at?
    c. What grade do you teach?
    d. What grade would you like to teach?

Part 2: Pre-teaching Information

1. Do you feel you were well prepared for your position in the classroom?
2. Discuss your college program and what you had to do to be a teacher.
    a. What specific pieces helped prepare you for the classroom?
    b. What pieces did not help prepare you for the classroom?
    c. What pieces do you feel were missing to prepare you for the classroom?
        i. What training was still needed?
        ii. What experiences would have helped you to feel more prepared?

Part 3: Self-Efficacy

1. How would you describe yourself as a teacher?
2. What do you like about being a teacher? Why?
3. What do you dislike about being a teacher? Why?
4. How do you feel others view you (administrators, other teachers, students)?
5. Why did you become a teacher?

Part 4: Mentoring

1. Do/did you have a mentor?
    a. How long will/did you have a mentor?
    b. Who selected this mentor?
    c. Do/Did you feel they were a good match?
    d. Is/was your mentor helpful?
    e. When do/did you meet with your mentor?
2. What kind of training/professional development has been provided since you began teaching?
    a. Was this training required or optional?
    b. Was it useful?

    c. Did you participate in any trainings at the district office (ex: new teacher academy/CHAMPS)?
3. Is there anyone in your professional life (not necessarily your mentor) who helps to support and develop you as a teacher?

Part 5: Administrative Support

1. Do you have a working relationship with your administrator?
2. Do you feel you can go to them with any concerns?
3. Do you feel supported by your administrator?
    a. How has your administrator supported you as a new teacher?
4. Does your administrator visit your classroom?
    a. Frequency
    b. How do you react?
    c. What does the admin relationship with your students look like?

Part 6: Future Plans

1. Do you plan on remaining in the teaching field in the future?
    a. If yes, will it be at this school/in this district/in the same grade?
    b. If no, what do you see yourself doing?
2. How are your experiences this far different than what you were anticipating?
3. How are your experiences this far the same as what you were anticipating?
4. Do you feel as though this career is a good fit for you?
    a. Do you have any negative thoughts of this as your career?
    b. Do you wish you would have taken a different career path?

Part 7: For teachers with more than 1 year experience

1. Would the responses you gave during this interview changed if I would have asked them during your first year of teaching?