

ABSTRACT

The Role of Mentoring, Instructional Coaching, and Reflective Professional Development in the Retention and Efficacy of Novice Teachers: A Case Study and Program Evaluation

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The purpose of this explanatory multiple case study and program evaluation was to describe and explain the perceptions and attitudes of new teachers receiving a mentor, instructional coaching services, and reflective development during their first year of teaching at a 6-A public school district in Central Texas versus the perceptions and attitudes of new teachers at the same school district who did not receive those support strategies during their first year of instruction. Although mentoring of novice teachers has become a prevalent component of many induction programs that support beginning educators, quality mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development are still elusive and public schools continue to suffer from frightening rates of new teacher attrition. Participants in this study included twenty-seven teachers who did not receive formal mentoring strategies during their first year of instruction and twenty-four teachers who did receive formal mentoring strategies during their first year of teaching. Multiple data collection techniques including semi-structured interviews, direct observations of planning sessions, and the collection of questionnaires and artifacts were

implemented for purposes of triangulation and to confirm findings through a saturation of data. Constant-comparison, pattern-matching, cross-case, and time-series analysis were conducted, and the study yielded an in-depth picture of the role of mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development on new teacher efficacy and retention.

The Role of Mentoring, Instructional Coaching, and Reflective Professional
Development in the Retention and Efficacy of Novice Teachers:
A Case Study and Program Evaluation

by

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DEDICATION

To Caroline, Gabriel, Emma, Claire, Oliver, Mom, and Dad.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background / Overview

In an era of increasing accountability and budget shortfalls, the stress and pressure being placed upon teachers is at a critical level. Educators can often be heard lamenting, “We are expected to do more with less.” The pressure for more data analysis, technology integration, and well-planned interventions for students is increasing, while funding for resources and even staffing has declined. Teachers entering the profession are placed within a perfect storm of increasing scrutiny to raise test scores coupled with decreasing levels of support with regard to materials and personnel. Thus, the focus of this study was to examine mentoring, the instructional coaching model, and reflective professional development on increasing the retention of zero-year teachers.

Preparing and retaining highly qualified teachers, especially at high-needs campuses, is one of the greatest challenges facing public school education in Texas. High-needs campuses are often situated in urban areas and are typically characterized by high populations of low-achieving, low-income, and minority students (Ingersoll, 2001). A study by the U.S. Department of Education found that urban schools experience a 30% greater teacher turnover rate when compared to the rest of the nation’s schools (Ingersoll, 2001). Despite recent initiatives by teacher preparation programs to address the challenges of working at high-needs campuses, the retention rate of teachers at these campuses is still dismal (Helfeldt, Capraro, Capraro, Foster & Carter, 2009). Teachers in low-income, high-needs schools encounter larger class sizes, fewer instructional

materials, and less administrative support (Helfeldt, Capraro, Capraro, Foster & Carter, 2009). Teacher turnover in these high-needs campuses is influenced more by poor working conditions such as inadequate salaries and deteriorating facilities than by the demographic characteristics of students (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005).

Context

While 30% of urban teachers leave the profession during their first two years of employment, nearly half of these teachers leave after five years, and teacher turnover rates in low-income schools are nearly 50% higher than turnover rates in more affluent schools (Ingersoll, 2002). The Texas Center for Educational Research found that \$329 million is spent annually to replace teachers in our state. In addition to the financial expense related to teacher attrition, the disruption in instructional continuity caused by the loss of these teachers is often most profound on high-needs campuses. The disproportionately high turnover rate at low-income, high-needs schools erodes the quality of instruction (Helfeldt, Capraro, Capraro, Foster & Carter, 2009). High-needs campuses with the highest percentage of low-income and minority students typically have the highest percentage of teachers new to the profession, the highest percentages of teachers with less than five years of experience, and the highest percentages of non-certified teachers (Prince, 2002).

With the staggering amount of teacher attrition especially at our most critical schools, educational leaders are looking for answers to curtail this trend. New teacher mentoring programs could be a possible solution; a recent study found that 80% of new teachers have mentors, which is a 20% increase over the past ten years (Wei, Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2010). Research indicates that mentoring can help new teachers

develop the skills necessary to improve student learning; however, the implementation and success of mentoring programs varies greatly across the country due to inadequate funding (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). New teachers working in high-needs schools are the least likely to receive quality mentoring that enhances professional learning and development (Wei, Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2010). Despite the increasing proliferation of mentoring programs, most fail to improve teaching with a disproportionate rate of ineffective mentoring occurring at high-needs schools (Gardiner, 2012). Thus, there is a critical need to explore mentoring programs that will support and enhance new teachers especially at-high needs campuses. Although mentoring of novice teachers has become a prevalent component of many programs that support beginning educators, quality mentoring which includes emotional support, instructional coaching, and professional socialization is still elusive (Schwille, 2008). While it takes time to learn a repertoire of instructional skills, mentors can provide novice teachers with the work habits and best practices needed to foster student learning.

A critical component of successful induction programs is the concept of instructional coaching. Many schools are beginning to hire individuals dedicated solely to the purpose of instructional coaching (Knight, 2007). These instructional coaches, or ICs, are in classrooms providing professional development, best practices, demonstration lessons, and other forms of support to teachers with the purpose of improving core instruction and increasing student achievement (Knight, 2007). Instructional coaching includes mediating teachers' thinking on instruction through reflection and discourse (York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere, & Montie, 2001). Many ICs work to give teachers a better understanding of the content standards, the intent behind specific instructional strategies,

and the importance of lesson objectives (Knight, 2007). Although instructional coaches can be readily available to assist any teacher on a campus, they are especially beneficial to new teachers who may be struggling with basic classroom management or instructional issues. With instructional coaches being non-evaluative, teachers feel more comfortable confiding and sharing their concerns or perceived weaknesses (Knight, 2007).

Instructional coach initiatives aimed at reforming school districts across the United States are prevalent; however, there is still a lack of research regarding professional development through instructional coaching (Gallucci, Lare, Yoon, & Boatright, 2010).

Opportunities for reflective professional development comprise a second essential element of a quality induction program. Reflective practice is an inquiry approach to learning whereby the educator analyzes his or her instructional actions and decisions by focusing on the process by which those actions were achieved (York-Barr et al., 2001). Reflective practice allows for higher-order thinking because it is a time for examining beliefs, goals, and practices in order to gain a deeper understanding that leads to improved learning (Darling-Hammond, 2008). Finding time for teachers to process and evaluate their teaching is a crucial component for implementing and sustaining school improvement. Reflective teaching focuses on the instructional decision-making process in order to identify instructional strengths and weaknesses (York-Barr et al., 2001). Through inquiry, peer observations, and analysis, teachers grow professionally by thinking critically and broadening their teaching experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2008).

One large school district within the Central Texas area has implemented a more formalized induction program with elements of both the instructional coaching model and reflective professional development; thus, the investigator conducted this study to assess

the impact of mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development on the retention of zero-year teachers at this district. The Belton Independent School District (BISD) is a fast-growth school district serving 10,343 students in grades PK-12 up from 8,837 students in 2010. The District calculated the following demographic data: 50.28% of the student population is classified as economically disadvantaged, 44.92% is classified as at-risk, and 6.91% is classified as English Language Learners. According to AEIS (Academic Excellence Indicator System) data provided by the Texas Education Agency, BISD grew by 40% during the last Census period resulting in 4 new schools and 377 additional employees (Texas Education Agency, 2001-2012).

The District has made a commitment to recruiting, preparing, and retaining a highly qualified and diverse faculty in order to better meet the needs of a diverse student body. As stated in Goal 3 of BISD's 2013-2014 District Improvement Plan, "Belton ISD will attract and retain high performing administration, faculty, and staff who reflect the values of the community, serve as positive role models, exhibit moral excellence and are committed to achieving excellence for all students (Belton ISD, 2013-2014)." However, BISD is also a property-poor District, which receives approximately \$155 less per student in state funding than the state average. With looming budget constraints it is difficult to implement all of the initiatives deemed necessary to ensure the success of the faculty and students. BISD is making strides in implementing a more comprehensive program of induction through formalized mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development in order to improve teacher retention especially among first year teachers serving high-needs campuses.

Research Problem

As stated earlier, recruiting and retaining effective teachers is at the forefront of society's efforts to reform education and thereby improve student success (Noddings, 2005). However, mentoring programs to further develop and retain talented teachers are often absent, scarcely funded, or thrown together as an after-thought. In addition, these mentoring programs are often the first initiatives cut if school districts face budget shortfalls. Meanwhile, teacher quality and teaching effectiveness is evaluated using high-stakes testing where the consequences for poor performance are severe. In other words, teachers new to the profession often see their probationary contracts terminated at the conclusion of the year because schools are unwilling to invest the time and resources necessary to grow these teachers into effective educators (Ingersoll, 2002).

To combat this pervasive problem of teacher attrition, induction programs that contain elements of mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development are being implemented. A continuing trend in education is a focus upon the instructional coaching model whereby specially trained staff members are responsible for increasing the content knowledge and pedagogical effectiveness of teachers and in turn increasing the success of students (Knight, 2007). This initiative is pertinent because society has placed a high priority on improving student performance especially in high-poverty and urban schools. With increasing accountability tied to student assessment, the public is demanding increased student productivity and growth from the public school system (Wisk, 1998). Finding time for teachers to process and evaluate their teaching is a crucial component of the instructional coaching model. In addition, reflective teaching focuses on the instructional decision-making process in order to identify instructional

strengths and weaknesses. Through inquiry, peer observations, and analysis, teachers grow professionally by thinking critically and broadening their teaching experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2008).

Central Phenomenon

Thus, the central phenomenon to be explored in this study was the new teacher induction program as characterized by elements of mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development. The participants in this case study analysis and program evaluation consisted of two groups within the faculty of Belton ISD: the first group consisted of new teachers to the district who received formal mentors, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development during their first year of work, while the second group consisted of new teachers to the district who did not receive formal mentors, instructional coaching, or reflective professional development during their first year of work. Not only were these teachers new to the district, but they were also new to the profession; thus, at times, the participants will be referred to as “zero-year” teachers indicating that they have no prior experience as classroom teachers. As the Director of Human Resources-Staffing for Belton ISD, the researcher had access to both groups of teachers to measure their perspectives of support and satisfaction based upon their experiences with a formalized induction program or their experiences without a formalized induction program during their first year of instruction. A purposive criteria-based sample was utilized to yield a more thorough understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2007).

Research Questions

The topic for this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a new teacher induction program as revealed through retention and attrition rates as well as feedback on viewpoints of support and satisfaction. Key elements of the induction program such as the formal assignment of a mentor, instructional coaching model, and reflective professional development were studied to find the influence on teacher retention and impressions of support and satisfaction especially at campuses characterized as Title I schools serving large populations of low socioeconomic students.

A new teacher induction program with components of mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development generated new insights into methods for effectively providing new teachers with pedagogical techniques to increase their effectiveness and reduce the likelihood of their attrition. Formalized induction through mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development is significant not only in developing quality instructional techniques in new teachers, but in providing more targeted support for novice teachers who are struggling and in danger of exiting the profession (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

The Central Question

Therefore, these current factors demonstrated the critical need for an explanatory case study and program evaluation with the following research question: How do new teachers at Belton ISD perceive mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development in their professional growth (Creswell, 2007)? Professional growth was defined as the development of more robust instructional techniques and

strategies by the teacher so that authentic and engaging classroom instruction was provided to students.

Sub-Questions

1. What is the role of mentoring in the developmental experiences of new teachers?
2. How do new teachers describe the overall mentoring program as measured by perspectives of professional support?
3. How do new teachers describe the instructional coaching model as measured by perspectives of professional support?
4. How do new teachers describe reflective professional development as measured by perspectives of professional support?
5. How do new teachers describe the overall mentoring program as measured by perspectives of job satisfaction?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study and program evaluation was to describe and explain the perceptions and attitudes of new teachers receiving formalized induction support strategies consisting of mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development during their first year of teaching at Belton ISD as well as the perceptions and attitudes of new teachers who did not receive these elements during their first year of teaching at Belton ISD. Perceptions of professional support and job satisfaction were measured by questions contained within an interview and questionnaire protocol.

This study was also significant because novice teachers frequently succumb to illness, depression, burnout, or even job abandonment during their first year. Full teaching loads, extra-curricular duties, paperwork, and parent conferences can create a recipe for stress and anxiety (Santoro, 2011). Beginning teachers often have to prepare more difficult subject combinations as well as manage more challenging students (Kosnik & Beck, 2005). Shocking attrition rates have been linked to strong dissatisfaction with teaching assignments, the lack of appropriate resources, and inadequate mentoring support (Santoro, 2011).

Decreased funding from the state level in recent years damaged Belton ISD's new teacher mentoring program because the district could no longer afford a mentor coordinator. However, in order to broaden and strengthen the induction system for teachers new to the profession, BISD transitioned to the instructional coaching model in the 2013-2014 school year. Instructional coaches provided new teachers with support in areas such as content knowledge, classroom management, differential instruction for students living in poverty, and pedagogical best practices. In addition, the instructional coaches provided demonstration lessons for their novice teachers and met with them regularly in order to engage in collaborative and reflective discussions. It is critical that instructional coaches build relationships with novice teachers, have a firm understanding of the content matter and pedagogy of teaching, and adapt mentoring practices to the new teacher's own ability level (Knight, 2007). The instructional coaches selected for these new positions were experienced educators deemed as content experts who also received extensive training on the instructional coaching model.

The 2013-2014 school year marked BISD's transition from the instructional facilitator model to the instructional coaching model. This was not merely a change in title because the transition was marked by extensive training for our instructional coaches in the areas of reflective discussions, non-evaluative feedback, demonstration lessons, and other critical components of instructional coaching. Three of the major Targeted District Initiatives for the 2013-2014 school year hinged upon the instructional coaching model being implemented with fidelity in BISD: 1) Refine the District's use of instructional coaching in such a way that coaches are used in their areas of expertise and are provided with specific training to provide feedback and support to teachers in order to impact student achievement. 2) Revise coaching and data walk instruments to include an element regarding short cycle formative assessments to guide conversations with teachers regarding timely feedback to students. 3) Provide four half-days of leadership development for administrators and instructional coaches focused on strengthening instructional coaching.

A quality induction program is a key component to slowing these frightening attrition rates of new teachers; however, in order to provide an effective induction program, school administrators must recognize the importance of a formally assigned mentor, the instructional coaching model, and reflective professional development and practice. Principals, as instructional leaders, must focus on supporting new teachers through quality induction initiatives to improve teaching and subsequently improve student outcomes (Graczewski, Knudson, & Holtzman, 2009).

New theories focus on induction programs with components of mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development as a key method for

improving instruction and student success (Schwille, 2008). Quality induction also provides new teachers serving at high-needs campuses with the best practices necessary to foster student learning (Schwille, 2008). Participation in authentic, intentional, and purposeful acts of teaching with the guidance, coaching, modeling, and reflective feedback of a mentor provides a rich opportunity for a novice teacher's learning (York-Barr, Sommers, Ghore, & Montie, 2001).

Reflective practice is an inquiry approach to learning (York-Barr et al., 2001); it is the analysis of actions and decisions by focusing on the process by which they were achieved. Reflective practice allows for higher-order thinking because it is a time for examining beliefs, goals, and practices in order to gain a deeper understanding that leads to improved learning. In other words, student achievement will improve if teacher professional development includes reflection upon the content, curriculum, assessment, and instructional methods of the classroom (Graczewski et al., 2009). A principal can make these professional development opportunities even more effective if the learning activities are aligned with the school's vision and the needs of the students.

Research Design Synopsis

While the importance of completing this study was clear, the research design and methodology were also sound and generated credible results. The most important factor in selecting a research method was to designate the type of research question being pursued. The central research question in this study was: How do new teachers at Belton ISD perceive components of induction such as mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development in their professional growth? "How" and "why" questions are more explanatory and often lead to the use of a case study research method

(Yin, 2014). Furthermore, the study presented by the investigator examined a contemporary topic in the field of education that could be studied through direct observation and interviews of the subjects involved as well as an examination of artifacts and questionnaire data from the participants. These multiple data collection techniques were implemented for purposes of triangulation and to confirm findings through a saturation of data (Creswell, 2007).

This was an explanatory multiple case study analysis and program evaluation where the research compared two cases: one cohort of new teachers at Belton ISD who received a formal induction program during their first year of instruction and another cohort of new teachers at Belton ISD who did not receive a formal induction program during their first year of instruction. Purposive criteria-based sampling was used to select the two cohorts of new teachers at Belton ISD as the focus for this case study because these faculty members could provide insight into the proposed research problem (Creswell, 2007). The participants at Belton ISD represented a typical or common case because the objective of the study was to capture the circumstances and conditions surrounding typical new teachers as they began their educational careers (Yin, 2014).

For case studies, one of the most desirable techniques for data analysis is to use a pattern-matching technique whereby an empirically based pattern found within this case study is compared with a predicted pattern made before the data is collected (Yin, 2014). The predicted pattern was based on propositions derived from knowledge of previous studies conducted regarding the impact of mentoring on new teacher retention and job satisfaction. With a multiple case study investigation, cross-case synthesis helps strengthen and make for more robust findings as opposed to focusing upon a single case

because this data analysis method treats each individual case as a separate study (Yin, 2014). Time-series analysis was also conducted to lay a more firm foundation for the conclusions of the case study; the ability to trace changes over time is a major strength of case study analysis (Yin, 2014). A time-series analysis allowed the researcher to examine “how” and “why” questions about the relationships of events over time so that an explanatory value could be gained.

Theoretical Framework

In addition to a sound research methodology design, the educational issues being studied were grounded in a theoretical framework. As opposed to the conventional, supervisory approach, new teacher mentoring allows the novice teacher to be an active participant in the learning process (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). The concept of educative mentoring is grounded in John Dewey’s theory of educative experience in which the learner interacts with the environment in a manner that produces growth (Dewey, 1938). With educative mentoring, the mentor provides purposeful and intentional learning opportunities for novice teachers to gain a better understanding of quality instruction. New Teacher mentoring draws from Vygotsky’s theory of learning whereby a knowledgeable teacher scaffolds the learning for the student until the learning is internalized (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, the novice teacher must be engaged in learning opportunities within the mentee’s zone of proximal development in order to truly learn how to teach (Vygotsky, 1978). The novice teacher, much like an apprentice, learns through authentic opportunities for teaching under the thoughtful and caring guidance of a more knowledgeable mentor (Noddings, 2005). Opportunities for deep and thoughtful

reflection on the practice of teaching are another critical component of learning and should be supported by the mentor.

A key component of the induction program for new teachers is the instructional coaching model. Jim Knight, author of *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction*, outlines six responsibilities of instructional coaches in supporting new teachers. A synopsis of those six responsibilities is summarized in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1

Knight's Six Responsibilities of Instructional Coaches

Responsibility or Function
1. Assess the strengths and areas of need for beginning teachers using walkthroughs, student test scores, and reflective discussions.
2. Teach new educators by providing them with best practices, research-based instructional strategies, and insight into content standards.
3. Model and demonstrate behaviors and techniques specific to educating different populations of learners and different content areas.
4. Provide beginning teachers with support so that they may develop the confidence necessary to explore alternate methods of instruction.
5. Observe new teachers closely to gain objective information and begin the collaborative cycle and offer suggestions for future professional development.
6. Give non-evaluative and academically-driven feedback to new teachers in order to assist in their self-reflective process.

In addition to the six responsibilities outlined above, instructional coaches typically lead professional development sessions, encourage classroom observations, provide instructional best practices, and help teachers increase student achievement. The

instructional coaching model is particularly important for new teachers because it focuses upon respectfully and effectively supporting these educators in the improvement of instruction while navigating the inevitable pitfalls, stress, and tension of a teacher's first year. The instructional coach can provide job-embedded, content-specific support to teachers so that instructional practices are improved and student achievement rises (Casey, 2006). For school districts pursuing the IC model, instructional coaches design and deliver professional development sessions tailored to address issues facing new teachers. They work alongside novice teachers by demonstrating instructional techniques, evaluating student needs, and collaborating with teachers to design instruction to meet those needs (Casey, 2006).

Reflective practice, or an inquiry approach to learning, is another essential element of a quality induction program (York-Barr et al., 2001). As stated earlier, the educator engages in reflective practice by analyzing his or her instructional actions and decisions by focusing on the process by which they were achieved. Reflective practice allows for higher-order thinking because it is a time for examining beliefs, goals, and practices in order to gain a deeper understanding that leads to improved learning (York-Barr et al., 2001). Learning is a function of reflection, so tools to promote reflection amongst novice teachers include journaling and mapping. Expert teachers use their reflective practices to design more effective learning environments as well as identify problems from a broader context and determine interventions more effectively (Wiske, 1998). Novice teachers reflect primarily on the immediate classroom situation such as management issues and relationships with students; however, reflective professional development can assist the novice teacher in assuming responsibility for his or her own

learning and aide in their transition from novice to master teacher (York-Barr et al., 2001).

Teachers have an under-developed understanding of instruction when they do not see the relationship between what they learn in professional development sessions and their everyday teaching (Wiske, 1998). At this level, teachers show no ownership in their learning and are unreflective, while master teachers, on the other hand, demonstrate critical awareness, integrate material across disciplines, and include multiple viewpoints and frameworks within their instruction (Wiske, 1998). The focus of reflection should be problem-based; once an instructional problem is found, it should be examined and experimented with in order to determine possible solutions as well as consequences related to that possible solution. As novice teachers work more closely with their peers, mentors, and instructional coaches in the evaluation of student instruction, time for reflection is a crucial component of the professional growth process for new educators (York-Barr et al., 2001). For example, as novice teachers engage in reflective practice, more thoughtful and purposeful planning results in ongoing differentiation of instruction to the meet the varied needs of students (York-Barr et al., 2001). As we delve deeper into more technical terminology, it is important that the critical terms and concepts of this study be defined.

Definition of Terms

1. *New Teacher Mentoring*—A process whereby mentor teachers must learn to modify and adapt their practices to each novice teacher’s personal learning style and specific situation. Mentoring occurs in many forms and contexts; however, the ultimate goal of mentoring is to provide quality learning and experiences for

- the novice teacher (Schwille, 2008). Mentors offer guidance and reflection as the novice teacher encounters various learning situations; share ideas on how to extend and probe student thinking; point out problems or components of the lesson that need to be modified; and recommend instructional tips or strategies (Schwille, 2008).
2. *Instructional Coaching Model*-- A critical component of induction in which instructional coaches provide professional development, best practices, demonstration lessons, and other forms of support to novice teachers with the purpose of improving core instruction and increasing student achievement (Knight, 2007). Instructional coaching includes mediating teachers' thinking on instruction through reflection and discourse. The purpose of instructional coaching is to give new teachers a better understanding of the content standards, the intent behind specific instructional strategies, and the importance of lesson objectives.
 3. *Reflective Professional Development*—An inquiry approach to learning whereby the educator reflects and examines his or her beliefs, goals, and instructional practices in order to gain a deeper understanding that leads to improved teaching and learning. It is the analysis of instructional actions and decisions by focusing upon the process by which they were achieved and allowing for higher-order reflective thinking (York-Barr et al., 2001).
 4. *New Teacher to the District*—Participants in this study were teachers new to the district as well as new to the profession; thus, at times, the participants were

referred to as “zero-year” teachers indicating that they have no prior experience as classroom teachers.

Study Limitations and Delimitations

Another important concept to define in this case study is that of a delimitation; a delimitation is a restriction or bound that the researcher imposes on the study prior to its inception so as to narrow its scope. This study was delimited to Belton Independent School District, which is one of many school districts in the Central Texas area. In addition, the study was delimited to two distinct groups within the district: new teachers to the district two years ago who did not receive formal mentors, access to the instructional coaching model, or reflective professional development and new teachers to the district one year ago who did receive those formal induction components. As stated previously, participants in this study were teachers new to the district as well as new to the profession; thus, at times, the participants were referred to as “zero-year” teachers indicating that they have no prior experience as classroom teachers.

In addition to delimitations, a limitation is any aspect of this study over which the researcher has no control and that may negatively affect the results. For example, because the researcher was also the Director of Human Resources-Staffing at Belton ISD, this raised issues of power and risk to the participants. Participants may be unwilling to disclose unfavorable data to a central office administrator if they believe their jobs could be negatively impacted. Thus, a limitation of the study was that the researcher’s position within the organization could hinder a true representation of the data. If the participants report unfavorable data it might negatively impact the culture of the organization. In addition, because the two cohorts of teachers began their instructional careers in two

different years, there is the possibility for other environmental or contextual influences to impact the research, which is beyond the investigator's control. Case study research is often limited by available resources, bias and credibility of the researcher, and issues of reliability, validity, and generalizability (Merriam, 1998). Despite the risks associated with "backyard" research, there are inherent risks in all data-collection measures such as a possible breach of confidentiality or anonymity.

Significance of the Study

As a conclusion to Chapter One of this research study, it is important to reiterate the importance of conducting research on this topic. Some new teacher turnover is unavoidable and beyond the control of the school district such as the relocation of a spouse's job, deteriorating health, or the birth of a newborn. However, new teacher turnover due to job dissatisfaction with issues such as unsafe working conditions, organizational bureaucracy, or poor leadership can and should be addressed by school districts. New teacher migration can be as detrimental as attrition in terms of the performance of schools because this movement impacts the cohesion of the faculty and the continuity of instruction with students (Ingersoll, 2001). Public school teaching is a practice fraught with impediments, frustrations, and challenges, which are being exacerbated by state and federal policies related to standardized testing. In some states, teachers are being given value-added ratings based upon their students' standardized test scores (Santoro, 2011). Schools often risk sanctions such as reorganization, decreased funding, and even closure if standardized test results are not deemed satisfactory. Often these policies have the most profound impact on high-poverty schools creating an even

more stressful environment for both students and teachers, which in turn can lead to widespread demoralization for educators.

Historically, the term burnout has been used to indicate that an individual teacher cannot meet the challenges and difficulties presented by the work (Santoro, 2011). However, burnout does not accurately describe a situation whereby the conditions of teaching change so dramatically that the moral rewards are now inaccessible (Santoro, 2011). These situations are becoming so widespread throughout the nation that it would be better characterized as a crisis of demoralization. Therefore, analysis of teacher attrition must include not only a focus upon individual teacher characteristics but also an analysis of the state of the profession (Santoro, 2011). Teacher attrition does not necessarily reflect a lack of commitment, talent, or skill on the part of the educator; rather, these educators may have no longer been able to reap the intrinsic and moral rewards from teaching due to the changing industry climate.

In a profession known for its modest monetary rewards, engaging in work that has a moral and ethical component can sustain teachers during challenging times. For example, responding to students' learning needs, promoting students' academic and personal success, and helping students meet high expectations can be very rewarding. However, if educators can no longer access the moral rewards of teaching, they can fall victim to a moral depression (Santoro, 2011). For example, educators who are forced to set unrealistic goals for their students may feel complicit in setting these students up for failure. In turn, actions that seem contradictory to what is ethical and moral can lead to personal stress, moral depression, and ultimately a demoralization leading to attrition.

Thus, in light of the research demonstrating a continued national crisis in terms of new teacher stress, demoralization, and attrition, a rigorous research study focusing upon the role of induction on new teacher efficacy and retention was needed. This study's focus upon new teacher mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development provided a critical contribution to the literature on induction. Since the induction program was found to play a significant role in the efficacy and retention of new teachers, this study holds important practical significance as well. The induction package of mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development may hold the greatest possibility for improving the skill set, efficacy, and retention of novice teachers and in turn lead to improved teaching and learning for students across the country.

The goal of the induction program at Belton Independent School District was to improve retention rates among teachers especially those serving the five campuses with the highest percentages of students qualifying for the free and reduced lunch program. From 2011 to 2013, average teacher turnover for high-need campuses ranged from 5.66 to 7.95 percentage points higher than the average for the other campuses. The highest turnover rates in the District, 24.14% and 24.44% occurred at two of the high-need campuses, Miller Heights and South Belton Middle School, respectively. Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) reveal that the teacher experience level at the identified high-need campuses is at least 1.8 years below the District average of 11.6 years. In the most extreme case, the experience level of teachers at Miller Heights Elementary was 4.9 years less than the District

average. Thus, the critical importance of this study being conducted at Belton ISD has been outlined.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The central research question of this case study and program evaluation was: How do new teachers at Belton ISD perceive components of an induction program such as mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development? Before the researcher collected data from study participants on how these induction methods impacted their perspectives of professional support and job satisfaction, it was critical that a literature review be conducted to examine the extent to which the answer to this question was already known. The literature review also cast light on the prevailing and lingering problem of teacher attrition across the nation as well as what is missing from the literature with regard to mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development.

An Introduction to Induction and Mentoring

Quality and comprehensive induction and mentoring programs are crucial for the success of beginning teachers, students, and ultimately our schools (Goldrick et al., 2012). Non-existent or poor mentoring programs exact a high price on beginning educators as well as their students. Regardless of the location, size, or makeup of the school, new teachers face a steep learning curve, a steady barrage of distinct challenges, and often feelings of isolation (Goldrick et al., 2012). Studies suggest that comprehensive induction programs accelerate the professional growth of new teachers, increase the rate of new teacher retention, and improve student learning (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). A

federally funded trial found that novice teachers who received two years of induction support produced greater student learning gains in mathematics and reading than teachers who received the prevailing and often less comprehensive support (Glazerman et. al., 2010). Recent evidence indicates that new teachers are more common in schools today than at any other time in the past twenty years (Goldrick et al., 2012). For example, in the 1987-1988 school year, the typical (or modal) teacher had fifteen years of experience; in the 2007-2008 school year, the typical teacher was in her first year (Carroll & Foster, 2010). New teachers and those who are alternatively certified are especially prevalent at difficult-to-staff schools that serve a high proportion of low-income students. These high-need schools often experience higher teacher turnover; thus, high quality mentoring programs are essential, but states must create the context and expectation that support will be provided to novice teachers. However, each state is unique in policy decisions that influence the design and scope of new teacher mentoring programs (Goldrick et al., 2012).

Teacher Induction Policies by State

New Teacher Center's *Review of State Policies on Teacher Induction* examined the induction policies in all fifty states and found that half of all states still do not require all beginning teachers to receive induction or mentoring support (Goldrick et al., 2012). Among the states which offer induction services, the quality and scope of these programs vary widely (Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010). There is still much work to be done by states to enact policies supporting quality mentoring programs. For example, twenty-seven states require some form of mentoring support for new teachers, while twenty-two states require completion of a mentoring program for teaching certification,

and seventeen states provide some funding for teacher induction (Goldrick et al., 2012). However, only three states, Connecticut, Delaware, and Iowa, require districts to provide multi-year induction support to new teachers, require completion of an induction program in order to receive teacher certification, and provide state funding toward this cause (Goldrick et al., 2012). Therefore, state induction policy is a work in progress whereby some states offer informal systems that provide limited support, while other states offer comprehensive programs that utilize trained mentors to provide support to new teachers in the areas of classroom management, content knowledge, and pedagogical strategies.

Among the 316,000 American teachers that New Teacher Center surveyed in 2010 and 2011, up to thirty percent of first- and second-year teachers reported that they were not formally assigned a mentor even in states that had a mentoring requirement (Goldrick et al., 2012). In addition, many new teachers were assigned a mentor but never had instructional planning time with them or had an opportunity to observe them while teaching. However, according to a *National Staff Development Council* analysis of 2007-2008 Schools and Staffing Survey data, new teachers in states with comprehensive induction policies are more likely to be assigned a mentor (Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010).

Induction Policy Criterion One

The New Teacher Center developed ten policy criteria that work to support school districts when designing induction programs; however, most states failed to meet most of the policy criteria (Goldrick et al., 2012). For example, criterion one is that state policy should require that all new teachers receive mentoring support during their first two years. Twenty-seven states require some form of mentoring for all beginning teachers,

but only eleven states require mentoring for all first- and second-year teachers (Goldrick et al., 2012). Six states require an induction period longer than two years, while three states require induction but do not provide a program length. Table 2.1, based upon data from the New Teacher Center, summarizes the states requiring new teacher induction as well as the corresponding time requirements.

Table 2.1

States Requiring New Teacher Induction

Required, but with no minimum length	Required for 1 year	Required for 2 years	Required for more than 2 years
Colorado	Arkansas	California	Delaware
Rhode Island	Kansas	Connecticut	Louisiana
Wisconsin	Kentucky	Iowa	Maryland
	Massachusetts	Maine	Michigan
	New Jersey	Missouri	North Carolina
	New Mexico		Utah
	Ohio		
	Pennsylvania		
	South Carolina		
	Tennessee		
	Virginia		
	West Virginia		
3 states	13 states	5 states	6 states

Induction Policy Criteria Two and Three

Criterion two focuses upon state policy requiring new school administrators to receive induction support during their first years in the profession (Goldrick et al., 2012). Since the focus of this study pertains to beginning teachers, this criterion will not be explored at length. However, it is important to note that while twenty seven states require some form of induction for beginning teachers, only sixteen states requires some form of

support for novice school administrators (Goldrick et al., 2012). Criterion three developed by the New Teacher Center provides the expectation that states should have formal program standards that govern the design and implementation of teacher induction programs (Goldrick et al., 2012). Standards establish a vision or purpose for the program as well as design elements such as mentor selection and training, professional development, and program evaluation. Ideally, a state board of education would formally adopt such standards, but many states provide only informal guidance on induction programs. Only fifteen states had formal induction program standards in the 2010-2011 school year, but another twenty states provided some program requirements in administrative code or informal guidelines. Table 2.2, based upon data provided by the New Teacher Center, summarizes the states with formally adopted induction program standards.

Table 2.2

States with Formal Induction Program Standards

States C-M	States N-V
California	New Jersey
Connecticut	New York
Idaho	North Carolina
Illinois	Ohio
Kansas	Rhode Island
Maine	South Carolina
Michigan	Virginia
Missouri	

Induction Policy Criterion Four

Criterion four focuses upon mentor selection and how state policy should require a rigorous mentor selection process (Goldrick et al., 2012). For example, pairing mentors

with teachers of similar grade or teaching assignments is critical. Common factors used by states to determine mentor qualifications include teaching experience, proven success in the classroom, and inter-personal skills. Twenty-nine states use teaching experience as a requirement for serving as a mentor, with many states requiring three to five years of teaching experience (Goldrick et al., 2012). Eight states allow retired teachers to serve as mentors, while only two states require a special certification for mentors (Goldrick et al., 2012).

Induction Policy Criterion Five

Criterion five spotlights mentor training and how state policy should require ongoing professional development for mentors (Goldrick et al., 2012). The selection and training of teacher mentors is crucial because the skills and abilities of an effective mentor are much different than those of an effective teacher. Mentors must facilitate learning through demonstration lessons, classroom observations, and reflective professional development. Thirty-one states require some mentor training but the policies articulate very little about content knowledge of state standards or mentoring practices such as reflective sessions (Goldrick et al., 2012). Table 2.3, based upon data provided by the New Teacher Center, depicts the fifteen states requiring both foundational training and on-going professional development for mentors.

Table 2.3

States Requiring Foundational Training and Ongoing Development for Mentors

States A-Ma	States Mi-U
Arkansas	Missouri
California	New Jersey
Colorado	North Carolina
Connecticut	Ohio
Illinois	Rhode Island
Kansas	South Carolina
Maine	Utah
Maryland	

Induction Policy Criterion Six

Criterion six concentrates on mentor assignment and caseload whereby state policy should address how mentors are assigned to novice teachers as well as the provision of release time for mentors (Goldrick et al., 2012). Providing regular release time for mentors so that they may observe new teachers, model demonstration lessons, and plan instructional activities together is essential. Some states allow for fully released mentors within their policies meaning that these mentors do not have to juggle a teaching load in addition to their mentoring responsibilities (Goldrick et al., 2012).

Induction Policy Criterion Seven

Criterion seven focuses upon critical induction program elements such as mentor-teacher planning time, formative assessment of new teacher instruction, and opportunities for new teachers to observe effective, more veteran teachers in their school (Goldrick et al., 2012). New Teacher Center recommends one-and-a-half hours to two-and-a-half hours each week of planning time between the mentor and novice teacher (Goldrick et al., 2012). Without sufficient time allotted to mentor and mentee planning, it is likely that

competing priorities will overshadow this important process. Without meaningful time for reflection on instructional practices, the mentoring relationship is diminished. However, most states have minimal or no requirements regarding time allotted for the mentoring relationship. Eleven states have established a minimum amount of planning time between a mentor and novice teacher, while five states have policies creating an option for beginning teachers to have a reduced teaching load so that they may plan with their mentors (Goldrick et al., 2012).

Formative assessment of new teachers involves an ongoing process of data collection in the classroom in order to help beginning teachers identify areas of strength and opportunities to grow (Goldrick et al., 2012). The data is not a component of the teacher's formal evaluation; rather, the mentor and novice teacher use the information to improve classroom instruction. Formative assessment may include best practices, criteria to measure growth and development, as well as evidence of success in the classroom. However, only sixteen states address formative assessment in their policies (Goldrick et al., 2012). Classroom observation is an important tool not only for mentor teachers to observe the instruction of novice teachers, but for beginning teachers to observe the instruction of more effective, veteran teachers (Goldrick et al., 2012). A reflective cycle including multiple observations, feedback, and discussion is important for the growth of novice teachers. Twenty-five states currently address classroom observation, but only nine states address all three elements in criterion seven (Goldrick et al., 2012).

Induction Policy Criterion Eight

Criterion eight centers upon dedicated funding from states to support local induction and mentoring programs (Goldrick et al., 2012). Funding is a key consideration

in the successful creation of induction programs at the district level. By funding local programs, states recognize the real and substantial costs associated with high quality, comprehensive induction programs. Comprehensive mentoring programs can cost thousands of dollars per novice teacher, so states cannot be expected to fund the full cost of induction programs (Goldrick et al., 2012). However, state funding provides a crucial base of support especially for high need districts that employ large percentages of beginning teachers. A 2007 study determined that the return on investment of a teacher induction program after five years was \$1.66 for every dollar spent (Goldrick, 2007). Seventeen states provide dedicated funding for induction, but four of these states, including Texas, offer funding only through a competitive grant program (Goldrick et al., 2012). Table 2.4, based upon data from the New Teacher Center, depicts states that provide dedicated funding for induction programs.

Table 2.4

States Providing Dedicated Funding for Induction Programs (2010-2011)

States A-K	States N-W
Alabama*	New Jersey*
Alaska	North Dakota
Arkansas*	Oregon
Connecticut	South Carolina
Delaware*	Texas
Illinois	Virginia
Iowa	West Virginia*
Kansas*	Wisconsin
Kentucky	

*State reserves all funding for mentor stipends

Induction Policy Criterion Nine

Criterion nine would have states require that new teachers participate in an induction program in order to gain a professional teaching license (Goldrick et al., 2012). Requiring induction as a component of the professional licensure process would highlight the importance of professional development and growth for novice teachers. This requirement also holds new teachers, school districts, and states accountable for creating and adhering to an induction process (Goldrick et al., 2012). A comprehensive induction process with a performance assessment component allows states the opportunity to develop a performance-based system of licensure. A performance assessment to move from temporary to professional licensure highlights the fact that new teachers develop and grow over time (Goldrick et al., 2012). Twenty-two states require participation in an induction program to move from a temporary to professional teaching license (Goldrick et al., 2012).

Induction Policy Criterion Ten

Criterion ten spotlights the need for states to assess the quality of induction and mentoring programs through various tools and strategies (Goldrick et al., 2012). By developing robust accountability systems, states can ensure program compliance with state laws and ensure more thoughtful implementation of induction systems. In addition, accountability systems allow states to evaluate induction programs in order to gauge the impact on student and teacher outcomes, identify strengths and weaknesses, and target areas for improvement (Goldrick et al., 2012). Twenty two states have a system of accountability to judge program quality, review mentor activities, and assess the influence on teacher retention (Goldrick et al., 2012).

Induction Policy Criteria and Texas

Having reviewed the state policies regarding ten criteria deemed most important to the induction of beginning teachers by the New Teacher Center, it is important to note how Texas fared on each of the ten criteria. Table 2.5, based upon data from the New Teacher Center, summarizes each of the ten criteria as well as how Texas addresses or fails to address each factor.

Table 2.5

Texas and the Ten Criteria Set Forth by the New Teacher Center

New Teacher Center Criteria	Status of Criteria in Texas
1. Teachers Served: state policy should require that all teachers receive induction support during their first two years in the profession.	Texas does <i>not</i> require new teachers to receive induction support; however, state policy provides that each district “may” assign a mentor to teachers with less than two years of experience (Texas Education Code 21.458). Texas requires all participants in educator preparation programs to be provided a mentor during their internship year (Rule 228.35). Texas offers the <i>Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program</i> which is a competitive grant program for districts to apply for mentoring funds.
2. Administrators Served: state policy should require that all school administrators receive induction support during their first two years in the profession.	Texas does <i>not</i> require new school administrators to receive induction support.
3. Program Standards: the state should have formal program standards that govern the design and operation of local teacher induction programs.	Texas does <i>not</i> have formal induction program standards.

(continued)

New Teacher Center Criteria	Status of Criteria in Texas
4. Mentor Selection: state policy should require a rigorous mentor selection process.	Texas state policy requires that a mentor teacher <i>must</i> “have at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record (Texas Education Code 21.458).”
5. Mentor Training: state policy should require foundational training and ongoing professional development for mentors.	Texas state policy requires that a mentor teacher must complete “a research-based, mentor and induction training program” approved by the state education commissioner and complete a “mentor training program provided by the district (Texas Education Code 21.458).”
6. Mentor Assignment and Caseload: state policy should address how mentors are assigned to beginning teachers, allow for manageable mentor caseloads, and encourage programs to provide release time for mentors.	Texas state policy requires that a mentor must teach in the same school and, to the extent practicable, teach the same subject or grade level as the beginning teacher (Texas Education Code 21.458).
7. Program Delivery: state policy should identify key induction program elements, including a minimum amount of mentor-new teacher contact time, formative assessment of teaching practice, and classroom observation.	For those districts offering a local induction program funded through the state’s <i>Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program</i> , Texas specifies that it “must be a research-based mentoring program that, through external evaluation, has demonstrated success in improving new teacher quality and retention.”
8. Funding: state policy should provide funding to support local teacher induction programs.	Texas provides an annual grant program, the <i>Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program</i> , but the district must apply for the funds to help establish a mentoring program for first and second year teachers. The state funding for the program was only \$11.6 million for the 2009-2011 biennium.

(continued)

New Teacher Center Criteria	Status of Criteria in Texas
9. Educator Accountability: state policy should require participation in an induction program for educators to advance from an initial to professional teaching license.	Texas does <i>not</i> require new teachers to participate in an induction program in order to advance to a professional teaching license. However, policy does require all participants in educator preparation programs to be provided a campus mentor during their internship year (Texas Administrative Code Rule 228.35)
10. Program Accountability: state policy should assess and monitor mentoring programs through program evaluation, surveys, site visits, self-reports, or other relevant tools.	The <i>Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program</i> allows TEA to audit mentor program funds and require districts to provide progress reports. A final evaluation report must include the number of beginning teachers and mentors involved in the mentoring program and how the funds were used (Texas Administrative Code Rule 153.1011).

The High Cost of Teacher Turnover

Despite the fact that many states still do not have formal policies regarding induction policies for new teachers, there has been a growth of induction programs in recent years offering support, mentoring, and orientation for beginning teachers as they enter the profession. Historically, the occupation of teaching has not offered a formal, structured induction process which is common among other professions (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). Isolation from colleagues can result in new teachers being left to their own devices to succeed or fail in an often high-stress environment. Thus, the occupation of teaching has been plagued with high levels of attrition especially among beginning teachers.

A number of studies have found that as many as 50% of new teachers leave the profession within their first five years of entering the occupation often resulting in teacher shortages across various parts of the country (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). While a

low level of employee turnover is normal in a well-managed organization, too little employee turnover can lead to stagnation. A limited amount of turnover whereby poor performers exiting the organization and are replaced by new employees bringing innovation and new ideas can be a positive situation. However, high levels of turnover within the education industry, which has double the attrition rate of engineers and pharmacists, are indicative of ineffectiveness and low performance (Ingersoll and Perda, 2014). In educational research, unlike research in the private sector, there have been limited studies conducted on the costs and consequences associated with employee turnover. One notable exception was the study conducted by the Texas Center for Educational Research in 2000 which found a conservative estimate that teacher turnover costs the state more than \$300 million per year (Texas Center for Educational Research, 2000). Table 2.6 below depicts various professions and corresponding turnover rates.

Table 2.6

Turnover Rate by Profession

Profession	Turnover Rate
Secretaries	79%
Childcare Workers	49%
Paralegals	49%
Correctional Officers	45%
Teachers	30%
Police	28%
Architects	23%
Nurses	19%
Lawyers	19%
Engineers	16%
Pharmacists	14%

Other consequences related to teacher turnover include organizational instability, low employee morale, and a lack of coherence or continuity in services. Poor student

performance has been linked to the inability of schools, especially in urban areas, to adequately staff classrooms with qualified teachers. Therefore, induction programs would seem a logical solution to this industry problem; however, a variety of induction programs exist with often conflicting purposes and mixed results (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). Additional research on the types of induction programs that exist as well as the effectiveness of these programs is critical for the field of education. For example, induction programs can range from a single orientation session at the beginning of the school year to highly structured programs involving multiple activities over the course of several years. Some induction programs serve all teachers new to a school or district, while other programs only serve teachers new to the profession (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004).

Research Studies on Teacher Induction

A number of studies seem to support the hypothesis that well-planned and implemented teacher induction programs are successful in improving job satisfaction, efficacy, and retention of new teachers; however, there are critical limitations to the existing empirical research on the effectiveness of teacher induction programs (Wilson, Darling-Hammond, & Berry, 2001; Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). Specifically, many of these studies did not collect outcome data from both participants and non-participants in these programs resulting in ambiguous conclusions about the true value-added by induction programs (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). Other studies did not take into account other factors that can influence teacher attrition; for example, the affluence of a school's community could affect whether it provides induction services and whether it has a high rate of teacher attrition (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). The purpose of this study was to

determine the effectiveness of an induction program with elements of mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development by establishing whether participants in the program have different outcomes than non-participants.

In a seminal study conducted by Smith and Ingersoll in 2004, the researchers examined whether first-year teachers who participated in induction activities were more or less likely to stay with their teaching jobs the following year. The sample of 3,235 teachers was drawn from a cohort that included all beginning teachers in the United States in the 1999-2000 school year, and the researchers controlled for a wide range of teacher factors such as race, gender, age, earnings, and subject taught and school factors such as measures of poverty, size, and level (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). SASS data and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) included questions designed to elicit information on the types of induction programs present. The researchers also evaluated teacher migration, or the movement of educators to teaching jobs in other schools.

The study found that about 40% of new teachers participated in a formal induction program in 1990 compared to 83% in 2000 demonstrating that induction programs are becoming widespread (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). About 70% of new teachers reported working closely with a mentor in a similar field, while 90% of these new teachers found their mentors to be helpful. Sixty-eight percent of new teachers reported that they had common planning time with other teachers in the same subject area, while 80% reported having regular, supportive communication with their principal (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). Overall, 15% of new teachers changed schools or migrated at the end of the year, while 14% left the teaching profession (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). Beginning teachers in high-poverty schools (where 50% or more of the student body is on

the free or reduced price lunch program) were more likely to leave teaching than their counterparts in more affluent schools (16% as opposed to 9%). Thirty-percent of new teachers in urban charter schools left at the end of their first year compared to 18% in suburban schools and 17% in rural schools (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004).

The Smith and Ingersoll study also found that special education teachers were two-and-a-half times more likely to leave education than other teachers. Interestingly, beginning teachers in charter, Catholic, and nonsectarian private schools were all more than twice as likely as their public school counterparts to leave after their first year of teaching (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). A 50% increase in the percentage of students on free or reduced lunches (i.e. the difference between a school with 25% low SES students versus a school with 75% low SES students) increased the likelihood of new teachers leaving by 50% (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). Having a mentor reduced the risk of leaving at the end of the first year by about 30%, while having common planning time with other teachers in their subject area reduced the risk of leaving by about 43% (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). An induction program for new teachers that consisted of mentors from their own field, supportive communication with their principal, common planning time with teachers in their subject area, and a new teacher seminar resulted in a turnover rate of only 27% (12% probability of leaving and 15% probability of moving).

Mentoring Forms and Components

As information has been presented on induction polices by state as well as relevant research on these programs, it is now critical that components of induction such as mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development be examined. First, mentoring is a complex practice whereby the mentor must differentiate the

guidance given to the novice teacher based upon the mentee’s strengths and weaknesses. From her 2008 study, Sharon A. Schwille identified ten distinct forms of mentoring performed to guide and support novice teachers’ learning which are summarized below in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7

Schwille’s Ten Distinct Forms of Mentoring

Component	Description
1. Coaching	Mentors offer advice and suggestions to novice teachers during lessons. Mentors pose questions and confer with the mentee to assess the progress of the lesson. Through nonverbal and verbal interactions, the mentor coaches the mentee through uncertainties during a lesson and fosters his learning.
2. Stepping-In	At times, the mentor “steps in” to ask a guiding question or teach a component of the lesson while being careful not to undermine the novice’s role as lead teacher. The mentor then “steps out” to allow the novice to resume the lesson. Communication through cues, gestures, and facial expressions allow the mentor to provide immediate assistance to the novice teacher.
3. Co-Teaching	Co-teaching or collaborative teaching involves the mentor and novice teaching alongside one another. Both are actively involved and take turns leading the lesson. At times, the class may be “split” so that the mentor and novice each work with smaller groups of students. Afterwards, the mentor and novice debrief about their observations and experiences during the lesson.

(continued)

Component	Description
4. Demonstration Teaching	The mentor provides deliberate and purposeful demonstrations of teaching for the novice to observe. Before each of these planned events, the mentor and novice discuss the lesson's purpose and content. During the lesson, the novice records his observations and reflections. After the lesson, the mentor and novice discuss the results, how to approach the next lesson, and what the novice learned from the demonstration.
5. Mentoring-on-the-Move	Brief interactions that occur before and after teaching between the mentor and novice. During these interactions, there is an exchange of comments, suggestions, and ideas. Though seemingly insignificant, these brief exchanges can develop into significant learning for the novice. These spontaneous and brief interactions should confirm the perspectives being presented during more formal mentoring sessions.
6. Mentoring Sessions	These regularly scheduled sessions between mentor and novice last anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour. These lengthier, more formal discussions focus on teaching and the novice's learning. During these sessions, the mentor teaches the novice how to reflect on teaching by analyzing a lesson together.
7. Debriefing Sessions	With a planned agenda, these meetings offer an opportunity for reflection on specific points. Probing questions by the mentor push the novice's thinking. Mentors help novices analyze their own teaching and explore larger educational issues. The mentor attends to both the novice's immediate concerns about a lesson but also to the long-term need of adapting to student learning.
8. Co-Planning	The mentor and novice work together to design learning activities. The mentor actually engages in planning with the novice, exposing her thought patterns. During this active form of collaboration, the mentor helps structure the lesson. This is an opportunity for novices to learn how to design purposeful teaching in the company of an experienced teacher.

(continued)

Component	Description
9. Videotape Analysis	<p>The mentor and novice discuss goals of the lesson, content and materials, and methods to have students actively involved.</p> <p>Mentors and novices engage in videotape analysis of specific types of teaching. By analyzing their own teaching, mentors and novices can recall their thinking and actions and gain insights into their profession. Discussions about what they saw will lead to a better understanding of teaching.</p>
10. Writing	<p>Journal writing provides a method for recording thoughts and questions that might otherwise be forgotten. Writing is a tool for reflection and allows mentors and novices to exchange thoughts, interpretations, and insights about the teaching and learning in their classrooms. Novices' journals provide a unique window into their thinking and understanding.</p>

While Table 2.7 summarizes ten distinct forms of mentoring in a succinct fashion, mentors must learn to modify and adapt these practices to each novice teacher's personal learning style and specific situation. Mentoring occurs in many forms and contexts; however, the ultimate goal of mentoring is to provide quality learning and experiences for the novice teacher (Schwille, 2008). Conventional forms of mentoring called for experienced teachers to have a "hands-off" approach while turning instruction over to novice teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Today, mentors are moving beyond this traditional approach by offering guidance and reflection as the novice teacher encounters various learning situations. By interacting with novice teachers during actual student instruction, mentors can share ideas on how to extend and probe student thinking, point out problems or components of the lesson that need to be modified, and recommend

instructional tips or strategies (Schwille, 2008). For this interactive form of mentoring to be effective, novice teachers must view these interjections by the mentor as learning opportunities rather than attempts to undermine the novice teacher's authority.

Forms of mentoring that occur outside of the immediate context of teaching are equally important to the novice teacher's learning. For example, co-planning with a mentor allows the novice teacher to learn the methods and practices necessary for quality instructional planning, while debriefing sessions are important opportunities for teachers to learn the art of reflection and self-assessment (Tomlinson, 1995). Discussions between mentor and novice serve as a critical component of learning for fledgling teachers. Participation in authentic, intentional, and purposeful acts of teaching with the guidance, coaching, modeling, and reflective feedback of a mentor provides a rich opportunity for a novice teacher's learning (Tomlinson, 1995). Effective mentoring transcends differences in contexts such as elementary versus secondary settings; similarly, mentors at all levels need a flexible repertoire of mentoring tools to help new teachers with the rigorous demands of teaching. To be effective, mentors must build a connection and rapport with their novice teacher, have a firm understanding of the content matter and pedagogy of teaching, and outline clear learning goals for the novice (Schwille, 2008).

Another key component of the mentoring relationship is adapting mentoring practices to the novice's own learning and ability level (Schwille, 2008). For example, some novice teachers are well prepared, confident, and reflective while others are not; therefore, the mentoring techniques implemented must match the needs and strengths of the novice teacher in order to be more effective. While an advanced novice can consider complex issues that extend beyond the classroom, a less advanced novice may need to

focus on the more basic components of teaching (Schwille, 2008). Likewise, it is important to note that not all good teachers make good mentors; mentors must possess specialized skills such as the ability to provide authentic learning opportunities in a variety of contexts (Schwille, 2008). Mentors can no longer simply provide advice or pointers in an industry fraught with ambiguities and uncertainties; rather, mentors must provide structured opportunities for learning that will allow the novice to grow and learn.

Powerful mentoring not only has deliberate and purposeful long-term goals for the novice, but provides spontaneous opportunities for the learner to develop beliefs and perspectives about teaching (Schwille, 2008). This “bifocal vision” of mentors allows them to have their end goals in mind while assisting novices with their immediate understanding (Norman & Feiman-Nemser). During the process of mentoring, it is critical that there is a culture in which the novice can admit vulnerability so that he or she may learn from more knowledgeable others (Vygotsky 1978).

Mentoring and New Teacher Attrition

In 2011, Kang conducted a seminal research study which examined the influence of mentoring on new teacher attrition whereby the reason for departure was caused by avoidable factors (i.e. job dissatisfaction, lack of support, etc.). Therefore, the study excluded teachers who left due to health problems, retirement, pregnancy, etc. Kang also examined if having a mentor who teaches the same subject as the beginning teacher has an impact on new teacher attrition as well as if the level of support given by the mentor influences the likelihood of a teacher to leave their position. Migration to a different campus versus leaving the profession altogether was also evaluated (Kang, 2011). With a sample size of 1,556 teachers responding to the Teacher Follow-up Survey, the study

revealed that only 60% of all beginning teachers participated in some form of mentoring program (Kang, 2011).

Surprisingly, having a mentor who teaches the same or a different subject or provided little support or intensive support did not show a statistically significant influence on turnover for beginning teachers in grades K-6 (Kang, 2011). However, for beginning teachers in grades 7-12, having a mentor who taught a different subject and provided little support generated a major increase in the likelihood of those teachers moving from the campus (970%) and a huge increase in the risk of those teachers leaving the profession (862%). This finding is consistent with other research studies emphasizing the quality of mentoring; simply having a mentor does not necessarily behoove beginning teachers because a poor mentor can be detrimental to their chances for job success (Feiman-Nemser 2001). Successful instructional coaching and the mentoring of new teachers hinge upon cultivating and sustaining a relationship of trust between mentor and novice teacher. Trust, open lines of communication, and an atmosphere of collaboration are crucial elements to any successful mentor-mentee relationship (Casey, 2006).

Reflective Professional Development

Now that a representation of the dimensions and limitations of mentoring has been presented, it is critical that another component of induction programs, reflective professional development, be examined. True school reform through more authentic and engaging instruction in the classroom requires significant change in the practices, knowledge, and beliefs of teachers (Camburn, 2010). Superficial professional development opportunities do not allow educators to critically evaluate and reflect upon their own instructional practices. Extended opportunities to learn, professional support

from mentors and peers, and opportunities to reflect and critique their own teaching are critical components of teacher growth (Cohen & Hill, 2000). There is growing recognition that reflective professional development, especially when working with an instructional coach, can be effective in improving instructional practice (Rodgers, 2002). In contrast, teachers engaging in traditional professional development, which is not explicitly focused on teachers' own instructional practice and does not provide opportunities for reflection, have a more difficult time developing a fuller understanding of their own instructional effectiveness (Porter et al., 2003).

Scholars have maintained for decades that reflective practice is an important process that supports learning by helping practitioners make sense of their experiences (Dewey, 1938). There is a gap in the literature with regard to how embedded learning opportunities, as opposed to traditional staff development, support teacher learning (Camburn, 2010). The power of reflection on professional learning draws upon the writings of John Dewey. In 1938, Dewey defined reflection as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or practice (p. 9).” Therefore, reflection is a process whereby practitioners make sense of problems through a process of critical appraisal and then develop potential solutions (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Teachers must consider, notice, and examine their practice to identify more effective instructional practices. Considering what worked, what did not work, and how to address a topic more effectively in the future is at the heart of reflective professional development (Camburn, 2010).

Reflective Practice and Student Success

New theories focus on reflective professional development as a key method for improving the instruction of novice teachers and subsequently improving student outcomes (Kent, 2002). These theories state that student achievement will improve if the teacher thoughtfully reflects upon core areas such as content, curriculum, assessment, and instructional methods (Graczewski et al., 2009). Reflective practice is an inquiry approach to learning whereby the educator analyzes his or her instructional actions and decisions by focusing on the process by which they were achieved (York-Barr et al., 2001). Reflective practice allows teachers to examine their educational beliefs, goals, and practices in order to gain a deeper understanding of the instructional decisions that lead to improved learning.

Effective professional development for teachers is at the forefront of society's efforts to reform education and thereby improve student success (Torff et al., 2011). However, professional development programs are often characterized as impractical, too theoretical, and lacking a foundation in research. In addition, these sessions are often taught by unqualified individuals in a one-time workshop setting. Meanwhile, teacher quality and teaching effectiveness is evaluated using high-stakes testing where the consequences for poor performance are severe (Torff et al., 2011). This issue is pertinent because society has placed a high priority on improving student performance especially in our high-poverty and urban schools. The public is demanding increased student productivity and growth from the public school system (Wisk, 1998).

Finding time for teachers to process and evaluate their teaching is a crucial component for implementing and sustaining school improvement (York-Barr et al.,

2001). Reflective teaching focuses on the instructional decision-making process in order to identify instructional strengths and weaknesses. Through inquiry, peer observations, and analysis, teachers grow professionally by thinking critically and broadening their teaching experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2008). Well-designed opportunities for reflection and learning allow teachers new insights into pedagogical techniques and content knowledge while, in turn, increasing authentic student engagement and student-centered learning (York-Barr et al., 2001). Instructional planning through reflective practice and collaboration is significant not only in developing quality instruction, but in generating more thoughtful and meaningful assessments as well as providing more targeted instruction for students who are struggling.

Reflective Practice and the Novice Teacher

Expert teachers use their reflective practices to design more effective learning environments and view problems from a broader context while determining student interventions more effectively. Novice teachers reflect primarily on the immediate classroom situation such as management issues and relationships with students (York-Barr et al., 2001). Teachers have a naïve understanding of their own instruction when they do not see the relationship between what they learn in professional development sessions and their everyday teaching (Wiske, 1998). Novice teachers often show no ownership in their learning and are unreflective, while master teachers, on the other hand, are creative, integrate material across disciplines, and include multiple viewpoints and frameworks (York-Barr et al., 2001). Critical awareness, reflection, and the process of inquiry characterize master teachers, while their instruction is differentiated in order to meet the varied needs of students.

The focus of individual reflection should be problem-based so that teachers examine and explore possible solutions to instructional or classroom management concerns as well as side-effects or consequences related to that solution. Reflective practice at the campus-wide level offers the most potential for school improvement (York-Barr et al., 2001). Through study groups, cross-content groups, and cross-grade level teams, school-wide reflection is meant to promote staff learning. While all staff members should be involved in some form of learning and shared work initiative, school-wide reflection should focus on curricular alignment which will increase continuity and coherence of instruction (York-Barr et al., 2001). Reflective practice can transform schools into communities where educators and students embrace continuous learning and improvement. However, this process requires flexibility in thinking, a consciousness of the surrounding environment, and the ability to recognize the importance of interdependent relationships (York-Barr et al., 2001).

Teachers rate professional development programs as effective when they can take an active role in the learning and the concepts taught were purposefully integrated into the daily affairs of the school (Torff et al., 2011). A hands-on and active learning approach combined with peer collaboration is deemed a more effective style of professional development. Professional development is also regarded as more potent when there is high classroom applicability as well as sufficient time for implementation (Torff et al., 2011). Reflective practice incorporates these characteristics of quality professional development so that teachers are more effective and students are more successful. In order to develop a professional learning community, teachers cannot learn

in isolation; rather, educators must use their colleagues for assistance while evaluating their own instructional and professional skills (Torff et al., 2011).

There is increasing pressure on public schools to provide quality professional development for their teachers, increase instructional effectiveness in the classroom, and make even the most disadvantaged students successful on state testing (Darling-Hammond, 2008). As the number of disadvantaged students continues to rise, reflective practice holds the promise of making classroom instruction more authentic, engaging, robust, and rigorous. Professional development is often neglected in public schools due to a lack of time, resources, and purposeful planning; however, reflective practice does not require large financial investments and can lead to more potent and intentional teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2008). Small group reflective practice results in enhanced learning, more professional support, improved classroom climate, and more effective interventions for struggling students. Reflective practice on a school-wide basis yields enhanced communication among staff members, expanded learning opportunities for students, an increased sense of purpose, and a better chance for meaningful and sustained improvement (Darling-Hammond, 2008).

Reflective Practice and School Improvement

Finding time for teachers to process and evaluate their teaching is a crucial component for implementing and sustaining school improvement. Because teachers already meet in committees and teams for various reasons, reflective practices can easily be imbedded into these groups in order to make significant advances in educational practice (Darling-Hammond, 2008). Common planning time, the use of substitutes, or altering the school schedule are all various methods for creating time for teachers to

reflect and collaborate. In the end, there must be a connection between the teachers' work and their professional learning in order to make staff development truly meaningful and lasting (Darling-Hammond, 2008). Instructional planning through reflective practice and collaboration is instrumental in developing quality instruction, enhanced student learning, and a more rigorous curriculum. By increasing reflective practice, teachers provide more thoughtful, intentional, and purposeful instruction to students who are then more likely to demonstrate mastery of the concepts through critical thinking and performances of understanding (Wiske, 1998).

Reflective professional development is critical for new teachers who need a stronger grasp on instructional and curricular issues, while veteran teachers need to engage in reflective practice in order to avoid stagnation and maintain a working knowledge of current developments within the field of education (Torff et al., 2009). Unfortunately, many professional development sessions are faddish and offer no follow-up which is a particularly damaging problem in schools serving low-socioeconomic students. With the achievement gap growing, effective teaching is of utmost importance in disadvantaged communities where students are at the greatest risk of receiving low-level instruction in a setting that is non-engaging and lacking rigor (Torff et al., 2009). In low-socioeconomic schools, professional development programs typically lack sufficient resources and quality compared to more affluent school districts, but reflective professional development can offer these disadvantaged campuses a form of quality professional growth that is also sustainable (Torff et al., 2009). Reflective professional development can assist teachers in the process of making their instruction more robust, the curriculum more rigorous, assessments more probing, and students more engaged.

When teachers begin to act as reflective practitioners, they begin to truly listen to students in order to determine their prior knowledge or points of confusion. Each student presents a unique set of talents, weaknesses, and pace of work that must be considered as the teacher reflects-in-action on the design of the lesson (Schon, 1983). The freedom to reflect, invent, and differentiate is critical to effective teaching and the success of students. Isolation in the classroom works against the teacher's ability to reflect-in-action, so it is imperative that teachers work together and collaborate on issues of instruction and student outcomes (Schon, 1983). In schools where reflective practice is encouraged, teachers challenge the prevailing notion of effective teaching and significant organizational learning occurs.

The Instructional Coaching Model

The third and final component of induction that is being examined is the instructional coaching model. The instructional coaching, model which focuses upon teacher professional development, is gaining momentum across the country; however, there is a lack of research regarding the impact instructional coaching has on the retention of new teachers (Gallucci et al., 2010). Engaging and authentic instruction that improves the academic success of all students is the stated outcome of most school district reform efforts (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Transforming instructional practice requires substantial professional learning and research suggests that wide-scale change is difficult to achieve (Gallucci et al., 2010). Embedded professional development guided by an instructional coach is a promising, but under-researched, strategy for improving teacher effectiveness (Taylor, 2008). Although the instructional coaching model is expanding

rapidly, there is little research available on its impact on teacher perspectives of job satisfaction and efficacy.

Educators who take on the role of coach are viewed as leaders for instructional reform efforts and are often change agents for district-directed reform efforts. Case study research illustrates that when professional learning of teachers is a priority for districts, positive reform efforts are more likely to occur (Firestone & Martinez, 2007). Despite literature dating back several decades on peer coaching as a tool for professional development (Showers, 1985), the research has yet to catch up with the gaining popularity of the instructional coaching model with regard to instructional reform efforts as well as teacher perspectives of job satisfaction and retention. Even the term, instructional coaching, brings with it a multifaceted and often ambiguous definition. For the purposes of this study, instructional coaches are teacher leaders who are non-evaluative but utilize their expertise and relationships to mentor teachers and guide them to more effective teaching practices (Taylor, 2008).

Instructional coaches are typically experts in a particular content such as literacy or math and provide embedded opportunities for professional learning which include demonstration lessons, modeling of instructional practices, and observations of classroom teaching which include a pre- and post-conference to discuss findings (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Instructional coaches also identify appropriate interventions for teachers in need, gather classroom data, and engage teachers in a reflective dialogue about instructional practices (Knight, 2007). Not only must instructional coaches be content and pedagogical experts, but they must demonstrate strong communication and relationship-building skills (Knight, 2007). Instructional coaches are often referred to as change agents because their

positions are critical in changing and improving classroom teaching practices (Tung et al., 2004). Working one-on-one with teachers, guiding conversations about instructional practice, and offering peer critiques is challenging work (Neufeld & Roper, 2003).

Instructional Coaching and Student Success

The goal of instructional coaching is to improve student success in the classroom by providing ongoing, relevant support to teachers (Sweeney, 2011). Student-centered instructional coaching offers job-embedded support to teachers while setting specific goals for students that are aligned to the curriculum standards. In order for students to be successful in the classroom, teachers must not only have a deep understanding of instructional strategies and strong content knowledge, but they must understand how to formatively assess their students' learning (Sweeney, 2011). Formative assessments help teachers analyze student learning and make instructional decisions to fill in the gaps between actual and desired levels of knowledge. Through thoughtful discussion and reflection, an instructional coach can assist a teacher in defining clear and measurable goals for student learning (Sweeney, 2011).

During debriefing sessions, the instructional coach and teacher can identify what student outcomes or products will serve as concrete evidence of learning in the classroom. Student work or assessment data should then inform coaching discussions and help the teacher pinpoint students in need of extra support (Sweeney, 2011). However, for the beginning teacher, an instructional coach may model or co-teach a lesson so that the novice teacher learns how to differentiate instruction to meet the varied needs of students. Analyzing student work allows the teacher and coach not only to drill down to

specific student needs but to reflect upon the classroom instruction that will address the needs of the learners (Sweeney, 2011).

The Instructional Coaching Cycle and the Novice Teacher

For new or reluctant teachers, student-centered instructional coaching takes the spotlight off of the teacher and places it upon the needs of the students. While student-centered coaching may focus on student outcomes, it still holds teachers accountable for student achievement (Sweeney, 2011). However, it is important to note that it is not the role of the instructional coach to hold teachers accountable for implementing the curriculum, delivering the instruction, or managing the classroom. That role falls to the campus leader which is why it is critical that principals study the facets of student-centered coaching (Sweeney, 2011). It is the instructional coach's responsibility to guide reflective discussions from student outcomes to effective instruction aligned to the curriculum or state standards. The instructional coach and teacher must contemplate the learning objective and formative assessment in order to reach those students who may be struggling or deepen the learning of gifted learners (Sweeney, 2011). By shifting the focus from documenting teachers to improving student learning, new or struggling educators are less likely to resist the coach's efforts and are more likely to benefit from the coaching cycle.

The foundation for a successful coaching cycle between a teacher and instructional coach is a relationship built on trust and mutual respect; however, many times the coaching cycle can never truly begin because the relationship was never established or it was soon neglected (Sweeney, 2011). Teachers must feel safe in expressing themselves if open, honest, reflective discussions are to occur. In addition to

providing intensive coaching aligned to the goals for student learning, instructional coaches often provide whole- or small-group professional development based upon the targeted needs of students (Sweeney, 2011). Elementary teachers often request coaching on topics related to guided reading, word study, or writer's workshop, while secondary teachers typically seek assistance in areas such as student engagement, classroom management, or high-yield instructional strategies. However, this varies across districts and it is ultimately the instructional coach's responsibility to collaborate with the teacher in order to determine a goal for the coaching cycle (Sweeney, 2011).

The coaching cycle refers to a period of time in which an instructional coach collaborates with a classroom teacher to offer support, guidance, and encouragement. The coaching cycle typically lasts six to nine weeks, focuses on a topic based upon student need, and includes regular planning sessions (Sweeney, 2011). The weekly planning sessions should also include time for co-teaching, modeling, or providing constructive feedback based upon classroom observations. In addition to implementing a coaching cycle with various teachers on campus, the instructional coach often provides professional development, student data analysis, and mentoring services (Sweeney, 2011). Thus, with such a heavy workload, it is recommended that a full-time instructional coach engage in only four to six coaching cycles at a time. Because teachers also have a tight schedule, it is imperative that the instructional coach and classroom teacher have a clear goal for the coaching cycle and set a realistic schedule for reflection and collaboration (Sweeney, 2011). It is also important that the instructional coach spend time in the teacher's classroom to collect evidence of student learning and provide instructional support through co-teaching or modeling.

Before engaging in the coaching cycle, instructional coaches must build trust and relationships with classroom teachers. In addition, it is imperative that the needs of students, not the needs of the teacher, remain the focal point of the coaching relationship (Sweeney, 2011). Other roles or duties of the instructional coach include creating opportunities for teachers to learn together, prioritizing reflective learning activities, and providing support and guidance for teachers throughout the school year. Instructional coaches must also use student data to guide coaching conversations and ultimately improve student achievement (Sweeney, 2011). By using student evidence in meaningful ways, the teacher and instructional coach can determine what students have learned and areas that need improvement. Student evidence does not consist solely of summative assessment data; rather, it can include portfolios, formative assessments, informal observations, or a myriad of other student outcomes (Sweeney, 2011). Teachers are often “data rich but information poor” because they do not have the time, tools, or systems to effectively and comprehensively analyze student data. Through data-driven coaching conversations, instructional coaches assist teachers in identifying student strengths and weaknesses, creating clear lesson objectives, and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students (Sweeney, 2011). By connecting assessment data to lesson planning, teachers and instructional coaches can design instruction that is tailored to the needs of their students.

The Vygotsky Space

It is important that the review of literature end with a discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of this research. The theoretical framework for this study draws upon Vygotsky’s notion of development that describes learning and change as occurring

through social practice (Vygotsky, 1978). Specifically, human thinking develops through the mediation of others; this theory is particularly helpful for investigating the reciprocal relationship between the learning of the new teacher, the instructional coach, and the organization (Vygotsky, 1978). To more closely examine the relationship between individual teacher change and organizational support, the conceptual framework developed by Harre (1984) and labeled the Vygotsky Space by Gavelek was utilized (Gavelek & Raphael, 1996). The framework characterizes how new teacher development is achieved through participation in social interactions with instructional coaches. Consistent with Vygotskian theory, new teacher learning occurs through professional development activities such as the interplay between coach and teacher as well as individual learning opportunities such as reflective practice by the novice teacher (Gallucci, 2008).

The Vygotsky Space represents professional learning in terms of relationships between collective group and individual interactions and between public and private settings. These interactions form a cyclical process whereby individuals internalize social practices, transform in the context of the activity, and then share knowledge in ways that others may adopt (Galluci et al., 2010). The stages of the learning process as demonstrated by McVee et al. (2005) include:

- Individual *appropriation* of particular ways of thinking through interaction with others
- Individual *transformation* and ownership of learning in the context of one's own work
- *Publication* of new learning through instruction or action
- The process whereby acts become *conventionalized* in the practice of that individual

In this process, teachers discuss and implement new ideas about instruction and then these acts are later transformed and integrated into practice (Galluci et al., 2010). This transformation of new ideas is depicted in Figure 2.1 below.

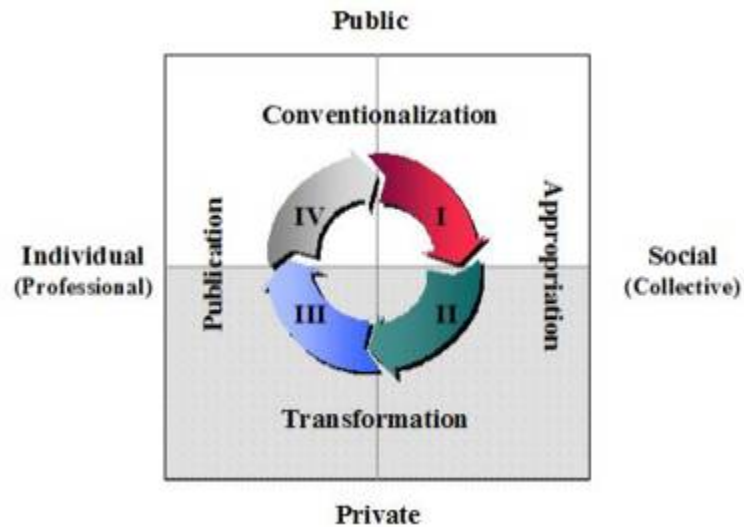


Figure 2.1. Vygotsky Space Quadrants.

The Vygotsky Space

To further examine the Vygotsky Space, consider a collective group professional development session introducing new ideas about instruction in a public setting (Quadrant 1). If the new concepts discussed at these collective group events are then interpreted privately by novice teachers, appropriation has occurred from Quadrant I to Quadrant II (Galluci et al., 2010). If novice teachers transform new concepts in the context of their work, there is movement from Quadrant II to Quadrant III of the Vygotsky Space. Here, teachers try out and make meaning of new concepts and learning becomes apparent in their instructional actions (Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003). If the transformed practices are demonstrated or made public through demonstration

lessons, the individual's learning becomes a resource for the learning of others (Quadrant III to Quadrant IV). Movement from Quadrant IV back to Quadrant I, or conventionalization, is a process whereby policies and procedures are created that stem from individual learning but support collective group change (Galluci et al., 2010).

Summary

In educational research, unlike research in the private sector, there have been limited studies conducted on the reasons and consequences associated with employee turnover. The relevance of this study was that it shed light on the perspectives of professional support, or lack thereof, held by new teachers who receive induction services and those who do not. Induction programs exist with often conflicting purposes and mixed results, so additional research on the types of induction programs as well as the effectiveness of these programs is needed. A number of studies seem to support the hypothesis that well-planned and implemented teacher induction programs are successful in improving job satisfaction, efficacy, and retention of new teachers; however, there are critical limitations to the existing research on the effectiveness of teacher induction programs (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Specifically, many of these studies do not collect outcome data from both participants and non-participants in these programs resulting in ambiguous conclusions about the true value-added by induction programs. This program evaluation and case study examined outcomes from participants who had induction services and those who did not. Thus, this study contributed to the practical and relevant body of knowledge pertaining to induction services within the public school sector.

There is a gap in the literature with regard to how embedded reflective learning opportunities supports teacher learning (Camburn, 2010). In addition, the instructional

coaching model, which focuses upon teacher professional development, is gaining momentum across the country; however, there is a lack of research regarding the impact instructional coaching has on the retention of new teachers (Gallucci et al., 2010). Embedded professional development guided by an instructional coach is a promising, but under-researched, strategy for improving teacher effectiveness (Taylor, 2008). Although the instructional coaching model is expanding rapidly, there is little research available on its impact on teacher perspectives of job satisfaction and efficacy. Thus, this study sought to rectify the growing popularity of the instructional coaching model with the scant amount of research available pertaining to the model's impact on teacher perspectives of job satisfaction and retention.

This program evaluation and case study research project is important because it highlights the need for an induction program in a state that does not require new teachers to receive induction support. Texas does not have formal induction program standards, which govern the design and implementation of local teacher mentoring programs. This study also identifies the need for more structured protocols with regard to mentoring and reflective practice. Although Texas provides an annual grant program to assist with mentoring initiatives, districts must apply for the funds and there was only \$11.6 million available in the 2009-2011 biennium. With feedback from teachers in the trenches of a 6-A, fast growth Central Texas public school, this research provided further evidence that the state of Texas needs to require induction support for new teachers, formal induction program standards, and more funding sources for local districts to create and sustain mentoring initiatives.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Research Design and Protocol

Chapter Three outlines the research design methodology, so it is critical to begin this component with a discussion of case study research and its appropriateness for this investigation. The volume of case study research has grown over the past thirty years in relation to other forms of study such as survey research, experimental designs, and random assignment research. From 1980 to 2008, *Google's Ngram Viewer* compared the citations of case study research to the three forms of research stated above; the findings show a distinct upward trend in case study research in contrast to the other three terms (Yin, 2014). Case study research has contributed to numerous research topics across a broad range of fields, disciplines, and professions, and it includes procedures for protecting against threats to validity and investigating rival explanations (Yin, 2014). Case study research is common in the field of education because it allows the investigator to focus on practical issues such as group and organizational behavior.

Case study research, like other forms of qualitative research, is a form of interpretive study; case study research is also inductive in nature because cases are examined to gain an understanding of the meaning each case makes within its context (Merriam, 1998). Some researchers view the case study as an object of study (Merriam, 1998), while others view it as a methodology (Creswell, 2007), and still others define it as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2014). Although the definitions of case study research vary, this

methodology provides an opportunity for a rich set of data for interpretation and the opportunity for more powerful analytic conclusions (Merriam, 1998). Case study research offers insight which advances a field's knowledge base particularly in applied fields of study such as education; educational problems such as high teacher turnover can be examined to bring about an understanding that can improve practice, inform policy, and better evaluate programs (Merriam, 1998). In addition, case study research was a practical means for evaluating educational innovation and allowed for a rich and holistic account of the teacher's thoughts and perspectives regarding mentoring as a development experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

The Case Study Paradigm

In selecting case study research as the qualitative paradigm best suited for this study, three important criteria were evaluated: 1) the type of research question posed, 2) the extent of control the researcher had over actual behavioral events, and 3) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events (Yin, 2014). The most important factor in selecting a research method is to designate the type of research question being pursued. The central research question in this study was: How do new teachers at Belton ISD perceive components of induction such as mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development in their professional growth? "How" and "why" questions are more explanatory and often lead to the use of a case study research method (Yin, 2014). In addition, the behavioral events of this study cannot be controlled; thus, lending itself further to a case study analysis. Furthermore, the study presented by the investigator examined a contemporary topic in the field of education that was studied through direct observation and interviews of the subjects involved.

Advantages of the Case Study Framework

The case study's unique advantage is its emphasis on a broad scope of evidence ranging from documents and artifacts to interviews and observations (Yin, 2014). The investigator selected case study research because this framework provided valuable insight into a real-world situation through multiple sources of evidence converging in a triangulated fashion. The case study represented a complete method of research with a theoretical design, data collection strategies, and distinct methods of data analysis (Yin, 2014). My rationale for selecting a case study approach was to capture the perspectives of different participants and how they perceived the role of mentoring in the efficacy and retention of new teachers. This explanatory case study, as defined by Yin, was a case study whereby the purpose was to explain how or why some condition came to be or occur (2014). The use of the multiple case study design offered a means of investigating the social issue of new teacher turnover and provided a rich and holistic account of this phenomenon (Merriam, 1998).

Furthermore, the case study approach best addressed the central phenomena of new teacher mentoring, the instructional coaching model, and reflective professional development. This form of qualitative research allowed the investigator to explore a bounded system over time through multiple sources of data collection. For instance, the researcher utilized observations, interviews, artifacts, and questionnaire instruments for in-depth data collection. This explanatory multiple case study analysis compared two cases: one cohort of new teachers at Belton ISD who received a formal induction program during their first year of instruction and another cohort of new teachers at Belton ISD who did not receive a formal induction program during their first year of instruction.

These cases were also selected due to accessibility in regards to data collection. An in-depth picture of the role of mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development on new teacher efficacy and retention has added value to the existing body of research (Yin, 2014). The cases in this study were not sampling units and were too small in number to serve as an adequately sized sample to represent the larger population. However, this study did use embedded units of analysis or units lesser than the main unit of analysis from which case study data were collected (Yin, 2014). Specifically, the embedded units of analysis were the individual teacher data found within the organizational cases being studied at Belton ISD.

Participants and Site

Belton ISD was chosen as the site to begin the data collection process in order to answer the research questions at hand. The faculty and staff at Belton ISD were accessible, willing to provide insightful information, and served a diverse student population including large numbers of disadvantaged students. The achievement of students can be seen through longitudinal analysis of state test scores, while the disadvantaged nature of the study body was observed through at-risk reports as well as percentages of families on the free-and-reduced lunch program.

Size of Sample and Justification for Inclusion

The participant teachers in this study were not only new to the district, but they were also new to the profession; thus, at times, the participants were referred to as “zero-year” teachers indicating that they have no prior experience as classroom teachers. Within the faculty, the 2012-2013 cohort of new teachers did not receive formal mentors,

did not have access to instructional coaches, nor did they receive reflective professional development from instructional coaches during their first year of instruction. However, this cohort did reap the benefits of the instructional coaching model and reflective professional development during their second year of instruction, which would have been the 2013-2014 school year. Also within the faculty, was the 2013-2014 cohort of new teachers who experienced a formalized induction program during their first year of instruction. Assigned mentors, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development were components of this formalized induction program. These individuals articulated the perspectives of professional support and job satisfaction associated with these components of an induction program. Both of these culture-sharing groups developed shared values, beliefs, and assumptions regarding induction practices which allowed for the identification of common experiences, themes, and the overall essence of the formal, new teacher induction program.

Criteria-Based Sampling

Purposive criteria-based sampling was used to select the two cohorts of new teachers at Belton ISD as the focus for this case study because these faculty members can yield an understanding of the proposed research problem (Creswell, 2007). Within the 2012-2013 cohort of teachers who did not receive the induction treatment during their first year of teaching, five participants were randomly selected to be interviewed. With the 2013-2014 cohort of new teachers who did receive the induction treatment during their first year of teaching, five participants were randomly selected to be interviewed. The participants at Belton ISD represented a typical or common case because the objective of the study was to capture the circumstances and conditions surrounding

typical new teachers as they begin their educational careers (Yin, 2014). The participants provided specific information about the relationship or lack of a relationship between the induction program and new teacher efficacy and retention. The researcher's strategy was to focus solely on Belton ISD as the site for study and to collect extensive detail about each participant's experience during his or her first year of instruction. The presence or absence of an induction program was then evaluated to determine if the program aided or hindered new teacher efficacy as an educator as well as their decision to stay or exit the industry. Extended time with fewer respondents and observation sites added depth to the research project. The two new teacher cohorts provided ample opportunity to identify themes and patterns during data analysis. The two cases yielded a thick, descriptive study whereupon a saturation of data and confirmation of themes was obtained.

As stated previously, the participants were selected through the use of criteria sampling; the criteria was that to belong to the first case / cohort a teacher must have been new to education and Belton ISD during the 2012-2013 school year. Despite being new to the profession, these novice teachers did not receive a formal mentor; they did not have access to the instructional coaching model; nor did they receive reflective professional development. In the 2012-2013 school year, Belton ISD hired twenty-seven teachers new to the profession. Of the twenty-seven teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort/case, nine taught at the high school level; ten taught at the middle school level; and eight taught at the elementary level. To belong to the second case / cohort, a teacher must have been new to education and Belton ISD during the 2013-2014 school year. These novice teachers did receive a formal mentor; they had access to the instructional coaching model; and they received reflective professional development. In the 2013-

2014 school year, Belton ISD hired twenty-four teachers new to the profession. Of the twenty-four teachers in the 2013-2014 cohort/case, nine taught at the high school level; nine taught at the middle school level; and six taught at the elementary level. The breakdown of new teachers by year is depicted in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1

New Teachers by Cohort

2012-2013 School Year		2013-2014 School Year	
Zero Year Teachers at High School:	9	Zero Year Teachers at High School:	9
Zero Year Teachers at Middle School:	10	Zero Year Teachers at Middle School:	9
Zero Year Teachers at Elementary:	8	Zero Year Teachers at Elementary:	6
Total 2012-2013 Zero-Year Teachers:	27	Total 2013-2014 Zero-Year Teachers:	24

Despite the ease of access to the potential case study participants, the researcher sought guidance from the Baylor Institutional Review Board to ensure there were no potential harmful effects or risks to participants. Participants reviewed and signed a consent form, which allowed for their voluntary withdrawal from the study at any time. This consent form outlined the central purpose of the study, procedures for data collection, a confidentiality agreement, potential risks associated with the study, and the expected benefits from the research. Full disclosure pertaining to why Belton ISD was chosen, the length of the research project, and the method for reporting results helped build rapport and trust with the participants.

The Instructional Coaching Model: Training Background

The spring of 2012 marked an important time in the evolution of the instructional facilitator to instructional coach model. During this time, the instructional facilitators at BISD began an intensive study on Jim Knight’s book entitled *Instructional Coaching: A*

Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction (2007). In June of 2013, BISD partnered with two instructional experts, Dr. Amy Markos and Dr. Melissa Castillo, who could assist the instructional coaches and our administrative team with the transition to the coaching model. Amy Markos is a teacher educator who specializes in the preparation of teachers for linguistically diverse students, which is especially important given Belton's growing population of bilingual and ESL students. Her research interests include the use of critical reflection in teacher learning which would be another important component of the District's transition to the instructional coaching model.

Dr. Melissa Castillo is an independent consultant who works with educators across the country on the development of academic language and literacy, sheltered instruction techniques, instructional coaching, and implementing training to build employee capacity. Her professional experience includes many years as a dual language and bilingual teacher, professional development coordinator, and director of English Language Learner programs at both the elementary and secondary levels. Her research interests focus on effective instructional programs for English Language Learners and coaching teachers in the successful implementation of research-based practices in sheltered English instruction. Again, these research interests aligned well with the goals of the District because of the increasing numbers of ELL and ESL students.

Dr. Markos and Dr. Castillo worked with the instructional coaches and campus administrators throughout the 2013-2014 school year focusing upon the concepts of side-by-side coaching, reflective feedback, and student learning objectives. Dr. Markos and Dr. Castillo have continued their side-by-side coaching training with BISD throughout the 2014-2015 school year. In addition, the instructional coaches and campus

administrators have focused their studies on Diane Sweeney's book entitled *Student Centered Coaching: A Guide for K-8 Coaches and Principals* (2011).

Researcher's Perspective

Because I am the Director of Human Resources-Staffing at Belton ISD, this raised issues of power and risk to the participants. Studying one's own workplace created questions about the quality of the data because the act of data collection could have introduced a power imbalance between the researcher and the individuals being studied. Participants could have been unwilling to disclose unfavorable data to a central office administrator if they thought their jobs could be negatively impacted. In other words, the power imbalance between teachers and a central office administrator could have created an incentive to provide inaccurate information. For example, were the participants willing to disclose unfavorable data to their employer if they thought their jobs could be negatively impacted? Did the power imbalance between teachers and a central office administrator create an incentive to provide inaccurate information? Did my position within the organization hinder a true representation of the data? Thus, a limitation of the study was that my position within the organization could hinder a true representation of the data. In addition, if the participants reported unfavorable data it might negatively impact the culture of the organization. Weaknesses in the case study approach included the bias and credibility of the researcher as well as the reluctance of participants to provide true and accurate responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Despite the risks associated with "backyard" research, there are inherent risks in all data-collection measures such as a possible breach of confidentiality or anonymity.

To promote confidentiality and the anonymity of the participants in this study, informed consent forms (see Appendix E) were distributed. Observations of new teachers in planning sessions with their instructional coaches or mentors were possible for all of the zero-year teachers identified as potential participants in this study. Because the obtrusive nature of the participant observer can often influence data, my frequent role as a non-participant observer yielded more validity to the data collected (Creswell, 2007). Fortunately, teachers are accustomed to having administrators as participant and non-participant observers in their classrooms. Likewise, questionnaires were distributed to all of the new teachers identified as potential participants in this study. Despite my position of power acting as a potential limitation on the accuracy of information gathered from participants, the process of data collection on new teachers is a routine component of my position. Therefore, to participate in data collection and analysis was a normal process for all new teachers in our district, and the researcher clearly articulated to potential participants that there was no risk involved with being a component of this study. The informed consent form was not a method for new teachers to opt out of participating in the normal operation of the mentoring program at BISD; rather, the consent form was a means for the new teacher to opt out of having their data reported in this study.

Data Collection

To build an in-depth picture of the two cases, multiple data collection techniques were used. A matrix of information sources was created beginning with the four broad types of data: interviews, observations, questionnaires, and artifacts (Creswell, 2007). Within these broad categories, the researcher outlined specific strategies for obtaining the data. Several forms of data collection occurred in order to investigate the research

questions posed by this study. These multiple data collection techniques were implemented for purposes of triangulation and to confirm findings through a saturation of data (Creswell, 2007). Yin defined triangulation as the convergence of data collected from different sources to determine the consistency of a finding (2014). External validity was addressed through rich, thick descriptions of observations, interactions, and discussions held by participants in the mentoring process as well as the establishment of the typicality of the cases being studied (Merriam, 1998). Table 3.2 below aligns the study’s research questions to the data collection protocol types as well as the specific items found within the interview and questionnaire protocols.

Table 3.2

Research Question – Data Collection Protocol Matrix

Research Question	Data Collection Protocol	Protocol Item
What is the role of mentoring in the developmental experiences of new teachers?	Interview Protocol Observation Protocol Questionnaire Protocol	Interview Questions 1, 2 Questionnaire Items 1, 2
How do new teachers describe the overall mentoring program as measured by perspectives of professional support?	Interview Protocol Observation Protocol Questionnaire Protocol Artifacts	Interview Question 3 Questionnaire Items 3,5,11
How do new teachers describe the instructional coaching model as measured by perspectives of professional support?	Interview Protocol Observation Protocol Questionnaire Protocol Artifacts	Interview Questions 4, 5 Questionnaire Items 4, 8
How do new teachers describe reflective professional development as measured by perspectives of professional support?	Interview Protocol Observation Protocol Questionnaire Protocol Artifacts	Interview Questions 6, 7 Questionnaire Items 9
How do new teachers describe the overall mentoring program as measured by perspectives of job satisfaction?	Interview Protocol Observation Protocol Questionnaire Protocol Artifacts	Interview Questions 8, 9 Questionnaire Items 6,7,10 Separation Questionnaire

Interviews

The investigator conducted semi-structured interviews with five randomly selected members from each of the two cases to measure their perspectives of support during their first year of teaching (Creswell, 2007). The interviews with the five randomly selected members of the 2012-2013 cohort were conducted during the fall of 2014, which was after their second year of teaching. The interviews with the five randomly selected members of the 2013-2014 cohort were also conducted in the fall of 2014, which was after their first year of teaching. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with four randomly selected members of the instructional coaching staff during the fall of 2014. Finally, two administrators from the curriculum and instruction department at Belton ISD were interviewed during the fall of 2014 to gain a better understanding of the transition from the instructional facilitator to instructional coaching model. These participants shed light on the facets of induction offered by the District as well as their perspective on the impact these elements had on novice teachers. The questions explored elements of induction support such as mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development. An interview protocol for the teacher participants (see Appendix A) and the instructional coaching staff as well as curriculum and instruction administrators (see Appendix B) were used to keep the information gathered in a chronological and organized fashion. The interview protocol consisted of ten questions, and each interview lasted no longer than forty-five minutes. A quiet meeting place on the participant's campus or at the central office, free of distractions, was utilized for these one-to-one interviews. The interviews began with open-ended questions that narrowed and targeted the research project's central question. The interview

instrument was piloted first to refine and develop the questions as well as decrease bias. All interviews were conducted within a forty-five minute time frame. The investigator collected and labeled these interview forms with pseudonyms as to protect the identity of each participant. A goal of five interviews per each of the two cohort groups was set and achieved by the researcher because these interviews yielded thick, descriptive data that confirmed certain themes and generated a saturation of data. A goal of two interviews per the elementary instructional coaches, two interviews per the secondary instructional coaches, and two interviews per the administrative team within the curriculum and instruction department was also set and achieved by the researcher.

With a general framework of questions created before each interview, the structured nature of the protocol allowed for consistent questions among all interview sessions. However, latitude was given to allow participants to expand upon their answers or elaborate on an issue not specifically set forth by an interview question if the researcher deemed it important to the case study. This allowance for flexibility was somewhat unstructured, but it also worked to give the interview participants some measure of control over the interview process. These interviews were also recorded so that exact quotes could be garnered at a later time.

The interviews occurred during the faculty member's conference period or after school. The interviews were recorded using an i-Phone, but the researcher also created field notes as the interviews occurred. The investigator began each interview by stating the purpose of the study while emphasizing the voluntary nature of each subject's participation. The investigator then read the questions in sequential order and provided the participants with ample time to respond thoroughly. When necessary, follow-up

questions were posed to clarify responses or to provide additional details regarding the participant's perspective. Interviews of participants occurred with the goal of retrieving background data related to the efficacy of the novice teacher as well as the induction process including elements of mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development and practice. Grand tour questions were used to elicit broad responses from participants to further explore the research question at hand (Creswell, 2007). Additional questions were then undertaken to probe deeper into earlier responses given by the participants and to clarify any additional information. The research question and the theoretical framework guided these semi-structured interviews, and the goal of the interviews was to obtain both depth and breadth of data.

Observations

Observations of novice teachers interacting with teacher mentors and instructional coaches during reflective meetings, planning sessions, and team collaboration time were another major component of the data collection process. My role as participant observer during professional development sessions targeting the instructional coaching model faded further to a non-participant while observing new teachers collaborating with their mentors and instructional coaches (Creswell, 2007). Because the obtrusive nature of the participant observer can often influence data, my frequent role as a non-participant observer rendered more validity to the data collected (Creswell, 2007). Fortunately, teachers are accustomed to being observed by administrators from anywhere between five minutes to forty-five minutes; observations in this study lasted no longer than forty-five minutes per occurrence. Field notes included descriptive notes of the participants, the particular instructional or developmental activities being addressed, as well as notes

highlighting specific topics pertaining to the act of mentoring, instructional coaching, or reflective professional development. As a central office administrator, the researcher was immersed in any professional development targeting instructional coaching, so participant observation was a natural occurrence.

The purpose of the observations was to document themes regarding new teachers and their perspective of support through the mentoring and instructional coaching process. The investigator contacted each participant by email at least one week prior to observing reflective meetings, planning sessions, or other team collaboration time. The investigator used the observation protocol form (see Appendix C) to document observations and reflections during the collaborative sessions. As the observation protocol forms were completed, the files were organized by date and placed in folders. The investigator collected and labeled these observation forms with pseudonyms as to protect the identity of the subject. Fortunately, teachers were accustomed to having administrators as participant and non-participant observers in their classrooms and the process of data collection on new teachers was a routine process (Creswell, 2007).

It is important to note that the instructional coaching model allowed teachers to receive additional classroom walkthroughs as well as more varied feedback from the instructional coaches. Through frequent classroom walkthrough observations, instructional coaches provided our novice teachers with non-evaluative but diagnostic feedback on areas ranging from student engagement to classroom management. The true value of these observations came in the reflective discussions held between mentor and mentee after the observations were completed. In addition to the traditional PDAS observation instrument, classroom walkthrough instruments were designed to spark

reflective discussions. The instructional coaches had been trained to observe teachers in a non-evaluative fashion focusing rather on pedagogy and student growth as measured by common assessment data. The goal of both pre- and post-observation meetings was for teacher growth and improved instruction so that ultimately students were more successful academically.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire protocol (see Appendix D) was used to gather feedback from case study participants to shed further light on the research questions at hand. Specifically, the questionnaire was designed to elicit information from participants regarding their perception of support during their first year of teaching. Specific questions regarding components of support such as mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development were used to identify themes that emerged from the responses given by participants in the two cohort cases. The investigator collected and labeled these questionnaires with pseudonyms as to protect the identity of each participant. At the conclusion of the 2012-2013 school year, the investigator piloted a questionnaire instrument (see Appendix D) to gain feedback from new teachers regarding their perspectives of professional support. The purpose of the pilot study was to measure and refine the study's methodology. After conducting the pilot study, the investigator realized that feedback from the new teachers indicated that more support was necessary for novice teachers. In addition, the questionnaire data was limited, so a zero-year teacher interview protocol (see Appendix A) and an observation protocol (see Appendix C) were developed.

Artifacts

Archival documents or artifacts were a ready-made source of data easily accessible to the investigator; unlike interviewing and observation, the presence of the investigator did not alter what was being studied (Merriam, 1998). Artifacts were objective sources of data that were reviewed or collected from each case. The documents that were reviewed included lesson plans, past reflective walkthrough observations conducted by other administrators or instructional coaches, and separation questionnaires that were completed by teachers wishing to leave BISD during the exit interview process. The separation questionnaires and walkthrough documents were both historical documents that were not designed by the investigator but helped with the triangulation of data. The investigator collected and labeled these artifacts with pseudonyms as to protect the identity of each participant.

Triangulation of Data

These multiple data collection techniques were implemented for purposes of triangulation and to confirm findings through a saturation of data. Yin defined triangulation as the convergence of data collected from different sources to determine the consistency of a finding (2014). When collecting information from multiple sources and through various means but obtaining results that corroborate the same finding, the investigator was performing triangulation. Once the case study's findings were supported by more than a single source of evidence, triangulation occurred (Yin, 2014). This convergent evidence also helped to strengthen construct validity as well as to ensure the case study had rendered each participant's perspective accurately. The triangulation of the data will be demonstrated and explained during the following data analysis sections.

Data Analysis

Data Organization and Coding

With the data collection techniques thoroughly described, the investigator must now outline data organization, coding, and analysis techniques. Data organization continued throughout the data collection phase and included the transcription of interviews, organization of questionnaire data, and the labeling of artifacts. These items were labeled by participant pseudonym and placed in a secure location. With the observation protocol, not only were descriptive and reflective notes taken, but themes and codes began to emerge within the data. The investigator began with open coding which was coding the data for its major categories of information (Creswell, 2007). From the open coding, axial coding emerged whereby the investigator identified a focal category or core phenomenon, and then sub-categories emerged around this central phenomenon.

With multiple data collection sources and tools, the researcher believes an in-depth and composite case study was created. After every interview, the field notes and recordings were scrutinized for important details. By identifying key words and phrases and reflecting on the thoughts and perspectives of the teachers interviewed, important concepts emerged and initial categories of data were created. Detailed descriptions of induction initiatives including mentoring services, instructional coaching, and reflective thinking within the context of classrooms and professional development sessions were crucial. By classifying the data into dimensions, a larger meaning of what was occurring at the site was identified. Constant comparative, pattern-matching, cross-case, and time-series analysis were then conducted, which I discuss in further detail below.

As interviews or observations were conducted out in the field, the data was then analyzed to find emerging categories. Transcripts, field notes, and other texts were examined to create categories of information. Observations, interviews, and other related documents were analyzed until the categories of data become saturated. This process of taking information from data collection and comparing it to emerging categories is better known as the constant comparative method of data analysis (Creswell, 2007). By reducing the data to a small set of themes or categories that characterized the process of induction, the findings illuminated the research questions presented in this qualitative study.

For case studies, one of the most desirable techniques for data analysis is to use a pattern-matching technique whereby an empirically based pattern found within this case study is compared with a predicted pattern made before the data is collected (Yin, 2014). The predicted pattern was based on propositions derived from knowledge of previous studies conducted regarding the impact of induction on new teacher retention and job satisfaction. Thus, the predicted patterns for this study were:

- Those new teachers receiving mentoring services during their first year of instruction will communicate positive developmental experiences such as increased professional growth and improved job satisfaction.
- Those new teachers receiving support from instructional coaches during their first year of teaching will demonstrate positive impressions of job support and satisfaction.
- Those new teachers engaging in reflective professional development during their first year of instruction will demonstrate positive impressions of job support and satisfaction.
- Conversely, those new teachers not receiving mentoring services, instructional coaching, or reflective professional development during their first year of teaching will not demonstrate positive developmental experiences and will more likely communicate perceptions of job dissatisfaction.

As the findings are discussed in a later section, it is important to note that the empirical and predicted patterns were similar, which strengthened the internal validity of the study. However, a potential threat to validity included the appointment of new campus and central office administrators whereby the counterargument could be made that the perceptions of support and job satisfaction by new teachers could be attributable to the practices of these new administrators as opposed to the induction program (Yin, 2014). Thus, it was crucial to identify all reasonable threats to validity and to conduct repeated comparisons demonstrating how these threats cannot account for the repeated patterns found in the cases. In addition, since the results were as predicted, a solid conclusion about the effects of induction on perceptions of new teacher support and job satisfaction was drawn (Yin, 2014).

The data collection in this case study was extensive because multiple sources of information were gathered through questionnaires, observation summaries, and interviews. This study utilized embedded units of analysis or units lesser than the main unit of analysis from which case study data were collected (Yin, 2014). Specifically, the embedded units of analysis were individual teacher data found within the organizational cases being studied at Belton ISD. The study explored the role of induction on new teacher efficacy and retention at Belton ISD. After focusing on key issues and analysis of themes, one aspect of the analysis was to identify themes that transcend the case. This thematic analysis across cases is referred to as cross-case analysis (Creswell, 2007).

With a multiple case study investigation, cross-case synthesis helped strengthen and make for more robust findings as opposed to focusing upon a single case because this data analysis method treats each individual case as a separate study (Yin, 2014). Cross-

case analysis was a method for conceptualizing the data from all cases and providing an integrated framework for closely examining results (Merriam, 1998). Information gathered from the data collection protocols was analyzed and dissected using a simple word table, whereby the data from the individual cases was displayed according to one or more uniform categories (Yin, 2014). For example, the impact of the instructional coaching model on perceptions of support by new teachers was an important category addressed by this study; furthermore, it was hypothesized that those new teachers receiving support from instructional coaches during their first year of teaching would demonstrate positive impressions of job support and satisfaction. A qualitative analysis of word tables enabled the researcher to draw cross-case conclusions about the two cohorts of teachers and in particular why the new teachers receiving induction services during their first year of instruction developed perceptions of professional support and job satisfaction. The findings confirmed the original expectations of the study and aligned with the prior research that was included in the literature review, which was used to develop this case study design (Yin, 2014).

The examination of the word tables for cross-case patterns relied heavily upon argumentative interpretation not numeric tallies because only a small number of cases were available for synthesis; therefore, a strong, plausible argument was supported by the data that was presented (Yin, 2014). In this study, the cohort of teachers receiving induction services during their first year of instruction represented a case, while the cohort of teachers not receiving mentoring services during their first year of instruction represented a second case; however, the teachers found within each case represented

embedded units. Thus, the findings and conclusions from this study have data from the broader cohort unit of analysis as well as the embedded teacher cases.

Time-series analysis was also conducted to lay a firm foundation for the conclusions of the case study; the ability to trace changes over time was a major strength of case study analysis (Yin, 2014). A time-series analysis allowed the researcher to examine “how” and “why” questions about the relationships of events over time so that an explanatory value was gained. As stated earlier, the new teacher mentoring program, instructional coaching model, and reflective professional development initiatives were implemented with the goal of reducing new teacher turnover and increasing perceptions of new teacher support and job satisfaction. This case study then presents time-series of the annual rates of turnover amongst new teachers over a three-year period. With the time-series design, the observed or empirical trend of new teacher attrition was compared to the predicted or theoretically significant trend (Yin, 2014). Based upon the review of related research, the predicted or theoretically significant trend was that new teachers not receiving mentoring services during their first year of teaching did not demonstrate positive developmental experiences, were more likely to communicate perceptions of job dissatisfaction, and were more likely to quit the teaching profession within the first five years of their career (Ingersoll, 2001).

During data analysis, a detailed description of the case and its setting was made. As the teachers evolved in their mentoring relationships, the data was analyzed to identify distinct steps or phases in the chronology of events. The data was also analyzed in order to determine how new teacher mentoring fits within the culture of the district. With direct interpretation, the data was pulled apart and placed back into more meaningful

classifications. By aggregating the data into categories, common themes emerged which were then compared to the existing literature related to the role of induction on new teacher efficacy and retention. The culminating product of the constant-comparative analysis, pattern-matching analysis, cross-case, and time-series analysis was a series of propositions depicting the trends and themes which emerged from the data. With the conclusion of this study, a complete qualitative research report was submitted to Baylor University.

Validity and Reliability

The discussion of data collection and analysis would not be complete without the researcher describing issues of validity and reliability. Because the concepts of validity and reliability are common nomenclature used in quantitative studies, the researcher used these quantitative terms as well as their analogous qualitative terms to describe these pertinent issues. In addition, because this research study is not purely qualitative, the use of both terms was appropriate. To meet the test of construct validity, the investigator studied new teacher efficacy and satisfaction in terms of specific concepts such as retention. Operational measures that match these concepts such as mentoring, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development were then created. Multiple sources of evidence through observation summaries, interviews, questionnaires, and artifacts created construct validity (Yin, 2014).

Internal validity or credibility was also a concern for explanatory case studies such as this. In other words, the investigator was careful not to incorrectly conclude a causal relationship between two variables when a third factor may have actually caused the relationship (Yin, 2014). Before making an inference, the investigator ruled out rival

explanations. The results of this study must be credible or believable from the perspectives of the participants in this research. External validity or transferability deals with whether the case study's findings were generalizable beyond the immediate study; by addressing "how" and "why" questions, this study lends itself to external validity. By thoroughly describing the context and the key assumptions to the research, transferability to other contexts or settings was enhanced. Finally, the goal of reliability or dependability was to minimize the errors and biases in this study by operationalizing as many steps as possible so that the research could be easily duplicated and similar results found (Yin, 2014). From a more qualitative perspective, the researcher accounting for the ever-changing context in which the research occurred enhanced dependability. As the induction setting at BISD changed from one year to the next, these changes affected the manner in which the researcher approached the study. Objectivity or confirmability refers to the degree to which others could corroborate the results. Strategies for verifying the objectivity of the data included triangulation whereby multiple and different sources provided corroborating evidence. Clarifying researcher bias from the outset of the study was important to demonstrate to the reader the researcher's perspective on the inquiry. Finally, a dissertation panel acted as a peer review or external check of the research by examining both the process and the product to ensure the accuracy of the study.

Researcher Background

As a Chemistry teacher at Connally High School and a special education teacher at Copperas Cove High School, the induction and mentoring I received as a novice teacher was limited at best. Professional development sessions could be described as unintentional and random. As a campus level administrator for six years, I strived to offer

support and professional development for new teachers that was intentional, reflective, and promoted effective teaching. I have continued my own professional growth through certification courses, graduate work, and other professional development trainings that focus on instructional leadership and supporting novice educators.

As a doctoral student, I have focused on professional development as an area of interest and research because of its extreme importance in creating educators that are more effective in providing quality instruction to students. In addition, that quality professional development is also essential in retaining new teachers and preventing their early exit from the industry. I narrowed my research efforts specifically to the topic of reflective professional development because of its profound impact on my own learning. As a campus principal, I conducted reflective classroom walkthroughs so that my faculty could engage in thoughtful reflection of their lessons and instruction. After these observations, I posed reflective questions for teachers to contemplate and answer in order to improve their teaching skills and habits. These questions also resulted in discussions aimed at promoting professional growth and practices within the classroom. Now, as Director of Human Resources-Staffing, the quality induction and professional development of novice teachers is extremely important so that new teachers feel supported and the district retains quality employees.

Ethical Considerations

In addition to describing possibilities of researcher bias, other ethical considerations were explored. There were no known physical, psychological, or sociological risks associated with this case study research project. All data was kept completely confidential and anonymously coded to ensure the privacy of all participants.

Names of participants will remain confidential and will not be cited in the study or possible future publications unless the participant has given explicit, written consent. To maintain confidentiality, the teacher names listed on any field notes, interview logs, or reflective responses were replaced with pseudonyms. The pseudonyms will also be used in any publications or presentations completed in relation to this research project unless the participant has given explicit, written consent. All print documents were shredded and audio/visual/electronic data were erased or deleted upon completion of the study. All other data related to the study continues to be maintained in a secure location under the researcher's supervision.

It should also be noted that all participants in this study were over eighteen years of age and could have voluntarily withdrawn at any time from the study. A detailed description of the central purpose of the research as well as the data collection procedures were provided to all participants at the beginning of the study. All data collected was completely confidential and anonymously coded to ensure the privacy of the participants. Names of participants were changed to pseudonyms in all data collected and in all written documents related to the study unless the participant gave explicit, written consent. Questionnaire responses and field notes were deleted at the conclusion of the study. The interview sessions, observations, and reflective sessions were voluntary, with no penalties for not participating. All participants were informed that no form of reward or sanction was attached to participation in the study. Potential rewards and sanctions would have only worked to skew the data. With multiple strategies for validation, the data obtained was accurate and insightful. All data will be maintained in a locked, secure room monitored by the researcher.

The privacy of those participating in this study was guarded with great care. Only the researcher had access to any specific participant information. All data was kept in a secure location and was destroyed upon completion of the research project. Names were coded and changed so that the participants remained anonymous. Again, pseudonyms will be used in any future publications and presentations unless the participant gave explicit, written consent. All participation was voluntary and the subjects could have withdrawn from the study at any time. If a participant had requested not to be recorded, only hand-written field notes would have been taken. All data was held in the strictest confidence.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

Instructional Coaches: Demographic Information

In order to design a comprehensive program evaluation and develop a thorough understanding of the evolution from the instructional facilitator model to the instructional coaching model, the researcher conducted interviews with administrators from the curriculum and instruction department as well as the instructional coaches. Table 4.1 below depicts information on the administrators from the curriculum and instruction department and provides demographic information such as age, gender, race, and level of education.

Table 4.1

Curriculum and Instruction Administrators: Demographics

Adm#	Age	Gender	Race	Degree	Years in BISD	Years in Edu.
Adm #1	52	Female	White	Master's	20	28
Adm #2	50	Female	White	Master's	30	30
Average:	51				25	29

Table 4.2 below shows the instructional coaches by campus or subject area responsibility and provides demographic information such as age, gender, race, and level of education. The average instructional coach is a forty-two-year-old, white female who holds either a bachelor's or master's degree.

Table 4.2

Instructional Coaches: Demographics

IC#	Campus / Responsibility	Age	Gender	Race	Degree
IC#1	Secondary Math	34	Female	White	Bachelor's
IC#2	Secondary ELA	31	Female	Afr. American	Master's
IC#3	High School Science	57	Female	White	Bachelor's
IC#4	Secondary Social Studies	42	Female	White	Master's
IC#5	Middle School Science	58	Female	White	Bachelor's
IC#6	Tyler / High Point	39	Female	White	Bachelor's
IC#7	Tyler / High Point	29	Female	White	Master's
IC#8	Miller / Tarver / Leon	50	Female	White	Master's
IC#9	Miller / Tarver / Leon	38	Female	White	Master's
IC#10	Lakewood / Sparta	48	Female	White	Bachelor's
IC#11	Lakewood / Sparta	33	Female	White	Master's
IC#12	Southwest / Pirtle	51	Female	White	Bachelor's
IC#13	Southwest / Pirtle	37	Female	Afr. American	Bachelor's

Table 4.3 below provides further information on the instructional coaching staff including their years of service in education as well as in BISD.

Table 4.3

Instructional Coaches: Years of Experience

IC #	Years in BISD	Years in Education
IC#1	1	10
IC#2	3	9
IC#3	6	24
IC#4	18	18
IC#5	36	36
IC#6	8	9
IC#7	0	7
IC#8	13	13
IC#9	13	13
IC#10	26	26
IC#11	0	7
IC#12	27	27
IC#13	2	14
<i>Average</i>	<i>11.77</i>	<i>16.38</i>

The average instructional coach has close to twelve years of experience in BISD and over sixteen years of experience in education.

Interview Findings

Instructional Coaching Training

Interviews with instructional coaches as well as the central office administrators in charge of spearheading the transformation from the instructional facilitator to instructional coach model shed light on the struggles and difficulties associated with the change. Throughout the following sections, these two administrators from the curriculum and instruction department will be referred to as Administrator #1 and Administrator #2. Administrator #1 highlighted the need for the instructional coaches to refrain from managerial aspects of school business such as performing duty and to transition toward observing classroom instruction, providing constructive feedback, and having deep conversations with teachers.

When we had facilitators, it was so loose and varied as to what they did based on the school. For example, some of them would do two hours of duty a day. [The facilitator] wasn't getting to spend much time with teachers period, let alone first year teachers. So, when we went to this coaching model, it was really important to all of us involved that we make sure everyone knew where their lane was. Their lane was not about filling in for duty, or filling in classes, or working one-on-one with kids. Their lane was about instruction and having those deep conversations about instruction. We have worked a lot on feedback and how you get that feedback. In June of 2013, we had Dr. Amy Markos come work with our coaches. Dr. Markos and Dr. Castillo came in 2013-2014 to work with our administrators. It was at the request of the administrators that we brought them back for our teachers this year [2014-2015].

Administrator #2 also elaborated on the training that was provided to the instructional coaches as well as the professional development they continue to receive.

We walked them through the instructional coach book study by Jim Knight. Dr. Amy Markos then did the coaches' training in June of 2013 and June of 2014. Dr. Markos did side-by-side coaching training for two years. Dr. Melissa Castillo will do the elementary side-by-side coaching training in February. We are having this training again because we have new coaches and have not had the experience of side-by-side coaching. This is the book study (Student Centered Coaching by Diane Sweeney) that we are doing right now this year [2014-2015] that the principals join us on. So, we have met twice in the fall. Principals came to one of the coaches' meetings and we reviewed chapters one and two. Then we did chapters three and four. Last Friday, we did chapters five and six. We have set a date in March to finish it. So, principals and coaches all are studying this one. Sweeney quotes a lot of Jim Knight.

IC #10 elaborated further on the difficulty with transitioning from an instructional facilitator to an instructional coach. She pointed out that many administrators still held the perception that the instructional coaches should be evaluative in their observations of teachers. In addition, with the instructional coaches being shared between campuses, it was difficult for them to build relationships with teachers. IC#10 also noted that the Markos and Castillo philosophy was to support and grow relatively strong teachers who want to be in the coaching cycle, while the administrative philosophy was to use coaches in an evaluative fashion to help document the weakest teachers.

We did a Jim Knight book study. Then, Dr. Melissa Castillo and Dr. Amy Markos came and trained us on the IC model. It was a bit rocky because the district still had the perception of using the ICs in an evaluative way with teachers, but the Castillo and Markos training taught us that we are not evaluative. So, there was some conflict there with our documentation. Also, because we were spread between two campuses at that time, it was difficult to build relationships with teachers. So, it was a little rocky at first getting started. There were almost too many fingers in the pie. The principals had ways they wanted to use us. They really liked us to do walkthroughs because it alleviated some of their responsibilities.

Admin still felt like we needed to get on it because we had teachers who needed support or needed to be gone, so they wanted us used in an evaluative fashion. There were certain teachers that they wanted us to be in their rooms, but the Markos and Castillo philosophy was to be supporting and growing those teachers that are relatively strong teachers because they are the ones who really want to be

in the coaching cycle. [These were] totally different philosophies, so finding the balance between the two has been a struggle.

IC#9 remarked on the intensity of the instructional coaching training she received involving components of the model such as content objective training and side-by-side coaching.

We had the Jim Knight book study. Dr. Melissa Castillo and Dr. Amy Markos came and did the content objective training. We also did coaching training in general with them. It was pretty intense. We shifted over right after school was out and met with them in June of 2013. It was two days and it was pretty intense. They came back and did training throughout the year. It was a side-by-side coaching model. They are going to come back next month.

IC#4 also commented on the training she received pertaining to reflective feedback.

We had a book study on Jim Knight. We started that during the end of our last year as facilitators. In 2013-2014, we had Dr. Amy Markos come in and teach us how to give reflective feedback to teachers.

While IC#3 expanded on the value of the Jim Knight material, she also shed light on the transition of tasks from instructional facilitator to instructional coach. In previous years, the instructional facilitators focused upon ensuring student success on state examinations through appropriate interventions. Now, the instructional coaches have shifted their focus to supporting teachers and maximizing the effectiveness of their instruction.

Dr. Markos came in and visited with us. That was the day of graduation in June of 2013. We did a jigsaw reading and reported out on the Jim Knight book on coaching. The book had some very good points in it. I even read another book by Knight. It prompted me to read on because I do see a deep need for teacher support. In the facilitator role, we were doing so many things and a lot of it was focused on making sure that kids were successful on the state exam or making sure that interventions were in place for that success. It was not so much about supporting teachers becoming good at their craft. I think it was making use of what resources were available.

Instructional Coaching Tools

As the researcher continued to gather background data on the transition from the instructional facilitator model to the instructional coaching model, members of the curriculum and instruction department were asked the following interview question:

What tools or forms were developed as a result of the instructional coaching model?

Administrator #1, who leads the efforts of the secondary instructional coaches, described documents such as a Menu Options of Secondary IC Services (See Appendix F), Secondary Instructional Coaching Expectations, and the Secondary Coaches' Framework. She also elaborated on the importance of instructional coaches helping teachers with data analysis and asking reflective questions with regard to the components of a quality lesson. Administrator #1 reiterated the need for instructional coaches to cease providing teachers with clerical support and focus on providing non-evaluative feedback on classroom instruction.

We really talk to teachers about analyzing data... not just new teachers but all teachers...but especially teachers who don't understand it. We work more one-on-one with them. We have a menu option of IC services. The elements of coaching were covered by Dr. Markos with the principals in 2013-2014. We have a form that is really informative on what coaching is and what it isn't. The hardest thing that we had to lose, and I still catch myself doing it, was using the words "I like." That is really hard. Dr. Markos stated that we are so worried about hurting people's feelings that we put people's feelings above the work.

The way I have framed that in my mind is that I was hired for the kids. The kids are my work. So I tell people quite often that any single kid in this district and their needs is more important to me than the whole of all the adults. In my mind that is how it should be. It really was about moving from that clerical part of helping them. Running copies is not the heart of coaching. That is being their clerk. It's not about checking off the teachers' to-do list for them or with them. It's about asking the questions. Coaches talk with teachers about what a good lesson should look like and consist of, but we have evolved.

Administrator #2 explained that an instructional coach framework (see Appendix G) was developed to outline coaching roles and responsibilities, guidelines, priority teachers, expectations, calendar activities, and even concerns. As the supervisor to elementary instructional coaches, Administrator #2 set an expectation that the coaches document their interventions with teachers in some fashion whether it be in an action plan or journal. Another tool used by the elementary instructional coaches is the Elementary Data Conversation Talking Points form (see Appendix H). This tool assists instructional coaches in gaining feedback from teachers during Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings on a variety of topics related to student assessment data or the curriculum. The Instructional Coaching Support Matrix was another form developed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a teacher with regard to instruction so that the coach can target areas for growth and improvement.

We started with our instructional coach framework. Some coaches take notes in One Note, some of them do it on the action plan, and some do it in a journal. I don't care how they take the notes, but I ask them to show me what you have done with a teacher. They have all been able to pull their notes and show me. There is a form, Elementary Data Conversation Talking Points, that we are using as we talk to teachers in grade level PLC meetings to talk about their data, talk about the curriculum, and how to gain feedback. So, when you are looking at the data think about what went well with the unit, what do I need to do immediately, and then what am I going to do for changes for next year.

The Instructional Coaching Support Matrix is used at the beginning of the year when they decide what quadrant a teacher is in and then they review it with their principal to see if the principal felt the same way. If you have a teacher in this quadrant this tool helps you determine what you can do to help grow that teacher. Ms. Bullen's Data Rich-Year form is a tool to use with teachers to help them think about data all year long at the different points in the year. They have a color coding tool where they show different events on their calendar.

IC#4 described how she used the Instructional Coaching Support Matrix frequently in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of teachers with regard to

instruction and content knowledge. IC#4 explained that Dr. Amy Markos, the District's outside consultant, would demonstrate and model coaching techniques with a teacher and then observe and give feedback to the instructional coaches as they worked with teachers. IC#4 also elaborated upon a new initiative at Belton High School for the 2014-2015 school year whereby team leaders, or department heads, act as mentors to new teachers on campus. IC#4 also made an important distinction between mentoring and coaching in that she feels that instructional coaching requires more training in order to speak to a teacher's instructional delivery.

When I was an IC, I used the quadrant quite a bit. That was really more for me so I could figure out where my teachers were and who needed the most work and in what area. Was it content or was it instruction? Dr. Amy Markos also provided a lot of help because we could observe her coaching and then she would watch us. That was really helpful. We also focused a lot on the student learning objectives. In my new role, I work with the team leaders who work with the new teachers. The team leaders act as mentors to new teachers this year. When I think of mentoring and coaching, I see those as two separate pieces. They will bleed into each other some. With mentoring, I see it more as teacher or team leader being capable of doing that. They can speak to the day-to-day operations and the content. But as far as coaching a teacher on their instructional delivery, I think you need more training for that.

IC#3 also discussed the use of the Instructional Coaching Support Matrix to spark discussions between the instructional coaches and teachers about content delivery. IC#3 also provided insightful feedback on the perspective of an instructional coach upon receiving training on non-evaluative feedback. Specifically, it was difficult for her to hear that the feedback provided to teachers should be non-evaluative which meant responses free from praise. For IC#3, the feedback provided to teachers appeared to be detached and non-emotional; however, now she sees the advantages of non-evaluative feedback whereby probing questions help the teacher self-reflect.

They have a matrix that was developed where a teacher would actually place themselves on where they thought they were on a continuum. Then the coach would place them on there also where they felt they were. This would be something for them to visit about. That was something that was created. I know that IC#4 did that matrix with her social studies team during the district-wide professional development day. If we can be very honest here, even when Amy Markos was here that first year we all just sat there. IC#2 completely shut down because what she was proposing was so far outside of what any of us thought teachers needed because it was not emotional. It was detached. There was no praise. It was always asking questions. Teachers by the very personality that they have when they choose this profession or vocation or lifestyle are that they are very nurturing. In turn, they need to know what they are doing right. If they are doing something wrong, they need to be told what it is. Then have some suggestions and then some true support in making changes, if it was viewed as wrong. But the whole model is probing questions. Teachers are going to think if you keep asking these questions, what I am doing must be wrong if you are not giving me any positive feedback. The whole idea I think is very solid where the teacher reflects.

Much like instructional coaches number three and four, IC#10 used the Instructional Coaching Support Matrix to determine which teachers to take through the coaching cycle and which teachers needed only minimal support. IC#10 also described how she documents everything she observes in a classroom so that she can thoughtfully and intentionally reflect upon that teacher's instruction. IC#10 frequently evaluated the different approaches used by teachers in the same grade level or subject area in order to truly assess the depth of understanding held by those teachers in the specific content area. In addition to reflecting upon classroom observations, IC#10 also analyzed the timeliness of lessons with relation to the scope and sequence documents as well as ensured student assessments were aligned with the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills).

I used the matrix initially when I determined what level my teachers were at individually...whether they were a teacher I would be able to take through the coaching cycle if the relationship was already built, or if they are a strong teacher and they just needed ideas on different ways to grow. Even when I was at two elementary campuses, I did that with all the teachers. Then, my process that I go through when I go into a classroom is basically to write everything down. I need to hear everything that is said. I will record it. I watch the kids and what the

children are doing. I look for that physical stuff around the room. I will go back into my office then and reflect on what I have seen and heard.

I really like to go into multiple teachers at the same grade level that are teaching the same subject area because it allows me to see the different approaches and the depth of understanding with each teacher. Even teachers who are rather experienced, you can tell the depth of understanding of the content is not necessarily there. I might not understand that content to the level I should understand it. Going into different subject areas, I don't have the depth of understanding that I should. I write down everything that I see and hear and then I go back and reflect. I look at their lesson plans. I look at the unit plans to make sure they are on target with the dates. I look at the assessments that are coming up to make sure they are in line with the verbiage in the TEKS.

IC#9 also mentioned the use of the Instructional Coaching Support Matrix, but highlighted the instructional coaches' focus upon identifying the content and language objectives in each teacher's classroom. IC#9 also shed light on a tiered system whereby Tier III teachers are exceptional instructors who require minimal support, Tier II teachers are proficient educators who may require more assistance, and Tier I teachers are new to the profession and are more likely to be characterized as novice educators.

The form we use now basically focuses in on the content and language objectives. That is our focus. We were supposed to transition into formative assessment, but we are still trying to grasp the objectives. Formative assessment is a piece of it, but we don't get too far into that when we have our reflective talks. We have three different levels of teachers. We have Tier III through Tier I teachers, with III being the highest. Tier III teachers do not require much support, while Tier II are the middle ground teachers. Tier I teachers are our brand new teachers. Whether they need a lot of help or not, they are put on Tier I. When it comes to the formative assessment, I just touch on it but that is not the focus. We also have the quadrant form that we use to place our teachers.

Mentoring and Instructional Coaching

To better understand how instructional coaches act as mentors and provide professional support to new teachers through demonstration lessons and other activities, the researcher asked the following question of selected instructional coaches and

curriculum and instruction administrators: Describe how instructional coaches act as mentors and provide professional support to new teachers? Administrator #1 explained that instructional coaches frequently engage in side-by-side co-teaching sessions with new or inexperienced teachers. Lesson plan collaboration, professional development focused on specific teacher needs, and observations of other classroom teachers are other forms of support offered to novice teachers. Through a co-teach process, the instructional coach can model best practices and the teacher can retain his or her credibility and authority within the classroom. Administrator #1 very astutely pointed out that a full-teach lesson by the instructional coach in the classroom of a novice teacher can send a message to the students that the teacher is struggling, so a co-teach model helps retain the teacher's authority.

They do side-by-side with teachers. The menu option of secondary IC services is real important to understand. In the knowledge level, that is where you might do some lesson plan collaboration or some professional development focused on teacher needs. This means they may need to observe somebody. This knowledge level is about getting them to observe. The modeling part is when you would do the co-teach or the side-by-side. It doesn't mean you take the class away from them that day. In the process of the co-teach, you are modeling those best practices.

The problem with going in and doing a complete lesson for a teacher is that it sends a couple of messages to the students, no matter what you tell the students. The students realize that the teacher is struggling and you are sending this person in. You have taken away all credibility from that teacher to those kids. That is why we feel more strongly about the co-teach because then you can sit down ahead of time and decide who is doing what. When you are doing that co-teach, the teacher needs to be perceived as the one in charge not the other way around. That is why we weren't ever keen on just doing a whole lesson.

Administrator #2 described how the instructional coaches act as mentors by providing demonstrations lessons, side-by-side coaching, and assistance with the

District's online student management systems. In addition, she cited the objectives set forth by the instructional coaches to grow and support classroom teachers.

Yes, they act as mentors and provide demonstration lessons. Since the elementary instructional coaches are on the campus, it seems to be one of the first places principals send them. For example, for one instructional coach, her job every day last week was to touch base with a brand new teacher each morning. When I shadowed this instructional coach that was the first place we went and we spent about an hour in there. Principals are really good about getting the coaches in and mentoring and side-by-side helping in whatever fashion. The coaches work with new teachers on Eduphoria and Skyward training. I do think at the elementary level they are a mentor to new teachers in addition to hopefully that assigned grade level person as well.

Our content language objective for the year is: Elementary Instructional Coaches will demonstrate application of coaching, growing, and supporting classroom teachers by using the elements of coaching to improve student performance and academic success as evidenced on weekly lesson plans, classroom observation data and / or measured on common assessment and formative/summative results. Elementary Instructional Coaches will utilize all four language domains to grow and support classroom teachers in their craft using the elements of coaching.

IC#4 affirmed that she engaged in model teaching and co-teaching sessions with new teachers; however, she highlighted the difficulty in mentoring new teachers on a consistent basis because she was responsible for serving four campuses.

Yes, I did model teach and co-teach. As an instructional coach, it was really hard to mentor because I see a mentor as someone who needs to be there on a daily basis. When we switched to the new instructional coach model, we were on four campuses, so it was really difficult to give them that every day time that they needed.

IC#3 acted as a mentor to new teachers in that she built relationships, provided demonstration lessons, and then gradually released the new teachers to implement the skill in the classroom.

Yes, absolutely. We like the "I do, we do, you do" process or that gradual release that you would do with students in a classroom learning a new skill. We like that model. For any of this to work, there has to be relationships. This is not a "gotcha," I am here to help you be an effective teacher.

In addition to offering demonstration lessons to mentor new teachers, IC#10 has observed the need to provide additional support for those new teachers who have been alternatively certified. While a new teacher who has been traditionally trained and participated in a student teaching experience still needs support and encouragement, IC#10 points out that those new teachers who have been alternatively certified often need specific training on how to manage a whole classroom.

Yes. My concern when I started with the coaching process was with alternative education teachers and how much more support they seem to need than the teachers who had been traditionally trained and did a student teaching experience. Also, teachers who are just new to the district who have taught in other places, those teachers need support as well just knowing the expectations are for Belton and where to find resources. Those teachers need support as well but not necessarily as much as the first year teacher. The first year teacher often doesn't need as much help as the teacher who is alternatively certified and has never had to manage a whole classroom. We do model lessons in our role now.

While IC#9 provided side-by-side coaching and model lessons for new teachers, she also modeled how to perform student assessments.

We do side-by-side coaching and model lessons. When it comes to any type of assessment, like F&P [Fountas and Pinnell literacy testing], I model how to do it. I train them first and then model. If they need help, like with mid-year assessments, they mainly wanted me to look at their forms to make sure they filled it out correctly. At the beginning of the year, I did more assessments. I'm not doing that many right now. In fact, I haven't done any.

Instructional Coaching and Professional Support for New Teachers

In addition to asking the teachers to describe how the instructional coaching model provided them with the perspective that they were being supported professionally, the researcher asked the following question of selected instructional coaches and curriculum and instruction administrators: Describe how the instructional coaching model will provide new teachers with the belief that they are being supported professionally?

Administrator #1 believes that the instructional coaching model has provided a better system for communicating with new teachers about instruction from a curricular standpoint. If a teacher is struggling with classroom management, it is the belief of Administrator #1 that campus administration should intervene to provide assistance. With a focus upon good teaching, Administrator #1 stated that the instructional coaching model has held the instructional coaches accountable for having reflective conversations with teachers that are grounded in the aspects of quality instruction.

I think that the transition to the instructional coaching model has ensured that new teachers understand from the beginning that it is about good instruction. I will say that we have a better system in place to talk to new teachers about their instruction because we always talk about it from a curricular standpoint. It's not about if your kids are hanging off the chandeliers. If it is to that point, we feel the principal needs to intervene. If it is about students' physical safety, we are going to let someone know. It has held us all accountable by when we have those conversations we ground it in instruction. We have all walked into classrooms where there was incredible classroom management but there was zero learning.

Administrator #2 believes that the instructional coaching model has provided a different perspective for administrators and instructional coaches whereby the focus is upon student learning and how to improve the teacher's instruction as opposed to simply focusing upon "fixing" the teacher. By analyzing the student evidence together, the instructional coach and teacher can formulate a plan to better teach a skill or lesson to the students. Administrator #2 also commented that the growth demonstrated by students during the year is one method for evaluating the effectiveness of the instructional coach's work with that teacher.

It's a different perspective and I think what I have gleaned the most about it is where we have struggled with going and talking to a teacher and we make it all about the teacher and what we can do to fix the teacher. The focus of this is student evidence, looking at the work of the students to then inform how I am going to help the teacher. Instead of I'm just going to go in here and fix the teacher. We look at the evidence together with the teacher and then we decide

what do you need support with to help get your kids where they need to be on this skill or this concept.

Then, what we talked about last Friday was how can you really evaluate the coach. This was an ongoing question last year. How are you going to evaluate me? How are you really going to know if I'm being effective? How are you going to know to tell the leadership team we have to keep these positions? The last two chapters that we read focuses on the evidence. You go in at the beginning and you do a pre-test with the kids and then you do all of the work of coaching and then you do a post-test. If your kids have grown as you have worked with that teacher that is your evidence to show what you did with that teacher made a difference. So, it was a whole chapter on how to evaluate. A school board wanted to see if spending the money on these positions...is it worth it? So, that's been very good.

While IC#4 definitely believes she offered professional support to the new teachers she served on four secondary campuses, she often heard teachers express disappointment that she was not on campus more frequently.

Yes, when we were there we definitely gave them support, but I heard numerous times when a teacher would say, "I wish you were here more." But we were only on each campus once a week.

IC#3 also expressed frustration with being responsible for the support of forty-four secondary science teachers. Although only a fraction of that number was composed of new teachers, IC#3 stated that many veteran teachers still struggle with aligning their instruction to the state standards. However, IC#3 further explains that team leaders and department heads at the high school have been of great assistance this year with coaching and mentoring new teachers.

Yes, I do. What I do think is that there is no way one person can do forty-four teachers especially when some of your teachers are in leadership roles are not aligned with our standards now. It is real hard to go in and affect change or turn the tide there when you are spread among forty-four teachers. High school is helpful because my team leaders are in classrooms day-to-day. At the high school, those team leaders have picked up the coaching.

While she feels that she is offering professional support to new teachers, IC #10 shared a similar sentiment of being spread too thin. “I do feel that I am being supportive of new teachers, and I am in classrooms a great deal more. My one concern is that we are stretched so thin still.”

IC#9 believes that the new teachers she serves have a perspective of support because they know they can approach her for help at any time. IC#9 also allots one hour a week to spend in each new teacher’s classroom so that she may assist them with items such as lesson planning, classroom management, or student assessments.

I know all of my new teachers know that they can come to me and they know they are supported. I think a lot of spot-checking is needed to see how things are going. With all of my new teachers, I make an attempt to go into their classrooms one hour a week. So, they know on my schedule I am going to come in. It is not to do a formal visit, but it is for anything. If I need to help a student, I will. But, I only have one teacher that is brand new. I am actually her mentor teacher. For her, planning is not the hard part. For her, it was classroom management. With F&P testing, she is one I really sat down with and helped at the beginning. I cover more or less what it is you should expect with your first year of teaching. I have some that are new to the district, but she is my only zero-year teacher.

New Teachers and Frequency of Support from Instructional Coaches

To gain a better understanding of how often new teachers actively seek out assistance from instructional coaches, the researcher asked the following question of selected instructional coaches and members of the curriculum and instruction department: How often do new teachers seek assistance from an instructional coach? Administrator #1 believes that the answer to this question hinges in large part to the rapport built between the novice teacher and instructional coach. In her response, Administrator #1 took the opportunity to state that she feels that it is imperative that instructional coaches serve

grades six through twelve in order to have a true picture of the vertical alignment found within a content area.

I think it depends on the rapport the instructional coach has with the teacher. Secondary instructional coaches need to be six through twelve. Even if we had the money, I would not go back to splitting instructional coaches between middle school and high school because you don't see the big picture. We have asked our secondary instructional coaches to really focus on tested subjects.

Administrator #2 believes that new teachers in the district are comfortable approaching the instructional coaches.

I think they feel comfortable approaching the instructional coaches. For example, a teacher we just hired is glued to the instructional coach. We have so many new teachers. Some new teachers are strong and have a very strong partner or grade level leader, so they don't have to navigate very far.

IC #4 remarked that her new teachers would reach out to her on average of three to five times a week.

They would email me because, again, I was on different campuses. It depended upon the teacher and whether they were struggling. I would say three to five times a week.

IC#3 described how novice teachers often ask her questions in team planning meetings; however, it is her belief that new teachers seek guidance from their mentor teacher more frequently. Despite her visibility on campuses, IC#3 maintained that the new teachers will seek assistance from their mentor teacher more readily because of their day-to-day interactions together.

They are great about asking me: How do I do this? What's a good idea? How could we approach this? That's more as the whole team struggling with a lesson. It's not a specific teacher. I go in and visit with a new teacher. They get to see me. I am on every campus every week sometimes more than once a week, but I am still not somebody who is there every day. It's getting better just getting to know them. There is no pretense here. They definitely go to their partner who teaches their subject more readily.

IC#10 noted the difference in the amount of assistance sought amongst the new teachers she served. In her opinion, she had more interaction with one new teacher because this novice educator was more confident and knew what questions to ask. In contrast, IC#10 had more limited contact with another new teacher on the same campus because that new educator was more hesitant and did not even know what questions to ask.

This year on our campus, we have two brand new kindergarten teachers. We have a new teacher to the campus who has taught before, but she seeks quite a bit of support from me. She knows the questions to ask. She knows what she doesn't know. Of our two new kindergarten teachers, one pursues help a lot more than the other. But, I really think the other one just doesn't know what to ask. They both taught pre-k last year. One knows questions to ask because she has been around education, but I think she knows when she doesn't know something. She knows how to come forth and ask. The other one seems very unsure of herself.

IC#9 explained that new teachers sought her assistance all the time because of the relationships she established not only with them but veteran educators as well.

All the time. I always put down on my evaluation that I try to make relationships with all the teachers but especially those that are new. If I can establish that, they will feel comfortable enough to come.

Reflective Professional Development and Instructional Coaches

In order to highlight the training received by the instructional coaches as they transitioned from the instructional facilitator model, the researcher asked the following question of selected instructional coaches and members of the curriculum and instruction department: Describe any training the instructional coaches received with regard to reflective practices or reflective professional development. Administrator #1 stated, "That was the best training they received and it was through Dr. Amy Markos in the 2013-2014 school year." Administrator #2 described ongoing reflective training modeled by Dr.

Amy Markos and Dr. Melissa Castillo. Specifically, the coaches have received training on providing teachers with non-evaluative feedback.

That's what we do on side-by-side coaching. We are going to get additional training in February with Dr. Melissa Castillo. She will model and show what these conversations should look like. Dr. Amy Markos modeled this at Southwest Elementary. It's how you give feedback without putting emotion in it, so you are not constantly praising and saying "good job." Yes, they get practice. That is why I want it again this year because we have new coaches. The new coaches need to see that. When they are on their own campuses, they don't have time to go watch someone else do it.

While IC#4 referenced the training provided by Dr. Amy Markos, IC#10 described quality professional development provided by both Dr. Markos and Dr. Castillo with regard to reflective practice. The two trainers modeled side-by-side coaching and reflective conversations with teachers at BISD. In addition to the current book study on *Student Centered Coaching: A Guide for K-8 Coaches and Principals* by Diane Sweeney, the instructional coaches plan to have a book study next year on *Language and Literacy for ELLs* by Dr. Castillo.

I really feel good about that training. Dr. Amy Markos and Dr. Melissa Castillo have come back several times. We have even done a side-by side-coaching day where they come and we go and visit a teacher. We watched Markos and Castillo do a reflective conversation with the teacher, so it was modeled to us. We are going to do a book study next year on *Language and Literacy for ELLs* written by Melissa Castillo. Right now, we are doing a book study on *Student-Centered Coaching*. We are doing that with the principals and Director of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction.

IC#9 commented on the effectiveness of the reflective training provided to instructional coaches because it centered upon non-evaluative and student-centered feedback. With a current focus upon content and language objectives, IC#9 asks her new teachers reflective questions after each observation to spark quality discussions about

classroom instruction. IC#9 observed that the reflective discussions are even more effective this school year because of the focus upon objectives.

The reflection training was nice especially now that we have a focus. It was really hard to reflect with the teachers because they still felt that element of being evaluated. But, we are just going in there to help them and talk about what we saw. I will even show the teacher my notes. In my notes I will never say “teacher did...” I will always say “the students did...” So, that makes them feel better because they know I’m not watching them but the students. Then, when we started doing the content and language objectives, then that was my focus. If it was posted or in the lesson plan, I would say “this is what your content language objective was, do you think they met the academic task? Did they meet the mark?” So, when we reflect we now we have more of a focus. Dr. Amy Markos taught us this with training. For me, it did not come to light until this year, but I think the reason being was because we have a focus. Last year, we always had reflective talks. I always met back with them after a visit, but it was hit or miss. It was good with some, but not with others. It is still like that a little bit now with some of my harder to reach teachers, but we still have a focus now. So, I can always fall back on that.

IC#3 also remarked on the quality training provided to instructional coaches by Dr. Castillo with regard to reflective questions. IC#3 believes the target goals of the instructional coaches are coming into focus now with a spotlight on the lesson cycle, student-centered engagement, and instructional alignment with the state standards. She also noted that the instructional coaching team does an excellent job of exchanging ideas with each other in a non-evaluative environment.

When we do those days with Castillo, she has given us good ideas. We even have scripted questions to ask teachers. Our target has been moving, but it is focusing now. We want to create our own model. We want to work with teachers on what is that lesson cycle. Looking at student engagement, it needs to be a student-centered class. That is a great group of instructional coaches. We can bounce ideas. Nobody gets their feelings hurt. We need to have the alignment. One thing we want to focus on is having the academic tasks aligned to the standards and to have built-in checkpoints throughout the lesson.

Reflective Practice and the Improved Instruction of New Teachers

To delve deeper into the component of reflection and how instructional coaches utilize reflective practice in order to strengthen the perspective of professional support held by new teachers, the researcher asked the following question of selected instructional coaches and curriculum and instruction staff members: Describe how you use reflective practice to improve the instruction and perspectives of professional support of new teachers? Administrator #1 explained that with high-performing teachers, a longer observation period is required in order to create reflective questions that can improve their instruction. However, with novice teachers who are still functioning in the knowledge level, the classroom observation component is typically more abbreviated because it does not take as long to pinpoint areas for growth.

There are a couple of ways and it depends on where your teacher is. If the teacher is a high functioning teacher, you talk with them beforehand and you are asking them what do you want me to look for. Then you go and do that observation, and then you do those reflective questions afterwards. You tell them what you observed, and then you ask the questions. If it is a teacher who is still in the knowledge level, then when you are meeting with them in a team meeting you may tell them I'm coming in for fifteen or twenty minutes, what are one or two things you really want me to look for. Then you look for those things and you talk about those things. So, it depends on where the teacher is. If you have a teacher and they are still in that knowledge part, it is pointless to spend the whole class period in there because you can get that information very quickly.

Administrator #2 as well as IC#9 expressed their belief that the instructional coaches' use of reflective practice has improved not only the instruction of new teachers but also their perspectives of professional support. IC#4 has even modeled to the team leaders and department heads at Belton High School how to conduct a reflective session with teachers in their departments. After conducting a joint observation of a new teacher,

IC#4 has taught these team leaders how to frame reflective questions so that more meaningful discussions about classroom instruction can occur.

That is one thing I have been working on with the team leaders. I actually have been going in with each team leader, and we have been doing walkthroughs together for their team. Then we discuss what we saw. I ask them, “What do you think they need to work on?” Instead of just asking them to tell the teacher to work on this, we work on framing a reflective question.

IC#3 articulated her preference to have a face-to-face meeting with a new teacher within forty-eight hours of observing in his or her classroom. In her opinion, a timely, one-on-one meeting is more effective than simply giving feedback to a teacher electronically.

I don't like to give feedback to teachers electronically until I have visited with them. That's where I go over their objective. Then the reflective question is: How do you know the students have mastered that objective? What evidence did you have? How is that going? When you have five different targets, how can you make sure you hit all five in one class period? That comes after the observation. It is always a sit-down visit. I try to make it the very next day, if not later the same day.

IC#10 offered insightful commentary on the difficulty in providing constructive criticism to a new teacher especially if there has not been an opportunity to develop a strong relationship with that novice educator. In other words, without a strong rapport with a new teacher, it is often difficult to provide a critical reflection of his or her teaching that is absent of praise.

What we have found is that if we don't have a strong relationship with the teachers, they want to hear, “you did a really good job on this” or “I really like the way you did this.” Just to have the reflective conversation and not say “you did great on that” is very hard. It is hard for us as coaches, and it is also hard for the teachers because that is what they want to hear. You really do have to have a pretty strong relationship with the teacher. It is very hard just to listen to constructive criticism.

Professional Development Offered to New Teachers

In order to gain a better understanding of the professional development and support offered to new teachers from the perspective of instructional coaches and administrators, the researcher asked the following question of selected instructional coaches and curriculum and instruction staff members: Describe the professional development and support offered to beginning teachers by Belton ISD? Specifically, do new teachers receive assistance with the analysis of student assessment data or lesson planning? Administrator #1 noted the volume and intensity of the late summer professional development offered to new teachers upon their arrival to BISD. She expressed a desire to scale back the first-of-the-year professional development so that the sheer volume of information does not overwhelm new teachers. In fact, Administrator #1 stated that it would be beneficial for new teachers to receive follow-up professional development in September, December, and February on major topics such as classroom management, grading, and student assessment.

We give them professional development in the beginning out of a fire hydrant. There are certain things you have to go over in the beginning, but I think it would be more beneficial for those teachers if we brought them back around the end of September especially those first year teachers. We would talk about three big things. First, we would have a share session on classroom management on what is working and what is not working. Second, grading: What are you doing? What have you heard from parents? What have you not heard from parents that you would expect to hear? Assessing and grading are two completely different things. Grading and assessing go hand in hand, but I think it is important for them to know they are not the same things. Assessing where my kids are is not grading their papers. Then, I think you bring them in the first of December and February. You don't know what you don't know.

Administrator #2 affirmed that new teachers do receive assistance with the analysis of student assessment data and lesson planning; however, she explained that the instructional coaches and principals have expressed a desire for even more training for

beginning teachers in those critical areas. Administrator #2 described how the instructional coaches use their knowledge of the Eduphoria software system to assist new teachers in creating a planner, reviewing the state standards, finding the District curriculum, and writing lesson plans. She explained that much of this planning and assistance transpires during grade level Professional Learning Community (PLC) time.

They do, but even the coaches say they need more training. Because the instructional coaches were all teachers who used Eduphoria to lesson plan, they are able to help a teacher set up their planner, pull over their standards, find their curriculum, and write the lesson plans. I think that is an ongoing cycle and that's what a lot of them are doing during grade level planning PLC time. The coaches have said that during the three day new teacher orientation this summer, we need Eduphoria sessions on data and lesson planning as we are putting in those content language objectives. The principals will tell you they need more training too. I'm hoping that with all the new views we built for principals in Eduphoria, all that data I crunch is at the touch of a button. Teachers are just like principals, they could always use more data.

In addition to district level professional development and support offered by instructional coaches, IC#4 described how beginning teachers at Belton High School receive a great deal of assistance from their team leaders on creating objectives, writing lesson plans, and analyzing data.

From a district level, I think they get some of that training at the beginning of the year. I know the instructional coaches work with each department before school. I think on the campus level, the team leaders are the ones that are really working with them on their objectives, writing lesson plans, and looking at data. They are the ones leading the data talks.

IC#3 stated that beginning teachers definitely receive assistance with lesson planning and many, depending upon the courses they teach, receive support with the analysis of student assessment data before the school year even begins. At the very least, all new teachers receive help on data analysis by the time their students are issued the first common assessment or benchmark test of the year.

Lesson planning...absolutely. The analyzing assessment data...it depends on what course it is. If they are coming in as a Biology I or 8th grade STAAR science teacher, yes they are going to be looking at that data from last year's assessment before school starts. However, other courses, it might be after the first common assessment before they actually look at it.

Much like Administrator #1, IC#10 has observed the overwhelming nature of the professional development offered to beginning teachers at the first of the school year. She described how new teachers are focused upon the essentials such as the preparation of their physical classroom, familiarizing themselves with the curriculum, and finding resources for lessons and activities. Training on administrative issues such as submitting an absence into the district's software system is often tuned out or quickly forgotten because it does not hold the same sense of urgency as the items that will impact classroom instruction according to IC#10.

I think the week that they have prior to school starting is so overwhelming to them. At that time, they are thinking about getting their classrooms ready, looking at the curriculum that is offered, and finding their resources. I can even say from personal experience, hearing about getting into Skyward to turn in an absence... they hear it, but it goes in one ear and out the other because it is not something that is of great need to them right then and there. They forget it.

The second or third week of school the new teachers went to something and they had to put in a half-day absence. As I was walking them through putting in an absence and it was brand new, they said, "well, we didn't get one of those codes." They were all teachers who should have been here for three days of training. But all three of them said we didn't get that. I know they probably did, and it was lost in all that paperwork. Everything with Eduphoria and figuring out how to put in lesson plans, it is just so overwhelming and at that time it isn't of high importance. I have got to deal with what's going to happen tomorrow not whether or not I'm going to be off campus next month.

Similarly to IC#3's response, IC#9 described frequent data discussions with her beginning teachers after every common unit assessment or benchmark taken by students. During these "data talks" or discussions, the teacher must identify his or her struggling students as well as the TEKS objective with which the students are having the most

difficulty. The teacher and instructional coach then evaluate their options such as a re-teach or the use of interventions. IC#9 commented that data analysis is a continuing process, but the method has become more formalized this year with a list of reflective questions to help guide the discussions.

Every time that they have given a common unit assessment, we have data talks. So, the grade level leader decides where we are going to have that and they send an invite to the principal, assistant principal, and instructional coach. I try to make them every time. The teacher has to come to the data talk ready with their data. They have to identify their lowest TEK and who are the struggling students. Then, we look at the different data pertaining to that content and see where we need to go. Do we need to re-teach? Do we need interventions? Data is a process in training. I'm new to this campus this year, but I don't think the process was as focused last year. I think they had data talks, but I don't think they had the form to fill out. It is something that you have to learn. There are a lot of reflective questions on the form. You don't have to answer all of them, but it is to guide the data talk.

Instructional Coaching Model and Support for New Teachers

To conclude the background information garnered from the instructional coaches and curriculum and instruction administrators, the researcher asked these selected participants the following interview question: "As you reflect on the transition to the instructional coaching model and its components of mentoring and reflective practice, do you feel that new teachers are better supported now than they were before the transition? Explain." Administrator #1 maintained that new teachers are better supported from a curriculum and instruction standpoint. However, she believes the responsibility for supporting new teachers with issues such as classroom management still rests with campus administrators. According to Administrator #1, while the instructional coach supports the beginning teacher with classroom instruction, the mentor teacher should be assisting the new educator with issues such as building relationships.

I think they are better supported in curriculum and instruction. It is the campus responsibility those first two weeks to find out who is struggling with classroom management and who isn't. That's my personal opinion. If you are the assistant principal or principal doing my PDAS [Professional Development and Appraisal System], shouldn't you be the one coaching me on classroom management? I don't know that your mentor necessarily needs to be in your content because the instructional coach and your teammates need to be helping with instruction. The mentor should help the new teacher with building relationships.

Administrator #2 agreed that beginning teachers are better supported now than before the transition to the instructional coaching model. However, Administrator #2 is still concerned that zero-year teachers, with their unique needs, require additional training addressing obstacles that teachers encounter during their first year. She echoed a familiar sentiment that the training offered to new teachers at the beginning of the school year is often not retained because of the sense of urgency facing these new teachers with regard to their classroom.

I think it is. I think the pieces that were missing are if they are brand new people. Remember how we used to pull them over here and do some of those very first things that new teachers need to know. Now we did do something this year and last year. We did a day long CHAMPS [classroom management] training with all zero year teachers. I think beginning teachers have different needs than someone who has already been a teacher. When you do that beginning of the year training, they are thinking about so many things, like getting their room ready, that it doesn't stick. I don't know that we want to pull them out of class and bring them over here and do a training. I don't know what we need to do about that.

IC#4 cited the team leader model implemented at Belton High School whereby the department heads or team leaders have two mentoring periods dedicated to supporting new teachers by providing them with reflective feedback, assisting with data analysis, or addressing other day-to-day issues.

When we went to the team leader model, they have two mentoring periods for each team leader. So, in English, we have four team leaders because there are four different areas. The zero year teachers are assigned to the team leads, and they work with them daily. They are going in and providing them with feedback, helping them with data, and day-to-day issues. I meet with team leaders once a

week and we discuss issues they are having. Then, I meet with team leaders once a month for a professional development where I present them with something they can take back and share with the teachers. There are fifteen team leaders from core subjects and foreign languages. New teachers feel disconnected when they are pulled away from training with their grade level peers.

IC#3 believes that new teachers at Belton High School are now better supported with the transition to the instructional coaching model. In addition, she believes that the teachers at the middle schools have been very receptive to the transition. IC#3 also remarked that the students may offer insight into whether or not the transition to the instructional coaching model has led to more support for new teachers as well as better instruction in the classrooms.

At the high school, yes. I honestly can't say at the middle school. I never was there as a facilitator, but they are very receptive. The students are the best litmus test for what is effective. They don't have any problems telling you. The kids are the best for letting you know what works for them.

IC#9 agreed that the instructional coaching model along with elements of reflective practice and mentoring has offered more support to beginning teachers. Under the previous model, instructional facilitators performed a variety of tasks from working with struggling students to even performing clerical duties such as making copies of assessments. With the transition to the instructional coaching model, her time is now focused on classroom instruction and supporting teachers. With a background in primary English-Language Arts-Reading (ELAR), IC#9 described how she is able to hold deeper conversations with those teachers whereas working with math teachers in the upper elementary grades is somewhat out of her comfort zone.

Oh yes, because I am in the classroom, whereas before I was doing more clerical. I was copying tests. There were times when I was even taking students out of the classroom, which they probably appreciated, but it was not helping them instructionally. Every now and then, I may help with a student who might be having difficulties, but it is not a disciplinary issue. I will talk to the student to see

the root of the problem. Then, I will go back to the teacher and talk to them, but that is very minimal. It is so much different. I think it now what it was meant to be...as a support. Before I don't think it was because it had an umbrella of all kinds of stuff that you did. The root of being a support to teachers was not there. We weren't doing that.

Last year, I did enjoy being content specific because I just had to worry about my ELA teachers. When you are that specific, you can get even deeper with teachers. Now, I try with my fourth and fifth grade math talks, but it is harder because it is out of my comfort zone. When I try to be of assistance to a teacher who is new in those areas, I would definitely have to seek out help. We are all learning with math due to the new TEKS, so we are in the same boat. In the perfect world, I would be a primary ELA instructional coach, because then you could have even deeper conversations. The relationships are important.

Both IC#9 and IC#10 mentioned the implementation of the new state standards in math creating a more stressful situation for both teachers and instructional coaches.

While IC#10 also acknowledged that the transition to the instructional coaching model has brought about positive change in the area of support for new teachers, she described how technology has created a situation in which teachers and instructional coaches are always "on call" in order to respond to emails and text messages.

I think it has been a good change. I think there are so many new things coming down the pipeline...the new math TEKS and kinder and first are doing new assessments. All of that stuff is very overwhelming to teachers. I honestly don't know what they would do if there weren't coaches.

I had a discussion with my mom over Christmas break and she asked: Why is it so different now? I said, "Well, Mom, it never shuts off. We used to teach. We went and we did our job and then we went home and had that time with our family. Now with technology, there is no end. If you don't look at your technology in the evening you are totally swamped, and they wonder why you have not responded to them by the time you get back the next morning. Well, teachers have the same thing. They go home and a parent may send an email or send a text or make a phone call. They have to get their grades submitted. It is just so different. It never ends. You are always on call."

New Teacher Demographic Information

With a thorough grasp of the perspectives held by members of the instructional coaching staff as well as administrators in the curriculum and instruction department, the researcher could then begin gathering information from new teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort and the 2013-2014 cohort. Table 4.4 below lists the members of the 2012-2013 new teacher cohort and provides basic information such as their assigned campus and subject area as well as demographic information including their age, gender, race, and level of education. The average age of a new teacher in the 2012-2013 cohort was a little more than twenty-seven years and its members were predominantly white. One-third of the cohort was composed of men, and a little more than a quarter of the cohort held a master’s degree. Close to a third of these new teachers worked at the elementary level, while the rest were housed at secondary campuses.

Table 4.4

2012-2013 Cohort: Demographic Information

Part. #	Campus	Age	Gender	Race	Degree	Subject
A1	BHS	30	Male	White	Master’s	Biology
A2	BHS	22	Male	White	Bachelor’s	Physics
A3	BHS	36	Female	White	Bachelor’s	Algebra
A4	BHS	26	Female	White	Master’s	Anatomy
A5	BHS	26	Female	White	Master’s	English III
A6	BHS	28	Male	White	Master’s	Chemistry
A7	BHS	37	Female	White	Bachelor’s	Chemistry
A8	BNTHS	21	Female	Hispanic	Bachelor’s	Spanish
A9	BNTHS	22	Male	White	Bachelor’s	Geography
A10	SBMS	23	Male	White	Bachelor’s	Math
A11	SBMS	23	Male	White	Bachelor’s	Science
A12	SBMS	27	Male	White	Bachelor’s	PE
A13	SBMS	24	Female	White	Bachelor’s	Math
A14	SBMS	32	Female	White	Master’s	History
A15	SBMS	24	Female	White	Bachelor’s	Science

(continued)

Part. #	Campus	Age	Gender	Race	Degree	Subject
A16	BMS	24	Female	White	Bachelor's	Science
A17	BMS	39	Male	White	Bachelor's	STAAR
A18	BMS	24	Female	White	Master's	ELA
A19	LBMS	28	Male	White	Bachelor's	AIMS
A20	Pirtle	23	Female	White	Bachelor's	FA
A21	Tyler	24	Female	White	Bachelor's	1 st grade
A22	Tyler	49	Female	White	Master's	1 st grade
A23	Southwest	23	Female	White	Bachelor's	3 rd grade
A24	Southwest	22	Female	White	Bachelor's	Kindergarten
A25	Miller Heights	28	Female	Afr. Am.	Bachelor's	3 rd grade
A26	Miller Heights	30	Female	White	Bachelor's	
A27	Leon Heights	22	Female	White	Bachelor's	Pre-K
<i>Average</i>		<i>27.3</i>				

Table 4.5 below lists the members of the 2013-2014 new teacher cohort and provides basic information such as their assigned campus and subject area as well as demographic information including their age, gender, race, and level of education. The average age of a new teacher in the 2013-2014 cohort was more than twenty-eight years or more than one year older than the average member of the 2012-2013 cohort.

Table 4.5

2013-2014 Cohort: Demographic Information

Part. #	Campus	Age	Gender	Race	Degree	Subject
B1	BHS	29	Male	White	Bachelor's	Chemistry
B2	BHS/SBMS	27	Male	Hispanic	Master's	Orchestra
B3	BHS	29	Female	White	Bachelor's	Agriculture
B4	BHS	28	Female	Hispanic	Bachelor's	Theater
B5	BHS	24	Female	White	Bachelor's	History
B6	BNTHS	22	Male	White	Bachelor's	History
B7	BNTHS	29	Female	White	Bachelor's	English
B8	BNTHS	44	Male	White	Bachelor's	Digital Media
B9	BNTHS	22	Female	White	Bachelor's	Math
B10	BMS	24	Male	White	Bachelor's	Electives
B11	SBMS	29	Male	Af. Am.	Bachelor's	PE
B12	SBMS	33	Male	White	Master's	Band
B13	SBMS	21	Female	White	Bachelor's	Social Studies

(continued)

Part. #	Campus	Age	Gender	Race	Degree	Subject
B14	SBMS	43	Female	White	Bachelor's	Journalism
B15	LBMS	25	Male	Hispanic	Bachelor's	ELA
B16	LBMS	25	Male	White	Bachelor's	PE
B17	LBMS	25	Female	White	Bachelor's	GCS
B18	LBMS	34	Male	White	Bachelor's	ELA
B19	Sparta	34	Female	White	Bachelor's	2 nd grade
B20	Southwest	22	Female	White	Bachelor's	5 th grade
B21	Southwest	27	Female	Hispanic	Bachelor's	5 th grade
B22	Miller Heights	24	Female	White	Bachelor's	1 st grade
B23	Tyler	34	Female	White	Bachelor's	5 th grade
B24	Tarver	33	Female	Hispanic	Master's	Pre-K
<i>Average</i>		28.6				

While the 2012-2013 cohort was predominantly white, about one-fourth of the 2013-2014 cohort was African American or Hispanic. More than forty-percent of the 2013-2014 cohort was composed of men compared to only one-third of the 2012-2013 cohort. While a little more than a quarter of the 2012-2013 cohort held a master's degree, only about twelve percent of the 2013-2014 cohort held an advanced degree. While close to a third of the 2012-2013 cohort worked at the elementary level, only twenty-five percent of the 2013-2014 cohort worked with that same age group.

Mentor Teacher Demographic Information

Table 4.6 below lists the mentors providing support to the 2013-2014 cohort and provides basic information such as their assigned campus and subject area as well as demographic information including their age, gender, race, and level of education.

Table 4.6

Mentor Teachers: Demographic Information

Mentor #	Campus	Age	Gender	Race	Degree	Subject
M1-B1	BHS	62	Female	White	Master's	Chemistry
M2-B2	SBMS	31	Male	White	Bachelor's	Instr. Tech.
M3-B3	BHS	29	Female	White	Bachelor's	Agriculture
M4-B4	BHS	33	Male	White	Bachelor's	Drama
M5-B5	BHS	40	Female	White	Bachelor's	Geography
M6-B6	BNTHS	55	Female	White	Master's	Instr. Fac.
M7-B7	BNTHS	--	-----	-----	-----	-----
M8-B8	BNTHS	36	Male	White	Bachelor's	Instr. Fac.
M9-B9	BNTHS	36	Male	White	Bachelor's	Instr. Fac.
M10-B10	BMS	40	Female	White	Bachelor's	Life Science
M11-B11	SBMS	50	Male	White	Bachelor's	PE
M12-B12	SBMS	41	Female	Hisp.	Bachelor's	Band
M13-B13	SBMS	25	Male	White	Bachelor's	Social Studies
M14-B14	SBMS	--	-----	-----	-----	-----
M15-B15	LBMS	31	Female	Afr. Am.	Master's	Instr. Coach
M16-B16	LBMS	49	Female	White	Bachelor's	History
M17-B17	LBMS	42	Female	White	Bachelor's	Instr. Coach
M18-B18	LBMS	67	Female	White	Bachelor's	English
M19-B19	Sparta	33	Female	White	Master's	2 nd grade
M20-B20	Southwest	26	Female	White	Bachelor's	3 rd grade
M21-B21	Southwest	41	Female	White	Bachelor's	Kindergarten
M22-B22	Miller Heights	41	Female	White	Bachelor's	1 st grade
M23-B23	Tyler	26	Female	White	Bachelor's	5 th grade
M24-B24	Tarver	32	Female	White	Bachelor's	Pre-K
<i>Average</i>		<i>39.4</i>				

The average age of a mentor was over thirty-nine years while the average age of their protégés was only twenty-eight years. While the mentor teachers were predominantly white, about one-fourth of the 2013-2014 cohort was African American or Hispanic. A little over twenty-seven percent of the mentor teachers were male, while more than forty-percent of the 2013-2014 cohort was composed of men. While approximately eighteen-percent of the mentor teachers held a master's degree, only about

twelve percent of the 2013-2014 cohort held an advanced degree. The mentor teachers and their protégés were housed on the same campuses.

Table 4.7 provides further information on the veteran teachers serving as mentors including their years of service in education as well as in BISD. The average mentor teacher has close to seven years of experience in BISD and over twelve years of experience in education.

Table 4.7

Mentor Teachers: Years of Experience

Mentor #	Years in BISD	Years in Education
M1-B1	9	27
M2-B2	5	8
M3-B3	4	6
M4-B4	3	9
M5-B5	11	16
M6-B6	6	22
M7-B7	--	--
M8-B8	7	7
M9-B9	7	7
M10-B10	2	10
M11-B11	2	14
M12-B12	8	17
M13-B13	1	4
M14-B14	--	--
M15-B15	3	9
M16-B16	27	27
M17-B17	18	18
M18-B18	1	35
M19-B19	11	11
M20-B20	1	3
M21-B21	1	7
M22-B22	11	11
M23-B23	1	4
M24-B24	4	6
<i>Average</i>	<i>6.5</i>	<i>12.6</i>

With better insight into the participant teachers and mentors involved in this study, the researcher then gathered interview data from teachers in both cohorts to begin addressing the research questions. The outcomes of those interviews are summarized in the sections to follow.

Research Question #1: What is the Role of Mentoring in the Developmental Experiences of New Teachers?

Interview Questions 1 & 2

Interviewing BISD educators who were new to the teaching profession in the 2012-2013 school year and those who were new to the profession in the 2013-2014 school year was an eye-opening experience for the researcher. The individual experiences of these new teachers varied greatly during their first year of instruction and their feedback was insightful. The information gathered during this program evaluation and case study reveals the continued need for a more structured mentoring program. Although new teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort generally expressed positive experiences regarding their first year, their feedback shed light on a support system that is still inconsistent across campuses. However, this case study also revealed that many new teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort also received support from an informal mentor, which improved their perspectives of job satisfaction.

The first research question in this case study and program evaluation asked: What is the role of mentoring in the developmental experiences of new teachers? The researcher randomly selected five new teachers from the 2012-2013 cohort and five new teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort to interview. The researcher informed each of these BISD educators that the interview was a component of a program evaluation and case

study dissertation. Each of the teachers agreed to participate in the study, signed the consent form for research, and provided valuable and insightful feedback regarding the level of induction services they received during their first year of instruction. To begin addressing research question #1, questions 1 & 2 from the interview protocol targeted the role of mentoring in the developmental experiences of new teachers as well as its impact on their perspective of professional support. As the researcher evaluated the responses from the participants, themes and trends began to emerge which differentiated the experiences had by those teachers new to the profession in the 2012-2013 school year versus those who were new to the profession in the 2013-2014 school year.

First, it is important to evaluate the responses provided by the teachers new to the profession in the 2012-2013 school year when no effort was made by the district to assign mentors to new teachers and the instructional coaching model had not yet been implemented. Interview question #1 asked: Describe how your mentoring experience helped you grow and develop professionally as a new teacher. If the mentoring experience did not help you grow professionally, please explain. Participant A14 from the 2012-2013 cohort described a familiar account of a new teacher's first year fraught with struggles and hardships that could have been ameliorated by a mentor teacher.

I think a lot of my problem was that I didn't know what I didn't know. A mentor would have been wonderful. I had my teacher mentor through my alternative program who would say great things and give me wonderful feedback. He would research articles on topics I might be struggling with and on his next visit he would come in with those articles or email them to me. I would read these and they were super helpful. But it wasn't until someone stepped in [at the district] and said this is what we are seeing that is wrong, but at that point it was at the end of the year. I really could have used that at the beginning of the year. A true observation, not attached to your PDAS, as a new teacher would have been extremely helpful. Someone to observe you with a constructive eye would have been helpful.

I felt very alone my first year. It was scary and it was hard. I didn't know what I didn't know, but there were a lot of productive things that came out of that and I will look at them in a positive manner. It helped me get to a very successful second year. I thought it was truly successful because I got to research some books and read some great things about increasing rigor. I looked at classroom management topics and talked to our behavioral interventionist a lot last year [2013-2014] at the beginning of the year to nip it in the bud straight out of the gate.

I feel like last year was very productive and positive even though my first year was super, super, super hard. But I think a lot of really good things came out of that and that's the God's honest truth. I am always someone who wants to be better, but I need to know that I am making mistakes. I knew it wasn't going right. I wasn't ignorant to the fact that what I was doing in the class was not working. I just didn't know who to go to and what to use. It wasn't until that next year that I improved. Over the summer I got different professional development that really helped. You talk about classroom management when you go through your courses but it's so hard to have a working knowledge of it rather than a book knowledge of it.

It is important to note that Participant A14 expressed the desire for a non-evaluative observation and feedback, which is a cornerstone of the instructional coaching model. The description of Participant A14's exceptionally difficult first year is common to teachers around the country, which explains the frighteningly high attrition rates of first year educators. By persevering through a "scary" and "hard" first year, Participant A14 is an exception to the norm. It was not until she received the appropriate professional development and received assistance from the behavior interventionist that Participant A14 was able to greatly improve her classroom management and instructional rigor which led to a very successful second year of instruction.

Participant A4 described a similarly difficult situation her first year of teaching during the 2012-2013 school year.

My first year, I did not have a mentor. Campus administration told me I would have a mentor, but the mentor was never there. The mentor was a part-time employee and eventually retired, so I was on my own. I went through a lot my first year. Thankfully, my CTE Director was always very supportive and his door

was always open. I could email him and he would respond. He was always checking on me, so thankfully I had someone I could go to in order to ask questions. One month into my first year of teaching, I was tossed out of my classroom and had to float between rooms. I taught Anatomy in the main building and Forensics in a portable building. So, we were conducting dissections with no water, but you make it work. I had to overcome a lot of obstacles my first year.

Participant A4's experience during her first year of teaching is another typical example of the hardship and adversity a new teacher must overcome in order to remain in the profession. The haphazard assignment of a mentor, the instability of the physical classroom setting, and even a situation whereby dissections had to be conducted without water were all factors that could have resulted in this teacher exiting the profession. Fortunately, Participant A4, much like Participant A14, demonstrated great perseverance to overcome these obstacles.

Some of the new teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort described a more positive experience with regard to their professional support during their first year in education. Participant A9 described a random and somewhat unplanned situation for getting mentoring assistance during his first year of teaching.

It was real loose because we had a lot of new teachers at New Tech [High School] during that year. We went to the instructional facilitators for help and also a traveling coach. The administration emphasized getting help from these staff members. As far as teacher mentors, we bounced ideas off each other. I was definitely stressed out the first year mostly because English and World Geography were combined. Also, I did not feel like we had a good grounding in PBL [Project Based Learning] and I tried to communicate this. The instructional facilitators really helped a lot. They were the most helpful when it came to mentoring and trying to develop projects.

Participant A9 also expressed concern over the lack of professional development he received in Project Based Learning (PBL), which is the fundamental instructional strategy at Belton New Tech High School. Participant A5 was fortunate in that she perceived having a formal mentor her first year; however, she described a similar

frustration with the professional development provided to her during her first year of teaching.

My mentor teacher gave me feedback and materials. She helped a lot. We met every day during our planning periods when we actually had planning periods. The instructional facilitator gave us assessment analysis and scores. The PD I received my first year was a waste of time. When it is team professional development, we got things done because we could actually focus. When the whole district meets, all ELA teachers from first grade up to high school, I get nothing out of that. The trainers try to hit all grade levels at the same time. How I teach a junior in high school is not the same way a first grader is taught. That holds no benefit to me. Our group training is more beneficial than meeting district-wide. My instructional facilitator was awesome. I went to her a lot. My principal was awesome. I went to my mentor teacher a lot. The people I was around and in the English department was a great support system. Last year [2013-2014], my instructional coach was great. She worked hard to cover a lot of material, but the district-wide training is not tailored to high school teachers. It is too broad and too general. The support I received from my mentor helped me grow professionally my first year.

Participant A5's testimony provided evidence that when a specific mentor teacher is formally assigned to a new educator, the perspective of professional support and development held by the novice teacher is greatly improved. Feedback, materials, and co-planning exercises were just a few of the methods the mentor teacher used to support Participant A5. In addition to the mentor teacher, she described how the instructional facilitator, fellow departmental teachers, and campus principal worked to provide a strong support system for her during the first year of instruction. Participant A5 also commented on the benefit of having an instructional coach during her second year of teaching, which was the 2013-2014 school year. Participant A25 described a rough first year situation that was improved by a supportive instructional facilitator and campus administration.

The instructional facilitator was my assigned mentor. She helped me set up observations of other teachers on other campuses and that was very beneficial. We came up with a teacher mentoring action plan. I observed model lessons at

another campus. It was a rough first year. I was also really able to go to my administration for help. They knew the answers and assisted well with lesson planning. BISD made sure I did not sink. Yes, it was a rough year in the sense of taking in new information, the first time being in the classroom, different acronyms, and wrapping your head around a lot. I was well prepared for my second year. One way to improve is to actually have a coach push through. I know they have facilitator / coach titles but to actually go to new teachers and help. A lot of new teachers are afraid to ask for help because it may be a sign of weakness or incompetence. They need to actually come in and coach. I had to learn a lot through reading books and watching tapes. I am a visual learner and I like to see it in action. When I was able to actually go and observe another teacher on another campus around November of my first year it was very beneficial. A lot of stuff made sense to see it in action. I know they have a lot of expectations of them but the coaches need to come in and help new teachers. Even if it is a block of time every week that the coach comes in to help, not observe, that would be beneficial. A lot of fear comes from the coaches observing because the teacher is afraid the coach is going to go back to the principal and say something. Formally assessing me is not helping me. It is scaring me.

Participant A25's experience provided evidence that a teacher mentoring action plan and the observation of demonstration lessons can greatly improve the perspectives of professional support had by a first year teacher. Participant A25 also touched upon another critical concept pertaining to new teachers actively seeking assistance versus instructional coaches taking the initiative to offer guidance and feedback to novice educators. While Participant A25 actively sought assistance from others on campus, many new teachers are apprehensive about approaching veteran educators for help. As Participant A25 pointed out, many new teachers are fearful of asking for help because it could be viewed as a sign of weakness or incompetence. Had Participant A25 not actively sought help from others, she too may have exited the industry. Participant A25 pointed out another important responsibility critical to the role of instructional coach and that was to provide non-evaluative feedback to teachers. By providing an assessment of the novice educator's classroom in a non-evaluative fashion, it allowed the new teacher an opportunity to make needed improvements before the formal evaluation conducted by a

principal. As Participant A25 noted, the relationship between teacher and instructional coach must be one based in trust, so there is not fear that the instructional coach will report any and all shortcomings displayed by the teacher to the principal.

With the 2013-2014 school year came the transition from the instructional facilitator model to the instructional coaching model. One of the goals of this evolution was to provide better instructional support to classroom teachers. Participant B15, who was a new teacher in the 2013-2014 school year, commented on the support he received from an instructional coach.

From the instructional coach, I feel that was the most consistent support throughout the year. With her feedback, it was able to help push me into becoming a better instructor. I was aware that it would take years before I became a master teacher. But with my type of learning and leadership, I want to know how to get better. I don't want anything sugar-coated so to speak. If anybody notices anything that could be improved, I want to be aware of those things. The instructional coach was able to provide that for me.

Participant B15 pointed out that he appreciated an open and honest critique of his teaching from the instructional coach so that he could improve his teaching. Participant B1 described how he felt support from his mentor during his first year; however, he lamented the lack of observations of his classroom by an instructional coach so that he could gain insight on how to improve especially in the area of classroom management.

The mentors I had from the beginning of the year did guide me and help me with everything. But, until someone actually comes in and sees you in action and sees the faults that you make, I had a lot of people just telling me what to do and books I could read. But what a lot of people don't realize is what they are doing wrong especially when it comes to classroom management. If you do not get a good grasp on your class early, you are going to struggle all year. I've seen some of these new teachers come in and that's what happens. They probably don't have the support they need at the very first and they get overwhelmed. I think their lessons and classroom management all suffer.

It's a cycle. Once it starts to go downhill, then it just gets worse. I think that being in the classroom more and seeing those first year teachers in action to point out

their weaknesses early enough is important, so the issues can be corrected before the problem gets too big to handle. Very few people came to my classroom and actually observed me besides the normal PDAS observation as well as my mentor through the alternative certification. The actual staff here did not come in very often, so I could have had serious issues and it could have gone a couple of months without being noticed.

Participant B15 recognized another struggle facing many districts and that is how to get instructional coaches and principals into classrooms more often. Without these eyes in the classroom, campus leadership cannot identify problem areas quickly or set a plan in place to help new teachers rectify whatever the struggle entails. Participant B15 pinpointed the main obstacle facing new teachers in their first year of instruction, which was classroom management. He also astutely identified the “vicious cycle” that develops when new teachers do not get a firm grasp on classroom management early in the year. Participant B17 explained how she appreciated the model given to her by her mentor teacher during her first year of instruction.

I am a big learner. If I have a model, now I know how to do it. I can take it and tweak it. So, that was very, very helpful. To have a teacher who would say this is what I am doing, so I am able to learn how to do it. I could go change. That was the biggest thing. To have a sounding board to go to.

While Participant B17 was fortunate to have a mentor to act as a sounding board, Participants B7 and B20 were not as lucky. While Participant B20 described an inadequate mentoring experience, Participant B7 was without a mentor during her first year as a teacher. Perhaps because Participant B7 was hired in November, she was not assigned a formal mentor. Participant B20 explained that the insufficient mentoring experience taught her to take the initiative to have questions answered.

Well, there wasn't much of a mentoring experience, but it did help me to learn to take initiative. If I have a question that needs to be answered, I don't need to just let it sit there. I need to take initiative and find out who is going to have the answer for me. My mentor had always been in 3rd grade so she knew a lot about

third grade, which was helpful. She was good at analyzing data and seeing where we needed to improve our instruction and what we were doing right. She helped me learn how to do that pretty well.

Although Participant B7 did not have a formal mentor, she described a supportive department and reiterated the notion set forth by Participant B20 that a new teacher must actively seek out assistance.

I didn't have a specific mentor, but the English I and English II teachers were very open and welcoming. That was helpful, but I had to seek that out. I had to pursue that, which I did. I think a new teacher should do that. It was never a formal thing. I constantly sought out their guidance.

For those new teachers who do not aggressively search out guidance and feedback from veteran teachers and administrators, they may be left struggling greatly with elements of classroom management and instructional rigor.

Interview Question #2 asked: What aspects of the mentoring relationship were particularly helpful to you? Participant A14, who was new to the profession in the 2012-2013 school year, reiterated that she was without a mentor that year. She stated, "It was mainly me seeking out help. Even when they [campus administration] told me the problems at the end of my first year, I fixed problems immediately as soon as I was cognizant of the problem." Participant A4, who was also without a mentor that year, commented on the assistance she received from the Career and Technology Education (CTE) Director.

From a CTE standpoint, if I ever needed anything I could order it. If I needed supplies it was taken care of, so I was very blessed to be in that department and still be in that department. I don't think I had many classroom management issues my first year. I had one class that was really rough, but I would go to my CTE Director for advice on how to solve problems.

Participant A9 observed the support he received from two campus instructional facilitators as opposed to a teacher mentor. He also perceived the recent and ongoing classroom experience held by the instructional facilitators to be a valuable asset.

The instructional facilitators would note what worked for them in the past. Even though they taught different subjects, they used their model for structuring other classes and showed me how it would work for mine. It was also helpful that they had recent classroom experience and they were also teaching at the same time. I was able to take things from both of the instructional facilitators. They were able to guide me into the project based learning model.

Participant A25, much like Participant A9, remarked on the assistance an instructional facilitator made available to her. She explained, “The observations of other teachers were particularly helpful. Allowing time to observe someone else was very helpful.” Despite being a new teacher in the 2012-2013 school year, Participant A5 reaped the benefits of being assigned a teacher mentor that year as well as having a supportive department. She stated, “They helped me keep my sanity. My fellow English teachers helped a lot. I had a really good support system. Knowing that I was coaching, they filled me in on things I missed.”

New teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort were able to give a more detailed account of the support they received during their first year of instruction. For example, Participant B1 noted the value of the classroom experience held by his formal mentor and other departmental teachers. With their advice and guidance, he described rectifying problems early in the instructional day as to avoid repeating mistakes.

Learning from other people’s experiences was really the most helpful to me. When I could pick the brain of people who have been there and done that, I learned how to handle certain situations. What really helped me the most was advice received even in between classes. If I had a struggle in between classes, I would go to my mentors. I could usually correct the issue on the fly. If something happened in first period, I could figure out a way to avoid it the rest of the day. I think that is the key. If something is going wrong in one class, it’s probably going

to go wrong all day. Then you have a serious issue. I tried to correct the problem then and there. If something wasn't working, I tried to figure out why it wasn't working and fix it before the next class. I felt like they were always willing to help. They were always willing to give me any advice they had.

Participant B15 perceived the open and honest feedback from an instructional coach to be the most effective form of support he received during his first year of teaching. He stated, "Honest feedback and consistent support was the most helpful aspect. I knew the instructional coach was spread thin, but I felt like it was adequate for me. It was definitely effective, consistent, and honest." Participant B17 reiterated the importance of having a mentor teacher provide her with model lessons that she could individualize and make her own, while Participant B7 offered that the advice she received from fellow departmental teachers on instructional strategies, assessments, and student products was the most beneficial.

Questionnaire Protocol: Questions 1 & 2

To further explore the role of mentoring in the developmental experiences of new teachers, the researcher provided a questionnaire protocol to all of the participants in both cohort groups. Of the twenty-seven zero-year teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort, eleven of these participants completed the questionnaire. Of the twenty-four zero-year teachers in the 2013-2014 cohort, ten of these participants completed the questionnaire. The protocol began with statements whereby the participant would select either "yes" to agree or "no" to disagree with the statement depending upon the participant's perspective. The first item stated, "A formal mentor was assigned to me for my first year of employment with BISD." Of eleven responses from the 2012-2013 cohort, five stated "yes" and six stated "no." This appeared to be consistent with feedback gained from the interview questions

whereby some participants in the 2012-2013 cohort had a mentor whereas others did not. Surprisingly, there was a mixed response from the ten participants from the 2013-2014 cohort who completed the questionnaire protocol. Only four of the respondents selected “yes” that a formal mentor had been assigned to them during their first year of employment, whereas six respondents marked “no” indicating that they had not been assigned a formal mentor during their first year of teaching.

This perspective could be explained by the responses gathered from the second protocol item, which stated, “Although not formally assigned, a fellow educator acted as a mentor to me during my first year of employment.” Of the ten participants from the 2013-2014 cohort responding to the questionnaire, nine marked “yes” that although not formally assigned, a fellow educator acted as a mentor to them during their first year of employment whereas only one responded with a “no.” This indicated to the researcher that the majority of new teachers in the 2013-2014 cohort had the perspective that the mentoring relationship they had with a veteran teacher happened by chance as opposed to a formal assignment. Interestingly, a majority of the respondents from the 2012-2013 cohort held the same perspective. Nine respondents from the 2012-2013 maintained that although not formally assigned, a fellow educator acted as a mentor to them during their first year of employment at BISD whereas only two respondents marked “no.” While it is disappointing that many of the respondents from the 2013-2014 cohort believed the mentoring relationship occurred by chance, it is encouraging that a majority of the 2012-2013 respondents had a perspective of support although it was not formally organized. At the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, the campus principals were directed to formally assign each zero-year teacher to a mentor teacher. These pairings were then

submitted to the central office. The responses to the questionnaire protocol are summarized below in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Questionnaire Protocol Analysis (Items 1 & 2)

Questionnaire Item	Cohort	Yes	No
A formal mentor was assigned to me for my first year of employment with BISD.	2012-2013	5	6
	2013-2014	4	6
Although not formally assigned, a fellow educator acted as a mentor to me during my first year of employment with BISD.	2012-2013	9	2
	2013-2014	9	1

Research Question #2: How Do New Teachers Describe the Overall Mentoring Program as Measured by Perspectives of Professional Support?

Interview Question #3

The second major research question posed in this program evaluation and case study analysis was: “How do new teachers describe the overall mentoring program as measured by perspectives of professional support?” To begin answering this question, the participants were asked the following interview question: “To what extent did the mentoring program provide you with the belief that you were being supported professionally? In other words, as a new teacher did you have the perspective or viewpoint that the mentoring program provided you with professional support?” The absence of a mentor for most of the new teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort is reflected in the responses given by these participants when asked about their perspectives of professional support. Participant A14’s response reveals the regrettable situation created for a new teacher when they have no mentor available for direction or support.

I didn't have a mentor. I would have had a different first year if I had a mentor. Obviously, I think it would still have been hard. I am not going to pretend that it wouldn't be. But, I think having a mentor of some sort to come in with that critical, constructive eye would have made a world of difference. Again, it still would have been hard. There were still things I had to learn, and there are still things I still need to learn because every class is different. That's just who I am. If it's hard, I am going to push through it. That first year was hard, but I had some things to help make it better.

Despite the longing for constructive, non-evaluative feedback from an experienced mentor, it is a testament to the dedication and commitment of this new teacher that she focused on the few positive factors that helped her endure an arduous first year of teaching. Participant A4's response also exposed the disappointing and isolated position a new teacher is placed in when no mentor is accessible for guidance or support. She alluded to the toll stress took on her not only emotionally but physically.

As far as a teacher mentor, I did not feel supported because I had to create lessons on my own. I did not sleep. I was on my own. It wasn't until my second year that I met a fellow teacher who also taught Forensics and Anatomy. At that point, I started to pick her brain, and I made her my mentor. Thankfully, she is still right next door if I need anything. I had to find my own mentor. My first year, it was just me.

Participant A5's fortuitous assignment of a mentor during her first year of teaching lent to her perspective that the mentoring program did provide her with support. Participant A9 referenced the support he received from campus instructional facilitators as opposed to teacher mentors.

The mentoring experience supported me a whole lot because the instructional facilitators worked hard to give us ideas and relate and share ideas with the entire faculty. They gave me more ideas on what to do in my classroom.

Participant A25 also benefited from a campus instructional facilitator as opposed to a mentor teacher stating, "Yes, I absolutely felt like I was being supported professionally."

New teachers in the 2013-2014 cohort provided responses that more consistently reflected perspectives of professional support. Participant B1 described a first year situation in which his mentor was always available; however, the mentor provided assistance with more of a hands-off approach rather than in a more insistent fashion. Participant B1 explained that this was an effective means of support for him, but reiterated his notion that many first year teachers could be afraid to ask questions for fear of looking incompetent. Participant B1 maintained that more timid or reserved first year teachers might need more assertive mentors. Participant B1 also described a high school Chemistry department that was plagued by high numbers of teacher turnover. He described witnessing other new teachers becoming quickly overwhelmed from the stress and pressures of the classroom; however, with the assistance of mentors they have regained their confidence and control of the classroom.

I felt supported. I never felt like I was on an island by myself. I have heard these horror stories where first year teachers would just get sent out on their own and it was sink or swim. I never felt like that. I always felt like no matter what was going on, I had someone to lean on. Now, did they really actively push to get involved? Maybe not so much, but I don't know that I would have really wanted that myself. I can see how some teachers would be afraid to ask. I was never afraid to ask. But, some teachers may be afraid to ask because they don't want to look like they don't know what they're doing. My mentality was I just need to go find out what the problem is and fix it right then and there. I can see how them [the mentors] being more actively involved could help out a new teacher who was more timid or reserved than I was.

We have had huge turnover in this department. I was one of three who was hired new last year. This year, there were three more new teachers, so, I have seen a lot of these new teachers. When I came in both of the other new teachers had some experience, but one was basically a new teacher because it had been years since they taught. With the new teachers this year, I've gotten to see it firsthand how it can get away from you quickly. They have to lean on veteran teachers. I can see how it is very useful to have someone to rely on that is there for you. They [new teachers] need to feel like they can go to them [their mentors]. There was a point in time when I was concerned about this year's new teachers. It's going to go one way or the other. It looks like they are gaining confidence. With that confidence,

they are gaining control of the class. I think it is getting better. There was a point in time, when I didn't know which way it was going to go. I have heard these stories that after a month, these teachers are done. Mentally they are done. There is no way you can be effective if you are not all in. The kids wear you out.

Participant B15 also expressed similar appreciation for having a mentor for guidance and encouragement especially with the knowledge that many new teachers in other districts do not receive support during their first year. When asked if his mentor provided him with professional support, Participant B15 provided the following response.

Yes. 100%. Absolutely. I didn't want to be thrown in with the wolves so to speak. I understand that some districts will do this. 'Here is your key. You are teaching this.' I definitely appreciated and valued the mentor especially as an entering teacher. I had friends in different schools that didn't have as good of an experience as I did.

Participant B17 also responded positively with regard to having a perspective of professional support during her first year of teaching despite the pressure that comes with having a spouse deployed overseas.

Yes, I thought my first year went very well. I had a unique situation. My husband was deployed last year, so the paperwork didn't bother me. I thought it was really fun. The classroom management wasn't bad at all. It was more of a feeling of what I wanted personally for my classroom. I have found the second year to be harder with classroom management. It is a different group of kids....trying to figure out what works and what doesn't.

Much like Participant B1's response articulating support that was always available but not aggressively pushed upon new teachers, Participant B15 also communicated a feeling of support during her first year of teaching that came from the culture of the campus.

I felt supported. It was built in the culture of the school. We are here for you. Sometimes you have to go ask or seek it out, but it was very supportive and that is what we are here for.

Despite having a knowledgeable mentor, Participant B20 expressed frustration with the inconsistent presence of an instructional coach at her school despite the fact that the campus served a large population of high-needs students.

Our instructional coaches last year were split between two campuses and then one coach left halfway through the second semester and there wasn't a replacement. So, any sort of question I would have had for an instructional coach, didn't get answered. I don't think I fully understood the role of the instructional coach because they were never on campus. I feel like our campus has such a big need. I really feel like this school needs a full-time coach. I was real excited this year when we had a full time coach, but then they moved things around and now we don't any more. I love the current coach. Since the first day she was here, she has been in my room working with me, so I know she is doing everything she can. But, I really think with the demographics of our school, we need a full-time coach...a really, really good full-time coach.

Questionnaire Protocol: Questions 3, 5, & 11

To further explore how new teachers describe the overall mentoring program, the researcher provided a questionnaire protocol to the participants in both cohort groups. The protocol began with statements whereby the participant would select either “yes” to agree or “no” to disagree with the statement depending upon the participant’s perspective. The third item on the questionnaire protocol stated, “I received mentoring either formally or informally during my first year of employment with BISD.” Of eleven responses from the 2012-2013 cohort, eight stated “yes” indicating that they had received mentoring support either formally or informally while three stated “no.” Of ten responses received from the 2013-2014 cohort, nine marked “yes” while only one respondent selected “no” indicating that he or she received no mentoring support either formally or informally. The one negative response could have been the result of a mid-year hire that was not assigned a formal mentor. The responses gathered from the questionnaire protocol reinforce or affirm the trends observed from the interview protocol. For

example, the vast majority of participants in the 2013-2014 cohort had a perspective of support from a mentoring relationship with a veteran teacher while the responses from the 2012-2013 cohort were slightly more mixed.

For other statements on the questionnaire protocol, the respondents were to select a response on a Likert scale to describe their perspective of agreement or disagreement with the statement. For example, the fifth item on the questionnaire protocol stated, “I met regularly with a fellow educator who participated in my ongoing support, provided me with feedback, and monitored my growth and progress during my first year of employment with BISD.” Of the eleven participants responding from the 2012-2013 cohort, two selected “strongly agree,” five selected “agree,” one selected “neutral,” and three marked “disagree.” These somewhat positive but also mixed responses affirm the trend that support for new teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort was random and arbitrary. However, the participants from the 2013-2014 cohort also provided mixed results on this questionnaire item. Specifically, three selected “strongly agree,” two selected “agree,” one selected “neutral,” two selected “disagree,” and two selected “strongly disagree.” The responses are summarized table 4.9 below.

The eleventh item on the questionnaire protocol was an open-ended question that allowed the participants to elaborate further on ways in which Belton ISD could improve the support it offers new teachers. The question asked, “What ideas could you offer to help Belton ISD improve the support it offers new teachers?” Participants A11, A13, and A14 from the 2012-2013 cohort highlighted an important deficiency in the mentoring process during their first year of teaching. Specifically, a formal mentor was not assigned to new teachers during the 2012-2013 school year, so these novice educators had to learn

by trial-and-error or were left alone to find assistance. Participant A11 stated, “Inform fellow teachers ahead of time about the presence of a new teacher in their subject area, assign a definite mentor, and allow time (possibly during an in-service day) for these teachers to meet together.” Participant A13 simply said, “Provide formal mentors for all new teachers.” Participant A14 echoed these sentiments, “An assigned mentor would have greatly increased my chances of success. Many things I had to learn by error I could have used more constructive assessment and analysis.”

Table 4.9

Questionnaire Protocol Analysis (Items 3 & 5)

Questionnaire Item	Cohort		Response		
	2012-2013	2013-2014	Yes	No	
I received mentoring either formally or informally during my first year of employment with BISD.			8	3	
			9	1	
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I met regularly with a fellow educator who participated in my ongoing support, provided me with feedback, and monitored my growth and progress during my first year of employment with BISD.	2	5	1	3	0 -2012
	3	2	1	2	2 -2013

If new teachers from the 2012-2013 cohort were fortunate enough to have been assigned a mentor, they often expressed a desire for assistance with basic tasks such as lesson planning and classroom management. Participant A4 thought a mandatory planning time with a mentor teacher would have helped her with these foundational issues. She stated, “A mentor teacher that you are required to meet with once a week about lesson plans and classroom management. I very rarely saw my mentor teacher. Thankfully, my supervisor was there to help me when I needed it.” Participant A9 also

expressed a need for continued “support and guidance when it comes to lessons and classroom management.” Likewise, Participant A15 felt she “would have benefitted from observing other classroom teachers and having more planning support.” Participant A25 expressed the need for an instructional coach during her first year of teaching who would have “set a block of time to come in to my classroom and help.”

Participants A5, A17, and A24 described training and professional development opportunities that would have benefited zero-year teachers upon arriving at BISD. Having been hired mid-year, Participant A24 missed the critical training and professional development that is offered to new teachers at the beginning of the school year. She explained, “I love the way that BISD supports first year teachers. The one thing I would suggest would be training on things that were taught at the beginning of the year (like how to set up a teacher website), but for teachers who start in the middle of the year.” Participant A17 described a professional development opportunity later in the school year whereby zero-year teachers could discuss common challenges and solutions. He stated, “It may prove worthy to bring the first year teachers together about six to nine weeks later during in-service to discuss challenges and ideas rather than just relying on the one-to-one mentor. While the mentor relationship is valuable and necessary, it only provides a single avenue for success based on the experiences of that mentor.” Participant A5 described the vertical content training in which elementary teachers and secondary teachers learn together as “having no benefit to me” as well as “too broad and too general.”

A major theme, which emerged from the responses provided by the 2013-2014 cohort, was the desire for the district to continue to formalize the mentoring program with

additional guidelines and procedures. In addition to this request, Participant B13 also expressed a desire for professional development tailored to the specific climate of the campus in which she served. She stated, “Provide professional development for classroom management based on the school climate that teacher belongs to. Even though I was assigned a mentor, the mentor program needs to have more guidelines and procedures that the mentor teacher and new teacher complete.” Other participants from the 2013-2014 cohort reaffirmed the need for a more structured mentoring program as well as additional training on classroom management. Participant B1 stated that he needed “more official information” on the guidelines of the mentoring process. He went on to state, “The first month is make or break for new teachers and the mentor must be heavily involved or the new teacher will become discouraged quickly.”

Participant B15 specifically requested additional “professional development on classroom management” and student discipline. Participant B14 not only voiced the need for a more structured mentoring program, but she wanted to ensure that mentors were provided to “new teachers of all subjects at all campuses.” She along with Participant B7 were hired after the start of the school year, so they “fell through the cracks” with regard to being assigned a formal mentor. Participant B20 offered the suggestion that the teacher mentors be “well-seasoned.” She explained that her mentor was “only in her fourth or fifth year of teaching.” Although much work is still needed to formalized and improve the mentoring program, Participant B22 stated that she “was lucky enough to have two wonderful educators on my team that acted as my mentors.” This discussion leads to the next component of the program evaluation and case study, which focuses upon

perspectives of professional support held by new teachers stemming from the instructional coaching model.

Research Question #3: How Do New Teachers Describe the Instructional Coaching Model as Measured by Perspectives of Professional Support?

Interview Questions 4 & 5

The second major component of the program evaluation and case study focuses upon instructional coaching and the influence on new teacher perspectives of professional support. Thus, the next major research question posed was: “How do new teachers describe the instructional coaching model as measured by perspectives of professional support?” To begin answering this question, the participants were asked the following interview questions: “To what extent did the instructional coaching model provide you with the belief that you were being supported professionally? In other words, as a new teacher did you have the perspective or viewpoint that the instructional coaching model provided you with professional support? How often do you seek assistance from an instructional coach?” The researcher began by asking these questions of new teachers from the 2012-2013 cohort in order to gain feedback from educators who saw the evolution from the instructional facilitator model to the instructional coaching model. While a comparison of responses between the two cohorts will show a trend that the instructional coaching model is more effective than the previous instructional facilitator model, another theme emerges identifying an instructional coaching staff that is spread too thin at the secondary level thereby reducing these coaches’ visibility on campuses and weakening their ability to assist new teachers.

Participant A14 from the 2012-2013 cohort described an instructional facilitator shared between campuses that was rarely present her first year of teaching; however, the current instructional coach is not only more present and visible at the campus but has also brought recent classroom experience to the position. According to Participant A14, the current instructional coach gathers feedback from teachers, plans diligently on units of study, strives to make professional development sessions more meaningful, and is proactive in approaching teachers with upcoming curricular issues.

My first year of teaching, we rarely saw them [instructional facilitators]. This is just from an untrained eye. They basically wrote an agenda, and we talked about issues going on in the social studies department. We really didn't see the instructional facilitator because they were on other campuses as well. My interactions with the instructional facilitator that year were so brief because the need for her at the high school was even greater. So, basically the instructional facilitator part was non-existent as well. During my first year, I saw the instructional facilitator if she came to our weekly meetings on Monday.

This year, we have an instructional coach and he is doing some great things. He has pointed out that our unit plans don't show what we truly do. He wants it so that a brand new Texas History teacher could come in and know what to cover and find the resources to do that. So, he has been working with us and asking our opinion. The current instructional coach has a lot of face time here, so I probably talk to him multiple times on a weekly basis. He is here a lot. I haven't really had the need to seek him out because he is already here bringing up what we would initially seek out. He has been on the social studies side, so he already knows the issues that we had during our professional development during the summer. He has a lot of foresight to make it more productive when we have those times together. So, I see the instructional coach a lot and sometimes I will catch him when I have ten minutes.

Participant A4 echoed many of the same sentiments of frustration regarding an absentee instructional facilitator during her first year of teaching.

I did not have an instructional facilitator. There was a half-time instructional facilitator who would come in and check on me or do walkthroughs. The instructional facilitator would stop by once a week to check on me. However, when I would seek her out during my conference time, she was not there.

Participant A25 observed an instructional facilitator who was valuable to her as a mentor “but not particularly effective” from an instructional standpoint. However, Participant A25 still sought out the instructional facilitator on a weekly basis in order to receive assistance especially in the area of data disaggregation. Participant A9 has observed an increase in professional support with the transition from the instructional facilitator model to the instructional coaching model.

With our current instructional coach, I can definitely see how she coaches us by giving us advice rather than telling us what to do in the classroom. The instructional coach makes it a point to admit that she does not know all the World Geography standards, so she tries to give advice on the standards she does know well. I definitely feel like the instructional coaching model has supported me professionally because we meet once a week. The instructional coach comes around to make sure we have everything we need. She is all-around very helpful. [I seek her out] once every two weeks...mostly during the project planning phase when trying to get things organized for the next project or when something is going wrong. I seek her out for planning and maintenance.

Participant A5 expressed disappointment with the transition from instructional facilitator to instructional coach because that particular staff member became much less accessible. This decrease in accessibility and visibility on campus was a result of the instructional coach being responsible for multiple campuses.

For my first year [2012-2013], I went to the instructional facilitator a lot. When we had the instructional facilitator, she was here five days a week, so if we needed her we knew where to get her. Last year [2013-2014], I thought it was helpful to an extent, but the instructional coach was at this school one day and at other schools on other days. The instructional coach was only here one day a week, and that really hurt. If we had someone here constantly and consistently, it would have been a lot more beneficial. Knowing that she was gone to other middle schools, it put a damper on the instructional coaching model. Last year, with the instructional coach being spread thin, I hardly ever went to her.

While Participant A5 lamented the reduced accessibility of the instructional coach due to sharing this staff member with other campuses, many of the new teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort reaped benefits from the new model. For example, Participant B1 had a

perspective of support from the non-evaluative feedback provided by his instructional coach. In addition, between his mentor and instructional coach, Participant B1 explained that he had veteran educators who offered a wealth of knowledge and support to him during his first year of teaching.

I've always had a good relationship with my instructional coach. She always made me feel like she was supporting me. I never felt like she was critiquing me or coming down on me. I felt like she was there to help. I think that is important. As soon as a teacher feels like they are being critiqued, then it just totally defeats the whole purpose. Then, they are not going to be who they are. When the instructional coach was in my classroom observing, I felt like I could be myself. If I made a mistake, she would come tell me about it. It was just general conversation, and I felt comfortable with that. I felt like she supported me. I usually did not go to the IC [instructional coach] very often simply because I could usually get the answers without going to them. If the IC was around I would ask her because she has a wealth of experience, but my mentor was always next door so I would ask her. There were times when I would ask the IC a question, and she could give me some advice. Usually I would get the answer before I got to the IC. I definitely wouldn't hesitate to ask the IC a question.

In addition to the professional support offered by the instructional coach, Participant B15 also commented on the wealth of content knowledge his coach had to offer.

The instructional coach was in my room often. I know she came with such great content knowledge. I appreciated that. When I felt like I was hitting a wall with a lesson plan, she had two or three strategies to offer to me, so that also helped tremendously.

Participant B7 received intensive support from her instructional coach during her first year of teaching. From assisting with project design to demonstrating driving questions, the instructional coach made daily contact with Participant B7 until she had a firm foundation in Project Based Learning.

Last year [2013-2014], we had two instructional coaches, and I was assigned to one. She was exceptionally helpful in designing the first two projects. She showed me what driving questions look like. It was a lot of curriculum design, and I had never really done that. So, I felt supported by them and it worked. I sought them

out all the time...especially December, January, and February. Every day I made contact with them. It may have only been a five minute conversation, but it was all the time. I would tell them this isn't working. It was less frequent once I had my footing.

Participants B20 and B17 remarked on the inaccessibility of the instructional coaches due to the nature of their positions being shared between multiple campuses. However, both participants did gain some benefit from the instructional coaching model during their first year of teaching. Participant B20 made the following observation.

The instructional coach did come in and observe some lessons and help me come up with a plan. Because she was stretched so thin, I didn't get as much support from her as I wanted. But, I know it wasn't her fault. She had to be everywhere. I reached out to her maybe 2 or 3 times a month.

Participant B17 also remarked on the benefits of the instructional coaching model, but admitted that as a first year teacher she was reluctant to ask for assistance because she did not want to appear to be in need of help.

For part of the year [2013-2014] we had an instructional coach, but for part of the year we were up in the air. I thought it was helpful. I thought the instructional coach did a really good job. But then we didn't have anyone. Halfway through the year, they officially assigned the instructional coach just to the high school, so then we just got lumped in with English. [This year] the new instructional coach is doing a very good job. He set goals for us this year. As a new teacher, I didn't really want to put myself out there and say I need this. As a first year teacher, I didn't want to ask for help because I didn't know what their position was or want them to feel like I needed help. I just stood back.

Questionnaire Protocol: Questions 4 & 8

To further explore how new teachers describe the instructional coaching model, the researcher provided a questionnaire protocol to the participants in both cohort groups. The respondents were to select a response on a Likert scale to describe their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement. The fourth item on the questionnaire protocol stated, "After an informal classroom observation by an instructional

facilitator/coach, we jointly created a teacher mentoring action plan.” Of the eleven participants responding from the 2012-2013 cohort, two selected “strongly agree,” one selected “agree,” two selected “neutral,” four selected “disagree,” and two marked “strongly disagree.” These more negative responses validate and uphold the testimonials provided by members of the 2012-2013 cohort during the interview process. Again, the responses gathered via the interview process and questionnaire corroborate the notion that the instructional facilitator role supported teachers in a more clerical or managerial fashion.

However, the responses from the 2013-2014 cohort were equally negative with regard to the creation of a teacher-mentoring action plan. Of the ten participants responding from the 2013-2014 cohort, one selected “agree,” six selected “disagree,” and three marked “strongly disagree.” Yet, after interviewing members of the instructional coaching staff and curriculum and instruction department, the researcher found that the teacher mentoring action plan was replaced with other tools to facilitate growth and development of new teachers. So, these responses may have been more positive had the researcher cited a tool other than the teacher mentoring action plan.

This leads to the eighth item on the questionnaire protocol, which stated, “A fellow educator conducted model lessons which I observed in order to improve my instruction during my first year of employment with BISD.” As expected, the responses from the 2012-2013 cohort were typically in disagreement with this statement. Specifically, of the eleven participants responding from the 2012-2013 cohort, one selected “strongly agree,” one selected “agree,” one selected “neutral,” two selected “disagree,” and six marked “strongly disagree.” This serves as further verification that

model lessons and other techniques common to the instructional coaching model were not as prevalent during the 2012-2013 school year. Of the ten participants responding from the 2013-2014 cohort, one selected “strongly agree,” five selected “agree,” one selected “disagree,” and three marked “strongly disagree.” These more positive responses substantiate the assertion that components of the instructional coaching cycle such as model lessons were more common in the 2013-2014 school year. Results from these two questionnaire items are summarized in Table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10

Questionnaire Protocol Analysis (Items 4 & 8)

Questionnaire Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
After an informal classroom observation by an instructional facilitator, we jointly created a teacher-mentoring action plan.	2	1	2	4	2 -2012 3 -2013
A fellow educator conducted model lessons which I observed in order to improve my instruction during my first year of employment with BISD.	1	1	1	2	6 -2012 3 -2013

Research Question #4: How Do New Teachers Describe Reflective Professional Development as Measured by Perspectives of Professional Support?

Interview Questions 6 & 7

The third major component of the program evaluation and case study focuses upon reflective practice and its influence on new teacher perspectives of support as well as classroom instruction. Therefore, the next major research question posed was: “How do new teachers describe reflective professional development as measured by perspectives of professional support?” To begin answering this question, the participants

were asked the following interview questions: “To what extent did reflective practices or reflective professional development provide you with the belief that you were being supported professionally? In other words, as a new teacher did you have the perspective or viewpoint that reflective professional development was a form of professional support? Describe how you use reflective professional growth and practice to improve instruction in your own classroom.”

After analyzing the interview data, the researcher found that a common theme emerged within the responses from participants in both cohorts. That theme was that new teachers utilized reflective practice frequently in order to improve their classroom instruction; however, there was another trend indicating that the reflective professional development offered by mentors and instructional coaches was more intentional during the 2013-2014 school year. Beginning with feedback from new teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort, Participant A5 described limited exposure to reflective practice in her first year, but she did reference reflective questions received from her instructional coach after walkthroughs were conducted in her classroom.

Any time we have a walkthrough or forty-five minute observation, they just come in here and then they leave. Then we get an email stating that the instructional coach has left you an update in Eduphoria. Then we go into the program and read their comments, and then they ask a question at the very end and we have to respond with an answer to that question. Other than that, we don't sit down and discuss.

Participant A14 explained that she and her instructional facilitator conducted observations of veteran teachers at other campuses during her first year of teaching, but due to time restraints the pair only briefly reflected on the strategies and techniques observed in these classrooms. She also described reflective activity performed with a

fellow teacher after every unit of instruction in order to adjust her teaching and make learning more meaningful for students.

It was not until later in my first year when the instructional facilitator and I went to some other middle schools and I observed, but we really didn't have the opportunity because of time to really reflect on why those teachers did what they did. In a way I know the intention was good, but I think in a way it was just do what they do. We did briefly reflect on it. I wrote something up for her, but I still took stuff away. It was a different type of environment with the demographics. It was a good step. This is how I look at all of this. It is steps building to get stronger and stronger. With every activity and unit that we plan for, a fellow teacher and I sit down and talk about what did not work for me and we will adjust it. Or, she may say this worked for me because I tried this. What is nice is that our schedules are flipped, so we can come in and provide each other with feedback.

Because of reflective activities with her supervisor and instructional facilitator, Participant A4 observed an evolution in her teaching during the first three years of her career.

The CTE Director and instructional facilitator both helped me reflect on lessons. Sometimes I would go to them and let them know a lesson did not work. I would ask them...what else can I do? I think the reflection improved my instruction. The first year, I made instruction too easy. The second year, I made my instruction too hard. This year, I think I found a happy medium. They say the first year is the hardest year.

Participant A25 stated that her mentor observed her classroom instruction so that they could reflect together on components of the lesson as well as classroom management.

As a mentor, she even took the time to come in. I wanted an observation at that point. She looked at everything I did as far as the lesson and classroom management. We sat down and really got after it. She took the time to even type out what really went well. I came into the meeting with my own notes of what I observed, and she complimented me on my natural ability. I would comment on what I noticed. It was weird how my notes were very close to her notes. Having her as a mentor really helped.

Participant A9 expressed an ability to better reflect upon his instruction now than in his first year of teaching due in large part to the instructional coach encouraging him to gain student feedback after each project.

I am definitely better at reflecting on things I do in the classroom now. Nothing I do now is the same as in previous years because I try to get student feedback. The instructional coach has encouraged us to get student feedback and to incorporate that into future projects. It may be too late for the current project, but it will improve future projects.

Participants from the 2013-2014 cohort also described reflective activities, which improved their perspectives of professional support. Participant B15 depicted a desire for continuous improvement not only in his own classroom but also in the classroom of his grade level partner and mentor.

Yes, that [reflection on instruction] was part of our conversations. I felt supported from a reflective standpoint. I think that [reflection] is necessary regardless of year one or thirty-one. Anything can be improved within the classroom. If I have 100% passing the reading test, then I want to make sure my team teacher has 100%. There is always room for growth. Definitely, I still try to reflect. The team tries to get a feel for each other. We both realize, regardless of what happened in the lesson, this particular TEK or concept wasn't fully grasped. We will backtrack together so we can move along, but still hit some of the items that we didn't master the first time around.

Much like participant B15's goal for continuous improvement, Participant B1 described reflecting on units of instruction and assessment data with his mentor as well as gaining feedback from other veteran teachers in order to be better organized and more effective as a teacher at the beginning of the instructional day.

We did reflect on a unit as a whole and talk about results based on data. My mentor would come over and watch and say certain things. I did feel like I had support that way. I like to reflect on every unit. I like to reflect on what was effective and what was not. My goal is to at some point in time to really clean up the little issues that I feel like pop up. I need to be better organized and take good notes on things that work and how to improve. I feel like every single time I do something, I get a little bit better. A lot of times I will start out at the beginning of the day and something is a little shaky. I will give it a little tweak and it will get

better. Usually by the end of the day I have it down. I would like to have it down at the beginning.

That's the goal. I have talked to teachers who have been doing it longer and they say there is a point in time when that occurs. If you keep working towards that at some point in time you will get to that comfort level. I still feel anxious sometimes because I'm not exactly sure how it is going to be delivered. I know what to do and how I am going to do it. I'm just not sure how it's going to be interpreted. Will they get it? At the end when we are looking at test scores and we are looking at data, I thought I covered that well. I think that is for any teacher. If you want to improve, I think that is something you should always do.

Participant B7 described a model for reflection used by both her instructional coach and campus administrators that helped improve her classroom instruction.

When I would have walkthroughs both by my instructional coach, assistant principal, or principal, they would provide 'I likes, I wonders, and next steps,' which is what we focus on in our model. 'I really like that you are doing this, I wonder about this, and next time do this.' There are opportunities for me to think about that and to reflect on my own. Yes, I do [reflect on my instruction]. I think that's period by period. What happened in third period that didn't work, why do it again in fourth period?

Participant B20 acknowledged that her instructional coach provided positive affirmations and suggestions for improvement after conducting classroom walkthroughs.

Participant B20 also remarked on the continual reflection on her own instruction in order to improve student engagement, transitions between activities, and small group instruction.

She [the instructional coach] does put things I am doing well. She makes a suggestion sometimes, so she does put compliments and suggestions. I do [reflect on my instruction]. A lot of times I'll be sitting in a lesson thinking this is crashing and burning. What should I do next time to make the transition flow better or make sure that these students are getting the small group instruction that they need? So, I am constantly thinking how I can change my lessons. How can I make it better? What can I do to keep their attention?

Participant B17 stated that she and her mentor discuss what they want to do differently after each unit of instruction, and they both have the goal of becoming more effective at analyzing student assessment data.

Observation Protocol

The instructional coach at Belton New Tech High School also uses the “I like, I wonder, and next steps” model for reflection with new teachers from both the 2012-2013 cohort and the 2013-2014 cohort. With Participant A8 from the 2013-2013 cohort, the instructional coach presented reflective questions for the novice to consider regarding formative assessment and proximity control.

I like. . . that most students were on task and that students were creating a resource to be used on future assignments. I like that you were answering questions. I wonder. . . How engaging this activity was? How long students will remember what they learned about authenticity? How will you know that all students were successful at learning the material? Would grouping students create a more efficient workflow? Next steps... Consider using a pre-printed foldable, and then giving the students an opportunity to write their own creative, project-based sentences. This activity could be used as a formative assessment to identify learning gaps part way through class; subsequently, mandatory workshops could address those gaps. In addition, moving around the room to answer questions (rather than having students come to you at your desk) will allow you to hear student discussions and see their work first hand and will enhance student accountability through your proximity.

With Participant A9, the instructional coach posed reflective questions to have the novice teacher consider scaffolding, real-world scenarios, and driving questions as instructional strategies to drive home student learning.

I like. . . that groups combined their models into a single, final product and the cooperative learning nature of the project. I wonder. . . if group representatives were ever given an opportunity to meet to discuss what the final product would look like before creating their own models. I wonder if scaffolding was provided for oral presentation? How might a real-world scenario be used to construct a relevant driving question? Next steps... While students could tell me what the product was, they had a difficult time expressing the reason for creating the

product. Consider posting a driving question in multiple places, and articulating rationale for the project often in a variety of ways. Also consider requiring use of academic vocabulary even in a short presentation to ensure that students are able to articulate what they have learned. Lastly, consider having student groups predict possible questions (along with appropriate answers) they may be asked, to prepare for the Q&A following the presentations.

With Participant B6 from the 2013-2014 cohort, she posed the following reflective prompt to help him consider methods for improving student engagement:

I like. . . that students were arranged theater style to listen to presentations and that the presentations required participation by all students. I wonder. . . how the audience will be held accountable for listening and if peer and self-evaluation will be part of the reflection piece on this project. Next steps. . . innovation points were given for setting the stage in a way that would help students assume their roles more completely and therefore increase audience engagement?

With Participant B7, this instructional coach prompted the novice teacher to consider formative assessment tools to monitor student progress during a project.

I like. . . that you specified benchmarks on your rubric and that you shared an exemplary model of student work. I like that your driving question and/or your entry document is always posted and that you are connecting classic literature with contemporary media. I wonder. . . What formative assessment tools you use during the course of a project? How student progress is measured on a day-to-day basis? Next steps. . . Consider including time at the beginning of a project for students to sketch out project goals, responsibilities, and deadlines using a task log or other tool as well as specified times during a project for modification and progress checks.

The same instructional coach at Belton New Tech High School also worked with Participant B8 to assist him with having students meet project goals and deadlines as well as developing a rubric to clarify expectations for students.

I like. . . that students clearly understood project goals and that you were monitoring individual groups. I like that there is a real-world connection for your project and that students were calling community contacts as part of their research. I wonder. . . What their exit ticket will be each day? How they will know they are meeting project goals? Next steps. . . consider having student teams develop a calendar of their own that includes specific goals and deadlines. Getting student input on development of a content rubric could also help clarify expectations.

Finally, the instructional coach at Belton New Tech High School suggested that Participant B9 use group collaboration to engage her students in deeper and more reflective conversations during the Project-Based Learning process.

I like. . . that students were keeping notes in their journals and that alternate ways to solve the problem were given. I like that every unit begins with a lab. I wonder. . . how deep discussions could be included in your daily process and if the lab could become a framework that would be more inclusive of the PBL process (e.g., lab related puzzle as entry event, lab report or error analysis as product). Next steps. . . Consider increasing collaboration during review by having groups discuss then present how to avoid misconceptions or common mistakes made.

Questionnaire Protocol: Question 9

To further explore how new teachers describe the professional development they received during their first year of teaching, the researcher provided a questionnaire protocol to the participants in both cohort groups. The respondents were to select a response on a Likert scale to describe their perspective of agreement or disagreement with the statement. The ninth item on the questionnaire protocol stated, “I received professional development which addressed my needs as a beginning teacher during my first year of employment with BISD.” Of the eleven participants responding from the 2012-2013 cohort, four selected “strongly agree,” five selected “agree,” one selected “disagree,” and one marked “strongly disagree.” Of the ten participants responding from the 2013-2014 cohort, three selected “strongly agree,” two selected “agree,” three selected “neutral,” and two selected “strongly disagree.” These generally favorable responses from both cohorts are encouraging and indicate that new teachers at BISD receive quality professional development, which address their needs as novice educators. Results from this questionnaire item are summarized in table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11

Questionnaire Protocol Analysis (Item 9)

Questionnaire Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I received professional development which addressed my needs as a beginning teacher during my first year of employment with BISD.	4	5	0	1	1 -2012
	3	2	3	0	2 -2013

Research Question #5: How Do New Teachers Describe the Overall Mentoring Program as Measured by Perspectives of Job Satisfaction?

Interview Questions 8 & 9

The next major research question posed was: “How do new teachers describe the overall mentoring program as measured by perspectives of job satisfaction?” To begin answering this question, the participants were asked the following interview questions: “How would you describe the professional development and support offered to beginning teachers by Belton ISD?”

After analyzing the responses from the participants, members of both cohorts expressed feeling overwhelmed by the professional development offered to new teachers upon employment. While members of both cohorts described the training offered to new teachers as being high in quality, participants from both groups conveyed a need for more autonomy in selecting the professional development attended. In other words, more targeted professional development based upon the needs of the teacher as well as the educator’s teaching assignment would have been more worthwhile.

Participant A25 from the 2012-2013 cohort spoke to the overwhelming nature of the summer professional development for both new and veteran teachers alike as well as

the benefits of targeted professional development based on the educator's teaching assignment. She also expressed a desire for the professional development provided in the summer to be divided out into future months so the content was more manageable.

It was good. Everything was good. At one point it was overwhelming. You collect everything. Then you start something else and you put it in a folder. It wouldn't be until the professional development around November where it really helped me as a new teacher. By that time, things started to sink in. The August training is so much. If the August training could be spread out, you would get a lot more out of it. Talking with veteran teachers coming from other districts but were new to the campus, they were feeling overwhelmed also so I didn't feel as bad. I like professional development targeted at third to fifth grade teachers. I started off in third grade, but now I am in fifth grade. The third through fifth grades together is perfect. As a third grade teacher my first year, I was constantly knocking on the fourth grade doors to make sure my language was the same. Third through fifth grade professional development and kindergarten through second grade professional development is much more helpful.

While Participant A25 questioned the timeliness of the professional development offered during her first year, Participant A9 remarked on the evolution of the professional development he received at BISD.

My first year in Belton, professional development was more of an introduction to the district. It was getting to know the policies and procedures of the district. After that first year, it became more about developing your teaching techniques.

Although Participant A4 attributes much of her first year of success to a supportive departmental director, she does note the quality of the professional development she received during her first year of teaching.

The professional development my first year was very helpful. The trainers explained things clearly such as how to do lesson plans and what the expectations were. This year, working with the new teachers, I feel grateful for the training I received. I feel like my level of support my first year was around a seven or an eight mainly because of the support from my CTE Director.

Having been hired in September 2012, Participant A14 missed the summer professional development offered to new teachers. However, after participating in the

embedded professional development days throughout the remainder of the school year, she felt the time spent training could have been better utilized. Participant A14 indicated that the instructional coaches are now working to make that professional development time more productive.

Summer professional development...I didn't get to do any of it. I was hired in September. Embedded days...to be honest, it didn't seem to be the best use of time. It is great time together. The objective for the day has wonderful intentions. The instructional coach is working really hard to make it more productive.

Participant A5 gave a candid response describing the professional development she received during her first year as “very monotonous.”

Monotonous...you want the truth...very monotonous. I would have had the same success without the professional development than when we do have it. I feel like there is so much I could get done during that in-service or professional development day if I just had a workday. If I could just be in my classroom and work, I could do so much. There, we are wasting time with elementary and middle school people [on content] that has no value to me.

While Participant A5 struggled to find the value in the training offered during her first year of teaching, Participant B17 from the 2013-2014 cohort found the professional development to be conducted by “really good speakers” and offer “good information.” Participant B1 also articulated a positive impression from the professional development he received during the summer of his first year. In addition, he observed the need for more targeted training with regard to classroom management for new teachers.

Participant B1 described the embedded professional development that teachers receive throughout the school year as both “valuable” and “repetitive.” However, it was his observation that veteran teachers often have a “sour outlook” on professional development that proved to be most insightful.

I really enjoyed the New Teacher Orientation because it is material you are going to need early on. I think one thing that could have been elaborated even more on

is classroom management. I would say the number one challenge for all new teachers is that. Can they really have control from the time the bell rings to the time it rings again? The lessons themselves will come and the effectiveness of your teaching is going to get better. If you don't have the life experience or prior work experience in other areas that have taught you how to deal with people (because kids are just younger people), you are not going to be able to control your class. It doesn't matter how good your lesson is, if your kids are out of control then it doesn't matter. As a new teacher, I think that is something that should be hit on more.

Now the professional development throughout the year, I think sometimes it is valuable and sometimes it is repetitive. Sometimes I think it is helpful and sometimes it is over the top. The problem is some teachers have such a sour outlook on professional development that they aren't even open to the idea that it might be helpful. That's scary if there is no way you can get past that barrier. That sour attitude is contagious. People start to get sour and every administrative thing that is done people get sour about which is not good. The new teachers are going to fall right in on it. If you are a veteran teacher and you are sour about professional development, then the new teachers are going to tune out just as fast.

While Participant B1 expressed a desire for more training on classroom management, Participant B20 mentioned that the student discipline training was highly effective as well as the literacy training. Participant B20 echoed the sentiments expressed by members of the 2012-2013 cohort in that she also felt overwhelmed by the volume of professional development offered at the beginning of the year. Participant B20 also reiterated the notion held by members of the 2012-2013 cohort that some of the professional development offered in the summer could have been dispersed throughout the year in order to make the material more easily absorbed.

At the beginning of the school year, every teacher feels overwhelmed because there is so much to do. I thought a lot of the professional development was very good like the CHAMPS and the classroom management material. But when it got into the content specific items for later in the year, I'm thinking this is a really long time from now. A lot of times I was thinking, there is a lot I could be doing right now. I do think Belton ISD has very good professional development. I do think a lot of the professional development we have on campus is really good like the literacy training we had a couple of weeks ago, and we will have some more over the Thanksgiving holiday. I am actually really excited about that because I

thought she was a wonderful presenter. But, some of it I felt like I already know this.

Participant B15 communicated a desire for more autonomy when selecting professional development courses to attend. For example, he would have focused on classroom management topics, while another new teacher might focus on content-related courses. Participant B15 also acknowledged the cost implications for the district if it offered a menu of professional development topics.

I wish there was more autonomy to it. I wish there were choices we could make. I told you that I was concerned about my management. So, I would devote much of that [time] to management, whereas someone could alter that to content. So, if it was more autonomous, I think it would be more beneficial as opposed to just 100% mandatory. That wouldn't be cheap for a district. Granted, it might not be cost-effective.

Although Participant B7 missed the summer training offered during her first year because she was hired in November, she remarked on the benefits of collaborating with other English teachers in the district.

I didn't get as much because I came in midyear. It was beneficial. Any time our campus is allowed to come together as a campus and it's not someone telling us here is what you need to do but it's us figuring out what works well in our model and what works well for us, that is always helpful. So, it was helpful. I actually like when I can go work with the BHS English teachers because there are only four of us on this campus. I am limited to three people to bounce things off of, so I like that but I have to take that and adapt it to what I do.

To further explore the research question, participants from both cohorts of new teachers were asked the following interview question: As you reflect on your first year of teaching, did the mentoring program and its components improve your job satisfaction, have no effect, or worsen your job satisfaction? The researcher considered this the most decisive question asked of the participants because the responses demonstrated a true divergence in the experiences had by the cohorts. A theme of insufficient or nonexistent

support offered by a mentor, which negatively impacted job satisfaction was prevalent within the responses from the 2012-2013 cohort, while a trend of robust support offered by a mentor greatly improved the job satisfaction held by the members of the 2013-2014 cohort.

Participant A14 from the 2012-2013 cohort conveyed feelings of sadness during her first year of teaching, which could have been ameliorated by a mentor. She also observed how novice teachers lacking in a strong sense of perseverance could easily exit the industry.

I look at that time and it was hard. I was sad for a day, but I picked myself back up. I'm going to make this better. I'm not leaving. I absolutely saw how folks with less perseverance could leave the industry. I'm not going to blame my problems on not having a mentor. Having a mentor could have improved it. I can't say that it hurt it. I can only say that having a mentor could have only improved [my situation]. I can only see it as elevating you from where you are.

In addition to a strong sense of perseverance, Participant A4 observed the need for new teachers to build relationships with other teachers, get involved in the activities of the campus, and find their niche. Participant A4 described how she shouldered most of the stress and pressures of her first year of teaching by herself; however, supportive family members helped her to endure an arduous first year. She also noted the importance of relationships with veteran teachers so novice educators have a sounding board or someone with which to vent. Participant A4 also made an astute observation that when new teachers become secluded or isolated from a network of support, they are more likely to resign.

I had to do a lot on my own. Thankfully my husband is also a teacher, so I was able to bounce ideas off him as well. It has been crazy. It did not help that we had so many changes the last couple of years. You have to find your niche. It really comes down to that. I have made my niche over there. I have met people on campus, and I have become more involved which is helping. I do all my classes in

the main building now. I do not have to float any more. I do UIL science. I am starting to become more involved. I have met new teachers who do not get to know people. When they get secluded, then they don't want to stay. There is no reason to stay. You need that group of teachers to vent about life and work.

A self-described continuous learner who was not afraid to request assistance, Participant A25 conveyed a sense of regret that a mentor was not available to her during the school day.

It would have been even more help on the days I felt like I was drowning if the mentor was available during the school day. It goes back to if I knew the mentor was coming in at a set time it would have been better. In some ways it did help, and in other ways it was easier for me to go out and find the information on my own. I said in my interview that I don't mind asking for help and I like to learn. I am a constant learner, and I am about to go back to school. I don't have any shame in asking for help because I want to make sure I am doing things effectively. If I could offer any advice, it would be to make the mentors really available to new teachers. It is especially tough on a high-needs campus. I am optimistic, but I am also vocal about ways to improve.

Participants A9 and A5 were more fortunate with their mentoring experiences during the 2012-2013 school year and its impact on their job satisfaction. Participant A9 specifically remarked on the positive feedback and encouragement he received from a supportive faculty and administration. He also noted the reflective activities performed with instructional facilitators, but the large class sizes in his first year of teaching led to feelings of burnout.

It definitely improved my job satisfaction. It was always nice to get positive feedback. Whenever I would do reflective activities with the instructional facilitators, they would point out the positives while I would focus on the negatives. I was really hard on myself, but they made sure I received positive feedback and focused on that as well. My first year here, my administrative team was very supportive. I could not have asked for a better supporting cast or administration. The thing that really got to me my first year was the 40 students per class. With two classes combined, I had 40 students for 80 minutes and that really put a stress on me. After my second year, I felt the burnout. So, I took the summer off from professional development in order to decompress and that really helped. When I got back from the summer, I was ready to go.

Unlike most of the participants from the 2012-2013 cohort, members of the 2013-2014 new teacher cohort typically described the mentoring program and its components as having a favorable impact on their job satisfaction. Participant B15 described how the support he received improved his job satisfaction immensely.

I think it improved it tremendously. Just being able to look back and know the support was there even if it wasn't always needed. In the back of your mind knowing that isn't something you have to worry about, that is a nice level of comfort for a first year teacher.

Participant B1 expressed similar sentiments of strong support from his mentor, instructional coach, and fellow teachers, which resulted in a high rate of job satisfaction. Despite hearing horror stories regarding the first year of teaching, Participant B1 never felt overwhelmed because he had the encouragement and guidance of his mentor teacher. In fact, Participant B1 would even call his mentor teacher early in the morning before school started to seek advice for the upcoming day.

I had a great experience my first year. I think that was mainly because at no point did I not have support. I came into this thinking it was going to be a lot worse. I had heard horror stories. People talk about how horrible the first year was going to be. I never felt panicky like I wasn't going to be able to figure out what to do. I never felt like I was bothering anyone. If I had ever felt like I was bothering my mentor or bothering my instructional coach or bothering my fellow teachers, I would have stopped asking. I would have tried to figure it out on my own and I probably wouldn't have developed as far as I did. But I never felt like that. They were always open. There were many times when I would call my mentor in the morning when she was getting ready for school and she would help me. She was great. I would call my partner teacher. This year she has been so helpful to me. We have been practicing at 6:00 in the morning. I have always felt like there was support.

Participant B17 remarked on a smooth first year due to the mentoring program and its components as well as strong feelings of job satisfaction. Despite a learning curve associated with classroom management, Participant B17 now feels that she has a firm grasp of student discipline.

I would say that it definitely helped. I think my first year was pretty smooth. It was hard, but I didn't necessarily go through the same process. In our certification class, they said in your first year you would probably go through these roller coaster emotions. I seem to be a couple of months behind on everything. So, I think it went pretty well. I would have to say the hardest thing was the classroom management - discipline part of it. How to go about when to write a referral? Is that a problem to write a referral? Does that say that you can't handle them? That was really the biggest thing. Going into my second year, I have this down a little more pat.

While Participant B17 experienced the typical first year struggles with classroom management, Participant B7 was hired in November so she experienced the added difficulties of being a mid-year hire. Despite coming into a difficult situation, Participant B7 felt the mentoring and support she received improved her feelings of job satisfaction and allowed her and the students to finish the year in a positive fashion.

I think it improved especially because I was coming in under a difficult situation. Any help was appreciated and improved what I was doing. I walked into a dysfunctional setting, but by May they were leaving all fixed up. They were going into their English IV senior year, but it was a rough start.

Although she had a challenging first year of teaching, Participant B20 has experienced an increase in job satisfaction during her second year of teaching due in large part to a supportive mentor and team of co-teachers. Participant B20 described the stress and pressure of her first year of teaching compounded by struggles with classroom management. Despite contemplating leaving the profession, Participant B20 persevered through her first year with the help of a supportive family. This year, her mentor and co-teachers have offered feedback and support on everything from room arrangement to learning stations.

I would say improved because I am much more satisfied in my job this year than I was last year. Last year, I felt like I was drowning which is probably typical for every first year teacher. But this year, I have a supportive team. I am very happy where I am this year. Although it is just as intense as it was last year, I am not nearly as stressed out or feel like I am drowning. I had classroom management

struggles last year. I feel like I will be changing what I do for ten years until I really get a good system. This year classroom management is a lot better than it was last year.

My partners this year are wonderful and helped me figure out what I was going to do for stations and how to set up my room. They were totally supportive. They give me suggestions. They are all wonderful. I couldn't ask for a better team. Within the first nine weeks of school my first year, I thought about if teaching was right for me. I honestly didn't know if this was for me, but I stuck it out another year and I am so glad I did. First of all, I didn't want to give up after just one year. But, my husband is also very encouraging. He knows I love what I do even though it is hard.

Questionnaire Protocol: Questions 6, 7, & 10

To further explore how new teachers describe the overall mentoring program as measured by perspectives of job satisfaction, the researcher provided a questionnaire protocol to the participants in both cohort groups. The respondents were to select a response on a Likert scale to describe their perspective of agreement or disagreement with the statement. The sixth item on the questionnaire protocol stated, "A fellow educator assisted me with the analysis of student assessment data during my first year of employment with Belton ISD." Of the eleven participants responding from the 2012-2013 cohort, three selected "strongly agree," four selected "agree," three selected "neutral," and one marked "disagree." Of the ten participants responding from the 2013-2014 cohort, four selected "strongly agree," two selected "agree," one selected "neutral," two selected "disagree," and one marked "strongly disagree." Although the responses from the 2012-2013 cohort may have been slightly more favorable, participants from both cohorts typically indicated that a fellow assisted them in some manner with the analysis of student assessment data.

The seventh item on the questionnaire protocol stated, “I received assistance from a fellow educator with writing lesson plans which were in alignment with the District curriculum during my first year of employment with Belton ISD.” Of the eleven participants responding from the 2012-2013 cohort, two selected “strongly agree,” three selected “agree,” four selected “disagree,” and two marked “strongly disagree.” Of the ten participants responding from the 2013-2014 cohort, two selected “strongly agree,” four selected “agree,” one selected “neutral,” one selected “disagree,” and two marked “strongly disagree.” The responses from the 2013-2014 cohort were more favorable indicating that new teachers that year received more assistance with one of the most foundational skills of being a teacher which is lesson planning. Table 4.12 below summarizes the responses from questionnaire items six and seven.

Table 4.12

Questionnaire Protocol Analysis (Items 6 & 7)

Questionnaire Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A fellow educator assisted me with the analysis of student assessment data during my first year of employment with BISD.	3	4	3	1	0 -2012
	4	2	1	2	1-2013
I received assistance from a fellow educator with writing lesson plans which were in alignment with the District curriculum during my first year of employment with BISD.	2	3	0	4	2 -2012
	2	4	1	1	2 -2013

The tenth item on the questionnaire protocol was an open-ended question that allowed the participants to provide statements regarding the following question: “What did Belton ISD do well to support its new teachers?” Many of the new teachers from the 2012-2013 cohort, such as Participant A11, cited “new teacher trainings” as being

beneficial. Participant A14 commented that BISD supported its new teachers through “professional development and summer courses such as AVID and poverty training.” Similarly, Participant A15 noted that “there is a ton of professional development offered and new teachers are encouraged to participate.” While Participant A17 also remarked that “the first year teacher orientation helped considerably,” this new teacher from the 2012-2013 cohort expressed a desire for additional training on student software programs. Participant A17 stated, “I do think that a day could be added...it would be healthy to spend more time with these applications and to understand the data...especially the 504 and special education documents.”

Other members of the 2012-2013 cohort observed the inviting atmosphere at BISD, while some novice educators commented on the support offered by fellow teachers, instructional facilitators, and administrators. Participant A9 explained, “I felt that new teachers were welcomed in the district and valued as contributing members of the school.” Likewise, Participant A13 remarked, “At my school I felt welcomed and valued, and BISD employees would ask me if I needed help or if there was anything I needed.”

Participants A4, A5, and A24 described the support and encouragement offered by instructional facilitators, co-workers, and supervisors. Specifically, Participant A4 stated, “My supervisor made himself available if I needed help or advice...faculty also checked on each other throughout the year.” Participant A5 declared, “My co-teachers, instructional facilitator, and principal were awesome.” Participant A24 explained, “There was a ton of support for me! My facilitator was awesome. She was always open to talk with me when I had questions or needed advice and really helped me throughout the year.

I also had a really supportive grade level team that helped with lessons and planning instruction. It was a very supportive first year!” While many members of the 2012-2013 cohort could identify positive aspects of the support system offered by Belton ISD, Participant A25 described a “rough” first year learning all of the district’s new information and acronyms.

New teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort commented on the quality professional development and support offered by teacher mentors, instructional coaches, and supervisors. Participant B13 noted the day of classroom management training provided specifically to zero-year teachers. She explained, “The first week of in-service, Belton provided a special training for zero-year teachers. The staff at the campus I work for was helpful and offered support when I needed it.” Participant B17 identified her “formal mentor” and “opportunities for professional development” as two areas of support, while Participants B1, B7, B20, B22, and B24 all described support from an instructional coach or principal.

Participant B1 described an instructional coach that “was there to answer questions and be supportive” as well as a team leader who helped him tremendously during his first year of teaching. Participant B7 appreciated her instructional coach and principal for providing “great moral support,” while Participant B20 commented on a “supportive team” of teachers who answered her questions. Participant B22 identified the opportunity to observe other teachers in order to gain ideas on better classroom management and more effective instruction. She stated, “Belton ISD provided me an opportunity to observe an educator of my same grade level to get ideas for guided reading and classroom management. My instructional coach and I together developed a plan to

implement what I observed.” Participant B24 explained how “everyone was very open to offering help during my first year of teaching” and the instructional coach “went above and beyond to ensure we had everything we needed and answered questions promptly.” The only negative response elicited from the 2013-2014 cohort came from Participant B14 who was hired after the school year started, and she did not receive a teacher mentor. She stated, “I was pretty much on my own...I have been given one at my new campus.”

Artifacts: Employee Separation Questionnaire

When teachers separate from the District, they are asked to complete an employee separation questionnaire as part of the exit process. Although not all participants from the two cohorts who have left BISD completed an employee separation questionnaire, the researcher used the available information to gain additional insight into the perspectives of job satisfaction held by those teachers as they exited the District. In addition to a series of job components that the exiting teacher was asked to rate as “excellent,” “good,” “fair,” or “poor,” the questionnaire also allowed the teacher to provide comments and suggestions for areas in which the District could improve.

On the whole, the seven responses from the 2012-2013 cohort and the four responses from the 2013-2014 cohort were positive; however, suggestions for improvement were also offered. For example, Participant A20 from the 2012-2013 cohort stated that she “did not feel supported” and suggested a “mentor program for new teachers;” however, she did appreciate the “learning materials” that were at her disposal. Participant A1 cited “team planning time, competitive pay, and great co-workers and team leader” as positive experiences with the District. Participant A22 stated that she “felt like the district tried to do what was best for the students,” but identified the

“number of hours worked on weeknights and weekends” as a determining factor in her leaving the District. Participant A12 appreciated “the opportunities for professional development,” while Participant A18 “enjoyed the encouragement from staff and administration.” Participant A16 highlighted that “BISD works as a team and each employee is valued,” but “driving thirty to sixty minutes to get to Belton” was a determining factor in her leaving the District. Although she ranked all of the job component items as “good,” Participant A3 noted “a disconnect between administration and classroom teachers.”

Participant B23 from the 2013-2014 cohort also commented that “there should be better communication between administrators and teachers,” while Participant B3 pinpointed the need for “better communication within department.” However, Participant B3 also stated that funds were “readily available to enhance student learning through trips and materials in the classroom.” Participant B11 noted that “the staff was friendly and willing to assist you when help was needed,” while Participant B2 added that he “felt very supported at SBMS.” For Participant B2, traveling between campuses became a source of discontent. Table 4.13 below summarizes the responses to the job component items found on the employee separation questionnaire.

Table 4.13

Exit Interview Analysis – 2012-2013 Cohort (7 responses)

Questionnaire Item	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Working Relationship with supervisor	4	2	0	1
Cooperation within department	3	3	1	0
Cooperation with other departments	3	2	1	1
Adequacy of orientation and training	2	4	1	0
Workload	1	5	1	0
Physical working conditions / facilities	3	3	1	0
Availability of materials and equipment	4	2	1	0
Evaluation procedures	2	3	1	1
Recognition on the job	1	3	3	0
Employee benefits	2	5	0	0
Communication within the district	3	3	1	0
Central Administration support	3	2	1	1
Community / parent support	2	3	1	1
Overall experience	2	4	1	0

It is important to note that for the 2012-2013 respondents, “adequacy of orientation and training” was rated favorably as well as “overall experience.”

With a sample of only four respondents from the 2013-2014 cohort, the researcher is hesitant to make any generalizations based on the data presented in Table 4.14 below. However, it is interesting to note how divided the four respondents are with regard to their evaluation of each job component.

Table 4.14

Exit Interview Analysis – 2013-2014 Cohort (4 responses)

Questionnaire Item	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Working Relationship with supervisor	0	3	0	1
Cooperation within department	0	2	0	2
Cooperation with other departments	0	2	2	0
Adequacy of orientation and training	1	1	1	1
Workload	0	4	0	0
Physical working conditions / facilities	1	2	1	0
Availability of materials and equipment	1	1	2	0
Evaluation procedures	0	3	1	0
Recognition on the job	0	2	1	1
Employee benefits	1	2	1	0
Communication within the district	0	1	3	0
Central Administration support	1	1	2	0
Community / parent support	0	1	2	1
Overall experience	0	2	1	1

Example of Triangulation

Objectivity or confirmability refers to the degree in which others could corroborate the results of this study. Strategies for verifying the objectivity of the data included triangulation whereby multiple and different sources provided corroborating evidence. After analyzing the data through constant comparative analysis, pattern-matching analysis, cross-case analysis, and time-series analysis, themes and trends began

to emerge from the data. After a saturation of interview, observation, questionnaire, and artifact data occurred, the researcher found ten propositions, which will be presented in chapter five. However, it is important to describe examples of triangulation, which led to these propositions. For example, proposition four states that new teachers from both cohorts utilize reflective practice to improve classroom instruction; however, the reflective professional development offered by mentors and instructional coaches was more intentional during the 2013-2014 school year.

Interview data from the 2012-2013 participants revealed limited exposure to reflective activities during their first year of teaching, while interview data from the 2013-2014 participants exposed a more uniform, continuous improvement process utilizing reflection to improve classroom instruction. Questionnaire data submitted by participants from both cohorts also corroborated this proposition. Observations of new teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort during professional development sessions or work with their instructional coaches confirmed the use of reflection while planning lessons. For example, instructional coaches often used the “I like, I wonder, and next steps” model to promote reflective thinking by teachers. Artifacts such as lesson plans created by new teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort demonstrated the use of this reflective model. Other artifacts such as walkthrough documents created by the instructional coaches also utilized the “I like, I wonder, and next steps” model to encourage instructional reflection by the 2013-2014 novice teachers. Thus, a triangulation and saturation of interview, observation, questionnaire, and artifact data confirmed and corroborated this proposition.

Summary

After analyzing the data provided by participants from both cohorts as well as the instructional coaches and administrators from the curriculum and instruction department, the information can be overwhelming especially since the data came from multiple collection techniques. Therefore, the researcher summarized the information briefly by addressing each research question with a one sentence response. The summary is presented in Table 4.15 below.

Table 4.15

Research Question – Outcomes Matrix

Research Question	Summary Outcomes
What is the role of mentoring in the developmental experiences of new teachers?	While not formally trained to act as mentors, the instructional coaches often mentor new teachers by providing professional support through side-by-side coaching, lesson plan collaboration, and professional development.
How do new teachers describe the overall mentoring program as measured by perspectives of professional support?	Zero-year teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort were better supported professionally through the instructional coaching model, formal assignment of mentors, and more intentional reflective professional development.
How do new teachers describe the instructional coaching model as measured by perspectives of professional support?	Members from both cohorts describe the role of instructional coach as having a stronger focus on assisting with lesson design, providing more meaningful professional development, and offering non-evaluative feedback to improve instruction.
How do new teachers describe reflective professional development as measured by perspectives of professional support?	New teachers from both cohorts utilize reflective practice to improve classroom instruction; however, the reflective professional development offered by mentors and instructional coaches was more intentional during the 2013-2014 school year.
How do new teachers describe the overall mentoring program as measured by perspectives of job satisfaction?	New teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort received instructional guidance, modeling, and non-evaluative feedback from a mentor which improved their perspectives of job support and satisfaction.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

After analyzing the data through constant-comparative analysis, pattern-matching analysis, cross-case analysis, and time-series analysis, themes and trends began to emerge from the data. Multiple data collection techniques were implemented for purposes of triangulation and to confirm findings through a saturation of data. When collecting information from multiple sources and through various means but obtaining results that corroborate the same finding, the investigator is performing triangulation. Once the case study's findings are supported by more than a single source of evidence, triangulation has occurred (Yin, 2014). Thus, the following ten propositions were found.

Analysis Results

Propositions

Proposition 1: New teachers from the 2012-2013 cohort received a non-existent or haphazard mentoring relationship and demonstrated great perseverance to overcome obstacles and hardships presented during their first year of teaching. As the researcher analyzed the responses from the participant teachers, themes and trends began to emerge which differentiated the first year experiences described by the 2012-2013 cohort from the experiences illustrated by the 2013-2014 cohort. With regard to a mentoring experience, participants from the 2012-2013 cohort typically described a first year absent of a mentoring relationship or a very haphazard or unstructured mentoring situation. Many of the new teachers from the 2012-2013 cohort used words such as “scary,” “hard,”

“rough,” “alone,” and “stressed out” to describe their first year teaching experience. “I didn’t know what I didn’t know” was a phrase used by one participant in the 2012-2013 cohort that encapsulated the perspectives held by many new teachers in her group. Other common statements made by new teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort included: “I went through a lot my first year.” “I had to overcome a lot of obstacles my first year.” “I was definitely stressed out the first year.” “It was a rough first year.” “I would have had a different first year if I had a mentor.” “That first year was hard.” “I did not sleep. I was on my own.”

The researcher also took note of great perseverance demonstrated by many of the new teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort because they overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles at times. The teacher who had her students perform dissections without running water in her classroom was a vivid example of this determination and commitment. This beginning teacher also commented on the feelings of isolation as well as the physical and emotional stress she endured due to the absence of a mentor teacher. While some of the novice teachers in this cohort actively sought assistance, there was an underlying fear that their request for guidance could be construed as a sign of weakness or incompetence. A minority of new teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort had a mentor who provided reflective feedback, demonstration lessons, instructional materials, and assistance with lesson planning or they relied upon a campus administrator or instructional facilitator who provided support.

Many of the participants in the 2012-2013 cohort communicated a desire for non-evaluative feedback and other aspects of a mentoring relationship during their first year, while others described the professional development offered by the district as too broad

or general. Despite an exceptionally tough first year for many of the teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort, many described a much more successful and productive second year due in part to the benefits of having an instructional coach who provided aspects of mentoring. This observation is aligned to the feedback given by many of the participant teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort who described consistent support, non-evaluative feedback, and facets of a mentoring relationship provided by the newly created instructional coach positions.

Proposition 2: New teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort received instructional guidance, modeling, assistance with data analysis, and non-evaluative feedback from a mentor, which improved their perspectives of support and job satisfaction. The majority of participant teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort expressed appreciation for a mentor teacher who provided instructional guidance, modeling, assistance with data analysis, and a sounding board for ideas. Although some of the novice teachers from this cohort did not realize that their mentor teacher had been formally assigned to them, they benefited greatly from the guidance provided by these mentors. These mentor teachers, with their years of experience, helped their novice protégés rectify problems or issued timely advice on how to adjust classroom instruction to better engage students. Veteran mentor teachers often provided model lessons as well as advice on instructional techniques, formative and summative assessments, and student work products. In addition to veteran mentors, participants from the 2013-2014 cohort also enjoyed honest feedback and consistent support from campus instructional coaches.

Participants from the 2013-2014 cohort often used the following statements to summarize their first year mentoring experience: “With her feedback, it was able to help

push me into becoming a better instructor.” “The mentors I had from the beginning of the year did guide me and help me with everything.” “She was good at analyzing data and seeing where we needed to improve our instruction.” “If I had a struggle in between classes, I would go to my mentors. I felt supported. I never felt like I was on an island by myself. I always felt like no matter what was going on, I had someone to lean on.” “I definitely appreciated and valued the mentor especially as an entering teacher.” “I thought my first year went very well.” “I felt supported. It was built into the culture of the school.”

However, a minority of teachers in the 2013-2014 cohort had an unstructured mentoring experience similar to those in the 2012-2013 cohort. One important finding for the researcher was that new teachers who were hired after the start of the school year often fell through the cracks as far as having a mentor assigned to them. For these teachers, they had to actively seek out assistance from fellow departmental or grade level teachers on issues ranging from classroom management to instructional rigor. While they often received support and guidance, this unstructured form of mentoring greatly increased the risk of attrition for new teachers who were struggling with typical first year issues such as classroom management.

Proposition 3: New teachers from the 2012-2013 cohort describe the role of instructional facilitator as narrow in scope and focused upon managerial or clerical tasks, while members of both cohorts describe the role of instructional coach as having a stronger focus on assisting with lesson design, providing more meaningful professional development, and offering non-evaluative feedback to improve instruction. As the researcher transitioned from the topic of mentoring to the subject of instructional

coaching, themes and trends again began to emerge from the responses provided by the participants that differentiated the experiences and perspectives held by the two different cohorts. Participants from the 2012-2013 cohort were able to speak to the transition or evolution from the instructional facilitator model to the instructional coaching model. Many of these participants remarked on the limited interaction they had with instructional facilitators during their first year of teaching. In addition, these teachers described the role of instructional facilitator as narrow in scope with their duties being more managerially focused. For example, it was observed that the instructional facilitators created agendas, attended departmental meetings, performed data disaggregation, and conducted walkthroughs but did not play a major role with regard to instruction.

However, participants from the 2012-2013 cohort witnessed the newly refined instructional coach positions during their second year of teaching and could observe a marked difference in their role with classroom instruction. For example, the instructional coaches increased their visibility in classrooms, gathered feedback from teachers, assisted in the planning of units of study, endeavored to make professional development sessions more meaningful, and were proactive in approaching teachers about upcoming curricular issues. As first year teachers, participants from the 2013-2014 cohort acknowledged the wealth of content knowledge offered by the instructional coaches as well as the support and non-evaluative feedback they received from these newly redefined positions. Other members of the 2013-2014 cohort described intensive support offered by the instructional coaches through frequent classroom visits, tips on instructional strategies, and assistance with project design. Despite the advantages and benefits offered by the instructional coaching model, the researcher found that the instructional coaches, especially those

serving multiple secondary campuses, were perceived by teachers from both cohorts to be spread-thin and at times difficult to reach.

Pivotal comments provided by the participants regarding the transition from the instructional facilitator to instructional coaching model included the following: “This year we have an instructional coach, and he is doing some great things.” “I definitely feel like the instructional coaching model has supported me professionally because we meet once a week. The instructional coach comes around to make sure we have everything we need. She is all-around very helpful.” “I’ve always had a good relationship with my instructional coach. I never felt like she was critiquing me or coming down on me. I felt like she was there to help. If I made a mistake, she would come tell me about it.” “The instructional coach was in my room often. I know she came with such great content knowledge. I appreciated that. When I felt like I was hitting a wall with a lesson plan, she had two or three strategies to offer to me, so that helped tremendously.”

Proposition 4: New teachers from both cohorts utilize reflective practice to improve classroom instruction; however, the reflective professional development offered by mentors and instructional coaches was more intentional during the 2013-2014 school year. As the researcher transitioned to the third major component of the program evaluation, reflective professional development and practice, a common theme emerged within the responses from participants in both cohorts. That theme was that new teachers utilize reflective practice frequently in order to improve classroom instruction. Another trend indicated that the reflective professional development offered by a mentor or instructional coach was more intentional for the new teachers in the 2013-2014 cohort.

Participants from the 2012-2013 cohort described limited exposure to reflective professional development during their first year of teaching. For example, an instructional facilitator may have posed a reflective question for a new teacher after conducting a walkthrough classroom observation. Another participant from the 2012-2013 cohort described observing a veteran classroom teacher with an instructional facilitator; however, there was no follow-up reflective activity to truly process the findings or learning from that observation. Other members of the 2012-2013 cohort were more fortunate in that their mentor or instructional facilitator helped them reflect on instruction and classroom management or encouraged them to gain student feedback in order to adjust their teaching.

There was more unanimity in the responses provided by the members of the 2013-2014 cohort regarding reflective development and practice during their first year of instruction. Participants from this cohort described a continuous improvement process whereby the novice teacher would reflect on instruction and assessment data with a mentor and gain feedback from these veteran teachers on how to be more effective in the classroom. One participant described the “I like, I wonder, and next steps” model for reflection used by her instructional coach, which improved her classroom instruction. Another participant commented on how her instructional coach provides suggestions for improvement after each classroom walkthrough, which bolstered her own reflective practice.

Decisive comments made by participants from the 2013-2014 cohort describing reflective professional development and practice included the following: “I felt supported from a reflective standpoint.” “We did reflect on a unit as a whole and talk

about results based on data. I did feel like I had support that way. I like to reflect on every unit. I like to reflect on what was effective and what was not.” “When I would have walkthroughs both by my instructional coach, assistant principal or principal, they would provide ‘I like, I wonder, and next steps’ which is what we focus on in our model. There are opportunities for me to think about that and to reflect on my own.” “I am constantly thinking how I can change my lessons. How can I make it better? What can I do to keep their attention?”

Proposition 5: With the transition from the instructional facilitator to the instructional coaching model, the focus of the instructional coach has shifted from providing direct support to students to improving the instruction of teachers through non-evaluative feedback and reflective discussions. Members of the curriculum and instruction department, including the instructional coaches, noted the struggles and difficulties associated with the transition from the instructional facilitator model. Under the former model, instructional facilitators performed a variety of managerial tasks, completed campus duty, and even engaged in clerical support for teachers such as making copies of student assessments. In previous years, a critical function for the instructional facilitators was to provide one-to-one support or small group interventions for students in order to help them pass state testing. However, with the evolution to the instructional coaching model, the focus is now upon improving instruction, providing constructive feedback, assisting with data analysis, and having reflective conversations with teachers. By supporting teachers and maximizing the effectiveness of their instruction, the instructional coaches are still impacting student outcomes in a positive fashion.

In the early phases of the transition to the instructional coaching model, many campus administrators still held the notion that the instructional coaches would be evaluative in their observations of teachers. For principals, the instructional coaches were essential in conducting classroom walkthroughs and providing feedback and insight on which teachers were struggling. Under the new model, not only are instructional coaches to provide non-evaluative feedback to teachers, but the coaching cycle is also intended to support and grow relatively strong instructors. Non-evaluative feedback offered by the instructional coaches can often appear to be non-emotional or detached because it is free from praise; however, by asking probing questions the instructional coaches can guide the teachers' self-reflection. Although the feedback provided to teachers is non-evaluative in the sense that the remarks are free from value judgments that could be classified as praise or criticism, the instructional coaches thoughtfully and intentionally reflect upon the teachers' instruction in order to evaluate pedagogical approaches as well as assess the depth of understanding held by teachers in their content area. Instructional coaches also focus upon identifying the content and language objectives of lessons as well as analyzing the timeliness of instruction in relation to the state and District curriculum documents.

Insightful remarks made by administrators in the curriculum and instruction department as well as instructional coaches regarding this shift in the role of instructional coach include: "When we had facilitators, it was so loose and varied as to what they did...For example, some of them would do two hours of duty a day. [The facilitator] wasn't getting to spend much time with teachers period, let alone first year teachers. So, when we went to this coaching model...their lane was not about filling in for duty, or

filling in classes, or working one-on-one with kids. Their lane was about instruction and having those deep conversations about instruction.” “It was a bit rocky because the District still had the perception of using the instructional coaches in an evaluative way with teachers, but the Castillo and Markos training taught us that we are not evaluative.” “In the facilitator role, we were doing so many things and a lot of it was focused on making sure that kids were successful on the state exam or making sure that interventions were in place for that success. It was not so much about supporting teachers becoming good at their craft.” “It really was about moving from that clerical part of helping them. Running copies is not the heart of coaching. That is being their clerk. It’s about asking the questions.”

Proposition 6: While not formally trained to act as mentors, the instructional coaches often mentor new teachers by providing professional support through side-by-side coaching, lesson plan collaboration, and professional development. Although the instructional coaches did not receive formal mentor training, many of the services they provided to teachers in the 2013-2014 cohort were forms of professional support that fall under the umbrella of mentoring. For example, the instructional coaches frequently engaged in side-by-side coaching or co-teaching sessions with new or inexperienced teachers. Professional development focused on specific teacher needs as well as model lessons demonstrated by the instructional coaches were other forms of support provided to novice educators. Spending time in the classroom, collaborating on lesson plan design, and helping navigate online student management systems were just a few of the other methods in which instructional coaches informally mentored new teachers. The instructional coaches often assisted new teachers with finding resources, provided tips on

how to manage a classroom, and offered guidance on how to perform formative and summative assessments with students.

The team of elementary instructional coaches even formalized the following objective: Elementary Instructional Coaches will demonstrate application of coaching, growing, and supporting classroom teachers by using the elements of coaching to improve student performance and academic success as evidenced on weekly lesson plans, classroom observation data, and/or measured on common assessment and formative/summative results. The instructional coaching model has provided a better system for communicating with new teachers about instruction from a curricular standpoint and has held the instructional coaches accountable for having reflective conversations with teachers that are grounded in the aspects of quality instruction. By focusing on the new teacher's instruction and its impact on student learning, instructional coaches were no longer tasked with "fixing" a teacher; rather, their goal was to improve the novice teacher's instruction in order to increase student achievement.

Insightful comments from members of the curriculum and instruction department regarding the instructional coaches' informal role as mentors included the following: "Yes, they act as mentors and provide demonstration lessons. For example, for one instructional coach, her job every day last week was to touch base with a brand new teacher each morning." "We do side-by-side coaching and model lessons. When it comes to any type of assessment, I model how to do it." "I will say that we have a better system in place to talk to new teaches about their instruction because we always talk about it from a curricular standpoint. It has held us all accountable by when we have those conversations we ground it in instruction." "The focus of this is student evidence, looking

at the work of the students to then inform how I am going to help the teacher. We look at the evidence together with the teacher and then we decide what do you need support with to help get your kids where they need to be on this skill or this concept. If your kids have grown as you have worked with that teacher that is your evidence to show what you did with that teacher made a difference.”

Proposition 7: Although the instructional coaches built relationships with new teachers and these novice educators in turn sought their assistance, the instructional coaching team was spread too thin among the fifteen BISS campuses. While the instructional coaching team offered professional support and informal mentoring services to new teachers in the 2013-2014 cohort, these novice educators often expressed disappointment that the instructional coaches were not on campus more frequently. Likewise, the instructional coaches expressed frustration with being responsible for the support of numerous teachers on multiple campuses. Despite a large workload, many of the instructional coaches made it a goal to spend at least one hour per week in the classroom of new teachers. Fortunately, the new teachers in the 2013-2014 cohort also had teacher mentors from which to seek assistance; however, the amount of assistance sought from either an instructional coach or teacher mentor often depended upon the confidence and assertiveness of that individual new teacher.

Pivotal comments regarding the heavy workload of the instructional coaches included the following: “It is real hard to go in and affect change or turn the tide there when you are spread among forty-four teachers.” “When we were there we definitely gave them support, but I heard numerous times when a teacher would say, ‘I wish you were here more.’ But, we were only on each campus once a week.” “I do feel that I am

being supportive of new teachers, and I am in classrooms a great deal more. My one concern is that we are stretched so thin still.” “With all of my new teachers, I make an attempt to go into their classrooms one hour a week.” “I think they feel comfortable approaching the instructional coaches. For example, a teacher we just hired is glued to the instructional coach.” “I am on every campus every week sometimes more than once a week, but I am still not somebody who is there every day. There is no pretense here. They definitely go to their partner who teaches their subject more readily.” “Of our two new kindergarten teachers, one pursues help a lot more than the other. But, I really think the other one just doesn’t know what to ask.”

Proposition 8: With quality training on how to conduct a reflective conversation and a targeted focus on student engagement and instructional alignment, the instructional coaches engaged in more effective reflective discussions with new teachers in the 2013-2014 cohort. With the evolution to the instructional coaching model, the team of instructional coaches received training as to how to provide new and experienced teachers with non-evaluative feedback, which is free from praise and criticism. Professional trainers modeled the practice of side-by-side coaching and reflective conversations with the team of instructional coaches during the transition to the instructional coaching model. With a focus upon student-centered objectives, the instructional coaches began asking new teachers in the 2013-2014 cohort reflective questions after each classroom walkthrough to spark quality discussions about instruction. With a more targeted focus on student engagement and instructional alignment with the state standards, the reflective conversations with the 2013-2014 cohort were more effective than the discussions had with new teachers in the 2012-2013 cohort.

The instructional coaches took time to thoughtfully and intentionally craft reflective questions based upon what they observed in teachers' classrooms.

Definitive comments from the instructional coaches regarding their training and implementation of reflective discussions and non-evaluative feedback with new teachers included the following: "I really feel good about that training. We watched Markos and Castillo do a reflective conversation with the teacher, so it was modeled to us." "The reflection training was nice especially now that we have a focus. So, when we reflect now we have more of a focus. Last year, we always had reflective talks. I always met back with them after a visit, but it was hit or miss." "We even have scripted questions to ask teachers. Our target has been moving, but it is focusing now." "Just to have the reflective conversation and not say 'you did great on that' is very hard. You really do have to have a pretty strong relationship with the teacher. It is very hard just to listen to constructive criticism."

Proposition 9: New teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort received more formalized assistance with regard to student data analysis; however, more consistent, ongoing training throughout the school year could alleviate the volume and intensity of the professional development at the beginning of the school year. New teachers to BISD from both cohorts received quality professional development on a variety of topics ranging from the analysis of student assessment data to lesson plan design; however, the sheer volume of this training at the beginning of the school year can be overwhelming for new teachers. By dispersing professional development on foundational items such as classroom management, grading, and student assessment throughout the school year, the information would become more manageable for novice educators just entering the

profession. At the beginning of the school year, new teachers were focused primarily on the basics such as the physical setup of their classroom, available resources and materials for instruction, and lesson plans adhering to the District's curriculum. Training on administrative issues such as submitting an absence was often quickly overlooked due to the pressing nature of the items mentioned earlier.

The instructional coaches often assisted new teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort with creating a lesson plan template, locating the District curriculum documents, reviewing the state standards, and then writing lesson plans which were aligned to those standards during the teacher's planning time. The instructional coaches also engaged in more formalized "data talks" with new teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort in order to identify students who struggled with benchmark assessments as well as pinpoint the TEKS objective with which the students had the most difficulty. With a list of reflective questions to help guide the discussions, the instructional coach and teacher then evaluate their options with regard to re-teaching the material or using interventions to assist struggling students.

Significant remarks made by members of the instructional coaching team and curriculum and instruction department regarding the professional development received by new teachers included the following: "We give them professional development in the beginning out of a fire hydrant. There are certain things you have to go over in the beginning, but I think it would be more beneficial for those teachers if we brought them back around the end of September especially those first year teachers. Then, I think you bring them in the first of December and February." "I think the week that they have prior to school starting is so overwhelming to them. At that time, they are thinking about

getting their classrooms ready, looking at the curriculum that is offered, and finding their resources. Everything with Eduphoria and figuring out how to put in lesson plans, it is just so overwhelming and at that time it isn't of high importance. I have got to deal with what's going to happen tomorrow not whether or not I'm going to be off campus next month." "Because the instructional coaches were all teachers who used Eduphoria to lesson plan, they are able to help a teacher set up their planner, pull over their standards, find their curriculum, and write the lesson plans." "Every time that they have given a common unit assessment, we have data talks. Do we need to re-teach? Do we need interventions? Data is a process in training. It is something you have to learn."

Proposition 10: Zero-year teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort were better supported professionally through the instructional coaching model, formal assignment of mentors, and more intentional reflective professional development; however, additional training for new teachers is still needed to better assist them with issues such as classroom management. With the transition to the instructional coaching model, new teachers from the 2013-2014 cohort were better supported from a curriculum and instruction standpoint. While the instructional coach supports the beginning teacher with classroom instruction, the mentor teacher assists with campus-related issues such as building relationships. Zero-year teachers still require additional training to address the many obstacles and challenges that they will face during their first year of instruction such as classroom management issues; however, beginning teachers often feel disconnected from their grade level peers when they attend new-teacher training. Overall, the 2013-2014 cohort was better supported through the instructional coaching model, formal teacher mentors, and intentional reflective practice. Under the previous model,

instructional facilitators completed a variety of tasks ranging from providing interventions to struggling students to performing clerical duties such as making copies of assessments. With the transition to the new model, instructional coaches now focus upon supporting teachers' classroom instruction so that student achievement is improved.

Seminal comments made by the instructional coaches and curriculum and instruction administrators regarding the success of the instructional coaching model, formal assignment of mentors, and more intentional reflective development included the following: "I think they are better supported in curriculum and instruction." "Oh yes, because I am in the classroom, whereas before I was doing more clerical. I was copying tests. There were times when I was even taking students out of the classroom, which they probably appreciated, but it was not helping them instructionally. It is so much different. I think it is now what it was meant to be....as a support." "I think it has been a good change. I think there are so many new things coming down the pipeline...the new math TEKS and kinder and first are doing new assessments. All of that stuff is very overwhelming to teachers. I honestly don't know what they would do if there weren't coaches."

Contribution to Existing Research

Ingersoll's research suggested that comprehensive mentoring programs accelerate the professional growth of new teachers and increase the rate of new teacher retention. This study appears to confirm those findings because the three-pronged support system offered to new teachers at BISD (a formally assigned mentor, instructional coaching, and reflective professional development) reduced the new teacher attrition in the spring of 2013 from 18.5% to only 12.5% in the spring of 2014. While the second year of teaching

for the 2012-2013 cohort brought a 29.6% attrition rate, only 8.3% of the 2013-2014 cohort resigned in their second year of teaching. By the time the 2012-2013 new teacher cohort was in its third year of teaching, 51.8% of those had already resigned or had submitted a resignation for the end of the 2014-2015 school year, which is consistent with the high levels of turnover plaguing new teachers across the country. Table 5.1 below summarizes the teacher turnover statistics by cohort and semester.

In educational research, unlike research in the private sector, there have been limited studies conducted on the reasons and consequences associated with employee turnover. The relevance of this study is that it sheds light on the perspectives of professional support, or lack thereof, held by new teachers who receive induction services and those who do not. Induction programs exist with often conflicting purposes and mixed results, so additional research on the types of induction programs as well as the effectiveness of these programs was needed. This was a practical research study in that it focused upon an induction program which consisted of the assignment of a formal mentor, instructional coaching services, and reflective professional development and the impact it had on new teachers and their perspectives of professional support. A number of studies seem to support the hypothesis that well-planned and implemented teacher induction programs are successful in improving job satisfaction, efficacy, and retention of new teachers; however, there are critical limitations to the existing research on the effectiveness of teacher induction programs (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Specifically, many of these studies did not collect outcome data from both participants and non-participants in these programs resulting in ambiguous conclusions about the true value-added by induction programs. This program evaluation and case study did examine

outcomes from participants who had induction services and those who did not. Thus, this study contributed to the practical and relevant body of knowledge pertaining to induction services within the public school sector.

Table 5.1

Teacher Turnover by Cohort and Semester

Participant #	Employment	Participant #	Employment
A1	resigned spring 2014	B1	
A2	resigned spring 2014	B2	
A3	resigned spring 2014	B3	
A4		B4	
A5		B5	
A6	resigned spring 2013	B6	
A7		B7	
A8		B8	
A9		B9	
A10	resigned spring 2014	B10	
A11		B11	resigned spring 2014
A12	resigned spring 2013	B12	
A13		B13	
A14		B14	resigned spring 2015
A15	resigned spring 2014	B15	
A16	resigned spring 2014	B16	
A17		B17	
A18	resigned spring 2013	B18	
A19	resigned spring 2013	B19	resigned spring 2014
A20	resigned spring 2014	B20	
A21		B21	
A22	resigned spring 2014	B22	
A23		B23	resigned spring 2014
A24	resigned spring 2015	B24	resigned spring 2015
A25			
A26	resigned spring 2013		
A27			
Cohort 1			
Year 1 Attrition:	18.5%	Year 1 Attrition:	12.5%
Year 2 Attrition:	29.6%	Year 2 Attrition:	8.3%
Year 3 Attrition:	3.7%	Total Attrition:	20.8%
Total Turnover:	51.8%		

The New Teacher Center's *Review of State Policies on Teacher Induction* found in 2010 that up to thirty-percent of first-year teachers were not formally assigned mentors. This finding is consistent with Belton ISD's failure to assign a formal mentor to new teachers before the 2013-2014 school year. Research studies have found that new teachers who were not assigned formal mentors often felt isolation from colleagues; members of the 2012-2013 cohort at Belton ISD also shared this same sentiment because they did not receive a formally assigned mentor. The New Teacher Center also found that only sixteen states address formative assessment in their policies regarding the support of new teachers; this study confirmed the importance of non-evaluative feedback and reflection in improving the instruction of novice teachers.

There is a gap in the literature with regard to how embedded reflective learning opportunities supports teacher learning (Camburn, 2010). The data gathered from this study showed the power of reflection on professional learning and perspectives of job support. In addition, the participants in this study who participated in reflective practice reflected on issues pertaining to the curriculum, assessment, and instructional methods in order to make decisions, which will lead to improved student learning. Fortunately, reflective practice does not require large financial investments and the participants in this study who engaged in reflective practice commented upon enhanced professional learning, increased perspectives of support, and more intentional instruction for students.

The instructional coaching model, which focuses upon teacher professional development, is gaining momentum across the country; however, there is a lack of research regarding the impact instructional coaching has on the retention of new teachers (Gallucci et al., 2010). Embedded professional development guided by an instructional

coach is a promising, but under-researched, strategy for improving teacher effectiveness (Taylor, 2008). Although the instructional coaching model is expanding rapidly, there is little research available on its impact on teacher perspectives of job satisfaction and efficacy. Thus, this study's outcomes, which relays the perspectives held by new teachers receiving instructional coaching services versus those who did not, is so valuable. In addition, in this study the cohort of new teachers who first received instructional coaching services showed a much higher rate of retention than the cohort of new teachers before them who operated under the outdated instructional facilitator model. The instructional coaching model helped reduce the new teacher attrition in the spring of 2013 from 18.5% to only 12.5% in the spring of 2014. While the second year of teaching for the 2012-2013 cohort brought a 29.6% attrition rate, only 8.3% of the 2013-2014 cohort resigned in their second year of teaching. Thus, this study helped to rectify the growing popularity of the instructional coaching model with the scant amount of research available pertaining to the model's impact on teacher perspectives of job satisfaction and retention.

Future Research and Conclusion

As the induction program at Belton ISD continues to evolve it will be important for the District to design and implement more formal standards regarding mentor selection and training, length of mentoring services, and program evaluation. While most of the teacher mentors at Belton ISD are veteran educators with a successful track record, the District should consider implementing a more rigorous mentor selection process based upon teaching experience and proven success in the classroom. Mentors need a flexible repertoire of tools and a firm understanding of the content matter and pedagogy

to help new educators with the rigorous demands of teaching (Schwille, 2008). In addition, specific mentor training for these educators on topics such as demonstration lessons, reflective professional development, and collaborative lesson plan design could be provided.

Although the instructional coaches at Belton ISD have been trained to provide new teachers with model lessons and reflective training, beginning teachers would benefit even more if their campus-level mentor had the same skills and knowledge set. The District should explore the use of substitutes to relieve new teachers so that they may conduct observations of talented, veteran teachers as well as participate in ongoing professional development throughout the year. While the state of Texas only offers funding for induction through a competitive grant program, Belton ISD will need to pursue that possible funding source as well as other grant opportunities to create a more structured mentoring program.

Additional case study research is needed to further explore the advantages of induction components on perspectives of job satisfaction and retention. The case study methodology is best suited for this future research because it best answers “how” and “why” questions. Furthermore, the behavioral events of this study cannot be controlled and it seeks to examine a contemporary topic in the field of education, which is further reason why the case study methodology should be implemented. A potential research question includes: How can school districts create well-structured mentoring programs to support new teachers and combat employee turnover in the face of limited funding? Future research should also delve more deeply into specific elements of the induction program, which were particularly helpful to new teachers or elements that were

potentially missing from the induction program. Through more specific interview and questionnaire protocols, more insight could be gained on the components of the induction program.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol for Zero-Year Teacher Cohort Members

Time of Interview:

Interviewer:

Date:

Interviewee:

Location:

Position of Interviewee:

(Briefly describe the project before asking the following questions)

1. Describe how your mentoring experience helped you grow and develop professionally as a new teacher. If the mentoring experience did not help you grow professionally, please explain.
2. What aspects of the mentoring relationship were particularly helpful to you?
3. To what extent did the mentoring program provide you with the belief that you were being supported professionally? In other words, as a new teacher did you have the perspective or viewpoint that the mentoring program provided you with professional support?
4. To what extent did the instructional coaching model provide you with the belief that you were being supported professionally? In other words, as a new teacher did you have the perspective or viewpoint that the instructional coaching model provided you with professional support?
5. How often do you seek assistance from an instructional coach?
6. To what extent did reflective practices or reflective professional development provide you with the belief that you were being supported professionally? In other words, as a new teacher did you have the perspective or viewpoint that reflective professional development was a form of professional support?
7. Describe how you use reflective professional growth and practice to improve instruction in your own classroom.
8. How would you describe the professional development and support offered to beginning teachers by Belton ISD?
9. As you reflect on your first year of teaching, did the mentoring program and its components improve your job satisfaction, have no effect, or worsen your job satisfaction?

(Thank the individual for participating in this interview. Assure him or her of confidentiality of responses and potential future interviews.)

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol for Instructional Coaches and C&I Staff

Time of Interview:

Interviewer:

Date:

Interviewee:

Location:

Position of Interviewee:

(Briefly describe the project before asking the following questions)

1. As instructional facilitators transitioned to the role of instructional coaches, what training did they receive? Describe, in some detail, the training with regard to the instructional coaching model.
2. What tools or forms were developed as a result of the instructional coaching model? For example, do ICs create a teacher-mentoring action plan with new teachers?
3. Describe how instructional coaches were *prepared or trained* to act as mentors to new or struggling teachers.
4. Describe how instructional coaches *act* as mentors and provide professional support to new teachers. For example, do instructional coaches provide demonstration lessons for new teachers?
5. Describe how the instructional coaching model will provide new teachers with the belief that they are being supported professionally?
6. How often do new teachers seek assistance from an instructional coach?
7. Describe any training the instructional coaches received with regard to reflective practices or reflective professional development.
8. Describe how you use reflective practice to improve the instruction and perspectives of professional support to new teachers.
9. Describe the professional development and support offered to beginning teachers by Belton ISD? Specifically, do new teachers receive assistance with the analysis of student assessment data or lesson planning?
10. As you reflect on the transition to the instructional coaching model and its components of mentoring and reflective practice, do you feel that new teachers are better supported now than they were before the transition to the IC model? Explain.

(Thank the individual for participating in this interview. Assure him or her of confidentiality of responses and potential future interviews.)

APPENDIX C

Observation Protocol

Name of Participant:

Duration of Observation:

Location / Site:

Date / Time:

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes	Themes	Coding

APPENDIX D

Questionnaire Protocol

	Yes	No			
1. A formal mentor was assigned to me for my first year of employment with Belton ISD.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
2. Although not formally assigned, a fellow educator acted as a mentor to me during my first year of employment with Belton ISD.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
3. I received no mentoring either formally or informally during my first year of employment with Belton ISD.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. After an informal classroom observation by an instructional facilitator, we jointly created a teacher-mentoring action plan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I met regularly with a fellow educator who participated in my ongoing support, provided me with feedback, and monitored my growth and progress during my first year of employment with Belton ISD.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. A fellow educator assisted me with the analysis of student assessment data during my first year of employment with Belton ISD.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I received assistance from a fellow educator with writing lesson plans which were in alignment with the District curriculum during my first year of employment with Belton ISD.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. A fellow educator conducted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

model lessons which I observed in order to improve my instruction during my first year of employment with Belton ISD.					
9. I received professional development which addressed my needs as a beginning teacher during my first year of employment with Belton ISD.	o	o	o	o	o
10. What did Belton ISD do well to support its new teachers?					
11. What ideas could you offer to help Belton ISD improve the support it offers new teachers?					

APPENDIX E

Informed Consent Form

Baylor University—Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Principal Investigator: Barrett L. Pollard

This form asks for your consent to participate in educational research regarding the role of mentoring in new teacher efficacy and retention. For this research you will be asked to respond to survey questions, open-ended questions, and follow-up questions in an interview format. The entire interview should take no more than 45 minutes to complete. For this study, it is also requested that you allow the investigator to observe meetings you may have with a mentor teacher or instructional coach.

There will be no physical risks at any time. You may elect, either now or at any time during the study, to withdraw your participation, with no penalty or loss of benefits. You have been selected to participate in this study based on your employment with Belton ISD as a new teacher. You should understand that your compliance is completely voluntary and that your participation, or lack of participation, in this study will not affect your employment.

A pseudonym will be used to identify each participant so you are guaranteed complete confidentiality. All information gathered will be held in strictest confidence and all recordings will be kept in a locked filed cabinet for three years and then destroyed. This study meets the American Psychological Association's standards for "minimal risk" and poses no major risks or dangers for you as a participant.

The interviews will be audio recorded and written observation notes will be taken by the researcher. These artifacts will be studied and analyzed to help the investigator understand the role of mentoring in new teacher efficacy and retention. Your anonymity will be preserved because the research report will represent composites of the interview results and participant names will be changed if specific references are made. This data will allow the researcher to better understand the role, if any, mentoring has on the efficacy and retention of new teachers.

Please direct all inquiries to Mr. Barrett L. Pollard, principal investigator for this project and a doctoral student at Baylor University. He may be reached at (254) 215-2017 or barrett.pollard@bisd.net. You may also direct inquiries to his faculty research chairman, Dr. Tony L. Talbert, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, School of Education, Baylor University, One Bear Place 97314, Waco, TX 76798-7314. Dr. Talbert may also be reached by telephone at (254) 710-7417 or by email at tony_talbert@baylor.edu.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, or any other aspect of the research as it relates to you as a participant, please contact the Baylor University Committee for Protection of Human Subjects in Research, Dr. David W. Schlueter, Ph.D., Chair Baylor IRB, Baylor University, One Bear Place #97368 Waco, TX 76798-7368. Dr. Schlueter may also be reached at (254) 710-6920 or (254) 710-3708. I have read and understood this form, am aware of my rights as a participant, and have agreed to participate in the research.

Name (signature)

Date

APPENDIX F

Menu Options of Secondary IC Services (developed August 2013)

Menu Option of Secondary IC Services:

- I. Assessment
 - a. Classroom visits
 - b. Analyze test scores / data analysis
 - c. Survey students
 - d. Dialoging with teachers (informal)
- II. Knowledge
 - a. Find resources for instruction / delivery
 - b. Find resources for content
 - c. Interpreting TEKS
 - d. Interpreting STAAR/EOC expectations
 - e. Developing understanding of Bloom's Taxonomy
 - f. Differentiation
 - g. Formatting written daily objectives
 - h. Lesson plan collaboration
 - i. Curriculum work (year-at-a-glance documents, unit plans, common assessments)
 - j. Professional development (focused on teacher needs)
- III. Model
 - a. Help write assessment questions
 - b. Co-teach
 - c. Set up peer observations (at other campuses or across subjects)
 - d. Demonstrate best practices (modeling done by the coach)
- IV. Practice: Teacher Implementation
- V. Observe: Reflective Cycle
- VI. Feedback: Reflective Cycle

APPENDIX G

Instructional Coach Framework

<p>Coaching Roles and Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To coach and grow teachers in their instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Focus on core teachers and Title teachers (only if needed) o Music/Art - under the directions of Fine Arts Director o PE - under the direction of the principal o Sp. Ed. - under the direction of the Special Education Department · To help improve a teacher's craft in order to increase student performance and academic success 	<p>Focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · To be clear and concise · To start with a standard · To work on measurable objectives tied to standards · To include formative assessment 	<p>Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Teachers and coaches (we as a district) need to understand our standards/TEKS. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How do we communicate this to teachers? · We need to write better objectives tied to standards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How do we ensure this is taught and understood by our teachers? · Teachers need to think about their academic tasks and whether or not they align to the standards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How will teachers know when their students know/learn?
<p>Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Communication · Not moving forward... · Time to 	<p>Priority/Teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Priority 1 = Teachers in MOST need of 	<p>Coaching Model:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Campus Hours: Report no later than 7:30 and leave no earlier than 3:30.

<p>plan PD for each campus and the district</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Day to day campus operations and duties – coaches should be strategically placed where they can “greet”, but not be put on the schedule. There should be a back-up person if the coach is not available. · Falling back into the “old” facilitator ways of doing things on campuses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Not being seen as a team player when coaches can’t drop everything and do what the principal wants. · Concerned about the struggling teachers and not being asked to take over. · Concerned about being part of the new math curriculum - becoming generalists instead of experts in specific areas. 	<p>intervention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Priority 2 = Teachers who need some intervention and support. · Priority 3 = Teachers who are doing okay and would be good candidates for a collaborative cycle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Assigned to the Curriculum and Instruction Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Attend bi-weekly meetings on Fridays from 7:30-9:30 a.m. (involve principals when possible) · Placement will be determined by the “Best Fit” for each campus · Continue to use Outlook Calendar to schedule classroom visits and send teacher invites. · Continue to lead campus and district-level PD sessions. · Jointly evaluated by the Elementary Curriculum Director and the Campus Principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Goal-Setting Conference to be scheduled early
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APPENDIX H

Elementary Data Conversation Talking Points

Below are some talking points the BISD Curriculum Department devised to be used by principals, grade level leaders, teams of teachers (PLC's), or individual teachers to focus on specific pieces of data. Please note: this is not a required protocol to follow, but intended to serve as a guide for data conversations.

1. Was the goal of 70% met for this standard? _____
2. Was the goal of 90% met for advanced? _____
3. What formative assessments and/or strategies did we employ in this unit of study?
 - Did we know where our kids were throughout the unit?
 - How did we know?
4. Do we have a systemic problem in this unit of study? (i.e. curriculum plan for this unit did not cover specific topics sufficiently)
 - What worked well?
 - What do we do next?
 - Immediate
 - Reteach, warm-up, formative assessment
 - Within next unit
 - Spiral essential skills related to readiness standards
 - Revisions to YAAG, unit plan, common assessments

APPENDIX I

Collaborative Cycle Action Plan

Teacher _____ Teaching Years _____
Date _____
Mentor _____ School _____
Grade _____
Classroom time _____ Reflective Follow-up
time _____
Mini-Lesson ____ Small group ____ Planning time ____ Transition ____ Independent
Work

Classroom Management/Classroom Environment:
Planning and Preparation:
Monitoring of Student Learning:
Instruction: Whole Group, Small Group, Independent Learning, Language Development
Implementation of current PD:

Teacher signature _____	Coach
signature _____	
For Mentor Use Only	
Circle type of visit	
Next visit _____	
1. Modeling instruction	3. Instructional Planning
Peer Visit	7. Child assessments
2. Side by Side Coaching	4. Room arrangement support
Co-teaching	8. Material delivery
	5.
	6.

APPENDIX J

Instructional Coach Classroom Walkthrough Form

Teacher: _____

Classroom Information: _____

Observed By: _____

Observation Date: _____

Observation Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Measurable Objective:

*Rate the Measurable Objectives according to the check boxes below.

Criteria:	Content:		Language:	
Observable and Measurable Objective Posted:	____ Yes	____ No	____ Yes	____ No
Objective Aligned to the TEKS/Standard:	____ Yes	____ No	____ Yes	____ No
Academic Task Aligned to the Objective:	____ Yes	____ No	____ Yes	____ No

Checking for Understanding:

*Check the Formative Assessment strategies observed and whether they were used in individual, small group, or whole group settings.

Formative Assessment	Individual	Small Group	Whole Group
Three-Minute Pause			
Exit/Admit Ticket			
Four Corners/Post-Its			
Hand Signal			
Thumbs Up/Down			
Think-Pair-Share			
Pinch Cards			
Journal Entries			
Question Webs			
List, Sort, Label			
I Wonder.... Show			

What You Know			
White Boards			
Other:			
None Observed			

*Notes and Reflective Questions are optional. If used, a reflective question is intended to promote dialogue about effective practices.

APPENDIX K

Instructional Coach Classroom Observation Notes

Teacher _____ Date _____
Coach _____ School _____
Grade _____
Classroom Visit Time _____ Reflective Follow-up
Time _____
Mini-Lesson ____ Small group ____ Planning time ____ Transition ____ Independent
Work ____

Classroom Management/Classroom Environment:

Lesson Plan Review:

Evidence of Lesson/Classroom Instruction (Teacher/Coach Focus):

Circle type of visit:
Next Visit: _____

1. Modeling instruction	3. Instructional Lesson Planning	5.
Peer Visit	7. Child assessments	
2. Side by Side Coaching	4. Room arrangement support	6.
Co-teaching	8. Material delivery	

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