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# A Mixed Method Study on the Missouri Beginning Teachers Assistance Program and Teacher Retention in Saint Louis School Districts

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A Mixed Method Study on the Missouri Beginning Teachers Assistance Program and

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by

Raymond Ciolek

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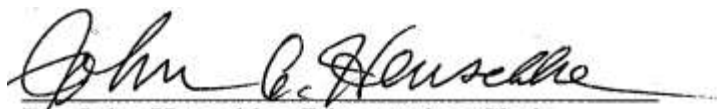
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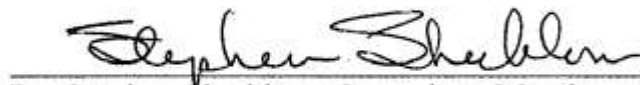
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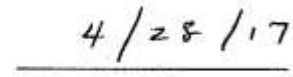

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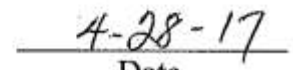

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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Raymond S. Ciolek

Signature: _____ Date: 4-28-2017

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to investigate whether new teacher and new teacher mentor perceptions of the effectiveness of the Missouri State Beginning Teachers' Assistance Program (BTAP) were positive and whether the new teacher perceptions led to the new teacher remaining in the teaching profession at least five years. At the time of this writing, in the state of Missouri, new teachers must work through a six step process to upgrade their initial teacher certification to a continual (99 year) certification (Appendix A). This paper describes research on the second step of Missouri's process, which involved the new teacher working with a mentor for the first two years of their careers, to become accustomed to the expectations of a teaching career.

The method used in collecting data for this was study was three-fold. First, the education department at a local university conducted a new teacher panel discussion. The researcher attended this discussion and noted the results within this paper. Second, secondary data were collected from a conference presentation discussing the perceptions of new teachers and their administrators. New teachers gave their responses, as to how they thought they were performing in their classrooms and their administrators gave their responses, as to how they thought their new teachers were performing. Thirdly, data was collected online from new teachers and new teacher mentors on their perceptions of the Missouri new teacher mentoring program.

Results from the data in all three collection methods indicated that, while all surveyed districts were using a mentoring process for new teachers, each district implemented their program with varying degrees of effectiveness. Best practices seemed to indicate that a good new teacher and new teacher mentor personal connection was key

to helping new teachers succeed in their new profession. The process for how these pairings were created varied from district to district.

Because of this research, the researcher recommends that individual districts make every effort to find a "good" personal fit between their new teachers and their mentors and that finding this ideal fit is bets performed by the administrator who will be supervising the new teacher and the mentor.

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**Chapter One: Introduction to the Study**

**Background**

At the time of this writing, the requirements to become a teacher were high in comparison to other professions, and many professionals in the educational field agreed there must be emphasis placed on retaining good teachers; especially when the future of our children was at stake (Meyer, 2013).  The purpose of this study was to investigate whether new teacher and new teacher mentor perceptions of the effectiveness of the Missouri State Beginning Teachers' Assistance Program (BTAP) were positive and whether the new teacher perceptions led to new teachers remaining in the teaching profession at least five years.

At the time of this writing, there were various pieces involved in becoming and remaining an outstanding teacher.  Teachers were expected to 'find' where their students were, and then, teach them from that location.  To enter the profession, most states required a teacher candidate to obtain at least a bachelor's degree ("Teacher: How to Become," 2016).  Then, candidates completed a specific program of study designed by a university, which included volunteer hours of observing and working in an actual classroom.   Teacher candidates wrote papers about what they saw, how different ideas worked, and how they could improve them in the future.  University teacher education programs' professors advised prospective teacher candidates to assess if teaching was the proper career for them to enter by looking at their interests and talents (Teacher Certification Degrees, 2016).  They shadowed, or volunteered with a certificated teacher to experience what it was like to work in the teaching career.  Teacher candidates should then have researched which program to enter, early childhood through college level, and

chosen which university to attend for their coursework (Teacher Certification Degrees, 2016).

Certificated teachers applied at school districts of their choice, in order to try to secure a job.  Success in that endeavor depended on the subject they were qualified to teach, the needs of each district, the economy, how well each person interviewed, and other factors.  The state of Missouri had a website devoted to connecting certificated teachers with administrators seeking new employees (Missouri Regional Education Applicant Placement [MOREAP], 2016).  Teachers uploaded their resumes and completed an online file, which administrators could access to find qualified candidates to fill open positions (MOREAP, 2016).  Teachers could also apply at individual school district websites for open positions. The state of Missouri had a list of high needs for teaching positions, so teacher candidates could determine if they wished to enter one of those specific fields ("Become a Teacher in Missouri," 2016; "High Needs Schools," 2016).  Future teachers who wished to make a difference and help school districts facing challenges in recruiting and retaining certificated teachers could work in a high-needs district.  There were federal programs for teachers who worked in these districts, which helped teachers with their education loans, grants and scholarships ("High Needs Schools," 2016).

What drew people to this profession, when the salaries were below average for someone with a college degree? At the time of this writing, the average starting salary for computer programmers was $43,635, and the average for registered nurses was $45,570, while the average starting salary for teachers was $30,377 (National Education Association [NEA], 2016a).  Teachers joined the profession to make a difference in the

lives of others, and research showed that after considering the efforts of the students themselves (50%), teachers contributed an additional 30% of the variance in student achievement (Hattie, 2003).

This researcher studied the second part of the six-step Missouri state certification process for teachers, which involved their teacher mentors during their first two years in the profession, in hopes of finding best practices in use by individual school districts. This study concentrated on how new teachers perceived the help from their school districts and mentors while completing the state-required process to upgrade the initial certification to a career continuous status (valid for 99 years, in the state of Missouri).

**Statement of the problem**

Teachers were a vital part of student achievement, estimated to contribute 30% of the variance in student achievement (Hattie, 2003). How new teachers perceived the effectiveness of the mentoring process during their first two years of teaching helped to lead them to decide whether to remain in the profession or exit (Alexander, Chant, & Cox, 1994). Any work conducted to determine how to better support new teachers and increase new teacher retention would be helpful to any school district. This would save the district money on recruiting and training new teachers, and more importantly, help to increase student achievement by placing and retaining seasoned teachers into all classrooms (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). Low performing schools districts had fewer hours to work toward closing the students' achievement gap, because they were constantly hiring new teachers. Teacher attrition rates were high at low-preforming schools, and new teachers were not in the field long enough to develop the skills necessary to create a completely successful learning culture for their students. Barnes,

Crowe, and Schaefer (2007) found that the cost to the Chicago Public School system was

$86 million per year.  The cost of replacing teachers with new staff was listed in the

following categories; recruitment, hiring, administrative processing, training for first-time

teachers (induction), training for New hires (orientation), training for all teachers

(professional development), learning curve, transfer (moves within the district, when

internal staff changed to new positions within the district).  Turnover costs were difficult

to calculate, due to the way many districts collected their original data.  High turnover

was not all negative, and some was due to teacher retirement or teachers moving to a

different area or geographic region.  Barnes et al. (2007) listed that "in low performing,

high poverty, and high minority schools, replacing large portions of the teacher

workforce each year appears to be both a symptom and one of the many causes of poor

working conditions" (p. 85).  Barnes et al. (2007) noted that the average cost of replacing

a lost teacher was $8000, and the higher tuirnover rate at lower performing schools was

much higher, due to their higher turnover rate in comparison to other schools.  He

recommended that districts work to collect better data on their teacher turnover costs, so

they could better analyze ways to lower this expense.

**Rationale**

Teachers were one of the largest factors, which affected student achievement

(Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011). Researchers conducted studies to

determine why people chose the teaching profession and remained in the profession

(Alexander et al., 1994).  Fourteen percent of American teachers left teaching after one

year, and 46% left before their fifth year (Auguste, Kihn, & Miller, 2010). There were

programs designed to assist teachers to become more effective and have a greater impact

on their students (MODESE, 2014).  There were studies, which found that the main reason teachers left the profession in the first five years was lack of administrative support (Tickle, 2008).  Administrative walk-throughs and detailed notes to helped new teachers better themselves and improve their instruction, according to Tickle (2008), and were beneficial in assisting teachers within their first years of teaching.

A dissertation study conducted by St. Pierre (2009), on a local school district, "found that the district's mentoring and professional development program for new teachers is effective as perceived by both beginning teachers and their administrators" (p. v).  St. Pierre's (2009) study addressed mentoring and new teacher perceptions of their initial two-year training, but was conducted at only one school district.  This researcher collected statewide data and surveyed new teachers and new teacher mentors from several different districts, to give a wider view of new teacher perceptions.  This researcher also found a follow-up dissertation study conducted by Powers (2012) in Ames, Iowa, about new teacher perceptions of their initial training. Initial training included traditional teacher education programs, instruction to pre-service teachers in a variety of settings that included stand-alone classroom management courses, methods courses, field experiences (most notably the culminating student teaching experience), and classroom management seminars connected to field experiences, (Darling-Hammond, Bransford, LePage, Hammerness, & Duffy, 2007).  Powers (2012) updated research used a 1999-2000 public school teacher dataset (as cited in Cleveland, 2008).  Power's research discussed how well teachers perceived that they were prepared for their first year of teaching (Powers, 2012).  This researcher focused on how new teachers perceived

the mentoring process and how effective it was for them in their first two years in the

teaching profession.

This research was conducted to determine how new teachers perceived their

initial training (first two years as practitioners).  This training was only as good as the

perception of those involved in developing, implementing, and participating in them

(Jayakumar & Sulthan, 2014). Initial teacher training was the first two years of a new

teacher's career, where they learned the basics of being a teacher from a mentor. The

state of Missouri required new teachers to complete six steps to upgrade their initial

certification to a career continuous designation, and the mentoring portion was part of

step two in this process (Appendix A). The mentor was a teacher or administrator who

had been in the teaching profession for at least five years, and who understood the

profession. Mentors demonstrated parts of the profession to new teachers from how to

prepare and present lesson plans, how to communicate effectively with parents, to all the

data and paperwork required by the state and the individual school district. The

researcher searched for and located information on how the value of training was based

on what the trainee believed or perceived to be his or her future benefit from the training

(Jayakumar & Sulthan, 2014).

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

**Research Question # 1**: How do different districts implement their Beginning

Teachers Assistance Program?

**Research Question # 2**: What do different districts implement within their

Beginning Teachers Assistance Programs?

**Research Question # 3**: What are the similarities and differences between what districts implement within their Beginning Teachers Assistance Programs?

**Research Question # 4**: What apparent best practices are districts implementing to increase the retention rate of new teachers?

**Research Question # 5**: How does secondary data from the Missouri state education site (MODESE) on new teacher retention compare with what districts are implementing within their Beginning Teachers Assistance Programs?

**Hypothesis # 1**: There is a difference between Midwest University new teacher perceptions and Midwest University principal perceptions, with regard to the Missouri State Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

**Hypothesis # 2**: There is a difference between statewide new teacher perceptions and statewide principal perceptions, with regard to the Missouri State Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

**Hypothesis # 3**: There is a difference between Midwest University new teacher perceptions and statewide new teacher perceptions, with regard to the Missouri State Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

**Hypothesis # 4**: There is a difference between Midwest University principal perceptions and statewide principal perceptions, with regard to the Missouri State Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

**Hypothesis # 5**: There is a relationship between new teacher perceptions of the Missouri State Beginning Teachers Assistance Program and new teacher retention.

**Hypothesis # 6**: There is a relationship between new teacher mentor perceptions of the Missouri State Beginning Teachers Assistance Program and new teacher retention.

**Hypothesis # 7**: There is a correlation between new teacher perceptions and new teacher mentor perceptions of the Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

## Limitations

This study was limited, because participants recalled events from the past when interviewed.  The interview was also self-report.  The reliability and validity of the qualitative data of this study were limited to the honesty of the participants' interviews.

**Limitation # 1**: The new teacher and new teacher mentor surveys were relying on the perceptions these teachers had and their ability to remember them.

**Limitation # 2**: The new teacher and new teacher mentor surveys were relying on teachers to self-exclude themselves from the survey.  It is possible that teachers who had never mentored a new teacher could complete the survey.

**Limitation # 3**: The new teacher surveys also excluded teachers who did not follow the Missouri Beginning Teachers Assistance Program (BTAP), but who may complete a survey.

**Limitation # 4**: The one-on-one interviews were voluntary and the researcher accepted whoever wished to participate.  The desire was to conduct two new teacher and two new teacher mentor surveys per district and four interviews per district.

## Definition of Terms

The researcher defined the following research terms for use in this study.

**AFT: American Federation of Teachers**. A union of professionals that championed fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare, and public services for our students, their families, and our communities (American Federation of Teachers [ AFT], 2008).

**BTAP: Beginning Teachers' Assistance Program**.  A program designed by the state of Missouri, which new teachers must complete to upgrade their initial certification to a career certification (Missouri NEA, 2016b).

**Individualized Educational Education Program (IEP):** An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet a child's individual needs. Every child who receives special education services must have an IEP ("What Is an Individualized Education Plan," 2016)**.**

**Likert scales**: "A self-reporting instrument in which an individual responds to a series of statements by indicating the extent of agreement.  Each choice is given a numerical value and the total score is presumed to indicate the attitude or belief in question" (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p. G-4). For the purpose of this study, the researcher selected the terms: Strongly Agree (5 points), Agree (4 points), Undecided (3 points), Disagree (2 points), and Strongly Disagree (1 point).

**Mentee**: (New Teacher) A person new to a field or activity, a novice ("Mentee," 2006, p. 1098).

**Mentor**: (Teacher Mentor) A wise and trusted counselor or teacher ("Mentor," 2006, p. 1204).

**Middle school:** "Schools which are planned and operated to provide an appropriate educational experience for those students in grades 5-8 or 6-8" (George & Alexander, 2003, p. 45).

**Missouri school district:**  For the purpose of this study, defined as school districts in the Saint Louis geographic area, in the state of Missouri.

**MODESE: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.**

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) oversees

public K-12 instruction in Missouri.  The department managed 2,439 schools and

916,842 students during the 2012-13 school years. The Missouri State Board of

Education was composed of eight members appointed by the governor and confirmed by

the Senate. Each member serves staggered, eight-year terms. The Missouri Constitution

imposed the responsibility of the instruction of public schools upon the State Board of

Education. (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE],

2015).

**NCATE: The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education** is the

profession's mechanism to help establish high quality teacher preparation. (National

Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2014).

**Pedagogy:** The art or profession of teaching.  Preparatory training or instruction

("Pedagogy," 2006, p. 1295).

**Professional development:** Process of improving and increasing capabilities of

staff through access to education and training opportunities in the workplace, through

outside organization, or through watching others perform the job. Professional

development helped build and maintain morale of staff members, and was thought to

attract higher quality staff to an organization (Professional Development, 2016).

**State retention programs**: MODESE required that new teachers in their first

through fourth years were to attend at least one non-district sponsored professional

development session to advance to the level of their Career Teaching Certificate

(MODESE, 2014).

**TFA: Teach for America.** a nonprofit organization whose stated mission was to

"enlist, develop, and mobilize as many as possible of our nation's most promising future

leaders to grow and strengthen the movement for educational equity and excellence"

(Teacher for America [TFA], 2017, p. 1). The organization aimed to accomplish this by

recruiting and selecting college graduates from top universities around the United States

to serve as teachers. The selected members, known as "corps members," committed to

teaching for at least two years in a public or public charter K–12 school in one of the 52

low-income communities that the organization served (TFA, 2017, p. 1).

**Teacher resiliency.** As defined by the researcher**:** People who enter the teaching

profession with full knowledge of the working conditions, low pay, and low level of

respect from multiple directions.  They accept the challenges of the profession and look

for the intrinsic reward of helping others to understand themselves and the world around

them (Patterson, Patterson, & Collins, 2002).

**United States Department of Education:** The U.S. Department of Education

(USDOE) is the agency of the federal government that establishes policy for, administers,

and coordinates most federal assistance to education. (U.S. Department of Education

[USDOE], 2010).

**Summary**

There are many steps on the way to becoming a teacher and the researcher looked

for how teachers perceived the help they received along the path.  Some questions that

guided the research included the following. Is the Missouri state requirement for two

years of mentoring helpful?  Are there better ways for each district to implement their

mentor program, which they can copy from another district?  How can the system help

new teachers to better survive their first five years in the profession?  Through this

research, the hope is to find good ways to help new teachers better survive the complicated path they have chosen as they work through the crucial first five years of the profession.

The researcher looked for how different districts implemented their programs, what they did differently in their programs, and the range in the differences in their BTAPs.  The researcher attempted to compare these programs and practices to the state teacher retention numbers for each district.  The researcher looked for correlations between the individual programs and new teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of the programs.  California was experiencing a problem with hiring enough certificated teachers, and this led to school districts placing un-certificated teachers into classrooms. "The supply of new teachers is at a 12-year low and enrollment in educator preparation programs has declined more than 70 percent over the last decade" (Walker, 2016, para. 5).  Missouri school districts benefitted from a good teacher pension system, and as many as two-thirds of other states looked to Missouri as a model for how to fund and structure their own teacher retirement systems (Judy, 2015).

**Chapter Two: Review of Literature**

**Introduction**

There are reasons why teachers enter the teaching profession and more reasons why they stay or leave.  The money was not a great incentive, but the intrinsic motivation of helping others contributed as a major factor in steering people into the profession.  The average starting salary for computer programmers was $43,635, and the average for registered nurses was $45,570, while the average starting salary for teachers was $30,377 (NEA, 2016b).  Once in the profession, there were many factors which affected teachers and weighed on whether they remained a teacher or left to pursue another career.  The initial training in universities and new teacher induction are the first items, which greet new teachers.  New teachers received their initial training in universities with classroom instruction and classroom observations in the local school districts. School districts hired new teachers and assigned them a mentor who guided them through their first few years as they entered the teaching profession.  The conditions in which new teachers worked and the amount of support they received from other teachers, administrators, parents, and students were factors, which influenced their decisions to remain in the teacher profession. A majority (83%) of the Teachers of the Year reported that school administrator support and better pay would encourage experienced teachers to continue teaching (Goldberg & Proctor, 2000).

Did individual resiliency play a role in keeping teachers in their new careers? Teachers know and teach the concept of lifelong learning, because our society is constantly changing and industry demands that their employees change and adapt to this reality.  Technology linked the classroom to a wide range of knowledge using online

content, which allowed for individualized content for students (USDOE, 2016).

Technology amplified student abilities and teachers saw it as propellant and not a crutch

(Johnson, 2012).  The competitive environment of the world demanded that teachers

emphasize not just multiple choice answers and knowledge, but complex skills, which

students could apply to multiple situations (Darling-Hammond, 2010).  This literature

review discusses the factors why teachers become, stay, and leave the profession for

varied reasons.

**Reasons for Becoming a Teacher**

        One of the reasons teachers listed as a positive to their job was the ability to work

with future leaders of their country and world. Teachers cited many reasons for entering

the profession, and making a difference for one child made it all worth the effort (Hare,

2007). The opening paragraph of an article from the AFT examined why teachers entered

the profession, "New teachers overwhelmingly say they love what they do. They say it

allows them to contribute to society and help others. And they would choose teaching

again as a career, if they had the choice" (AFT, 2008. p. 2).   Hare (2007) listed ten

reasons why teachers entered the profession, and the main reason 68% said they stayed

was due to support from their administrators (Phillips & Norwood, 2015).  "Choosing

what to teach, or what field to teach in, is probably the most important decision to make

once you decide to become a teacher" (AFT, 2008, p. 8).  AFT (2008) reported teachers

admitted an ultimate satisfaction witnessing the growth of a student, not only

academically but emotionally.

        The state of Missouri listed the routes of how to enter the teaching profession,

including choices from the traditional college program to a Doctoral assessment

(MODESE, 2016b). The states' Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

where the prospective teacher lived governed the process for entering the profession

(AFT, 2008, p. 7) and MODESE offered a way for teachers to transfer their certifications

from their home state if they moved to or taught in Missouri (MODESE, 2016e).

Teacher salaries were public information in spite of the wide range, which depended on

the district and, the number of years in teaching (AFT, 2008, p. 6).  Prospective teachers

could look up teacher salaries for any public school in Missouri on a website made

available by the Saint Louis, Missouri, newspaper, *The Post Dispatch*, for the previous

year (Moskop, 2015).

As part of most teaching programs, potential teachers wrote a statement of why

they wanted to become a teacher.  They were asked to explain why they wished to enter

the profession (Kizlik, 2016).  Potential teachers sought out sources to find answers in

helping to write this personal statement or visited their local school and spoke directly

with teachers to hear their personal reasons for becoming a teacher (Fried, 2013).

As with any profession, each individual had a reason to select his or her

profession and career.   Whitbeck (2000) examined why pre-interns desired to enter the

teaching profession.  Data analysis revealed the pre-interns held a belief of a 'special

calling' or 'gift' that would make them more successful than other individuals for this

career. The pre-interns indicated that this 'gift' alone was enough to allow them to be

successful in teaching. Most of their beliefs developed from their own experiences as

students and from the comments of others (primarily teachers), who stated a belief that

the student had natural abilities (Whitbeck, 2000).

In addition to the reasons why people entered the teaching profession, Kizlik (2015) also listed numerous tips or warnings to be considered prior to beginning the education process.  Being good at explaining things, keeping their cool, and having a sense of humor were near the top of this list, and the person interested in teaching must like the people they were teaching and have some common sense (Kizlik, 2015).  Kizlik (2015) gave some sound advice:

> If it is not your goal to become a good teacher at the very least, perhaps thinking about the above will help you see other career alternatives. A good idea, when first making such a decision, is to talk to teachers. Find out what they do, and what led them into teaching. Do a personal inventory of your own values, personality, preferences and goals. But, whatever you do, don't go into teaching simply because you love kids! (para. 25)

Szecsi and Spillman (2012) researched how minority education students perceived a career in education and noted a serious concern with the overall image of teachers perpetuated in many minority families, reflecting a lack of respect for the teaching profession (Szecsi & Spillman, 2012). This view of the teaching profession in the African-American community evolved through the negative experiences they had as students, themselves.

The low salary for teachers in comparison to other professions was a factor in the perception of lack of respect for the teaching profession (NEA, 2016a).  Machado (2013) wrote about her struggle with being a minority teacher.  She finally gave into the pressure to find a 'good job,' and her students told her they wondered why she ever became a

teacher and did not just follow her own dreams in the first place (Machado, 2013).   The

families of minority teachers had major reservations about their children entering the

teaching profession, but later came to accept their decisions (Szecsi & Spillman, 2012. p.

25).   Three teachers spoke of how they entered the teaching profession, in spite of  their

families' reservations about becoming a teacher, after having positive experiences with

their coursework or positive contact with an influential teacher.  Families of minority

teachers initially challenged their decisions to become teachers but finally came to accept

it and gave them strong support during their first difficult years of entering their new

professions.

Who was entering the teaching field has also been a topic for discussion, in

reference to minority participation (Ingersoll & May, 2011).  Even as the student

population of the United States became more diverse, the teaching population became

more White and less diverse.  The impact of this trend was that minority students lacked

role models in the teaching profession from their ethnic group.  The main reason

Ingersoll and May (2011) cited was the lack of teachers in the supply line.  Fewer

minority students entered and completed college, which led to fewer minority students

entering the teaching profession.  Only 56% of Black students attended college, so the

potential pool of teacher applicants was reduced (The Huffington Post, 2012).

The strongest factors by far for minority teachers were the level of

collective faculty decision-making influence in the school and the degree

of individual instructional autonomy held by teachers in their classrooms.

Influence and autonomy, of course, are key hallmarks of respected

professions. Schools that provided more teacher classroom discretion and

autonomy, as well as schools with higher levels of faculty input into

school decision-making, had significantly lower levels of minority teacher

turnover.(Ingersoll & May, 2011, para. 17)

Ingersoll and May (2011) discussed how efforts were made to recruit more minority

teachers, and while this was successful, it did not keep up with the rapidly changing

student population.  Added to this was the effect of minority teacher turnover.  While the

percentage of minority teachers entering the profession increased, the number leaving

actually out-paced this growth.  Minority teachers faced the same environment as White

teachers.

The findings of Szecsi & Spillman (2012) supported the view that school

organization, management, and leadership mattered.  Their data suggested that poor,

high-minority; urban schools with improved working conditions would be far more able

to retain more minority teachers. Reforms, such as changing some conditions, such as

teachers' classroom autonomy and faculty's school-wide influence, would be less costly

financially, especially in low-income settings and in periods of budgetary constraint

(Szecsi & Spillman, 2012).

People did not remain in their first career in America as much as they did in past

generations and workers over the age of 50 looked to teaching as a possible career

change.  Over half of the workers in America were unhappy with their careers, but felt

trapped with their retirement, only a few years away. These workers would bring 20 to 40

years of experience with them in a career change, and teaching became one of the fastest

growing careers for older workers ("Learn How To Become," 2014).  The Bureau of

Labor Statistics (2014a) had not specifically tracked data on the number of jobs

Americans had in their lifetimes; however studies were performed on worker stability and job tenure. The median number of years over which people earned wages and salaries with their then-current employers was 4.6 years, according to the 2014 data. In comparison, the United Kingdom median was 8.8 years, and Germany's median was 11 years (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD], 2016). Pierret (2005) collected data, beginning in 1979 and reported,

> BLS economist Chuck Pierret has been conducting a study to better assess U.S. workers' job stability over time, interviewing 10,000 individuals, first surveyed in 1979, when group members were between 14 and 22 years old. So far, members of the group have held 10.8 jobs, on average, between ages 18 and 42, using the latest data available. (Pierret, 2005, pg 3, para. 3)

"The prediction for the fastest growing occupation for those over fifty who are changing careers through 2018 is working as a primary, secondary, and special education teacher" ("Learn How to Become," 2014, para. 6).

Bennett (2013) gave helpful advice with regard to what types of teachers were in greatest demand and alternative ways to become a certificated teacher.  The teaching profession was experiencing an influx of older people, who were changing careers and wished to become teachers.  Olson (2011) wrote about older workers taking on a new career in teaching, *"*Many come to teaching later in life because they want a challenge. Some want to help others or keep active. Others need an income or a supplement to retirement savings" (para. 3).

There was a debate in education for which one side thought there were too many schools and universities that offered degrees to become teachers (Sawchuk, 2013).  Do

we have too many teachers in the United States?  Statistics showed the number of teachers and teacher aides has almost increased by 188% since 1970, but the student population has only grown by 8.5% (Coulson, 2012).  Coulson (2012) implied through these statistics that, "America's public schools have warehoused three million people in jobs that do little to improve student achievement—people who would be working productively in the private sector" (para. 6).  Coulson (2012) stated that the extra people in the education field are not justified for the number of students in school.

How can we have teacher shortages if we already have too many teachers?  This appears to be a geographic area or subject area occurrence.  High needs fields such as special education and specialized sciences are in high demand while early education has too many people for the open positions, "In fact, there may be too many certificated teachers in some fields, such as early-childhood education" (McKenna , 2015, para. 2). Rural areas have had a difficult time recruiting some teachers, "rural districts have struggled to convince young people to relocate to areas where housing and recreational options are limited" (McKenna , 2015, para. 7).  McKenna also noted that some cities are also having trouble filling open positions "Teachers are needed in Newark, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, for example, where concerns about safety and other challenges in urban schools may deter prospective teachers" (McKenna , 2015, para. 4).   High School science and math are disciplines that suffered from not having enough qualified teachers, especially physics and chemistry.  McKenna reported how some school districts were addressing teacher shortages for specific disciplines with online classes, "there's always the Internet. Some states are trying out virtual-education programs so that children in geographically remote regions can learn even without a teacher" (McKenna , 2015, para.

13).  Online classes have become more common in colleges and universities but now K-12 schools are beginning to follow their lead to fill open teaching positions.  Schools with the greatest staffing need are called "high-needs "and they are defined by the  No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 as

> Within the top quartile of elementary and secondary schools statewide, as
>
> ranked by the number of unfilled, available teacher positions; or is located
>
> in an area where at least 30 percent of students come from families with
>
> incomes below the poverty line; or an area with a high percentage of out
>
> of-field-teachers, high teacher turnover rate, or a high percentage of
>
> teachers who are not certificated or licensed. ("Demand for Teachers,"
>
> 2016, para. 4; "High Needs Schools," 2016, para. 1)

The Teach.com article also discussed the need for teachers who could teach English as a second language due to the large immigration of students who do not speak English as their first language.

**Teacher Training and Development**

It sometimes seems to be assumed that anyone could teach, because we have all been to school. If this was the case, why did we have such an elaborate certification process for making sure teachers knew how to teach a class? "The education research community has spent years debating the value of teacher education and professional development programs and their impact on teaching effectiveness and student achievement" (Barnett, Daughtrey, & Wieder, 2010, para. 1).  At the time of this writing, we have more new teachers entering the profession from non-traditional paths, and this is challenging the traditional model of "one size fits all" for the certification process"

(Barnett et al., 2010, p. 3).  Research has shown that "high-quality pre-service training increases new teacher retention and improves their effectiveness" (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 3).  Traditional models of teacher preparation were being questioned; whether they prepared new teachers to handle the challenges of the classroom. Well-supervised and extensive student teaching, in a context that congruent with placement as first-year teachers was one of the newer models.  The increase of non-traditional teachers entering the profession required attention to make sure the new professionals received real-world experience to prepare for their future classroom.  "This teacher's insight is a powerful one: passion for educating high-needs students is not enough to be a successful teacher. High-quality preparation is absolutely essential to teacher effectiveness – and anything less is a disservice to students" (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 5).

The state of Missouri, at the time of this writing, had 12 institutions of higher learning where individuals could complete a state-approved alternative teacher certification program (MODESE, 2016b).  People came to teaching from the business world, bring with them a sense of constant checks for progress.  Companies had monthly, quarterly and annual reports, which they must publish to demonstrate their monetary solvency to stockholders.  How do teachers, administrators and school districts follow this model?  Between 1961 and 1980, national average spending on education per pupil in the United States increased from $2360 to $7086 per student and student performance, as measured by scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and high school graduation rates remained approximately the same (Greene, 2002).  One of the few pieces economists agreed upon was that the payoff for education was highly individualized and that each additional year a student was in school raised an individual's

income (Bernasek, 2005).  All public school districts were required by the laws of the

state they were located within to report all financial aspects of their operations

(MODESE, 2016d).  However, how do school districts demonstrate the educational

ability of their students?

        The data were also included as standardized test scores on the same MODESE

webpage as the financials and listed by each sub group of students, along with math,

science, and English scores.  Individual teachers wished to use data to determine how

they performed with their students; this became known as "high stakes testing;" through

use of *"any test used to make important decisions about students, educators, schools, or

districts, most commonly for the purpose of accountability"* ("High Stakes Tests," 2014,

para. 1). The Washington D.C. school district had high numbers of transient students,

students who moved into or out of the district. This caused disruption for those individual

students and caused a change in total student population in some areas (Chandler, 2015).

Teachers were accountable for student achievement when they had the student in their

class for only a part of the academic year.  One major drawback of high stakes testing

was that there was no impact on students on how they performed on the test.  While at the

same time, state and federal funding were tied to school district performance of these

same students.  Teachers needed to face this reality as they worked with those students

who wanted to do well on the test and still convince students who were not motivated to

take another test, which did not affect their grade (Chandler, 2015).  A better test to

administer would be a low stakes test, where it would be used to measure academic

achievement, identify learning problems, or inform instructional adjustments, among

other purposes. What distinguishes a high-stakes test from a low-stakes test is not its

form (how was the test designed) but its function (how the results are used) ("High Stakes Test," 2014, para. 2). Low stakes testing had more meaning to the person taking the test and did not have public consequences.  Teachers and students cared the greatest about test results they could use to improve future-student outcomes.

Teaching to the test became a common term for how school districts focused on helping students to do well on their standardized tests.  Student scores determined state and federal funding.  School districts wished to maximize these student scores, but was this really teaching or just students preparing to take a test?  Research showed that tests were better when used as a diagnostics to determine where students needed specific help, followed by giving them that help (Lloyd, 2016).

In the business world, people could see the results of their work in pluses and minuses on the financial bottom line, but how does this translate into the field of education?  There was a debate about holding teachers accountable for what students learned with good points on both sides.  From the teacher side, Tucker and Stronge (2016) gave a good explanation, "Most educators would agree that they are responsible for student learning, but the profession as a whole has avoided evaluations based on measures of student learning, sometimes with good reason, given the unfair approaches that have been proposed"( para. 22). Measuring student growth by cohort or individual growth gave a better assessment of how students were progressing, with the help of each of their teachers (Hull, 2007).  Students may not achieve the proficient standard required by each, state but they were improving.

Teachers obtained a required license in their subject areas and grade levels by their individual state (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014b). After teachers were in their

positions, they continued with professional development through the help of university courses or workshops, school districts, or individual mentors.  In Missouri, school boards, teacher mentors, and school leaders helped new teachers increase their effectiveness and student success (MODESE, 2013b).  In Missouri, teachers received an initial certification, which must be upgraded to a Career Continuous Professional Certificate (CCPC), or Continuous Career Education Certificate (CCEC), by their fifth year to continue to be certificated to teach by the state (MODESE, 2013b). As part of this process, new teacher candidates participated in a University program;

> Attendance at the one-day program satisfies the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Beginning Teachers Assistance Program requirement for participation in a university/college-sponsored mentoring program. The program is required for advancement in state certification. Certificates of attendance provided at the conclusion of the day. (Simms, 2016, para. 5)

Once teachers were certificated, they could acquire additional certifications (MODESE, 2016a).  Common certifications were for grades 1 to 6, 5 to 9 and 9 to 12 (MODESE, 2016c).  Once teachers completed all the requirements to teach their grade levels, they could take a proficiency test to add a certification to teach another grade or subject area.

Teachers also attended training in person or online from their district each year on concepts to help them improve themselves and increase student achievement (Francis Howell, 2015).

Teacher training is regulated and ongoing through the help of each district

and state.  Universities and teachers follow the example, which they work

to instill in each of their students, become lifelong learners.  "The

American system of public schooling is unusual for a modern state, as

most nations rely upon education systems operated by the national

government. The education system in the United States is actually a set of

state-based systems. There is, however, a federal government role in

education, and national education organizations and activities exist. But

the ultimate authority–what is called plenary authority–for schooling in

the United States resides with the individual states. (Guthrie, 2016, p. 1)

Many states reciprocated teacher licenses between each other.  Missouri had a

reciprocity arrangement with all states, as long as the teacher was already certificated by

his or her home state (MODESE, 2016e), and Swarthmore College (2016) listed a clear

chart on how teachers could compare different state requirements.

Many states had new teacher mentor programs, and the importance of these

programs became more evident in helping new teachers with the procedures of joining

the profession. Alexander and Alexander (2016) listed six reasons why new teachers

became frustrated and left the profession.  Mentors come from a pool of existing, veteran

teachers who helped new teachers successfully navigate through these frustrations "New-

teacher mentors generally are chosen from the pool of experienced volunteer educators.

Senior faculty members who have collaborative and cooperative skills and can commit

time to the process" (Alexander & Alexander,  2016, para. 8).   Barlin (2010) discussed

the importance of finding the right mentors for new teachers and the benefit to

organizations:

> For more than a decade, clear and consistent research has shown that the quality
>
> of teachers is the most powerful school-related determinant of student success.
>
> Capitalizing on this now-large body of evidence, many education leaders have
>
> begun to invest in new-teacher mentoring. It's a smart bet. (Barlin, 2010, p. 1)

Mentors helped bridged the gap and guided new teachers through the first steps of

beginning the profession.  This help during the first two years in the teaching profession

for new teachers could help them remain in the profession.  There was a greater cost if

new teachers left after failing to teach effectively, "More significant than teacher dropout

rates is the impact of poorly trained teachers on student performance. We know that

student achievement is connected to the quality of instruction" (Fleischmann, 2016, para.

5).  Frazier (2007) conducted a study of new teacher perceptions of their mentoring

process in rural Tennessee, and his Research Question 5 asked,

> What are the perceptions of beginning teachers regarding the elements of
>
> an effective mentoring program for 1st-year teachers? In general, the
>
> beginning teachers said they felt a mentoring program would be more
>
> successful if only mentors who wanted to be mentors were used. (p. 62)

Assigning mentors to new teachers was not unique to America.  In Japan, new

teachers were assigned two mentors, one on-site and one off-site.  "Professional learning

opportunities of teachers are highly structured, and activities at the school, district,

prefecture, and national levels are well coordinated based on a national model, the

teacher professional implementation system, developed by the Ministry of Education"

(Akiba & LeTendre, 2009, p. 5).  The main difference between the United States and

Japan's new teacher mentoring was that the United States used a 'jurisdiction model,'

which meant each state or territory had the authority to develop and implement teacher-

induction programs. The results were a wide variety of programs, and not all of the

teacher induction programs had a mentoring portion embedded.  The mentoring program

would be one part of the teacher induction process depending on the state or individual

country.  Japan supported a 'member model,' where the government primarily designed,

funded, implemented, and monitored the teacher-induction program (Moskowitz &

Stephens, 1997).  *"Japan demonstrates a strong commitment to the professional*

*development of teachers.  Its induction program is marked by close contact with new*

*teachers, a strong mentoring system, and support time for planning, collaboration, and the*

*general sharing of ideas"* (Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997, p. 9, para. 3)*.*

**Japan**

In Japan, the entire country followed the same model due to its 'member model'

in education.  All school districts knew what steps to follow and all teachers in the entire

country followed the same system under the Ministry of Education, which was similar to

the USDOE in the United States (National Center on Education and the Economy

[NCEE], 2016).  There was little difference between districts in Japan; the effectiveness

of following the specified national model was the only variable. In the United States, the

> jurisdictional model allowed each school district to design and follow its own
>
> system.  In the United States, there could have been 567 distinctly different
>
> systems in the state of Missouri alone, the number of school districts in the state
>
> in 2013. (Danford et al., 2015)

**Finland**

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) launched the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 1997, in order to assess how 15-year-olds applied knowledge (OECD, 2016). Seventy-eight countries participated in 2012's assessment (OECD, 2016).  The PISA 2012 reading literacy scale ranked Finland in 6th place and the United States in 24th place.  Finland required all teachers to earn their Master's degree in education, with the emphasis of their degree in their field or grade level,

> Teachers major in education, while upper grade teachers concentrate their studies in a particular subject, e.g., mathematics, as well as didactics, consisting of pedagogical content knowledge specific to that subject. There are no alternative ways to receive a teacher's diploma in Finland: the university degree constitutes a license to teach. (Sahlberg, 2010, pp. 2-3)

Finland's teacher training process, new at the time, was uniform under the Ministry of Education for the entire country, but the teachers experienced specific professional development that aligned with the position obtained within the school district.  Each school district received an equitable share of money from the federal government, but it was up to each individual district to determine how much to spend on teacher development, which resulted in a variation between districts (Sahlberg, 2010, p. 6).

According to Sahlberg (2010), teachers were the main reason for the huge jump in student achievement,

> Until the 1960s, the level of educational attainment in Finland remained
> rather low. Only 1 out of 10 adult Finns in that time had completed more
> than nine years of basic education; achieving a university degree was an
> uncommon attainment. (p. 1)

Sahlberg (2010) also credited the desire for people to become teachers as not from the salary, but from the prestige of the position.  Teaching was viewed as a noble, prestigious profession, akin to medicine, law, or economics in the Finnish culture.

**Singapore**

In Singapore, each year the Ministry of Education calculated the number of teachers the country needed and opened that number of slots in the teacher training programs (NCEE, 2016).  The process of becoming a teacher in Singapore was challenging.  Only one-out-of-eight applicants were accepted and they must score at 'A' level, or 90%, on the country's A-level exams (NCEE, 2016).  Applicants were required to pass a panel interview and their academic record and community involvement was scrutinized.

Teaching was a highly respected profession in Singapore, due to Confucian culture, which valued teachers.  It was common knowledge related to the intense training it took to become a teacher.  Hogan (2014) wrote that for more than a decade, Singapore, along with South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Finland, were at or near the top of international comparison tables that measured children's abilities in reading, math, and science.  Teaching salaries in Singapore were comparable with other professions, and teachers had the opportunity to earn performance and retention bonuses. "The maximum salary for a lower secondary teacher is twice the GDP per capita,

indicating that teacher compensation is generally quite strong" (NCEE, 2016, para. 3).

The per capita Gross Domestic Product of Singapore for 2014 was $56,284, which was

higher than the United States' $54,269 (The World Bank, 2015).  Teacher salaries were

around $112,000 (U.S. Dollars), while the average teacher salary in the United States was

$56,400 (Digest of Education Statistics, 2013).

**Teacher Working Conditions**

A new teacher faced challenging conditions that affected the success of fulfilling

the role of a teacher.  Researchers found one main condition teachers faced was large

class sizes and how large class sizes affected student achievement (Hunn-Sannito, Hunn-

Tosi, & Tessling, 2001, p. 20).  In Postell's (2004) study, teacher expectations of students

were already low, due to the low socio-economic status of the school district, and larger

classroom sizes added stress for these teachers.  Educating students  was labor intensive,

and any discusion about lowering the number of students in each classroom started a cost

analysis (Schneider, 2002).  Decreasing class size would require the hiring of more

teachers, which would raise the cost of education for the school district.  In a survey

conducted by Public Agenda, Schneider (2002) noted that 70% of teachers said that small

class sizes were more important to student achievement than small school size.  There

was a debate whether smaller class size increased student achievement.  Ferguson (1991)

found that district student achievement fell as the student-teacher ratio increased for

every student above an 18:1 ratio.  Robinson and Wittebols (1986) used a related-cluster

analysis approach of more than one hundred relevant research studies in which the

researchers grouped similar kinds of research studies together.  They concluded that the

clearest evidence of positive effects of smaller class size was in the primary grades,

particularly kindergarten through third grades, and that reducing class size was especially promising for disadvantaged and minority students. (Robinson & Wittebols, 1986). Hanushek (1999) conducted research, which showed that class size was not associated with high performance.

In the early days of American education, teachers had many basic job roles and expectations.  Teachers could not be out in public from 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., unless it was for school business, and they would be frowned upon if they were seen drinking alcohol of any kind (Jackson, 1984).  Women could not be married or go out on a date; the result of these actions could be termination from their teaching positions.  Teachers were pillars of the community without any question of their character.  Teachers were expected to keep their classroom space clean and build and tend a fire during cold days. In a 2014 child-molestation case, the criminal system was quick to address illegal, individual teacher actions, and the legal system sued an individual school district (Porter, 2014).  The Los Angeles Unified School District settled the case for $139 million, involving a teacher who was in the profession for thirty years. The school district also settled an additional 65 cases involving this teacher for another $30 million. The courts sentenced the teacher to 25 years in prison for his actions of child molestation.

At first glance, teachers appeared to have a great advantage over their predecessors.  Technology made it easier to create and grade students' work, smart boards eliminated chalk in the classroom, and teachers entered grades electronically. Parents could see their children's grades any hour of the day and email teachers with questions about missed student work.  The ability to replace textbooks completely became a possibility at the turn of the 21st century, as publishers of school textbooks

were making them available online.  Teachers could use other online resources to assign

homework and communicate with parents about grades and missing student work

(Engrade, 2016).

      In the early 2000s, teacher pay was still low in comparison to other fields with

similar levels of required education (Weissmann, 2011), but teachers often cited that they

did not enter the profession 'for the money' (Lewis, 2015).

      **Administrative support.** The most cited reason teachers left the profession was

lack of administrative support (Michigan State University, 2015).  The professional

website, LinkedIn, stated people did not quit jobs, they quit their managers (Sunday,

2014).  The school leader, principal, helped create the environment in which the teacher

worked.  Principals had a large part to play in helping teachers to feel engaged in the

success of the school and their positive personal morale by including them in the

decision-making process of the school (DeMatthews, 2014).

      **Hours.** Teachers explicitly worked about seven hours a day in their classrooms

and in their school buildings (Startz, 2012).  New teachers developed lessons for each

class they taught, and additional demands of federal mandates added to this list (Cocco,

2014).  After each class with students, teachers evaluated their performance or ability to

teach and assessed what their students learned.  Student work was graded, and to help

students learn, teachers gave them feedback.  There was a large debate about the use of

and grading of homework, or even if it should be assigned at all (Vatterott, 2007).

      Teachers often had meetings before and after school with parents, administrators,

and other teachers, as well as professional development trainings.  They may be required

to attend Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to help students meet their

educational goals and follow state and federal laws detailed in each student plan. Teachers had commitments related to the role outside of classroom instruction, such as coach of school sports teams or after school academic clubs (Harrison & Killion, 2007). Teachers were asked in their initial interviews what extracurricular activities they would sponsor. Administrators wanted to know that the person they were hiring to join their team was willing to participate in the school community (Alstad-Davies, 2015).

Administrators chose some teachers to present meetings about new ideas or district programs, while the rest of the staff attended (Jennings, 2007). Teacher leaders were expected to research, create, and present information integrating technology on and about the new ideas or programs implemented by the school district.

On the surface, the number of hours teachers spent actually 'performing' their jobs of instructing students looked appealing, but time spent preparing could be greater than the time actually spent teaching. An appropriate comparison to teacher preparation time could be the time spent by a professional baseball player perfecting a swing (Berg, 2014). Viewers see a player at bat but do not see the hours they spend practicing the fundamentals from their stance to bat swing. Teachers must work to get their instruction right 100 % of the time, because it was the all-important future of each student, which rested in their hands and abilities (Weise, 2014).

**Class assignment.** School districts hired new teachers to fill an open spot within a school created by teachers retiring, moving, or taking another position. This was a good opportunity for administrators to move existing teachers around, due to their desire or changing needs of the building. In best-case scenarios, administrators selected new teachers to be the most successful for their students, the building, and the district. In less

than ideal situations, new teachers could be given 'challenging' classes which existing

teachers desired to avoid (O'Brien, 2013).  Department heads were usually teachers with

the most experience and could be pulled from their classes to perform administrative

tasks, leaving their classes to less experienced teachers or even student teachers

(LaBrecque, 2007).

In ideal situations, administrators worked in collaboration with teachers to assign

students to teachers who could maximize each student's potential (Carpenter, 2008).  At

times, pressure from senior teachers could sway this consideration and harm the potential

of student success (O'Brien, 2013).

**Planning time.** The time during regular school hours, where teachers met and

conferred with other teachers, administrators, students, and parents was referred to as

teacher-planning time. The teachers discussed student needs, asked instructional

questions, shared best practices, or met with parents.  A team discussion could help to

maximize student achievement ("Planning Time," 2013).  All too often, planning time

was used by administrators to inform and discuss district needs with teaching teams, and

some districts began reducing this time (Toplikar, 2007). This vital 30 to 40 minutes

could be lost from helping students, which did not directly influence the learning process.

Teachers worked together with parents, administrators, and students to help their

students, and planning time was crucial to this process (The Center for Comprehensive

School Reform and Improvement , 2010).  Many times, teachers met before and after the

regular school hours to discuss student performance and ways to improve them, which

made the short workday grow in length.

**Class size.** Student class size was a variable used to determine the number of teachers employed by a district. Districts hired teachers based on the amount of money they had. One of the first expenses used to help lower district costs was to hire fewer teachers and place more students in each class (Mason, 2015). There were many factors, in addition to class size, which affected student achievement, such as: "the quality of the teaching, the school leadership, the size of the school, the amount of parent involvement."(Lloyd, 2016, para. 1). What was small class size? "Researchers have found that gains in achievement generally occur when class size is reduced to less than 20 students" (Lloyd, 2016, para. 6).

There were many benefits to smaller class size, especially in lower grades, as children were just beginning to learn and need more one-on-one attention to be more successful. Many school districts worked to keep the student-to-teacher ratio low in lower grades and then raised the student-to-teacher ratio in higher-grade levels. There were some unintended consequences with lowering student-to-teacher ratio, such as the need for more teachers and individual classrooms. One major consequence was "per student funding for class size reduction was not enough to cover the cost for already underfunded districts" (Lloyd, 2016). On the spectrum of class size, special education class sizes were at the smaller end. The United Federation of Teachers (2016) recommended a ratio of 6:1, and up to a 12:1 ratio, for special education, referenced as special-need classrooms. The class size recommendation for those that needed extra help, but were not classified as special education, was 20. Private schools addressed class size from a different perspective. Many private schools advertised small class size as a major benefit to prospective students and their parents, but this benefit came at a

cost; the national average cost for private schools was $9582 per year (Private School

Review, 2016,). While the national average cost for public schools was $10,700, this

number varied from $6,555 in the state of Utah to $19,818 in the state of New York (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2015).  Parents of private school students paid the tuition in addition to

their regular tax payment for the public schools in their area.  Teachers in private schools

earned approximately 30% less than their public-school counterparts (Orlin, 2013).  The

average number of students-to-teachers in the United States during the 2010-2011 school

year was 15.5:1.  Studies showed that the effect of having a large decrease in the number

of students in each classroom from 7 to 10 fewer students could have a significant long-

term effect on student achievement and other meaningful outcomes (Chingos &

Whitehurst, 2011, para. 6).  Class size for teachers with students with a range of diverse

needs could be critical in what the student could learn within the environment (Chingos

& Whitehurst, 2011).

      **Technology.** "Technology has transcended poverty, race and economics to

become a driving force in the lives of people across the world. More than two billion of

us now have access to the internet and five billion of us have mobile phones" (Kelly,

2013, para. 1). Poorer areas of the world did not have the resources; therefore, utilization

of the positive aspects of the technological society of the 21st century was not possible,

but there was a growing trend to improve the situation.  Several high-profile tech

companies launched global initiatives to increase access to technology by children and

young people in the world's poorest countries (Kelly, 2013).  "Children are growing up in

a world where social media, mobile technology and online communities are fundamental

to the way that they communicate, learn and develop" (Kelly, 2013, para. 2).  Kelly noted

positive uses for new technology in education and the need to keep it updated.  Kelly

(2013) also listed drawbacks and cautions to the use of technology, such as child

protection in situations of bullying and communicating with strangers.  Simply placing

technology in a classroom did not automatically increase student learning, according to

Kelly (2013).  Technology was only a tool used to bring more experiences and

information to students in the classroom.  Teachers had the option to pause in the middle

of the lesson and access technology to answer more in depth questions from students.

This model of using technology to find information also demonstrated to students how

they should use technology to help them answer future questions or complex problems on

their own.

Mitra's research, showed the positive effect of using technology in education.  His

famous 'PC in the wall' experiment showed how children in the slums of New Delhi,

India, taught themselves how to use a computer on the internet and even how to

understand English (as cited in Copeland, 2013).  Children learned without a teacher, not

knowing the language used on the PC after two months of experimenting with the 'PC in

the wall.'

People could conduct their own research in the palm of their hand with the help of

modern technology.  When Apple, Inc. unveiled its iPod in 2001, the information of the

world was brought to the fingertips of everyone who held one (Edwards, 2011), and all

for the sake of listening to music.  The demand for faster music transfer helped to push

technology to build faster, more efficient (universal serial bus (USB) connections, which

helped the transfer of all electronic information.  Students and teachers could create and

save vast amounts of information on portable USB flash drives (Lund, 2016).  They could

create presentations and reports, and submit homework without ever printing a page. The

availability of computers and projectors became more common each year and the cost

continued to fall, even as the speed and capacity increased. Education benefited from the

technological improvements, from textbook-free schools to individualized instruction for

all students. Textbooks were a huge cost for schools; not calculating the additional cost

of storage and wear-and-tear of the physical book itself. The process of updating

physical textbooks became a political football as publishers tried to meet the needs of

each state in the United States; it was a seven-to-ten-year adoption time line for new

books in most school districts (Rapp, 2008).

> Typical elementary-school textbooks cost more than $100 each, and, as a result,
>
> the four largest textbook publishers rake in more than $4 billion each year. A big
>
> part of that haul, of course, comes out of state education budgets nationwide.
>
> Besides cost, traditional paper textbooks have other disadvantages. Textbooks can
>
> be damaged, and their subject matter can become outdated or obsolete in just a
>
> few years. And any student can testify to how textbooks are heavy and
>
> inconvenient to carry around. (Rapp, 2008, para. 2)

> Electronic books (e-books) began as copies of regular books, but then became

much more. Publishers could update the books with new information any time to fit new

curriculum in each classroom, school, or district. Higher education embraced this form

of teaching and technology as a part of almost every career field; however, K-12 was

much slower to adopt these tools (Rapp, 2008). E-books could be customized for each

student, to meet them at their level, so they did not become discouraged by their inability

to understand new information (Hendrickson, 2014); this helped to motivate students to

reach their highest potential, because they experienced more successes more often in their course work.  There were studies, which either linked reading ability to success in life, academically or in the real world.  Zimmerman (2012) commented on the effect of reading level on a person's success:

> We know, for example, that there is a strong connection between your reading
> skills and your academic success; and there is a building body of evidence that
> shows a connection between your reading skills and reading activity and your
> business success as well as relationship success. (para. 4)

Microsoft offered a new online program some school districts already embraced, called OneDrive.  OneDrive is Microsoft's service for hosting files in the "cloud", that's available for free to all the owners of a Microsoft account. OneDrive offers users a simple way to store, sync and share all kinds of files, with other people and devices on the Web. Xbox One, Windows 8.1, Windows 10 and Windows Phone use OneDrive also for synchronizing your system settings, visual customizations, themes, app settings and even Internet Explorer or Microsoft Edge tabs, history and saved passwords (Tech Radar Pro, 2015).

Students could share their work with each other live on the internet; they could enter and edit information for projects, papers, and presentations with their classmates. This is a long way from what the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET), accomplished in 1969, and online bulletin boards (Rouse, 2016), when they developed many of the protocols used for internet communication today (Zimmerman, 2012).

Elementary students could work online with their classmates through the help of modern technology. Online programs could be adapted to the needs of each student to assist K-12 school districts with the demands of the then-new Common Core Standards in the United States. Students could work at their level and advance at their own pace through the curriculum. One company, Scootpad Corporation, had an extensive program, tailored for the K-8 school environment (Schoology, 2016). Teachers must be familiar with these programs and use them and other online resources to enrich the learning experience for their students (Poole, 2012).

Online programs gave teachers information and the steps to follow for a Response to Intervention (RTI) model; an educational approach that provided early, systematic assistance to children who were struggling in one or many areas of their learning. RTI sought to prevent academic failure through early intervention and frequent progress measurement (Hattie, 2012). Hattie's (2012) meta-analysis of influences on student achievement gave RTI the sixth highest affect out of 150 listed influences. In 2015, Hattie updated his list from 150 to 195 influences related to student academic outcomes, positive and negative (Hattie, 2015). Hattie (2012, 2015) combined the results from over 15 years from almost 50,000 studies on this subject and developed a list of positive and negative influences on student achievement. In Hattie's (2012, 2015) analysis, the natural baseline affect was a 0.40 and RTI models rate a 1.07, almost three times the baseline.

**Parent support.** Parent support was high in elementary schools and declined as students advanced in school. Teacher aides and room mothers were in 74% of elementary schools, and this parent support impact was profound (Dervarics & O'Brien,

2011).  Parental involvement dropped from 74% in the primary grades to below 28% by

grades 9 through 12 (Child Trends, 2013).

At the time of this study, parents and teachers communicated through email and

parents viewed online grade books to check their student's progress.  These forms of

communication were considered important timesaving tools for busy people, but also had

drawbacks.  Emails could be misunderstood and at times caused confusion and harm,

instead of conveying the intentional help first thought to offer (Webster, 2015).

Ginott (1969) was the first to use the term 'helicopter parent' in his book,

*Between Parent and Teenager.* Teens said their parents were like a helicopter, which was

hovering right over them; the term became popular enough to become a dictionary entry

in 2011.  These parents have the best of intentions for their children, but can end up

smothering their child (Bayless, 2013).  Teachers must be able to communicate well with

this type of parent, so the parents feel informed of their child's grades and academic

progress (Gatens, 2015).

While it may have sounded appealing to have parents actively involved in their

child's education, there could be drawbacks (Vinson, 2013).  If a parent was not happy

with a grade given to their child, they could challenge the teacher's scoring, regardless if

the grade was justified or not.  Teachers could enter student grades online for 24-hour

access, and if the teacher made a mistake, helicopter parents could send an email asking

to have it fixed.  Teachers welcomed the correction from helicopter parents, but it could

become a burden on regular teaching duties if it was excessive (Everette, 2013).

Teachers needed to set boundaries for these parents and not give instant access to their

questions, or they may become over-whelming in time for the teacher.  Gatens (2015)

cautioned teachers to keep their principal informed of communications with these types

of parents; because, they could and would go to the principal if they felt their

expectations for their child were not being met (Gatens, 2015).

Many people who entered the teaching profession did so because of the love to

help others learn.  Marsh (2015) cited a survey conducted by the Association of Teachers

and Lecturers in which 75% of teachers said they wanted to make a difference.  Once

teachers completed the required coursework and certification and found themselves a job,

other job-related tasks and people connected to the job began to consume their time.

Teachers shared their instructional time with all the administrative and regulatory needs

of the educational process (Freedman, 2007).

**Support for Teachers**

In an interview conducted by Scherer (2012), Darling-Hammond discussed how

the teacher used to be like one living on a desert island, which resulted in the feeling of

ineffectiveness in the classroom.  Teachers did not have a formal mentoring program,

which they could use to find help from a seasoned teacher, and they felt alone to face the

challenges of being a new teacher.  States developed mentor programs for new teachers

to help them develop into competent and effective educators, who stayed in the

profession.  Darling-Hammond stated one of the best ways to help new teachers, "What

great schools, great principals, and great school teams know is that you support teachers

by structuring group collaboration for planning curriculum, by building professional

learning communities, by encouraging ongoing inquiry into practice" (as cited in Scherer,

2012, p. 23).

There were many examples of how to help new teachers (Starr, 2002).  Starr (2002) listed  ideas for new teachers to follow: "Take charge, Keep students busy and engaged, Get peer support, Get parental support, Organize yourself, Organize your students, Write and reflect and Have fun"(Starr, 2002, para. 4).  Starr (2002) referenced a list of 26 ideas to help survive the first year of teaching, compiled by teachers who responded to the request, beginning with, 'Admit your mistakes, through Zero in on your strengths.'

Teachers could gain certification to teach in several different ways: traditional, alternative or innovative, temporary authorization, out-of-state, American Board of Certification for Teacher Excellence, or Doctorate (MODESE, 2016e).  The type of support required by a new teacher depended on the way the teacher candidate entered the profession.  New teacher candidates could enter the profession through the traditional route, where an individual completed a four-year, college-recommended course of study, did student teaching, passed the designated assessment test, graduated with a bachelor's degree in a field of education and was issued an initial certificate (MODESE, 2016e). New teacher candidates could follow an alternative or innovative route,

An individual with a bachelor's degree in a content area (such as

Mathematics or English) returns to a college of education for a program of

study that may enable him to take courses and teach simultaneously.  The

teacher works under a two-year, provisional certificate and usually

completes about 30 semester hours.  When the college program is

completed and the designated assessment test passed, the college

recommends and the individual receives an initial certificate.  Some of

these programs were offered via distance learning, some programs offer a

master's degree plus certification and some offer only the certification

(MODESE, 2016e, para. 3).

**Teams and professional development.** There were laws, which teachers must

follow; one example was the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, which

required that states ensure the availability of 'high-quality' professional development

for all teachers (Borko, 2004).  One way to fulfill this requirement was through team

teaching, an instructional strategy, used across subject areas primarily in middle grades,

in a variety of methods. Teams were typically composed of two and four teachers

working collaboratively to plan units and lesson plans, in order to provide a supportive

environment for students (Coffey, 2016). These teams could help new teachers meet this

requirement of 'high quality' professional development.  Teams were essential to help

new teachers remaining in the profession and feeling connected to colleagues (Aguilar,

2012).

**Mentors.** The principal assigned new-teacher mentors, and it was important that

these mentors possessed the qualities of a good mentor.  Rowley (1999) developed six

essential qualities of good mentors that provided an effective plan for principals to

consult.  Rowley's (1999) first quality was that the mentor was committed to the role of

mentoring and was not simply assigned to the new person.  Research indicated positive

outcomes because of mentorship. An experienced and accomplished academician

mentored a novice educator to expedite the full scope of the academic role and enhanced

productivity.  The other five qualities were: the good mentor was accepting of the

beginning teacher, skilled at providing instructional support, effective in different

interpersonal contexts, effective in different interpersonal contexts, and communicated hope and optimism (Rowley, 1999).

**Administrators.**  The most important factor for teachers remaining in the profession was the new teachers' perceptions of how their principals worked with their teachers (Tierney, 2012, para. 3). "What is the reason so many new teachers quit the profession or move to a different school? The main reason is their principals" (Tierney, 2012, para. 1).  Tierney (2012) found that factors, such as the heavy workload, low salary, the absence of autonomy, and the always-on, demanding nature of the work were trumped by how well the school principal worked with the teaching staff as a whole.

Administrators earned the trust of their teachers, which fostered a positive and productive work environment.  Administrators who demonstrated personal integrity and showed that they cared, were mirroring the apporach of how teachers acted toward their own students in their classes.  The researchers' final conclusion stated how any new relationship required time, but the investment was well worth the return of increased teacher satisfaction (Brewster & Railsback, 2003).

**State requirements.** States' colleges and universities had rigorous teacher education programs in place to verify content knowledge of each teacher candidate, and many teachers felt they were properly prepared for the basics of their profession (Jasper, 2014)**.**  The USDOE (2015) listed each state's requirements for new teachers, available for the prospective future teachers to view.  The requirements were categorized by grade level, so future teachers could focus on the level they wished to teach; early childhood (birth - grade 3), elementary (grades 1 - 6), middle school (grades 5 - 9), or secondary (gardes 9 - 12) (MODESE, 2016c).  Teachers could obtain their certification online

through college and university teacher preparation programs (Western Governors

University, 2015). Many states offered reciprocity for certificated teachers who moved

from one state to another (NCATE, 2014). In 2011, the National Association of State

Directors of Teacher Education and Certification was established. The goal of this group

was to encourage cooperation between states to allow teachers to acquire certification in

another state when they had already earned their certification in their current location.

This allowed teachers to move to states which had a high need for teachers. Every state

in the United States was a participants in this agreement except Minnesota and Iowa

("Teacher Certification Reciprocity," 2015, para. 3). Prospective teachers had a variety

of ways to enter the teaching profession, but had to research the options with each state's

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the teacher candidate

requirments.

**Motivation to Remain in the Teaching Profession**

New teachers wanted to make a difference. They would only stay in the classroom

if they felt successful, and they are most likely to feel successful if they received support

in their jobs — specifically, ongoing help from colleagues, administrators, and mentors

and the ability to work in conditions that enabled good teaching (Baldacci & Johnson,

2006, page 13). Some teachers turned down other jobs to remain in the profession

(Zdanowicz, 2012). Zdanowicz (2012) wrote of the Longshore family, where both

parents were teachers and both worked second jobs to make ends meet. Their passion for

teaching children helped them overlook their modest life, although Renee Longshore

sometimes resented her job, because she felt under-appreciated by parents, at times. In

the same article, Sanchez described, "Each semester I have to answer the very real

question: Can I afford it anymore?" (as cited in Zdanowicz, 2012, para. 47). He continued

teaching because he believed he could show each student that they were a valuable part

of society. The question of why teachers chose to remain in the profession was complex,

which took into account how long each served in the teaching profession (Johnson, Berg,

& Donaldson, 2005). They found that teachers were most likely to leave after their first

year of teaching, and lower salaries increased this tendency to leave the profession more

quickly.

Teacher resiliency was a key to longevity in the teaching field (Bobek, 2002).

Teachers faced many things over which they had little control, from federal, state, and

district laws and policies to real-world factors in their students' lives. Great lesson plans

and procedures could fall apart if outside factors came into the classroom and took over

the central focus of student learning. Teachers who could adapt and adjust to adverse

conditions develped a resiliency which helped them to remain in the teaching profession

(Bobek, 2002).

Teachers looked to foster a love of lifelong learning in their students, but this

presented a challenge depending on where they taught (McCarthy, 2011). McCarthy

(2011) discussed how the distribution of books and library resources was uneven across

schools in the United States, as well as whether the resources were even present; the use

of these resources was not always the same. From the days of Carnegie and his desire to

bring knowledge to regular people, libraries were a source of that knowledge, which

regular people could use freely (Stamberg, 2013). During the late 19th and early20th

centuries, Carnegie donated his own money to build over 1,679 libraries in the United

States (Carnegie Foundation, 2015).  Carnegie had two main reasons for his donation of public libraries.

> First, he believed that in America, anyone with access to books and the desire to learn could educate him- or herself and be successful, as he had been. Second, Carnegie, an immigrant, felt America's newcomers needed to acquire cultural knowledge of the country, which a library would help make possible. (as cited in Carnegie Foundation, 2015).

In the early 21st century, with the help of technology, society could create lifelong learners of everyone in the world (Malykhina, 2014).  The 'gamification' of education was where video games were used as a tool that allowed students to take a more active role in their learning.  This placed teachers in the role of coach more than that of a lecturer.  Malykhina (2014) cited Gershenfeld on the benefits of using video games in education, because the workers of tomorrow would also likely change jobs many times throughout their careers, and they would need some mastery of media and technology to prepare for these future careers, which did not exist when they completed their secondary education.

**Students and Future Impact**

Mandela (2003) stated, *"*Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" (p. 1).  Many studies examined what made an effective teacher in raising student achievement scores.  According to Goe and Stickler (2008), the majority of the effectiveness was due to an "unobserved variable" (p. 10)*.* The summation of teacher responses on why they entered the profession was that they were

able to touch and impact the future. McAuliffe stated, as she was preparing for her space shuttle flight in 1986, *"I touch the future. I teach"* (Heitin, 2011, para. 11).

**Summers Off**

One complaint against teachers by most regular people was 'they get every summer off,' but do they just go to the beach? Teachers had many activities to occupy their summers from committee meetings to teaching summer school (Wolpert-Gawron, 2014). They also attended school or worked a second job (Williams-Boyd, 2012). Teachers could work during the summer break as summer camp staff, teach summer school, or tutor (Fudin, 2013). In 2009, 40% of teachers held second jobs, and 47% were seriously considering leaving the profession (Moore, 2010). Having summers off of work meant that teachers would not receive a paycheck, and this could create stress for them and their families. Having the time off to spend with younger children was a plus, but without a paycheck coming in, potential financial problems were created for their families. New pay options offered by school districts allowed teachers to receive their pay over twelve months, rather than just ten (Mahuron, 2016).

**Summary**

There were many positive points to becoming a teacher, from the professional team environment to nights and weekends off. With good support from colleagues and administrators, teachers could grow and improve themselves to become better educators. In the early 21st century, there were many new ways to enter the teaching profession and people could enjoy one or two other careers before becoming a teacher. This allowed them to have experience from other fields, which they could use to give their students a more diverse learning environment. While teacher pay was not comparable to many

other professions, people in the teaching profession did not cite this as their main factor

for entering the field and they usually had a good idea of the financial sacrifice.  The

education field needed to use the store of knowledge within its teachers and include them

in the process to allow the best ideas to advance the level of all learners and students.

**Chapter Three: Methodology**

**Overview**

This study investigated the second part of the six-step Missouri state certification process for teachers, which involved their teacher mentors during their first two years in the profession, in hopes of finding best practices by individual school districts.   The researcher wished to know: How did new teachers perceive the help from their school district and mentor while completing the state required process to upgrade the initial certification to a career-continuous status?  The researcher collected statewide data from new teachers and their principals on how each perceived the first year in the profession of the new teacher.  Secondly, the researcher collected data from comments made by a panel of new teachers, while they discussed their personal perceptions of their first year as a teacher.  Lastly, the researcher collected data from an online survey of new teachers and new teacher mentors from several different districts, to give a wider view of the perceptions of first-year teachers' performances. The researcher looked for a correlation between new teacher performance and their perceptions of their training with a mentor during the first year in the teaching profession.

The gap in knowledge found by the researcher, which this study looked to bridge, was to determine if a positive relationship between new teachers and new teacher mentors had a positive effect on those new teachers remaining in the teaching profession. In addition, to see if new teachers perceived a benefit through the implementation of the BTAP by their district, which helped them during their initial five years in the profession.

The process by which new teachers upgrade their initial certificates with the state of Missouri had six parts.  This research involved new teacher (Appendix B) and new teacher mentor perceptions of step 2 of this process (Appendix C).

The researcher contacted seven Saint Louis area school districts; however, none had data concerning their new teacher retention rates. Therefore, individual comparisons of best practices among the districts could not be completed, with respect to teacher retention.  The researcher collected Missouri state data, most recent to this writing, on new teacher retention rates from MODESE (2016g) and used the data to compare new teacher perceptions of their mentoring process.

**Research Questions and Null Hypotheses**

From the literature discussed in Chapter Two, the researcher designed the following research questions to obtain information about new teacher and new teacher mentor perceptions of the state-required mentoring program.

**Research Question # 1**: How do different districts implement their Beginning Teachers Assistance Program?

**Research Question # 2**: What do different districts implement within their Beginning Teachers Assistance Programs?

**Research Question # 3**: What are the similarities and differences between what districts implement within their Beginning Teachers Assistance Programs?

**Research Question # 4**: What apparent best practices are districts implementing to increase the retention rate of new teachers?

**Research Question # 5**: How does secondary data from the Missouri state education site (MODESE) on new teacher retention compare with what districts are

implementing within their Beginning Teachers Assistance Programs?  Question # 5 was

not answered as planned in this study. Quantitative data were collected from the Missouri

state educational website on new teacher retention, but was not used because individual

teachers and districts were not identified by district; this did not allow for a district

comparison.

**Null Hypothesis # 1**: There is no difference between Midwest University new

teacher perceptions and Midwest University principal perceptions, with regard to the

Missouri State Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

**Null Hypothesis # 2**: There is no difference between statewide new teacher

perceptions and statewide principal perceptions, with regard to the Missouri State

Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

**Null Hypothesis # 3**: There is no difference between Midwest University new

teacher perceptions and statewide new teacher perceptions, with regard to the Missouri

State Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

**Null Hypothesis # 4**: There is no difference between Midwest University

principal perceptions and statewide principal perceptions, with regard to the Missouri

State Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

**Null Hypothesis # 5:** There is no relationship between new teacher perceptions of

the Missouri state Beginning Teachers Assistance Program and new teacher retention.

The initial method of collecting data by the researcher was to include new teacher

and new teacher mentor responses from individual districts.  This method did not work

out for the researcher as each district had different reasons for not allowing the research

to take place with its new teachers and new teacher mentors. The researcher was not able to collect this data through this research.

**Null Hypothesis # 6:** There is no relationship between new teacher mentor perceptions of the Missouri state Beginning Teachers Assistance Program and new teacher retention.

The initial method of collecting data by the researcher was to include new teacher and new teacher mentor responses from individual districts.  This method did not work out for the researcher as each district had different reasons for not allowing the research to take place with its new teachers and new teacher mentors.  The researcher was not able to collect this data through this research.

**Null Hypothesis # 7:** There is no correlation between new teacher perceptions and new teacher mentor perceptions of the Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

The initial method of collecting data by the researcher was to include new teacher and new teacher mentor responses from individual districts.  This method did not work out for the researcher as each district had different reasons for not allowing the research to take place with its new teachers and new teacher mentors.  The researcher was not able to collect this data through this research.

**Research Design**

The researcher chose a mixed-method research design for this study, but as the secondary data became unavailable for purposes of this research, the primary methodology became qualitative.  According to Maxwell (2005), qualitative studies were especially effective for "understanding the meaning, for participants in the study, of the events, situations, experiences, and actions they are involved with" (p. 22).   In this study,

the researcher was looking for an observable difference between what different schools

used for their new teacher mentoring programs and how this affected the performance,

morale, and retention of new teachers in each district.  The researcher compared new

teacher and new teacher mentor responses, concerning the processes in place in each of

their school districts.  The researcher conducted these comparisons using online

qualitative surveys of new teachers and new teacher mentors, with a link to a survey on

Google Docs.  These results were a convenient sample of new teachers and new teacher

mentors, who were contacted through individual school districts, and students from a

local university.

   The researcher collected data from MODESE from a survey of new teachers and

their principals, as participants.  This was a qualitative study, which asked the

participants how they believed the new teachers performed during their first year of

teaching.  Researchers presented the survey results at an educational conference during

the summer of 2015 (MODESE, 2017).  The responses were a convenient sample from

state records of graduating new teachers, during the 2014 school year.

   Each year, the First-Year Teacher Survey and First-Year Principal Survey were

   administered in the springtime. There is some variation in the beginning and end

   dates of the surveys. The 2015 surveys launched on April 3, 2015 and concluded

   on June 12, 2015. In previous years, surveys have launched as early as March 3

   and have closed as early as mid-May. In general, timing was driven by the

   availability of contact information by which to solicit participation in the surveys,

   but it also reflects a strategic interest in assessing preparation relative to a

   reasonable sampling of classroom experience. (MODESE, 2017, p. 1)

The researcher collected convenient responses of qualitative data from a panel of new teachers who graduated from a local university during the spring of 2015.  The new teachers discussed their perceptions of their performance during their first year of teaching during the 2015-2016 school year**.**

**Research Settings**

The settings involved three separate groups.  The first was a panel discussion of new teachers about their perceptions of their first year in the profession.  The second was secondary data collected by the researcher's professor from the state of Missouri, consisting of responses from new teachers and their principals.  The third was information collected online with the help of a professor at a local university; this involved a survey of questions concerning new teacher perceptions of their mentoring process during their first year of teaching.  The researcher provided a release form to all participants explaining the purpose of the research and a process to have their responses removed from the research up, until the time of publication, if they wished.

**Participants**

An invitation to participate in the study went to the Superintendent of Saint Louis Public Schools, Parkway School District, Hazelwood School District, Pattonville School District, Francis Howell School District, Fort Zumwalt School District, and Saint Charles City Schools.  The easy geographic accessibility of the sample made it convenient for the researcher.  "A convenience sample is any group of individuals that is conveniently available to be studied" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000, p. 123). The researcher looked to have a minimum of thirty responses and a maximum of fifty, in total between all the districts.   According to Fraenkel (2012) for experimental causal comparative studies, a

minimum of thirty individuals was recommended.  At fifty individuals, a correlational study to establish a relationship between new teacher perceptions of the BTAP and the effect on the retention of those teachers, was planned**.**  The request for approval letter attached at the end of this document (Appendix H).

After approval from the Superintendent of each district, each Human Resources or Staff Development office received a cover letter and email link to an online survey with Survey Monkey. The initial survey of new teachers and teacher mentors asked for their perceptions of their new teacher training processes and how they helped during the first two years of the new teacher's career.  At the end of the online survey, conducted through Survey Monkey, the researcher asked participants for a follow-up interview to obtain detailed qualitative data; for the survey of new teachers (Appendix B, item 18) and for teacher mentors (Appendix C, item 10).

New teachers were defined as teachers who started their career in the 2010-2011 school year, or after.  The teacher mentors had mentored new teachers during the same period.  The research was designed for new teachers who started teaching in the following school years; 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012–2013, 2013–2014, and 2014–2015, and teacher mentors who mentored teachers who started teaching in the following school years: 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012–2013, 2013–2014, and 2014–2015.

**Excluded participants.**  Teachers with more than five years in their profession and teachers who had not mentored a new teacher in the past five years were excluded from the study.  Teach for America teachers were also be excluded from the study, because they had an alternate certification process, and usually only remained in the teaching profession for two years (Hansen, 2016, para. 3).

**Participant sample size.**  The sample size of 30 to 50 new teachers and 30 to 50

new teacher mentors (at least five new teachers from each district and at least five new

teacher mentors from each district) allowed for a statistical analysis of the data.  This also

allowed for individual interviews of new teachers and teacher mentors after their online

surveys (at least one new teacher from each district and at least one new teacher mentor

from each district was included in the research).

The researcher attempted to have a minimum of 30 responses and a maximum of

50 in total between all the districts.  According to Fraenkel (2012), for experimental

causal comparative studies a minimum of 30 individuals was recommended.  The

researcher wanted 50 individuals, in order to conduct a correlational study to establish a

relationship between teacher perceptions of the BTAP and the effect on the retention of

those teachers.

Four samples surveyed for this study included 75 first-year teachers from

Midwest University (pseudonym), 50 principals of first-year teachers from Midwest

University, 1,968 first-year teachers statewide, and 2,176 principals of first-year teachers

statewide. The statewide data represented 41 Missouri state institutions.

**Procedures and Instruments**

The researcher created individual invitation letters for each school district and

sent a copy for approval to the Superintendents of each school district.  Initially seven

school districts were included:  Saint Louis Public Schools, Parkway School District,

Hazelwood School District, Pattonville School District, Francis Howell School District,

Fort Zumwalt School District, and Saint Charles City School District. The districts were

chosen based on their student population size; at least 5,000 students.  New teacher

surveys (Appendix B) and teacher mentor surveys (Appendix C) were sent to each

district for approval.  Each district received the same survey for new teachers and teacher

mentors. The researcher numbered each district survey for identification purposes, for

comparison of retention rates to state data for each district.

The researcher collected teacher retention rates from MODESE (2016g) and

compared the data for alignment to teacher perceptions of their mentoring programs.

The researcher collected data from online new teacher surveys and teacher mentor

surveys (Appendix G). The collection continued until 30 to 50 participants (5 to 6 per

district) had responded.  Two to three of these respondents were from new teachers and

two to three were from teacher mentors. The collection of data was to continue until the

researcher had 7 to 14 participants for the individual interviews, which would include at

least one new teacher interview and one teacher mentor interview from each district.  The

last question of the online survey included a request for a one-on-one interview.

However, the response to the request for interview only provided three participants; one

mentor and two new teachers.

The researcher conducted new teacher and teacher mentor interviews to get an in-

depth idea of new teacher and teacher mentor perceptions of how the district

implemented the BTAP (Appendix D).

**Summary**

This study researched the perceptions of new teachers and new teacher mentors of

the BTAP, which all new teachers must complete in their first five years after entering the

teaching profession, in the state of Missouri.  More specifically, the research focused on

step two of the six-step process in which new teachers must participate in a mentoring

program.  Once new teachers completed this step, along with the other five steps, they

could upgrade their initial certification to a 99-year certification.

## Chapter Four: Results

**General Qualitative Feedback**

The researcher's results consisted of three sections; first the panel discussion of new teachers about their perceptions of their first year in the profession.  The second was secondary data collected by the researcher's professor from the state of Missouri, consisting of responses from new teachers and their principals.  The third was information collected online, with the help of a professor at a local university; this involved a survey of questions concerning perceptions of the mentoring process during the first year of teaching.

The initial online surveys yielded two-to-three individual interviews, two to three new teachers and two-to-three new teacher mentors, per district.  During the interviews, all responses were transcribed and coded to develop themes for best practice, which each district was using for the mentoring program.

All of the districts researched had similar programs in place for their mentor programs.  One key finding, which came out during the interviews, was how new teacher mentors were assigned to new teachers.  It was important that new teachers and new teacher mentors had as much time to meet and confer as possible.  This fostered positive interaction between the two professionals and helped to enhance the positive experience of new teachers in the profession.  This also led to an increase in new teacher resiliency, lowered stress levels, and lowered turnover for the school district.

Good new teacher–mentor relationships were also a key theme, which developed from responses during the individual interviews.  When the relationship was a positive

one, it led to an increase of the perception that the new teacher program was helpful, and when it was not very positive, it was not helpful to new teachers.

**Section 1: First-Year Teacher Panel**

**Teacher panel**: The first data results were from a focus group of first-year teachers, conducted at a local university.  The first-year teachers discussed different aspects of their experiences during their first year.  These included extra duties, how they found their job, what struggles they had, and how their university studies prepared them for their positions.  The portion of the panel of most interest to this research covered mentor assignments and suggestions to help new teachers succeed in their first year.  The questions and participant responses are listed in this section.

Focus group questions (Appendix E):

**Focus group question # 1.** Please, introduce yourself and include the program you completed with Lindenwood University. Identify the district and school where you are employed.

Participants - **P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6**.

The participants listed their school districts, certifications, and positions.

**Focus group question # 2.** Talk about the classes you currently teach and any additional duties you have (coaching, clubs, organizations, graduate coursework, etc.)

**P1** - Teaches class and works in some student clubs.

**P2** - Teaches class, tutors, and was planning a trip with students.

**P3** - Teaches class, bus duty, recess duty, works on committees, and was attending graduate classes.

**P4** - Teaches class, lunch duty, bus duty, and mentors a student club.

**P5** - Teaches class and works with a few student clubs.

**P6** - Teaches class and coaches.

**Focus group question # 3.** How did you land the job? Describe your experiences.

**P1** - Hired in January, took a temporary position, and was full time in a week. Schools are looking for a good fit when they hire you; her hiring principal told her this.

**P2** - Hired in January, other teacher quit during Christmas break. Tough position, due to the leaving new teacher. He has consulted the old retired teacher for help, and he has been very helpful.

**P3** - Went on over 20 interviews. Emailed P and AP of individual buildings. She had principals come to see her teach.

**P4** - Hired at the end of July, right before school started. The process is very slow, but out state schools moved more quickly. The key to getting in is networking.

**P5** - Hired by the school where she student taught at the last minute. Keep your eyes open for last minute openings due to transfers or people moving.

**P6** - He was hired quickly; interviewed and hired by the district all in the same week. This was a smaller district where Principals could make quick decisions.

**Focus group question # 4.** Do you have a named mentor/ support system for first-year teachers in your district? Please describe the experience.

**P1** - She was not given a mentor, due to her specialized field and few teachers in her field in the district. She has sought outside organizations for support on classroom lessons.

**P2** - His mentor helps him to plan, and their relationship is great. His mentor has come to his class to observe him with helpful hints and possible changes.

**P3** - She has a grade level mentor, but feels like her entire team is her mentor. She receives great ideas from everyone on her team. This placement was a great fit for her and her team. Her mentor has observed her several times. She attends once a month new teacher meetings, where they discuss ideas and challenges.

**P4** - His mentor has been to his classroom for observations. He has monthly meetings with the new teacher group and his Teach for America group. He has also reached out to other teachers in his building, and others, for help and ideas.

**P5** - His mentor has three new teachers to observe and work with, and he has an ok relationship with them. He did not receive any observations or feedback. He told his new teacher group leader that she needed more help from his mentor, and the principal asked him who he would like to be his new mentor. He chose another teacher on his team, and it has been helpful for him.

**P6** - He has many things in common with his mentor, and it is a great fit.
They are on a first-name basis and have frequent meetings.  His mentor
has given him pointers on classroom ideas from observations.

**Focus group question # 5.** How did your student teaching experience
prepare you for the realities of being a first-year teacher? Give an example of a
challenge you faced while teaching in your first year.  How were you able to
overcome that challenge?

**P1** - Knowing when your lesson is dying and needs to be changed in the
middle of it.  Stop where you are and make a change, adjustments.

**P2** - Understand the importance of team building for future success.

**P3** - Classroom management is very important. Find the 'problem child,'
and get close to them to see what is going on and to have an impact on
them.  Know your students and plan every minute.

**P4** - Student teaching did not prepare him for being a regular classroom
teacher.  He uses incentives to help students focus on positive behaviors.
This is for individual students and for each class.

**P5** - Parent communication was his major concern.  Answer any
communication with parents quickly.  He has a classroom newsletter to
keep parents informed.

**P6** - Classroom behavior tracker with rewards handed out in each class
and the entire school uses the system.

**Focus group question # 6.** Classroom management is often an area where new teachers struggle. What strategies have you used to help your classroom run smoothly? What problems do you still face?

**P1** - You are in survival mode, just keep going, and it will get better. Little parental support.

**P2** - Seek out teachers for help.  Little parental support.

**P3** - There is a lot of paperwork.  Always think of the child first, and look for administrative support when you need it.

**P4** - Stay on top of classroom management and plan everything.  Calls home in the first quarter with a positive comment about students and introduce themselves.  Find the most involved person in the student's life and work with them.

**P5** - Leave school problems at school, and do not take them home.  Send letters home. Create a club or participate in a club and include as many of your students as possible.

**P6** - Take time off, one day a week to just let go and rest.  Build relationships with students, and set up interventions for them to succeed.

**Advice:**

**P1** - Have procedure and details to cover all areas of your class.

**P2** - Remember the spark and passion of why you became a teacher.

**P3** - Watch your stress level and relax.

**P4** - It is hard work but will get better.

**P5** - Do not get discouraged when looking for a job; one will come your

way, so just keep looking.

**P6** - Give four positive comments for each negative or corrective

comment.

## Section 2: Teacher and Administrator Surveys

The second set of data was secondary data from the state of Missouri, consisting

of responses from new teachers and their principals (Appendix F).  Teachers were from

two categories, state and a local Midwest university.  Administrators were from two

categories, state and a local Midwest university. The researcher has listed the data one

table at a time, with an analysis of each table following each set of data.

**Statement(s) # 1.** Teacher: I was prepared to incorporate interdisciplinary

instruction.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to incorporate interdisciplinary

instruction.

Table 1

*Incorporating Interdisciplinary Instruction*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 2% | 11% | 60% | 27% |
| Statewide Teachers | 5% | 14% | 56% | 25% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 4% | 6% | 67% | 22% |
| Statewide Principals | 8% | 12% | 58% | 22% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teacher preparation to incorporate

interdisciplinary instruction into their lessons (all were between 80% and 89%).

**Statement(s) # 2.** Teacher: I was prepared in my content area.  Principal: The teacher was prepared in his or her content area

Table 2

*Prepared In the Content Area*

|                              | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|------------------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Midwest University Teachers  | 4%       | 5%      | 53%   | 37%            |
| Statewide Teachers           | 4%       | 9%      | 45%   | 42%            |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 2%   | 2%      | 61%   | 35%            |
| Statewide Principals         | 4%       | 6%      | 53%   | 37%            |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teacher preparation in their content area (all were between 87% and 96%).

**Statement(s) # 3.** Teacher: I was prepared to engage students in my content area. Principal: The teacher was prepared to engage students in his or her content area.

Table 3

*Engage Students in Content*

|                              | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|------------------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Midwest University Teachers  | 3%       | 11%     | 54%   | 32%            |
| Statewide Teachers           | 2.5%     | 8.5%    | 51%   | 38%            |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 10%  | 0%      | 57%   | 33%            |
| Statewide Principals         | 6%       | 8%      | 53%   | 33%            |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers engaging students in their content area (all were between 86% and 90%).

**Statement(s) # 4.** Teacher: I was prepared to make my content meaningful to students.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to make content meaningful to students.

Table 4

*Making Content Meaningful To Students*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Midwest University Teachers | 3% | 11% | 52% | 34% |
| Statewide Teachers | 3% | 10% | 50% | 37% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 8% | 2% | 53% | 37% |
| Statewide Principals | 6.5% | 8.5% | 52% | 33% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teacher preparation in making their content area meaningful to students (all were between 85% and 90%).

**Statement(s) # 5.** Teacher: I was prepared to design lessons that include differentiated instruction.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to design lessons that include differentiated instruction.

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers designing lessons that included differentiated instruction (all were between 80% and 81%).

Table 5

*Differentiated Lesson Plans*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 8% | 12% | 39% | 41% |
| Statewide Teachers | 7% | 12% | 44% | 37% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 8% | 12% | 55% | 25% |
| Statewide Principals | 12% | 17% | 47% | 24% |

**Statement(s) # 6.** Teacher: I was prepared to implement instruction based on a

student's IEP.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to implement instruction based on a

student's IEP.

Table 6

*Instruction Based on IEP's*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 15% | 19% | 46% | 20% |
| Statewide Teachers | 18% | 21% | 40% | 21% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 10% | 14% | 53% | 23% |
| Statewide Principals | 11% | 21% | 48% | 20% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, teachers

rated themselves lower than administrators, concerning teachers being prepared to

implement instruction based on a student's IEP (teachers were between 61% and 66%,

while principals were between 68% and 76%).  This is a 20% difference, where teachers

rated themselves lower than principals rated them.

**Statement(s) # 7.** Teacher: I was prepared to modify instruction for English

Language Learners.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to modify instruction for

English Language Learners.

Table 7

*Modify Instruction for English Language Learners*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 29% | 27% | 28% | 16% |
| Statewide Teachers | 27% | 30% | 28% | 15% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 4% | 49% | 33% | 14% |
| Statewide Principals | 9.5% | 44.5% | 32% | 14% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers modifying instruction for

English language learners (all were between 43% and 47%).  On the disagree side of this

question, administrators were below 10%, while teachers were almost three times that

number.  Teachers were three times more likely to say they were not able to do this, when

compared to what their administrators would report.

**Statement(s) # 8.** Teacher: I was prepared to modify instruction for gifted

learners.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to modify instruction for gifted learners.

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers modifying instruction for

gifted learners (all were between 56% and 65%).  On the disagree side of this question,

administrators were at or below 10.5 %, while teachers were almost twice that number.

Teachers were twice as likely to say they were not able to do this, when compared to

what their administrators would report.

Table 8

*Instruction for Gifted Students*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 15% | 20% | 46% | 19% |
| Statewide Teachers | 18% | 24% | 41% | 17% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 4% | 39% | 41% | 16% |
| Statewide Principals | 10.5% | 33.5% | 41% | 15% |

**Statement(s) # 9.** Teacher: I was prepared to create lesson plans to engage all

learners.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to create lesson plans to engage all

learners.

Table 9

*Lesson Plans for All Learners*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 4% | 15% | 44% | 37% |
| Statewide Teachers | 5% | 11% | 50% | 34% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 12% | 2% | 55% | 31% |
| Statewide Principals | 10% | 11% | 52% | 27% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers creating lesson plans to

engage all learners (all were between 79% and 84%).

**Statement(s) # 10.** Teacher: I was prepared to deliver lessons based on curriculum standards.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to deliver lessons based on curriculum standards.

Table 10

*Lesson Plans with Curriculum Standards*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Midwest University Teachers | 5.5% | 5.5% | 47% | 42% |
| Statewide Teachers | 4.5% | 8% | 45% | 42.5% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 4% | 4% | 59% | 33% |
| Statewide Principals | 5% | 8% | 56% | 31% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to deliver lessons based on curriculum standards (all were between 87% and 92%).

**Statement(s) # 11.** Teacher: I was prepared to deliver lessons for diverse learners. Principal: The teacher was prepared to deliver lessons for diverse learners.

Table 11

*Lessons for Diverse Learners*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Midwest University Teachers | 2.5% | 9.5% | 62% | 26% |
| Statewide Teachers | 4.5% | 12.5% | 55% | 28% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 12% | 8% | 60% | 20% |
| Statewide Principals | 11% | 15% | 52% | 22% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to deliver lessons for diverse learners (all were between 74% and 88%).  Teachers were slightly higher in scoring themselves than administrators, who scored them 74% to 80% compared to teachers at 83% to 88%.

**Statement(s) # 12.** Teacher: I was prepared to implement a variety of instructional strategies.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to implement a variety of instructional strategies.

Table 12

*Variety of Instructional Strategies*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 3% | 6% | 49% | 42% |
| Statewide Teachers | 3% | 7% | 52.5% | 37.5% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 8% | 4% | 62% | 26% |
| Statewide Principals | 10% | 10.5% | 53% | 26.5% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to implement a variety of instructional strategies (all were between 79.5% and 91%). Statewide principals were at the lower end of this scale, and both teacher groups were at the top end of the scale.

**Statement(s) # 13.** Teacher: I was prepared to engage students in critical thinking.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to engage students in critical thinking.

Table 13

*Engage Students in Critical Thinking*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 7% | 7% | 59% | 27% |
| Statewide Teachers | 5% | 12% | 53% | 30% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 8% | 4% | 58% | 30% |
| Statewide Principals | 10% | 15% | 52% | 23% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to engage

students in critical thinking (all were between 75% and 88%).  There was a significant

difference between Principals of Midwest university teachers (88%) and the statewide

principals (75%).

**Statement(s) # 14.** Teacher: I was prepared to model critical thinking and

problem solving.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to model critical thinking and

problem solving.

Table 14

*Model Critical Thinking and Problem Solving*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 5.5% | 12% | 51% | 31.5% |
| Statewide Teachers | 5% | 13% | 51% | 31% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 6% | 6% | 58% | 30% |
| Statewide Principals | 10% | 15% | 51% | 24% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to model

critical thinking and problem solving (all were between 75% and 88%).  There was a

significant difference between Principals of Midwest university teachers (88%) and the

statewide principals (75%).

**Statement(s) # 15.** Teacher: I was prepared to use technology to enhance student

learning.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to use technology to enhance student

learning.

Table 15

*Use Technology to Enhance Student Learning*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 10% | 4% | 53% | 33% |
| Statewide Teachers | 8% | 13% | 44% | 35% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 0% | 8% | 60% | 32% |
| Statewide Principals | 6% | 12% | 52% | 30% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to use

technology to enhance student learning (all were between 79% and 92%).  There was a

notable difference between Principals of Midwest University teachers (92%) and

statewide principals (82%).

**Statement(s) # 16.** Teacher: I was prepared to create a classroom environment

that encourages student engagement.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to create a

classroom environment that encourages student engagement.

Table 16

*Create a Classroom Environment That Encourages Student Engagement*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 9% | 7% | 40% | 44% |
| Statewide Teachers | 3% | 8% | 49% | 40% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 6% | 6% | 52% | 36% |
| Statewide Principals | 8.5% | 9.5% | 51% | 31% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to create a classroom environment that encourages student engagement (all were between 82% and 89%).  There was a small difference between Principals of Midwest University teachers (88%) and statewide principals (82%).

**Statement(s) # 17.** Teacher: I was prepared to use a variety of classroom management strategies.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to use a variety of classroom management strategies.

Table 17

*Variety of Classroom Management Strategies*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 16% | 7% | 38.5% | 38.5% |
| Statewide Teachers | 8.5% | 11.5% | 46% | 34% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 16% | 2% | 54% | 28% |
| Statewide Principals | 15% | 12% | 48% | 25% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to use a

variety of classroom management strategies (all were between 73% and 82%). There was

a notable difference between Principals of Midwest University teachers (82%) and

statewide principals (73%).

**Statement(s) # 18.** Teacher: I was prepared to manage a variety of discipline

issues. Principal: The teacher was prepared to manage a variety of discipline issues.

Table 18

*Manage a Variety of Discipline Issues*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 20% | 7% | 40% | 33% |
| Statewide Teachers | 16.5% | 20% | 39.5% | 24% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 16% | 4% | 56% | 24% |
| Statewide Principals | 16.5% | 14.5% | 47% | 22% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to use a

variety of classroom management strategies (all were between 63% and 80%). There was

a notable difference between Principals of Midwest University teachers (80%) and

statewide principals (69%). There was also a notable difference between Midwest

University teachers (73%) and statewide teachers (63.5%).

**Statement(s) # 19.** Teacher: I was prepared to motivate my students to learn.

Principal: The teacher was prepared to motivate his or her students to learn.

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to

motivate their students to learn (all were between 80% and 88%).

Table 19

*Motivate Students to Learn*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 8% | 12% | 40% | 40% |
| Statewide Teachers | 4% | 12% | 51% | 33% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 2% | 10% | 44% | 44% |
| Statewide Principals | 7% | 11% | 53% | 29% |

**Statement(s) # 20.** Teacher: I was prepared to keep my students on task.

Principal: The teacher was prepared to keep his or her students on task.

Table 20

*Keeping Students on Task*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 8% | 14% | 47% | 31% |
| Statewide Teachers | 6% | 14% | 51% | 29% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 10% | 8% | 60% | 22% |
| Statewide Principals | 10% | 11% | 52% | 27% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to keep their students on task (all were between 79% and 82%).

**Statement(s) # 21.** Teacher: I was prepared to foster positive student relationships. Principal: The teacher was prepared to foster positive student relationships.

Table 21

*Fostering Positive Student Relationships*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 0% | 7% | 46.5% | 46.5% |
| Statewide Teachers | 2% | 5% | 44% | 49% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 0% | 2% | 44% | 54% |
| Statewide Principals | 4.5% | 6% | 48% | 41.5% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to foster positive student relationships (all were between 89.5% and 98%).

**Statement(s) # 22.** Teacher: I was prepared to facilitate smooth transitions for my students.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to facilitate smooth transitions for his other students.

Table 22

*Facilitates Smooth Transitions for Students*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 5% | 12% | 46% | 37% |
| Statewide Teachers | 5.5% | 13% | 49% | 32.5% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 6% | 8% | 58% | 28% |
| Statewide Principals | 7.5% | 10.5% | 54% | 28% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to facilitate smooth transitions for his or her students (all were between 81% and 86%).

**Statement(s) # 23.** Teacher: I was prepared to use effective communication strategies to foster learning.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to use effective communication strategies to foster learning.

Table 23

*Using Effective Communication Strategies to Foster Learning*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 3% | 8% | 54% | 35% |
| Statewide Teachers | 2.5% | 8.5% | 54% | 35% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 2% | 2% | 66% | 30% |
| Statewide Principals | 6% | 9.5% | 56% | 28.5% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to use effective communication strategies to foster learning (all were between 84.5% and 96%). There was a difference between Principals of Midwest University teachers (96%) and statewide principals (84.5%).

**Statement(s) # 24.** Teacher: I was prepared to effectively communicate with parents.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to effectively communicate with parents.

Table 24

*Effectively Communicate With Parents*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 5.5% | 12% | 50% | 32.5% |
| Statewide Teachers | 11.5% | 18% | 45.5% | 25% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 2% | 0% | 66% | 32% |
| Statewide Principals | 7% | 13% | 54% | 26% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to effectively communicate with parents (all were between 80% and 98%). There was a difference between Principals of Midwest University teachers (98%) and statewide principals (80%).

**Statement(s) # 25.** Teacher: I was prepared to effectively communicate with all staff. Principal: The teacher was prepared to effectively communicate with all staff.

Table 25

*Effectively Communicate With All Staff*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 1% | 15% | 46% | 38% |
| Statewide Teachers | 6% | 12% | 49% | 33% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 2% | 2% | 66% | 30% |
| Statewide Principals | 5.5% | 10% | 54.5% | 30% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to effectively communicate with all staff (all were between 82% and 96%). There was a difference between Principals of Midwest University teachers (96%) and statewide principals (84.5%).

**Statement(s) # 26.** Teacher: I was prepared to promote respect for diverse cultures, genders, and intellectual / physical abilities. Principal: The teacher was prepared to promote respect for diverse cultures, genders, and intellectual / physical abilities.

Table 26

*Promote Respect for Diverse Cultures, Genders, and Intellectual/Physical Abilities*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 0% | 9.5% | 46% | 44.5% |
| Statewide Teachers | 2% | 7% | 46.5% | 44.5% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 0% | 12% | 56% | 32% |
| Statewide Principals | 3% | 11% | 57% | 29% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to

effectively communicate with all staff (all were between 86% and 91.5%).

**Statement(s) # 27.** Teacher: I was prepared to use technology as a

communication tool.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to use technology as a

communication tool.

Table 27

*Using Technology as a Communication Tool*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 4% | 11% | 40.5% | 44.5% |
| Statewide Teachers | 5.5% | 11% | 44.5% | 39% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 2% | 0% | 66% | 32% |
| Statewide Principals | 3% | 9% | 56% | 32% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to use

technology as a communication tool (all were between 83.5% and 98%).  There was a

significant difference between Midwest University principals (98%) and Midwest

University teachers (85%).

      **Statement(s) # 28.** Teacher: I was prepared to enhance students' skills in using

technology as a communication tool.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to enhance

students' skills in using technology as a communication tool.

Table 28

*Enhance Students' Skills in Using Technology as a Communication Tool*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 4% | 9.5% | 46% | 40.5% |
| Statewide Teachers | 8.5% | 15.5% | 44.5% | 31.5% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 2% | 6% | 58% | 34% |
| Statewide Principals | 5% | 14% | 53.5% | 27.5% |

      With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to enhance

students' skills in using technology as a communication tool (all were between 76% and

92%).

      **Statement(s) # 29.** Teacher: I was prepared to use assessments to evaluate

learning.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to use assessments to evaluate learning.

      With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to use

assessments to evaluate learning (all were between 80.5% and 90.5%).

Table 29

*Using Assessment to Evaluate Learning*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 7% | 2.5% | 52.5% | 38% |
| Statewide Teachers | 4% | 7.5% | 48.5% | 40% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 4% | 8% | 68% | 20% |
| Statewide Principals | 7% | 12.5% | 56.5% | 24% |

**Statement(s) # 30.** Teacher: I was prepared to develop assessments to evaluate learning. Principal: The teacher was prepared to develop assessments to evaluate learning.

Table 30

*Develop Assessments to Evaluate Learning*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 8% | 14% | 43% | 35% |
| Statewide Teachers | 7% | 12% | 50% | 31% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 2% | 16% | 60% | 22% |
| Statewide Principals | 8.5% | 17.5% | 55% | 19% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to use assessments to evaluate learning (all were between 74% and 82%).

**Statement(s) # 31.** Teacher: I was prepared to analyze assessment data to improve instruction. Principal: The teacher was prepared to analyze assessment data to improve instruction.

Table 31

*Analyze Assessment Data to Improve Instruction*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Midwest University Teachers | 15% | 13% | 45% | 27% |
| Statewide Teachers | 8% | 14% | 48% | 30% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 8% | 16% | 54% | 22% |
| Statewide Principals | 9.5% | 18% | 54.5% | 18% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to use assessments to evaluate learning (all were between 72% and 78%).

**Statement(s) # 32.** Teacher: I was prepared to help students set learning goals based on assessment results. Principal: The teacher was prepared to help students set learning goals based on assessment results.

Table 32

*Help Students Set Learning Goals Based On Assessment Results*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Midwest University Teachers | 17% | 16% | 41% | 26% |
| Statewide Teachers | 12% | 17% | 47% | 24% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 8% | 18% | 58% | 16% |
| Statewide Principals | 10.5% | 19.5% | 52% | 18% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to help students set learning goals based on assessment results (all were between 67% and 74%).

There was a significant difference between the number of Midwest university teachers who disagreed (17%) and Midwest university principals who disagreed (8%).

**Statement(s) # 33.** Teacher: I was prepared to work with colleagues to set learning goals using assessment results.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to work with colleagues to set learning goals using assessment results.

Table 33

*Work with Colleagues to Set Learning Goals Using Assessment Results*

|                            | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----------------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Midwest University Teachers | 12%     | 18%     | 39%   | 31%            |
| Statewide Teachers          | 10%     | 15%     | 48%   | 27%            |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 4%  | 12%     | 62%   | 22%            |
| Statewide Principals        | 7%      | 16.5%   | 55%   | 21.5%          |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to work with colleagues to set learning goals using assessment results (all were between 70% and 84%).  There was a significant difference between Midwest university teachers (70%) and principals of Midwest university teachers (84%).

**Statement(s) # 34.** Teacher: I was prepared to analyze data to reflect on areas for professional growth.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to analyze data to reflect on areas for professional growth.

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to analyze data to reflect on areas for professional growth (all were between 72.5% and 75.5%).

Table 34

*Analyze Data to Reflect On Areas for Professional Growth*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 15% | 12% | 42% | 31% |
| Statewide Teachers | 10% | 14.5% | 47% | 28.5% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 8% | 18% | 58% | 16% |
| Statewide Principals | 9.5% | 18% | 53.5% | 19% |

**Statement(s) # 35.** Teacher: I was prepared to reflect on my practices for professional growth.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to reflect on his or her practices for professional growth.

Table 35

*Reflect On Practices for Professional Growth*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 8% | 12% | 46% | 34% |
| Statewide Teachers | 4% | 8% | 49% | 39% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 2% | 16% | 48% | 34% |
| Statewide Principals | 6.5% | 12.5% | 54.5% | 26.5% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to reflect on his or her practices for professional growth (all were between 80% and 88%).

**Statement(s) # 36.** Teacher: I was prepared to collaborate with colleagues to support student learning.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to collaborate with colleagues to support student learning.

Table 36

*Collaborate With Colleagues to Support Student Learning*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 5% | 7% | 55.5% | 32.5% |
| Statewide Teachers | 3% | 9% | 51% | 37% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 2% | 8% | 52% | 38% |
| Statewide Principals | 5.5% | 9% | 55% | 30.5% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to collaborate with colleagues to support student learning (all were between 85.5% and 90%).

**Statement(s) # 37.** Teacher: I was prepared to collaborate with parents to support student learning.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to collaborate with parents to support student learning.

Table 37

*Collaborate With Parents to Support Student Learning*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 8% | 12% | 53% | 27% |
| Statewide Teachers | 10% | 17.5% | 47% | 25.5% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 4% | 10% | 52% | 34% |
| Statewide Principals | 6% | 15.5% | 57% | 21.5% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to collaborate with parents to support student learning (all were between 72.5% and 86%).

**Statement(s) # 38.** Teacher: I was prepared to participate in professional

organizations.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to participate in professional

organizations.

Table 38

*Participate In Professional Organizations*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 11% | 16% | 46% | 27% |
| Statewide Teachers | 8% | 15% | 47% | 30% |
| Principals of Midwest U Teachers | 2% | 14% | 58% | 26% |
| Statewide Principals | 3.5% | 16.5% | 57% | 23% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, both teachers

and administrators gave similar responses, concerning teachers being prepared to

participate in professional organizations (all were between 73% and 84%).  There was a

significant difference between Midwest university teachers (73%) and principals of

Midwest university teachers (84%).

**Statement # 39.** Teacher: Please click on the response that best reflects your

perspective about the overall quality of the professional education program you

completed.

Table 39

*Overall Quality of the Professional Education Program You Completed*

|  | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 4% | 14% | 42% | 40% |
| Statewide Teachers | 2.5% | 14% | 47% | 36.5% |

With respect to the responses of good and very good combined, teachers gave

similar responses, concerning their perspectives about the overall quality of the

professional education program they completed (all were between 82% and 83.5%).

**Statement # 40.** Teacher: Did you complete any of your teacher preparation

course work at a community college?

Table 40

*Teacher Preparation Course Work At a Community College*

|  | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 10.5% | 89.5% |
| Statewide Teachers | 19.5% | 80.5% |

With respect to the responses of yes and no, statewide teachers responded with

twice the response of Midwest University Teachers, concerning preparation work at a

community college (19.5% and 10.5%).

**Statement # 41.** Teacher: What overall rating would you give the quality of your

community college teacher preparation coursework?

Table 41

*Rate the Quality of Your Community College Teacher Preparation Coursework*

|  | Fair | Good | Very Good |
|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 12.5% | 75% | 12.5% |
| Statewide Teachers | 22% | 50% | 28% |

With respect to the responses of good and very good combined, concerning the

overall rating for the quality of their community college teacher preparation coursework,

statewide teachers responded with a lower rating than Midwest university teachers did

(78% to 87.5%).

**Statement # 42.** Teacher: Were you assigned a first-year teacher mentor?

Table 42

*Were you assigned a First-Year Mentor?*

|  | No | Yes, from my school | Yes, from my district, but not from my school | Yes, from outside my district |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 8% | 88% | 4% | 0% |
| Statewide Teachers | 5% | 85% | 8.8% | 1.5% |

With respect to the responses of yes and no, as to who assigned mentors to new teachers, both teacher groups responded with assignment from their school of employment (85% and 88%).

**Statement # 43.** Teacher: How often did you meet with your mentor this school year? (either formally or informally)

Table 43

*How Often Did You Meet With Your Mentor This School Year?*

|  | Never | Once or twice | Three to five times | Six or more times |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 1.5% | 4% | 9% | 85.5% |
| Statewide Teachers | 1% | 6.25% | 13.5% | 79.25% |

With respect to the responses of how often new teachers met with their mentor, both teacher groups responded with similar numbers, indicating six or more times (79.25% to 85.5%).

**Statement # 44.** Teacher: The mentoring process is non-evaluative.

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, concerning whether the mentoring process was non-evaluative, both teacher groups gave similar responses (52% and 54.5%).

Table 44

*The Mentoring Process Is Non-evaluative*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 13% | 32.5% | 25% | 29.5% |
| Statewide Teachers | 17% | 31% | 31% | 21% |

**Statement # 45.** Teacher: The support I received from my mentor has helped me improve my practice.

Table 45

*Support Received from My Mentor Has helped Me to Improve My Practice*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 7% | 12% | 25% | 56% |
| Statewide Teachers | 8% | 12% | 34% | 46% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, concerning whether support new teachers received from their mentor helped them improve their practice, both teacher groups gave similar responses (80% and 81%).

**Statement # 46.** Teacher: My mentor provided me with the resources I needed to improve my practice.

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, concerning whether support new teacher's mentors provided them with the resources they needed to improve their practice, both teacher groups gave similar responses (79% and 81%).

Table 46

*My Mentor Provided Me with the Resources I Needed To Improve My Practice*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 6% | 13% | 31% | 50% |
| Statewide Teachers | 8% | 13% | 33% | 46% |

**Statement # 47. Teacher:** My mentor provided me with effective support.

Table 47

*My Mentor Provided Me with Effective Support*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 3% | 10% | 28% | 59% |
| Statewide Teachers | 7% | 10% | 32% | 51% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, concerning whether support new teachers' mentors provided them with effective support, both teacher groups gave similar responses (83% and 87%).

**Statement # 48.** Teacher: I was prepared to reflect on feedback from my mentor.

Table 48

*I Was Prepared To Reflect On Feedback from My Mentor*

|  | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midwest University Teachers | 0% | 20.5% | 26.5% | 53% |
| Statewide Teachers | 5.5% | 12.5% | 36% | 46% |

With respect to the responses of agree and strongly agree combined, concerning whether new teachers were prepared to reflect on feedback from their mentor, both teacher groups gave similar responses (79.5% and 82%).

**Check for Difference in Agreement**.

A *z*-test for difference in proportions was applied to analyze for potential differences in agreement on each of the survey tool statements, # 1 through # 48. Differences in perception were checked between Midwest University New Teachers and Principals of New Teachers, Statewide New Teachers and Principals of New Teachers, Midwest University New Teachers and Statewide New Teachers, and Midwest University Principals of New Teachers and Statewide Principals of New Teachers.

In the comparison of Midwest University New Teacher perceptions to Principals of New Teachers perceptions, data supported a significant difference in agreement for statements 24 and 25 ($z = 2.682$ and $2.084$, respectively), with Principals of New Teachers, indicating stronger agreement than New Teachers, in both cases (Table 49).

In response to question 24, new teachers prepared by Midwest University were more confident of their communication abilities with parents than new teachers from other statewide universities. Principals seemed to agree with new teacher perceptions of their parent communication abilities. Midwest University principals rated their new teachers from Midwest University higher than statewide principals of new teachers rated their new statewide teachers in the area of communication.

In response to question 25, principals of new teachers from Midwest University rated their teachers higher in communicating with staff than principals of new teachers in the statewide category.

Table 49

*Results: Midwest University New Teachers and Principals of New Teachers.*

| Midwest U | | Percent of Agreement with Statement | | | Reject |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | New-Teacher | Principal | z-test value | null? |
| Statement # | 1 | 87 | 89 | 0.335 | |
| Statement # | 2 | 90 | 96 | 1.24 | |
| Statement # | 3 | 86 | 90 | 0.665 | |
| Statement # | 4 | 86 | 90 | 0.665 | |
| Statement # | 5 | 80 | 77 | 0.402 | |
| Statement # | 6 | 66 | 76 | 1.195 | |
| Statement # | 7 | 44 | 47 | 0.33 | |
| Statement # | 8 | 65 | 57 | 0.231 | |
| Statement # | 9 | 81 | 86 | 0.729 | |
| Statement # | 10 | 89 | 92 | 0.553 | |
| Statement # | 11 | 88 | 80 | 1.22 | |
| Statement # | 12 | 91 | 88 | 0.543 | |
| Statement # | 13 | 86 | 88 | 0.324 | |
| Statement # | 14 | 82.5 | 88 | 0.837 | |
| Statement # | 15 | 86 | 82 | 0.604 | |
| Statement # | 16 | 84 | 88 | 0.624 | |
| Statement # | 17 | 77 | 82 | 0.672 | |
| Statement # | 18 | 73 | 80 | 0.895 | |
| Statement # | 19 | 80 | 88 | 1.172 | |
| Statement # | 20 | 78 | 82 | 0.544 | |
| Statement # | 21 | 93 | 98 | 1.257 | |
| Statement # | 22 | 83 | 86 | 0.451 | |
| Statement # | 23 | 89 | 96 | 1.397 | |
| Statement # | 24 | 82.5 | 98 | 2.682 | yes |
| Statement # | 25 | 84 | 96 | 2.084 | yes |
| Statement # | 26 | 90.5 | 88 | 0.447 | |
| Statement # | 27 | 88.5 | 98 | 1.952 | |
| Statement # | 28 | 86.5 | 82 | 0.685 | |
| Statement # | 29 | 90.5 | 88 | 0.447 | |
| Statement # | 30 | 78 | 82 | 0.544 | |
| Statement # | 31 | 72 | 76 | 0.497 | |
| Statement # | 32 | 67 | 74 | 0.835 | |
| Statement # | 33 | 69 | 84 | 1.897 | |
| Statement # | 34 | 73 | 74 | 0.124 | |
| Statement # | 35 | 78 | 82 | 0.544 | |
| Statement # | 36 | 89 | 91 | 0.362 | |
| Statement # | 37 | 80 | 86 | 0.863 | |
| Statement # | 38 | 73 | 84 | 1.441 | |

Note: z-critical = ±1.96.

In the comparison of New Teachers and Principals of New Teachers, data

supported a significant difference in agreement among statewide participants.  Data for

statements 3, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 21, 23, 26, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, and 36 ($z = 2.909$,

7.502, 4.13, 7.018, 9.326, 3.843, 5.463, 6,.361, 5.295, 3.965, 4.253, 5.106, 7.071, 5,375,

4.09, 2.197, 6.191, 2.366, respectively), indicated stronger agreement among New

Teachers than among Principals of New Teachers.  Data for statements 2, 6, 15, 18, 19,

24, 25, 27, 28, and 37 ($z = 3.033$, 7.709, 2.439, 3.744, 7.975, 7.102, 2.156, 4.154, 5.594,

respectively), indicated stronger agreement among Principals of New Teachers than

among New Teachers (Table 50).

Table 50

*Results: Statewide New Teachers and Principals of New Teachers.*

| Statewide | | Percent of Agreement with Statement | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | New-Teacher | Principal | z-test value | Reject null? |
| Statement # | 1 | 81 | 80 | 0.811 | |
| Statement # | 2 | 87 | 90 | 3.033 | yes |
| Statement # | 3 | 89 | 86 | 2.909 | yes |
| Statement # | 4 | 87 | 85 | 1.851 | |
| Statement # | 5 | 81 | 71 | 7.502 | yes |
| Statement # | 6 | 61 | 68 | 7.709 | yes |
| Statement # | 7 | 43 | 46 | 1.941 | |
| Statement # | 8 | 58 | 56 | 1.299 | |
| Statement # | 9 | 84 | 79 | 4.13 | yes |
| Statement # | 10 | 87.5 | 87 | 0.482 | |
| Statement # | 11 | 83 | 74 | 7.018 | yes |
| Statement # | 12 | 90 | 79.5 | 9.326 | yes |
| Statement # | 13 | 83 | 75 | 3.843 | yes |
| Statement # | 14 | 82 | 75 | 5.463 | yes |
| Statement # | 15 | 79 | 82 | 2.439 | yes |
| Statement # | 16 | 89 | 82 | 6.361 | yes |
| Statement # | 17 | 80 | 73 | 5.295 | yes |
| Statement # | 18 | 63.5 | 69 | 3.744 | yes |
| Statement # | 19 | 84 | 92 | 7.975 | yes |

**continued**

| Statewide | | Percent of Agreement with Statement | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | New-Teacher | Principal | z-test value | Reject null? |
| Statement # | 20 | 80 | 79 | 0.796 | |
| Statement # | 21 | 93 | 89.5 | 3.965 | yes |
| Statement # | 22 | 81.5 | 82 | 0.416 | |
| Statement # | 23 | 89 | 84.5 | 4.253 | yes |
| Statement # | 24 | 70.5 | 80 | 7.102 | yes |
| Statement # | 25 | 82 | 84.5 | 2.156 | yes |
| Statement # | 26 | 91 | 86 | 5.106 | yes |
| Statement # | 27 | 83.5 | 88 | 4.154 | yes |
| Statement # | 28 | 76 | 83 | 5.594 | yes |
| Statement # | 29 | 88.5 | 80.5 | 7.071 | yes |
| Statement # | 30 | 81 | 74 | 5.375 | yes |
| Statement # | 31 | 78 | 72.5 | 4.09 | yes |
| Statement # | 32 | 71 | 70 | 0.705 | |
| Statement # | 33 | 75 | 76.5 | 1.126 | |
| Statement # | 34 | 75.5 | 72.5 | 2.197 | yes |
| Statement # | 35 | 88 | 81 | 6.191 | yes |
| Statement # | 36 | 88 | 85.5 | 2.366 | yes |
| Statement # | 37 | 72.5 | 78.5 | 4.496 | yes |
| Statement # | 38 | 77 | 80 | 2.351 | yes |

Note: z-critical = ±1.96.

In comparison of Midwest University New Teachers to Statewide New Teachers, data supported a significant difference in agreement for statements 24, 28, 40, and 41 ($z =$ 2.246, 2.101, 1.943, 1.961, respectively), with Midwest University New Teachers indicating stronger agreement than Statewide New Teachers, in each instance, except in statement 40 (Table 51).

Table 51

*Results: Midwest University New Teachers and Statewide New Teachers.*

| Teachers | | Percent of Agreement with Statement | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Midwest U | Statewide | z-test value | Reject null? |
| Statement # | 1 | 87 | 81 | 1.306 | |
| Statement # | 2 | 90 | 87 | 0.761 | |
| Statement # | 3 | 86 | 89 | 0.811 | |
| Statement # | 4 | 86 | 87 | 0.252 | |
| Statement # | 5 | 80 | 81 | 0.217 | |
| Statement # | 6 | 66 | 61 | 0.872 | |
| Statement # | 7 | 44 | 43 | 0.172 | |
| Statement # | 8 | 65 | 58 | 1.207 | |
| Statement # | 9 | 81 | 84 | 0.694 | |
| Statement # | 10 | 89 | 87.5 | 0.386 | |
| Statement # | 11 | 88 | 83 | 1.136 | |
| Statement # | 12 | 91 | 90 | 0.284 | |
| Statement # | 13 | 86 | 83 | 0.681 | |
| Statement # | 14 | 82.5 | 82 | 0.111 | |
| Statement # | 15 | 86 | 79 | 1.467 | |
| Statement # | 16 | 84 | 89 | 1.348 | |
| Statement # | 17 | 77 | 80 | 0.636 | |
| Statement # | 18 | 73 | 63.5 | 1.681 | |
| Statement # | 19 | 80 | 84 | 0.924 | |
| Statement # | 20 | 78 | 80 | 0.424 | |
| Statement # | 21 | 93 | 93 | 0 | |
| Statement # | 22 | 83 | 81.5 | 0.329 | |
| Statement # | 23 | 89 | 89 | 0 | |
| Statement # | 24 | 82.5 | 70.5 | 2.246 | yes |
| Statement # | 25 | 84 | 82 | 0.443 | |
| Statement # | 26 | 90.5 | 91 | 0.148 | |
| Statement # | 27 | 88.5 | 83.5 | 1.15 | |
| Statement # | 28 | 86.5 | 76 | 2.101 | yes |
| Statement # | 29 | 90.5 | 88.5 | 0.534 | |
| Statement # | 30 | 78 | 81 | 0.649 | |
| Statement # | 31 | 72 | 78 | 1.227 | |
| Statement # | 32 | 67 | 71 | 0.748 | |
| Statement # | 33 | 69 | 75 | 1.174 | |
| Statement # | 34 | 73 | 75.5 | 0.493 | |
| Statement # | 35 | 78 | 88 | 2.582 | |
| Statement # | 36 | 88 | 88 | 0 | |

**continued**

| Teachers | | Percent of Agreement with Statement | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Midwest U | Statewide | z-test value | Reject null? |
| Statement # | 37 | 80 | 72.5 | 1.432 | |
| Statement # | 38 | 73 | 77 | 0.806 | |
| Statement # | 39 | 82 | 83.5 | 0.343 | |
| Statement # | 40 | 10.5 | 19.5 | 1.943 | yes |
| Statement # | 41 | 87.5 | 78 | 1.961 | yes |
| Statement # | 42 | 92 | 95.3 | 1.309 | |
| Statement # | 43 | 85.5 | 79.25 | 1.315 | |
| Statement # | 44 | 44.5 | 52 | 1.276 | |
| Statement # | 45 | 81 | 80 | 0.213 | |
| Statement # | 46 | 81 | 79 | 0.418 | |
| Statement # | 47 | 87 | 83 | 0.908 | |
| Statement # | 48 | 79.5 | 82 | 0.552 | |

Note: z-critical = ±1.96.

Principals of New Teachers indicated a significant difference in agreement for statements 13, 14, 21, 23, 24, 25, and 27 ($z$ = 2.107, 2.107, 1.954, 2.237, 3.17, 2.237, 2.169, respectively), with Midwest University Principals indicating stronger agreement than Statewide Principals, in each instance (Table 52).

Table 52

*Results: Midwest University Principals and Statewide Principals of New Teachers.*

| Principals | | Percent of Agreement with Statement | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Midwest U | Statewide | z-test value | Reject null? |
| Statement # | 1 | 89 | 80 | 1.579 | |
| Statement # | 2 | 96 | 90 | 1.407 | |
| Statement # | 3 | 90 | 86 | 0.808 | |
| Statement # | 4 | 90 | 85 | 0.982 | |
| Statement # | 5 | 77 | 71 | 0.926 | |
| Statement # | 6 | 76 | 68 | 1.201 | |
| Statement # | 7 | 47 | 46 | 0.14 | |
| Statement # | 8 | 57 | 56 | 0.141 | |
| Statement # | 9 | 86 | 79 | 4.205 | |
| Statement # | 10 | 92 | 87 | 1.043 | |
| Statement # | 11 | 80 | 74 | 0.958 | |
| Statement # | 12 | 88 | 79.5 | 1.477 | |
| Statement # | 13 | 88 | 75 | 2.107 | yes |

**continued**

| Principals | | Percent of Agreement with Statement | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Midwest U | Statewide | z-test value | Reject null? |
| Statement # | 14 | 88 | 75 | 2.107 | yes |
| Statement # | 15 | 82 | 82 | 0 | |
| Statement # | 16 | 88 | 82 | 1.095 | |
| Statement # | 17 | 82 | 73 | 1.421 | |
| Statement # | 18 | 80 | 69 | 1.666 | |
| Statement # | 19 | 88 | 92 | 1.026 | |
| Statement # | 20 | 82 | 79 | 0.516 | |
| Statement # | 21 | 98 | 89.5 | 1.954 | yes |
| Statement # | 22 | 86 | 82 | 0.729 | |
| Statement # | 23 | 96 | 84.5 | 2.237 | yes |
| Statement # | 24 | 98 | 80 | 3.17 | yes |
| Statement # | 25 | 96 | 84.5 | 2.237 | yes |
| Statement # | 26 | 88 | 86 | 0.404 | |
| Statement # | 27 | 98 | 88 | 2.169 | yes |
| Statement # | 28 | 82 | 83 | 0.186 | |
| Statement # | 29 | 88 | 80.5 | 1.328 | |
| Statement # | 30 | 82 | 74 | 1.278 | |
| Statement # | 31 | 76 | 72.5 | 0.548 | |
| Statement # | 32 | 74 | 70 | 0.611 | |
| Statement # | 33 | 84 | 76.5 | 1.204 | |
| Statement # | 34 | 74 | 72.5 | 0.235 | |
| Statement # | 35 | 82 | 81 | 0.178 | |
| Statement # | 36 | 91 | 85.5 | 1.096 | |
| Statement # | 37 | 86 | 78.5 | 1.28 | |
| Statement # | 38 | 84 | 80 | 0.7 | |

Note: z-critical = ±1.96.

Statements 13, 14, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, and 28 yielded significant differences in agreement in more than one comparison, when considering the pairing of New Teachers to Principals and New Teachers to Teachers in each of the Midwest University and Statewide settings.

**Section 3: Online Survey of New Teachers and New Teacher Mentors**

The third data section was information collected online, with the help of a professor at a local university. This data involved survey questions concerning new teacher perceptions of their mentoring process during their initial year of teaching.  It also

involved a survey of questions concerning the perceptions of new teacher mentors of the mentoring process of the new teachers they were mentoring.

The researcher conducted the online survey with Google Docs and received three responses.  They are numbered R1, R2, and R3, for each of the respondents.  The responses consisted of the following questions and responses:

**Online survey question # 1.** What are some of the tools your district uses for their BTAP (Beginning Teacher's Assistance Program) program?   What works and what needs some modifying?

**R1 -** My district has a coordinator who met with us monthly to discuss various topics. She also walked us through our first Professional Learning Plan, which was great help. Each new teacher is also designated a 'go to' person in their department, which was very helpful to have someone that I knew I could ask questions to at any time.

**R2 -** New teachers were assigned a consulting teacher who mentored and observed them.

**R3 -** I am not sure if I am even aware of all aspects of the BTAP program. Mine consisted of mentor observations, connecting teachers with resources in the district, random PD assignments. I think that beginning teachers need more support and training with SIS and disciple issues to create a more stable classroom environment. The consultant observations and reviews were the most helpful to me personally and gave me productive feedback in a way that I could try to implement new things.

**Online survey question # 2.** Do you think your district's BTAP program is

effective?  How would you change it?

**R1 -** Yes! Perfect!

**R2 -** Yes. However, some of the new teachers need training dealing with students of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

**R3 -** It is a general review of classroom management and periodic feedback, but does address the unique behaviors and needs of the student demographics in the district.

**Online survey question # 3.** How well do you collaborate with your mentor?

**R1 -** Very well. Both mentors – school mentor and department mentor – were very helpful.

**R2 -** I observe their classes, review, and assist with their lesson plans. We also discussed different strategies for implementing their lessons.

**R3 -** Very well when we met, but my school mentor was very busy and I felt that it was more of an afterthought because of all of the other school demands.

**Online survey question # 4.** How useful is the feedback your mentor gives you?

**R1 -** School mentor observed me a couple times and gave feedback in person. It was helpful. I realized I was doing a better job than I thought I was which helped my confidence.

**R3 -** I had more meetings with my mentor the first year than the second year (3-4 times). Meetings would last 1-2 hours. I do not remember meeting much the second year (1-2 times). We are in different departments, and I believe the building administrators each take a content area, i.e. math, science, and ELA.

**Online survey question # 5.** How often did you meet with your mentor and how

was this time spent? Where did you meet?  Were you both in the same department or team?  How were you assigned to each other?

> **R1 -** I met monthly with my school mentor in a large group with other new teachers and a few other school mentors. We met at the central office. They had specific topics to discuss. The school mentors have this role as part of their paid position. My department mentor and I never had formal meeting times, but we ate lunch together, which was an easy way to ask a simple question. She was also available before and after school, and via text and email.

> **R3 -** I had more meetings with my mentor the first year than the second year (3-4 times). Meetings would last 1-2 hours. I do not remember meeting much the second year (1-2 times). We are in different departments, and I believe the building administrators each take a content area, i.e. math, science, and ELA.

> **Online survey question # 6.** How much support does your administration give you with the BTAP program?

> **R1 -** Very supportive!

> **R2 -** We have monthly meetings for new teachers at my job site.

> **R3 -** The administrators were supportive if I took an issue to them. They would try their best to help if there was a problem. If I needed to be away for a training or PD, they were usually able to get coverage for my classroom.

> **Online survey question # 7.** How reasonable do you think the expectations are for the state BTAP program?

> **R1 -** Perfect, for a teacher who is in a supportive district.

> **R2 -** I have not been involved with the state BTAP plan.

**R3 -** I think that the expectations are reasonable, but I don't think that they are implemented well in my district. I think that the high rate of teacher turnover in my school and district show that not enough is being done to prepare and retain quality educators.

**Online survey question # 8.** Did the state give you the right amount of information and direction to complete the BTAP program?

**R1 -** Yes

**R2 -** N/A

**R3 -** It was very difficult to track my PD's and requirements using the My Learning Plan. Also calling MODESE or the district office to ask questions was not very helpful or clear.

**Summary**

**Section 1: First-Year Teacher Panel**

**Analysis of mentoring answers:** Five participants stated they did not receive a mentor from their district or their building administrator. One stated that she did not have a mentor, due to her specialized field. Participant two gave a clear example of the good mentoring they received. His mentor has come to his class to observe him with helpful hints and possible changes. Participant three stated that she felt everyone on her team was like a mentor to her, and that she attended monthly meetings with her district, where new teachers discussed ideas and challenges. Participant three described how they had a great relationship with their mentor and received good classroom advice from them. Participant five described how they were not receiving adequate help from their mentor,

and when they mentioned the situation to a new teacher group leader and their principal, a new mentor was assigned.

**New teacher suggestions:** All the participants advised other new teachers to remember why they entered the profession in the first place, when they were having a stressful day.  One participant gave a great piece of advice; have a procedure for everything, so confusion in students will be limited.

**Researcher conclusions:** Most participants stated that they did not have a mentor assigned to them by their district, but sought out a mentor for their own benefit.  They realized that having someone to confer with about the aspects of teaching made their entry into the profession much easier.  This mentor was usually a teacher with a similar schedule and a personal openness, to confer with and help the new teacher.  None of the participants mentioned any type of paperwork, which they may have been required to complete, or had to document their work in the mentoring process, and the researcher questions whether this was done or not.  Teachers pride themselves on reflecting on how their lessons worked, and the participants may have done this, but they did not share whether they personally conducted this process alone or with their mentor.  The most important aspect of the mentoring process, which all participants mentioned, was having a good relationship with the mentor.  When new teachers were able to work with someone and receive advice on aspects of the profession, they reported that their stress levels were much lower, and they were happier with their jobs.  Making teachers better in their first two years of the profession and preparing them for a positive and effective career for student achievement was the objective of the BTAP process.  While these new

teachers may not have appeared to be consciously following the required BTAP process, they all recognized the spirit and need of this step in the state required program.

**Section 2: State Teacher and Administrator Surveys**

The first item of importance from the teacher surveys was concerning lessons for diverse learners and the implementation of a variety of instructional strategies. In both categories, the principals of state teachers rated their teachers approximately ten points below what the teachers rated themselves. This concern by principals points to the heart of instruction and whether teachers were prepared to deliver good, sound instruction to their students. The principal and teacher responses for the Midwest University were closer, as both were within four points of each other. This item gave the Midwest University a six-point edge in the preparation of their students to meet this student need in the classroom.

The second category, questions 13 through 15, discussed student engagement and critical thinking. The principals of the Midwest University teachers rated their teachers approximately ten points above the rating given by other state principals to their teachers. These two items were keys to helping students learn new information and staying involved in their class work, and the Midwest University showed a decided edge in their score.

The third category, questions 16 through 18, addressed how teachers were able to handle discipline issues in their classrooms. One key point in all three items was that the principals of Midwest University teacher scored their teachers ten points above what statewide principals scored their teachers. This was almost a 20% higher score for the Midwest University teachers, when dealing with discipline issues in their classrooms.

The last category, questions 45 through 46, dealt with teacher-mentor

relationships.  Both teacher groups rated themselves at the 80th percentile but this

important item should be in the high 90s is to be effective.  A key way for teachers to

learn their profession was from other teachers already in the profession.  Both groups

needed more knowledge and practice to prepare them for this important piece of their

future career, so they could be more successful for themselves and their students.

**Researcher conclusion:** In many of the survey questions, the Midwest University

principals scored their teachers higher by 10 to 15 points, consistently, over statewide

principal scores.  This gives positive data to support looking at the Midwest University

for promising practices in how they prepared their students in these key areas to be

successful as a future teacher.  The data suggest that the principals of new teachers from

Midwest University rated their teachers higher than principals of new teachers from

statewide universities.

**Section 3: Online Survey of New Teachers and New Teacher Mentors**

The researcher provided a link from a Google Docs survey to multiple groups and

individual teachers, and the researcher collected the data through Google Docs, as well

(Appendix G).

Online Survey Question # 1 asked what tools each district used for their

Beginning Teacher's Assistance Program (BTAP) and what worked or needed some

changes for the new teachers.  All respondents gave some indication of being assigned

someone to help mentor them.   These mentors observed the new teachers and gave them

ideas on how to improve themselves as a teacher.  The mentors also helped new teachers

navigate the paperwork teachers must complete in addition to their regular classroom

teaching.

Online Survey Question # 2 asked respondents how they viewed the effectiveness of their district's BTAP and how they might change it.  All respondents agreed that their program was effective, but wanted more focus on their individual classrooms.  New teachers wanted more individualized training, so they could be more effective with their classroom management.

Online Survey Question # 3 asked respondents how well they collaborated with their mentors.   The respondents stated that their mentors were very helpful.  One stated they were frustrated that other demands encroached upon their time with their mentor.

Online Survey Question # 4 asked new teachers how useful the feedback was from their mentor.  They responded that it was very helpful, but they wished they had more time with them.  Having someone else say how they were doing their job gave new teachers confidence.

Online Survey Question # 5 asked new teachers how they were assigned to their mentors and how often they met with them.  None of the respondents answered on how this process was conducted in their school or district.  Two respondents stated that they met a set number of times with their mentor and discussed a certain set of questions.

Online Survey Question # 6 asked respondents how much support the administration gave them with their BTAP.  The new teachers responded that their administration was supportive and helped make sure they were able to attend their mentor meetings.

Online Survey Question # 7 asked respondents if they thought the expectations for the state BTAP were reasonable.  One responded yes, while another responded that the

district could use a better program, due to high turnover of new teachers.

Online Survey Question # 8 asked respondents if the state gave them the right amount of information and direction to complete the BTAP.  One responded stated that they contacted MODESE and the office was not very helpful, and that the paperwork was difficult to complete as presented to the new teachers.

**Researcher conclusion:** Many of the responses gave indication that the state-required process for new teachers was extensive and should be more relevant to individual districts.  With the aid of technology, districts could modify the process to make it better suit the new teachers in their districts.

The largest theme, which emerged from the online surveys, was that new teachers desired more time with their individual mentors.  Personal contact with their mentors allowed new teachers to better understand what their individual schools and districts expected of them.

**Chapter Five: Discussion and Reflection**

The purpose of this research was to investigate whether new teacher and new teacher mentor perceptions of the effectiveness of the Missouri State Beginning Teachers' Assistance Program (BTAP) were positive. In addition, this researcher was looking for effective and promising practices, which school districts used to help new teachers complete the Missouri state requirement for the upgrade of their initial certification to a 99-year certificate (Appendix A). New teachers were required to participate in a district-sponsored mentoring program as a part of this process, and the researcher was looking for how these programs were addressed by different districts.

The researcher collected data from a teacher panel interview, secondary data from a Missouri state online survey of new teachers and their administrators, and primary data from an online survey of teachers and their mentors. The initial data collection method proposed by this research was to work with different school districts and have them survey their new teachers and their mentors. This method did not work out for the researcher, as each district had different reasons for not allowing the research to take place with its teachers or mentors. Several districts declined during their final approval process, with the main reason stated as already having too much paperwork for their teachers then-currently. The researcher continued data collection through other processes to obtain information from new teachers and their mentors, without direct contact with each district.

The greatest factor, which new teachers cited as beneficial to their success during their first and second years of teaching, was working with a mentor who was the proper fit with them. New teachers needed to have time to confer with their mentors to help

them improve their teaching abilities.  Another factor was the assigning of mentors to new teachers, so this relationship could help maximize new teacher success.  Mentors needed to have the time and desire to help a new teacher, and finding a positive fit of personalities between these two professionals added to new teacher success.

All new teachers involved in this research mentioned being part of a mentoring program.  Some of the programs were more formal, with assigned mentors, set meeting times, and required paperwork by the district.  New teacher mentors were helpful to new teachers in completing this required paperwork and lowered the stress level of the new teachers, so they could focus on their regular, daily procedures.

**Triangulation of Results**

In an effort to align the results of this research to teacher retention, the researcher attempted to follow up by gathering teacher retention rates from districts represented by participants in this study. However, individual district data were not available due one of two reasons: the district did not compile and record historical retention data or the district did not wish to share the data, to avoid potential misinterpretation.

The researcher did locate a report by MODESE on teacher retention, which was very up-to-date at the time of this writing. The data analyzed in this study spanned the academic years between 2010 and 2015. The MODESE retention data spanned the academic years between 2009 and 2016. Table 53 and Table 54 describe Missouri's teaching workforce between those years. Table 53 summarizes statewide teacher gender and ethnicity, while Table 54 summarizes teaching experience by expressing the percentage of teachers in each experience category for each of the years 2009 – 2016.

Table 53

*Demographic Data 2009-2016*

| Year | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # Teachers | 71,156 | 69,249 | 68,896 | 69,025 | 69,407 | 69,859 | 69,683 |
| % Female | 78.4 | 78.6 | 78.4 | 78.3 | 78.1 | 78.1 | 78.4 |
| % Male | 21.0 | 20.9 | 21.1 | 21.1 | 21.3 | 21.4 | 21.6 |
| % White | 93.0 | 92.8 | 93.3 | 93.3 | 93.2 | 93.5 | 93.5 |
| % Black | 5.9 | 5.9 | 5.3 | 5.2 | 5.2 | 4.9 | 4.9 |
| % Other | 1.1 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 |

*Note:* Excerpt from MODESE (2016h, p. 2).

New teacher experience remained steady for the first four years displayed in Table 54 and then began a mild increase for the following three years; 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2016.

Table 54

*Percent of Teaching for Categorized by Experience: 2009 - 2016*

| Years | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 - 5 | 27.7 | 25.8 | 25.4 | 25.3 | 25.8 | 26.7 | 27.6 |
| 6 - 10 | 21.5 | 22.1 | 22.1 | 22.3 | 22.4 | 21.4 | 20.3 |
| 11 - 15 | 17.9 | 18.9 | 19.3 | 17.6 | 18.4 | 17.9 | 17.9 |
| 16 - 20 | 12.1 | 13.0 | 13.8 | 14.3 | 14.7 | 15.2 | 15.7 |
| 21 or more | 20.5 | 20.0 | 19.1 | 18.8 | 18.3 | 18.3 | 18.7 |

*Note:* Excerpt from MODESE (2016h, p. 3).

Table 55 displays the number of teachers in the state of Missouri, along with the number of new teachers in the state for the academic years between 2010 and 2015, which coincide with the years of this study. The table also displays the percent of new teachers who left the district between 1-3 years of service and 1-5 years of service. Since the data gathering depended upon a teacher's choice of whether to remain in the same employment over a span of three or five years, some calculations were unavailable at the time of publication in 2016.  The percent of new teachers leaving the profession

decreased from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 and again from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013, and

then possibly reached a plateau.

Table 55

*First Year Teachers, Statewide: 2010 - 2015*

| Years | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # Teachers | 69,249 | 68,896 | 69,025 | 69,407 | 69,859 |
| # New | 4,083 | 4,524 | 4,352 | 4,501 | 4,476 |
| Left Teaching | | | | | |
| % After 1-3 yrs. | 48.2 | 31.9 | 28.3 | 28.7 | unavailable |
| % After 1-5 yrs. | 57.8 | 46.0 | unavailable | unavailable | unavailable |

*Note:* Excerpt from MODESE (2016h, p. 4).

Table 56 provides a breakdown of the number and percentage of teacher hires for

the academic years between 2009 and 2015, which coincide with the timeframe of this

study.  The percent of new teachers hired to fill open positions was between 56% and

66%.  Overall retention decreased mildly, while the percent of hiring rose mildly.

Table 56

*New Teachers Entering the Missouri Workforce. 2010 - 2015*

| Year | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # Teachers | 69,249 | 68,896 | 69,025 | 69,407 | 69,859 |
| # New Hires | 6273 | 7203 | 7377 | 7745 | 7840 |
| # New Teachers | 4083 | 4534 | 4360 | 4504 | 4450 |
| % Hired | 9.1 | 10.5 | 10.7 | 11.2 | 11.2 |
| % Retained | 90.9 | 89.5 | 89.3 | 88.8 | 88.8 |
| % New out of # Hired | 65.1 | 63.0 | 59.0 | 58.1 | 56.7 |

*Note:* Excerpt from MODESE (2016h, p. 4).

**Research Question # 1**

**How do different districts implement their Beginning Teachers Assistance**

**Program?**  Some districts assigned the pairing of the new teacher with the mentor,

though some did not. Sometimes the matching of the new teacher with the mentor

allowed work within the same, or similar disciplines; yet, sometimes not.  The researcher

found that most districts assigned new teacher mentors at the building level. This was a problem with certain disciplines, with few teachers in that field working for the district, and with smaller districts with fewer teachers, due to the lower numbers of teachers working for the district. Having a mentor in the same field helped new teachers with specific classroom ideas and lesson planning to increase student achievement.

**Research Question # 2**

**What do different districts implement within their Beginning Teachers Assistance Programs?** The researcher found that the varying aspects of what was implemented in the BRAP depended on two factors; new teacher paperwork required by the individual district and the personality of the mentor. Some districts required new teachers and their mentors to attend monthly meetings. The new teachers had to fill out weekly documents, which demonstrated what they discussed with their mentors that week. The new teachers were required to bring these documents to their monthly meetings and discuss them with a group of new teachers. Some mentors 'visited' their new teacher only on rare occasions in their classrooms. Other mentors conferred with them on a daily basis to discuss their progress and to answer any questions they may have. The common themes appeared to be regular meetings, required paperwork, and conversations between the new teacher the mentor.

**Research Question # 3**

**What are the similarities and differences between what districts implement within their Beginning Teachers Assistance Programs?** Some districts had new teachers and their mentors fill out forms noting what they discussed at different times during the year. Sometimes the new teacher had little input into the content of these

forms.  In other districts, daily contact between new teachers and their mentors led to a plan to address the questions on the forms they were to complete for their districts. Differences appeared to be with regard to how the district tracked the mentor-mentee activities.

**Research Question # 4**.

**What apparent best practices are districts implementing to increase the retention rate of new teachers?**  A teacher gave one good example of a best practice from the panel interviews.  She did not get along with her assigned mentor, and when she mentioned this to an instructional coach, her building principal came to see her about the situation the next day.  It was a bad personality fit between the new teacher and her mentor, and the principal asked the new teacher if she had anyone else in mind to be her mentor.  The principal changed the new teacher's mentor that day, and the new relationship proved to be very helpful to the new teacher.

There were two other best practices mentioned by several of the participants: (a) Allowing new teachers to pick a mentor with whom they were comfortable working and (b) Assigning mentors who wished to spend the time working with a new teacher.

**Quantitative Data**

**Null Hypothesis # 1**: There is no difference between Midwest University new teacher perceptions and Midwest University principal perceptions, with regard to the Missouri State Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

In comparison of Midwest University new teacher perceptions to the perceptions of Midwest University principals of new teachers, a lack of difference could indicate Midwest University appeared to be preparing students to fill the qualities needed in new

teacher hires.  A difference could indicate that Midwest University was not preparing

students to meet the requirements, as perceived by their principals.

There was excellent alignment between perceptions of new teachers and

principals of new teachers. The only area indicating significant difference in new teacher

and principals of new teacher views was communication. Principals rated new teachers

higher than they rated themselves. Perhaps new teachers lacked self-confidence in the

area of communication.

**Null Hypothesis # 2**: There is no difference between statewide new teacher

perceptions and statewide principal perceptions, with regard to the Missouri State

Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

In a similar manner, in comparison of statewide new teacher perceptions to the

perceptions of statewide principals of new teachers, a lack of difference could indicate

universities statewide appeared to be preparing students to fill the qualities needed in new

teacher hires.  A difference could indicate that statewide universities were not preparing

students to meet the requirements, as perceived by their principals.

In this study, there were multiple areas supporting a significant difference in

views. The statewide data were gathered from multiple teacher preparation programs in

the state of Missouri. Differences between those programs could have contributed to the

different views generating the significant differences. It is possible a closer alignment

would exist between new teachers and new teacher mentors; however, the survey

administered by the state did not gather data directly from the mentors.

**Null Hypothesis # 3**: There is no difference between Midwest University new teacher perceptions and statewide new teacher perceptions, with regard to the Missouri State Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

In comparison of Midwest University new teacher perceptions to the perceptions of statewide new teachers, a lack of difference between the perceptions could indicate an alignment between Midwest University and statewide universities with state standards in teacher preparation. A difference between those perceptions could indicate areas of weakness or strength in new teacher preparation and in the usefulness of the BTAP, both in the local study participants and statewide new teachers.

In this study, there were few difference in perception, when comparing Midwest University new teachers to statewide new teachers; possibly indicating an alignment between new teacher preparation programs with state standards and agreement with BTAP measures of new teacher preparation. Differences were found for the topics of teacher communication, teacher use of technology as a communication tool, and contribution of a community college to new teacher preparation.

**Null Hypothesis # 4**: There is no difference between Midwest University principal perceptions and statewide principal perceptions, with regard to the Missouri State Beginning Teachers Assistance Program.

In a similar manner, in comparison of Midwest University principals of new teacher perceptions to the perceptions of statewide principals of new teachers, a lack of difference between the perceptions could indicate an alignment between Midwest University and statewide universities with state standards in teacher preparation, as well as a potential view that teacher preparation in the state of Missouri met the needs for new

teacher hires, as perceived by principals. A difference between those perceptions could indicate areas of weakness or strength in new teacher preparation and in the usefulness of the BTAP, both in the local study and statewide.

Significant difference were found in the areas of new teacher communication, use of technology within communication, and development of critical thinking in students.

**In summary**. Table 49, which compares perceptions reported by new teachers from Midwest University and Midwest University principals, agreed on the majority of the responses. The major difference dealt with communication and principals rated their new teachers higher than the new teachers rated themselves. This agreement suggested that Midwest University was performing at a high level while preparing students to take new teaching positions. Table 50, which compares perceptions by new teachers from statewide universities to perceptions by their principals agreed on nine out of 38 statements. The first difference showed that principals rated their new teachers lower on instruction, based on IEPs and designing lesson plans. Another difference was indicated in varying instructional strategies and delivering lessons to diverse learners. Principals rated teachers below where the point at which teachers rated themselves. Another difference was in the use of assessment to evaluate learning, where principals rated new teachers lower than the teachers rated themselves.

Table 51, which compares new teachers from Midwest University and new teachers from statewide universities, showed several differences. Midwest University teachers answered that they were better prepared to communicate with parents and using technology as a communication tool than the teachers in the statewide category rated themselves. Statewide teachers answered that they were almost twice as likely as

Midwest University teachers were to have completed some of their teaching coursework in junior college; and Midwest University teachers rated their amount junior college coursework higher. From the responses, it appeared that Midwest University was better in preparing its new teachers in communication.

Table 52, which compares principals of new teachers from Midwest University to principals of new teachers from Statewide universities showed differences in three main categories; modelling and engaging student in critical thinking, fostering positive student relationships, and communication. There was a difference between principal groups in how they rated their new teachers in modelling critical thinking to their students; principals of Midwest University new teachers rated them higher than the statewide principals rated their new teachers. This seemed to support the curriculum of the Midwest University in this category as a best practice. A similar result was found for the category of developing teacher relationships with students. This was an important area, since students will work much harder in their studies if they know the teacher cares about them and actively listens to them. The third category with a difference was communication of several types; teachers with parents, teachers with staff, and using technology in communication. In all three categories, principals rated new teachers from Midwest University higher than statewide principals rated the statewide group of new teachers. In the 20th-century world, when communication accelerates monthly, communication was vital to everyday life, and teachers must use communication to enhance their students' education. In each of these three categories Midwest University new teachers appeared better prepared to take on their new positions for their principals than those new teachers located throughout the state and prepared by other universities.

**The Research: In Retrospect**

The teacher panel gave several examples where individual school districts were not using the state-required mentoring process to its fullest potential.  Administrators assigned new teachers a mentor, which may not have been the best fit.   Some mentors had several new teachers assigned to them, in addition to their regular classroom teaching.  The mentors were not all able to visit all their new teachers in their classrooms, for a better hands-on look at what the new teacher needed, due to teaching at the same class times.

The online surveys gave indication that the Missouri state requirements were not explained to new teachers very clearly, by their individual school districts; but they were being implemented.  New teachers received notifications in class, from the educational institution where they completed their studies to become a teacher, and through other communication from the institution.  The website of many institutions gave information to new teachers about the requirements for their certificate upgrades; but, this did not seem to be a priority to new teachers, with many new challenges facing them as they entered the profession.

**What went wrong during this research**:  For this study, individual school districts were hesitant to join the research process and did not want to send out the researcher's online questionnaire for several different reasons.  One main reason was that the survey would take away time from new teachers, which they needed for other duties. Many research hours were spent travelling to district offices turning in updated requests, only to have them rejected after weeks of waiting for a response.

**What went right during the research**: Missouri state data gathered by MODESE was one of the best resources for data, as used in this study.  Another great source of data was Midwest University, which tracked its new teacher progress after they graduated.   While data from individual schools was difficult to obtain, the information from the University gave a great deal of vital and apparent information to strengthen the analysis reported in this dissertation.  The data appeared to support that new teachers from this University were better prepared to take on the responsibilities of their teaching careers.  This led to researcher to recommend looking into what the differences were between Universities and their teacher preparation courses, as a factor for how new teachers may perform, as they enter the teaching profession.

**Personal Reflections**

From the review of the literature for this research, it was apparent that teachers faced many challenges in becoming, remaining, and improving themselves on their way to becoming master teachers.  The university requirements were the beginning, as teachers then faced federal, state, local, and individual district regulations.  Teachers faced classrooms with students who possessed various abilities and shortcomings.  Some of their students had parents who watched everything their teachers said and did, while others students had no one to help them at home or even care how they performed at school.  Teachers faced these challenges and were then evaluated on how their students scored on a standardized test on a particular day, once a year.  Their efforts may not have shown in their students immediately, as all humans were unique in their learning and abilities.  The researcher was looking for ways in which individual school districts helped

teachers face these challenges and satisfied the Missouri state requirement of completing a mentoring process to then upgrade their teaching certifications.

The researcher found from the statewide teacher and principal surveys that not all schools prepared their graduating teachers to the same level.  The statewide number was an average, which allowed some schools to have scores below that number and some to be above.  In almost all the categories, the Midwest University scored a higher number than the statewide average score.  This led the researcher to conclude that Midwest University be viewed as a role model to develop future improvements in all state university programs under the direction of the State Education department.

**Recommendations to the Program**

Luck of assigning a mentor: Ask prospective mentors if they wish to be assigned to a new teacher.  Some districts offer a monetary stipend for existing teachers who choose to become a mentor to new teachers.

Assign mentors who can spend an extensive amount of time with their new teacher.  Add the mentoring process to the building master schedule, to allow more time for new teachers and mentors to work with each other, possibly on the same team or in the same wing of a building.

Look to create good personality pairings of mentors and new teachers.  Building administrators should try to have mentor teachers participate in the hiring process of new teachers, so the mentors could look for new teachers with whom they would be comfortable working in the mentoring process.

Administrators and coaches should be open to changing assignments of new teachers if problems arise.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Contact the teacher development department at several universities for more survey responses.   This would possibly avoid the challenge this researcher had in receiving approval by individual districts to survey their teachers.

Collect MODESE data on teacher turnover and conduct action research with a district, to determine if promising practices helped that district.

The researcher met with a great deal of resistance from individual school districts in collecting survey results.   Several responded with desired updates and changes, which the researcher completed, and then the district declined to accept the survey of its teachers, despite the requested revisions of the approval application.  The best course of action to obtain the survey data was to contact individual teachers and teacher mentors through universities.

**Conclusion**

The researcher found that the state-required process was being followed, but with many variations in its implementation in each school district.  Most districts allowed each building administrator to assign new teachers to their mentors, which resulted in different levels of success.  To better prepare new teachers to succeed in their career, the state department of education should develop some kind of flow chart for building administrators to follow or refer to, as they assign their new teachers to their mentors. This should allow for changes or adaptations for different circumstances so administrators could better support new teachers.  Another suggestion would be to have a checklist where administrators, new teacher mentors, and new teachers could verify they covered important aspects of the mentoring process.

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**Appendix A**

**Upgrading From the Initial Certificate to Career Certificate**
The classification, Initial Professional Certificate (IPC) or Initial Career Education Certificate (ICEC), is valid for four (4) years from the date of issuance. Any additional areas(s) of certification issued during the valid dates of this classification will fall under the same classification regardless of the certificate effective date. Therefore, all areas of certification under the IPC classification will have the same expiration date.

During the four (4) years that you hold this classification, you need to complete the following requirements before you can upgrade to a Career Continuous Professional Certificate (CCPC) or Continuous Career Education Certificate (CCEC), both valid for 99 years:

1. Complete four (4) years of Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) approved teaching experience.

Approved teaching experience includes at least half-time, contracted employment in Missouri's public schools or in accredited nonpublic schools. Experience will be accepted when earned in nonpublic schools accredited by North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, National Federation of Nonpublic School State Accrediting Association, Independent Schools Association of the Central States, National Lutheran School Accreditation, or Missouri Accreditation of Programs for Children and Youth.

Substitute teaching and serving as a teacher's aide or assistant cannot be counted toward teaching experience.

2. Participate in a district-provided mentoring program for two (2) years. Your school will assign an appropriate teacher to be your mentor;

3. Successfully complete thirty (30) contact hours of professional development.  This may include college credits (1 semester hour equals 15 contact hours of professional development);

4. Participate in a beginning teacher assistance program offered by a Missouri college or university, Regional Professional Development Center (RPDC), or professional teacher organization such as MNEA or MSTA; and

5. Successfully participate in your employing school's annual Performance Based Teacher Evaluation process.

6. Develop and implement a professional development plan that is on file with the district" (MODESE, 2003a, para. 1)

**Appendix B**

**New Teacher Survey**

**New Teacher link = https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6PRKH9G**

Hello. My name is Raymond Ciolek and I am currently a middle school mathematics teacher.  I am conducting research to complete my Doctorate in Educational Administration at Lindenwood University.  As part of my research I am conducting online surveys of new teachers and new teacher mentors.  All information will be confidential and only used to compare best practices in new teacher programs, which can be adopted by other districts.  Your responses acknowledge permission to use your response data in study analysis.  Thank you for participating in my survey, your feedback is important.

This survey is seeking your perceived experience with the Beginning Teacher's Assistance Program (BTAP) in your district.  Specifically, in reference to the second requirement as listed on the Missouri state DESE website; *"2. Participate in a district-provided mentoring program for two (2) years. Your school will assign an appropriate teacher to be your mentor;"*
This survey is designed for new teachers who started teaching in one of the following school years; 2010 - 2011, 2011 - 2012, 2012 – 2013, 2013 – 2014, or 2014 - 2015. Please think of only the two years during which you had a mentor and not the entire five years of your initial certification.

1. The tools your district uses for its BTAP program are not useful.
___ Completely agree
___ Agree
___ Neutral
___Disagree
___ Completely disagree

2. How useful is the feedback your teacher mentor gives you?
___ Extremely useful
___ Very useful
___ Moderately useful
___ Slightly useful
___ Not at all useful

3. How much support does your administration give you with the BTAP program?
___ A great deal
___ A lot
___ A moderate amount
___ A little
___ None at all

4. How reasonable are the expectations for the Missouri State BTAP program?
___ Extremely reasonable
___ Very reasonable
___ Moderately reasonable
___ Slightly reasonable
___ Not at all reasonable

5. The state gave you the right amount of information and direction to complete the BTAP program.
___ Completely agree
___ Agree
___ Neutral
___ Disagree
___ Completely disagree

6. How well do you collaborate with your teacher mentor?
___ Extremely well
___ Very well
___ Moderately well
___ Slightly well
___ Not at all well

7. Your district does not give much attention to your professional growth.
___ Completely agree
___ Agree
___ Neutral
___ Disagree
___ Completely disagree

8. How much financial support does your district give you for your professional development?
___ A great deal
___ A lot
___ A moderate amount
___ A little
___ None at all

9. Overall, how satisfied are you with your teaching experience?
___ Extremely satisfied
___ Moderately satisfied
___ Slightly satisfied
___ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
___ Slightly dissatisfied
___ Moderately dissatisfied
___ Extremely dissatisfied

10. In what month and year did you begin teaching in the Missouri school system?

_____

_____

11. In college, what was your major? Did it change? Briefly explain

_____

_____

_____

12. The teaching program at your university was not very effective in preparing you to complete the BTAP program with the state.
___ Completely agree
___ Agree
___ Neutral
___ Disagree
___ Completely disagree

13. Were you employed as a teacher full-time upon graduation during the school year following your graduation?
___ Yes
___ No

14. Did you attend graduate or professional school in the academic year immediately following graduation?
___ Yes
___ No

15. Your university career center was not helpful with your preparation to complete the BTAP program with the State.
___ Completely agree
___ Agree
___ Neutral
___ Disagree
___ Completely disagree

16. How likely are you to recommend your university to others in reference to how they helped you complete the BTAP program with the State?
___ Extremely likely
___ Quite likely
___ Moderately likely
___ Slightly likely
___ Not at all likely

17. Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience at your university in how it prepared you to complete the BTAP program with the State?

\_\_\_ Extremely satisfied
\_\_\_ Moderately satisfied
\_\_\_ Slightly satisfied
\_\_\_ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
\_\_\_ Slightly dissatisfied
\_\_\_ Moderately dissatisfied
\_\_\_ Extremely dissatisfied

18. If you would be willing to participate in a short (15-30 minute) one on one interview, please enter your name and email address below

_____
_____

19. If you are past your initial two years of teaching, do you still work with your first teacher mentor?  Did you seek out a different teacher mentor?  Briefly explain.  (If you are still in your first two years, please enter N/A).

_____
_____
_____

**Appendix C**

**New Teacher Mentor Survey**

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**New Teacher Mentor link = https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PZGC989**

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important.

This survey is seeking your perceived experience with the Beginning Teacher's Assistance Program (BTAP) in your district.  Specifically, in reference to the second requirement as listed on the Missouri State DESE website; *"2. Participate in a district-provided mentoring program for two (2) years. Your school will assign an appropriate teacher to be your mentor;"*
This survey is designed for teacher mentors who mentored new teachers in the following school years; 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012–2013, 2013–2014, or 2014-2015.

---

 Bottom of Form

**1. The tools your district uses for their BTAP program are not useful.**
\_\_\_ Completely agree
\_\_\_ Agree
\_\_\_ Neutral
\_\_\_ Disagree
\_\_\_ Completely disagree

**2. How much support does your administration give you with the required two year state BTAP program?**
\_\_\_ A great deal
\_\_\_ A lot
\_\_\_ A moderate amount
\_\_\_ A little
\_\_\_ None at all

**3. How reasonable are the expectations for the state BTAP program?**
\_\_\_ Extremely reasonable
\_\_\_ Very reasonable
\_\_\_ Moderately reasonable
\_\_\_ Slightly reasonable
\_\_\_ Not at all reasonable

**4. The state gave you the right amount of information and direction to complete the BTAP program?**
\_\_\_ Completely agree
\_\_\_ Agree
\_\_\_ Neutral
\_\_\_ Disagree

___ Completely disagree

**5. How well do you collaborate with your new teacher?**
___ Extremely well
___ Very well
___ Moderately well
___ Slightly well
___ Not at all well

**6. Your district does not give much attention to your professional growth?**
___ Completely agree
___ Agree
___ Neutral
___ Disagree
___ Completely disagree

**7. How much financial support does your district give you for your professional development?**
___ A great deal
___ A lot
___ A moderate amount
___ A little
___ None at all

**8. Overall, are you satisfied with your teaching experience?**
___ Extremely satisfied
___ Moderately satisfied
___ Slightly satisfied
___ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
___ Slightly dissatisfied
___ Moderately dissatisfied
___ Extremely dissatisfied

**9. How effective was your teacher mentor preparation with your district?**
___ Extremely effective
___ Very effective
___ Moderately effective
___ Slightly effective
___ Not at all effective

**10. If you would be willing to participate in a short (15-30 minute) one on one interview, please enter your name and email address below.**

_____

_____

## Appendix D

## Interview Questions

**Process:**
1) The researcher will tape all interviews with a mini tape recorder then sort and code the data.
2) The researcher will use tapes with 30 minutes per side of the tape to allow for 20-30 minute interviews.
3) The researcher will define words from respondents in their own terms and not assume a definition.
4) All responses will be transcribed.
5) These interview questions will be used as probes by the researcher to look for open responses from participants and develop themes.

**Interviews: Taped and marked NT for new teacher and NTM for new teacher mentor**.

**New Teacher Interview Questions**

1) Tell me about your experience in the mentoring program and how it has gone for you?
2) How are you working on completing your state required BTAP program? (**BTAP:** Beginning Teachers' Assistance Program. A program designed by the State of Missouri which new teachers must complete to upgrade their initial certification to a career certification).
   Probe – How do you track your progress and who do you give copies to?
3) How were you made aware of the state requirements for the BTAP program? How and when were you informed? I will provide copies of the requirements from DESE.
   Probe – What information did your university give you?
4) How are you keeping track of your required paperwork? Forms? Classes?
   Probe – electronic? Does your district require copies?
5) How often do you meet with your mentor and how is the time spent? Where do you meet? Are you both in the same department or team? How were you assigned to each other?
   Probe – Does your mentor have a set plan from your district or using what they developed on their own?
6) What kind of feedback do you receive from your mentor? How do you use it?
   Probe – Is this included in your paperwork and how?
7) Is there anything else you would like to add?
   Probe – Do you feel you will complete the BTAP program on time and has it helped you?

**New Teacher Mentor Interview Questions =**
1) Tell me about your experience in the mentoring program and how it has gone for you?
2) What kinds of tools or program do you use in mentoring new teachers?  Are they from your district or something which you have developed yourself?
   Probe – how do you use these tools?
3) How were you made aware of the state requirements for the BTAP program?
   Probe – how did you learn of them?  State website, university advisor, and district?
4) How often do you meet with your new teacher and how is the time spent? Where do you meet?  Are you both in the same department and on the same team?  How were you assigned to each other? What do you discuss?
   Probe – why do you meet like this? Schedule?
5) Do you think your district's BTAP program is effective?  How would you change it?
   Probe – Why and how is it effective?
6) Is there anything else you would like to add?
   Probe – best practices for other districts to follow?

**Appendix E**

**Focus Group Questions**

1) Please, introduce yourself and include the program you completed with Lindenwood University. Identify the district and school where you are employed.

**2)** Talk about the classes you currently teach and any additional duties you have (coaching, clubs, organizations, graduate coursework, etc.)

3) How did you land the job? Describe your experiences.

4) Do you have a named mentor/ support system for first-year teachers in your district? Please describe the experience.

5) How did your student teaching experience

**6)** Classroom management is often an area where

**Appendix F**

**Teacher and Administrator Survey Statements**

**Statement(s) # 1.** Teacher: I was prepared to incorporate interdisciplinary instruction.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to incorporate interdisciplinary instruction.

**Statement(s) # 2.** Teacher: I was prepared in my content area.  Principal: The teacher was prepared in his or her content area

**Statement(s) # 3.** Teacher: I was prepared to engage students in my content area. Principal: The teacher was prepared to engage students in his or her content area.

**Statement(s) # 4.** Teacher: I was prepared to make my content meaningful to students.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to make content meaningful to students.

**Statement(s) # 5.** Teacher: I was prepared to design lessons that include differentiated instruction.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to design lessons that include differentiated instruction.

**Statement(s) # 6.** Teacher: I was prepared to implement instruction based on a student's IEP.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to implement instruction based on a student's IEP.

**Statement(s) # 7.** Teacher: I was prepared to modify instruction for English Language Learners.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to modify instruction for English Language Learners.

**Statement(s) # 8.** Teacher: I was prepared to modify instruction for gifted learners.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to modify instruction for gifted learners.

**Statement(s) # 9.** Teacher: I was prepared to create lesson plans to engage all learners.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to create lesson plans to engage all learners.

**Statement(s) # 10.** Teacher: I was prepared to deliver lessons based on curriculum standards.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to deliver lessons based on curriculum standards.

**Statement(s) # 11.** Teacher: I was prepared to deliver lessons for diverse learners. Principal: The teacher was prepared to deliver lessons for diverse learners.

**Statement(s) # 12.** Teacher: I was prepared to implement a variety of instructional strategies.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to implement a variety of instructional strategies.

**Statement(s) # 13.** Teacher: I was prepared to engage students in critical thinking.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to engage students in critical thinking.

**Statement(s) # 14.** Teacher: I was prepared to model critical thinking and problem solving.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to model critical thinking and problem solving.

**Statement(s) # 15.** Teacher: I was prepared to use technology to enhance student learning.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to use technology to enhance student learning.

**Statement(s) # 16.** Teacher: I was prepared to create a classroom environment that encourages student engagement.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to create a classroom environment that encourages student engagement.

**Statement(s) # 17.** Teacher: I was prepared to use a variety of classroom management strategies.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to use a variety of classroom management strategies.

**Statement(s) # 18.** Teacher: I was prepared to manage a variety of discipline issues.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to manage a variety of discipline issues.

**Statement(s) # 19.** Teacher: I was prepared to motivate my students to learn. Principal: The teacher was prepared to motivate his or her students to learn.

**Statement(s) # 20.** Teacher: I was prepared to keep my students on task. Principal: The teacher was prepared to keep his or her students on task.

**Statement(s) # 21.** Teacher: I was prepared to foster positive student relationships.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to foster positive student relationships.

**Statement(s) # 22.** Teacher: I was prepared to facilitate smooth transitions for my students.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to facilitate smooth transitions for his other students.

**Statement(s) # 23.** Teacher: I was prepared to use effective communication strategies to foster learning.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to use effective communication strategies to foster learning.

**Statement(s) # 24.** Teacher: I was prepared to effectively communicate with parents.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to effectively communicate with parents.

**Statement(s) # 25.** Teacher: I was prepared to effectively communicate with all staff.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to effectively communicate with all staff.

**Statement(s) # 26.** Teacher: I was prepared to promote respect for diverse cultures, genders, and intellectual / physical abilities.  Principal: The teacher was

prepared to promote respect for diverse cultures, genders, and intellectual / physical abilities.

**Statement(s) # 27.** Teacher: I was prepared to use technology as a communication tool.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to use technology as a communication tool.

**Statement(s) # 28.** Teacher: I was prepared to enhance students' skills in using technology as a communication tool.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to enhance students' skills in using technology as a communication tool.

**Statement(s) # 29.** Teacher: I was prepared to use assessments to evaluate learning.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to use assessments to evaluate learning.

**Statement(s) # 30.** Teacher: I was prepared to develop assessments to evaluate learning.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to develop assessments to evaluate learning.

**Statement(s) # 31.** Teacher: I was prepared to analyze assessment data to improve instruction.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to analyze assessment data to improve instruction.

**Statement(s) # 32.** Teacher: I was prepared to help students set learning goals based on assessment results.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to help students set learning goals based on assessment results.

**Statement(s) # 33.** Teacher: I was prepared to work with colleagues to set learning goals using assessment results.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to work with colleagues to set learning goals using assessment results.

**Statement(s) # 34.** Teacher: I was prepared to analyze data to reflect on areas for professional growth.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to analyze data to reflect on areas for professional growth.

**Statement(s) # 35.** Teacher: I was prepared to reflect on my practices for professional growth.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to reflect on his or her practices for professional growth.

**Statement(s) # 36.** Teacher: I was prepared to collaborate with colleagues to support student learning.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to collaborate with colleagues to support student learning.

**Statement(s) # 37.** Teacher: I was prepared to collaborate with parents to support student learning.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to collaborate with parents to support student learning.

**Statement(s) # 38.** Teacher: I was prepared to participate in professional organizations.  Principal: The teacher was prepared to participate in professional organizations.

**Statement # 39.** Teacher: Please click on the response that best reflects your perspective about the overall quality of the professional education program you completed.

**Statement # 40.** Teacher: Did you complete any of your teacher preparation course work at a community college?

**Statement # 41.** Teacher: What overall rating would you give the quality of your community college teacher preparation coursework?

**Statement # 42.** Teacher: Were you assigned a first-year teacher mentor?

**Statement # 43.** Teacher: How often did you meet with your mentor this school year? (either formally or informally)

**Statement # 44.** Teacher: The mentoring process is non-evaluative.

**Statement # 45.** Teacher: The support I received from my mentor has helped me improve my practice.

**Statement # 46.** Teacher: My mentor provided me with the resources I needed to improve my practice.

**Statement # 47. Teacher:** My mentor provided me with effective support.

**Statement # 48.** Teacher: I was prepared to reflect on feedback from my mentor.

**Appendix G**

**Online Survey Questions**

Online Survey Question # 1 asked what tools each district used for their Beginning
      Teacher's Assistance Program (BTAP) and what worked or needed some changes
      for the new teachers.

Online Survey Question # 2 asked respondents how they viewed the effectiveness of their
      district's BTAP and how they might change it.

Online Survey Question # 3 asked respondents how well they collaborated with their
      mentors.

Online Survey Question # 4 asked new teachers how useful the feedback was from their
      mentor.

Online Survey Question # 5 asked new teachers how they were assigned to their mentors
      and how often they met with them.

Online Survey Question # 6 asked respondents how much support the administration
      gave them with their BTAP.

Online Survey Question # 7 asked respondents if they thought the expectations for the
      state BTAP were reasonable.

Online Survey Question # 8 asked respondents if the state gave them the right amount of
      information and direction to complete the BTAP.

**Appendix H**

**Letter of Request to Superintendents**

**(Letter to Superintendent or assistant superintendent for permission to conduct study)**
*I will visit each district office and speak to the assistant superintendent of instruction or human resources to ask permission and explain my research.  I will have copies of all my work and then email them the same material as soon as possible.*

Dr. XXXXX
  My name is Raymond Ciolek and I am a student in the Educational Doctoral program at Lindenwood University.  I am working on my dissertation, which is a mixed method study on the Missouri Beginning Teachers Assistance Program (BTAP) and teacher retention in Saint Louis school districts. I will be retrieving data on teacher turnover from DESE for statistical analysis for those school districts.  As part of my research I will begin with electronic surveys of new teachers who have entered the teaching profession since the 2010-2011 school year and new teacher mentors with at least five years in the teaching profession, who have also mentored a new teacher during the same time (2010-2011and later).
  I hope to gain permission from several school districts in the Saint Louis area to begin my data gathering through use of electronic surveys of new teachers and new teacher mentors.  The surveys will be comprised of approximately 10-20 questions and take about ten minutes to complete.  At the end of these initial surveys there is a request for a one-on-one interview of both new teachers and new teacher mentors by the researcher.  The electronic surveys will be completely confidential with the only tracked characteristic being the school district so I can compare responses to new-teacher five year retention rate from each district.
  The one-on-one interviews will be used to compare how new teachers and new teacher mentors perceive how each district implements the state required BTAP program and how the program affects retention of new teachers.   These interviews should not take longer than thirty minutes and I will meet the respondents at a convenient location for them.  This information will also be confidential and only used to look for best practices and how they can be used to increase new teacher retention.
  Here are links to my surveys; one for new teachers and a second for new teacher mentors.
**New Teacher link = https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6PRKH9G**
**New Teacher mentor link =    https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PZGC989.**
  I will not be collecting any specific district information, individual teacher information, school or administrator information, only general information to determine possible correlation between the BTAP program and new teacher retention perceptions. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to use your district in my research.

**Vitae**

Raymond S. Ciolek earned his Bachelor of Science degree in economics from the University of Missouri - Saint Louis (UMSL) in 1987 and worked for twenty years in the restaurant business.  He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Middle School Education, with an emphasis in mathematics, from UMSL in 2007 and taught for Saint Louis Public Schools as a middle school math teacher.  He earned his Masters of Arts in Education from Lindenwood University in May 2013 and began his Doctoral program at Lindenwood in the fall of 2013.  His anticipated graduation date for his Doctorate in Educational Leadership is May 2017.