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ASSESSMENT OF A NEWLY IMPLEMENTED
TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM

by
Jo Ann Doyle

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
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Approved by

Professor

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ABSTRACT

Jo Ann Doyle
ASSESSMENT OF A NEWLY IMPLEMENTED
TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM

2003/04

Dr. Robert W. Kern
Master of Arts in School Administration

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a newly implemented teacher induction program that commenced in August 2003. Twenty-one teachers who began employment in August 2003 were required to participate in this piloted program. Six months following the initial induction meeting, 18 teachers were surveyed. The survey design conformed to a modified Likert scale. The findings revealed that the need existed for a comprehensive new teacher induction program that was designed to help alleviate some of the fears expressed by the participants. A major goal of the program was to provide all newly hired faculty members with a system of support and assistance that would extend throughout the school year. This system of support consisted of informative meetings that encouraged sharing of ideas amongst educators coupled with post-meeting communication between the new staff members, administrators, veteran teachers, mentors, and buddies. The study revealed that the majority of teachers felt supported throughout their first year of employment. They also described their first year at this large regional high school as successful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To my husband, Dennis, along with our daughters, Jennifer and Denise:

“Your unending patience and words of encouragement have enabled me to go further than I ever thought possible. I am proud of all of us and will always be grateful for your love and support.”

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Focus of the Study

The 2003-2004 school year at Eastern Camden County Regional School District (ECCRSD) commenced with twenty-one new teachers. This group of new faculty members was composed of experienced teachers, novice teachers and alternative route teachers.

Nationwide, an estimated one third of all novice teachers have resigned from their teaching positions within the first two years of their tenure (Jones, 2000). An estimated one half of all new hires have resigned from the district within the first five years of employment. In order to ensure a smooth transition into a large suburban high school, increase the district's retention rate and improve the quality of instruction, ECCRSD initiated a New Teacher Induction Program. All teachers who commenced employment in September 2003 were required to participate in this newly developed program.

The focus of this research was directed toward the unrelenting problem of attrition, the difficulties faced by new teachers and a possible solution that was developed in an effort to offer support to a group of educators who were considered to be "at risk".

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research project was to evaluate a recently developed induction program for all newly hired teachers. The goal of the induction program was to assist and support newly hired teachers as much as possible throughout the school year. The system

of support that these new teachers received was designed to help them feel comfortable in their new positions at this large suburban high school.

In an effort to assess the effectiveness of the program, the participants were surveyed midway through the school year. Data was analyzed and shared with district administrators so that the effectiveness of this new program could be evaluated.

Definitions

Alternate Route: a non-traditional process of education designed to prepare non-teaching college graduates for careers as educators.

Alternative Route teacher: one who can demonstrate evidence of alternative education and/or experience but lacks the formal pre-service teacher preparation coursework as required by the New Jersey Department of Education. Alternative route teachers are routinely monitored and required to attend regularly scheduled training as mandated by the New Jersey Department of Education.

Attrition: teacher turnover. The broad definition includes teachers who leave the teaching profession, those who change positions within a district and those who change school districts. For the purpose of this thesis, attrition will pertain to new teachers who abandon the teaching profession early in their careers.

Buddy: one who has voluntarily agreed to guide, support and encourage a newly hired teacher throughout their first year of employment with the school district.

Conventional course offerings: course offerings that include English, History, Mathematics, Science, Foreign Language, Health Education/Physical Education, Fine Arts, Business Education, Special Education, Building Trades, Consumer Science and Technology.

ECCCRSD: Eastern Camden County Regional School District.

Emergency certification: a process that allows individuals who have graduated from an institution of higher education to teach in public schools concurrent with completing required educational coursework.

General education students: students who do not fall into the following categories: Special Education Students or Limited English Proficient Students.

Induction Program: a sustained training program of orientation and support designed specifically for newly hired teachers.

Mentor: a certified teacher who receives a predetermined stipend in exchange for guidance services offered to novice teachers for a period of one year.

Novice teacher: an individual who has successfully participated in a formal pre-service teacher preparation program, has earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university, has met the New Jersey Department of Education requirements and is in possession of a New Jersey provisional teaching certificate issued by the New Jersey Division of Teacher Preparation and Certification.

Scholastic Assessment Test: SAT – standardized test adopted by the Educational Testing Service; often used as a college admissions instrument.

Veteran teacher: any teacher employed by the ECCCRSD for one or more years.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study were limited by the personalities of the participants. Participants who were unhappy with situations that extended beyond that of employment (e.g., personal) might have tainted the findings.

In addition, the data derived from the follow-up study might have been skewed in favor of the program. Inflated opinions might have been reflective of the participants' fragile non-tenure status. Participants might have unknowingly enhanced their opinions of the program in an effort to avoid self-imposed anxiety brought on by an undue fear of administrative conflict.

Setting of the Study

The study was done at Eastern Camden County Regional School District, a public, suburban, regional high school system located within the confines of Camden County in the Township of Voorhees, New Jersey. The student body was noted to be a diverse population of adolescents who were residents of the Borough of Berlin, Borough of Gibbsboro and Voorhees Township. Two high schools were found to share the same locale: Eastern Intermediate High School (grades 9 and 10) and Eastern Senior High School (grades 11 and 12). According to the New Jersey School Report Card (2001-2002) approximately 2,000 students collectively attended the Intermediate and Senior High Schools.

The Berlin New Jersey Detailed Profile (2003) stated that the Borough of Berlin encompassed a land area of 3.6 square miles. The profile also indicated that the official 2000 census reported a population of 6,149 with a median household income of \$60,286.

The Gibbsboro New Jersey Detailed Profile (2003) stated that the Borough of Gibbsboro encompassed a land area of 3.7 square miles. The profile also indicated that the official 2000 census reported a population of 2,435 with a median household income of \$57,326.

The official Voorhees Township electronic website (2003) stated that Voorhees Township encompassed a land area of 11.6 square miles. The website also indicated that the official 2000 census reported a population of 28,126 with a median household income of \$68,402.

Nine elected representatives from three sending districts served on the Board of Education. Two elected school board members represented residents living in the Borough of Berlin, whereas residents living in the Borough of Gibbsboro were represented by one elected school board member. Six elected school board members served on behalf of the residents of Voorhees Township, the largest of the sending districts.

The 2001-02 HSPA Statewide Assessment Results (2001-2002 New Jersey School Report Card) indicated that 88.6% of the General Education Students were determined to be "Proficient" or "Advanced Proficient" compared with the state average of 74.5%.

The 2001-2002 New Jersey School Report card revealed that 416 students took the standardized Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT). The report card further indicated that those individuals who participated in this standardized testing exercise earned an average math score of 553 and an average verbal score of 537. State averages were 514 and 495, respectively.

In addition to conventional course offerings, ECCRSD offered seventeen advanced placement courses, gifted and talented programs, School-to-Work programs and Latin.

Within the narrative portion of the year 2001-2002 New Jersey School Report Card, Eastern Senior High School Principal, Dr. Harold Melleby, Jr., pointed out that "the current professional staff includes more than 150 fully certified classroom teachers, nine

guidance counselors, eight full-time Child Study Team members, two nurses, two media center specialists, one athletic trainer, and one student assistance counselor” (p. 2). Each high school building was found to house a central office that was staffed with a principal, administrators and support staff.

The district median years of experience was approximately 12 years and the district median annual teacher salary was reported to be \$50,400. The state median was 14 years and \$54,285, respectively. Fifty-three percent of the fully certified faculty members have earned BA/BS degrees, 44% have earned MA/MS advanced degrees and 3% have earned PhD/EdD advanced degrees (New Jersey School Report Card, 2001-2002).

The 2002-03 Total Comparative Cost per Pupil was reported to be \$9,763. The Total Comparative Cost per Pupil was \$1,160 below the reported state average of \$10,923 per pupil cost (New Jersey School Report Card, 2001-2002).

The official ECCRS D website illustrated the myriad of ways that community support was evident. Community support was demonstrated via the Eastern Education Foundation, Inc. (EEF), Eastern Parents Athletic Association (EPAA) and Project Graduation.

The official EEF website described the foundation as being “based on partnerships between ECCRS D and community groups that include: civic, business, citizens and parents.” The EEF was “established to acquire and distribute funds and other resources to supplement and enhance the quality of education for ECCRS D students.”

The official EPAA website described the EPAA as an organization “that strives to encourage parental involvement with all of the Eastern Viking Sports Teams.” The

mission of the EPAA is to “seek parental representation for each athletic team in order to provide for each team's needs.”

Project Graduation was described as a volunteer committee comprised of parents of Eastern High School students. According to the official Eastern High Schools Project Graduation website, this group of parent volunteers had been instrumental in the fundraising efforts that enabled them to provide an annual alcohol and drug-free graduation party for all graduating seniors. The graduation ceremony has been traditionally held on the last day of school during the early evening hours. The annual school-sanctioned graduation party followed the graduation ceremony.

The voting citizens of ECCRS D were noted to be overwhelmingly pro-education. Their sustained support was demonstrated annually at the polls. A spokesperson who represented the ECCRS D confirmed that within the past ten years, the district’s registered voters have approved nine out of ten school budgets.

Significance of the Study

This project was implemented in an effort to reduce teacher dissatisfaction, increase teacher retention and maximize professional growth of new hires. Dissatisfaction was often recognized as a precursor to sub-optimal performance. Frustrated teachers were noted to change districts or exit the teaching profession altogether. The New Teacher Induction Program was instituted with the hope of inculcating the newly hired teachers with a sense of confidence and belonging that would, in turn, lead to superior classroom performance and employment longevity. It was the goal of this school district to improve the delivery of classroom instruction, reinforce effective classroom management techniques and increase the retention rate of this new group of teaching professionals.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of the study was organized into the following chapters: Chapter 2, Review of Literature; Chapter 3, Design of the Study; Chapter 4, Presentation of Findings; Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications and Further Study.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

“Intimidating” was a universal term used by teachers when asked to describe their first year of service at a school district. School districts were particularly intimidating to new faculty members when the districts were large and fast paced. The level of teacher frustration often became exacerbated when overwhelming amounts of unfamiliar information were being disseminated and simultaneously processed. A friendly smile and an offer of help often eased the anxiety experienced by those who were “new”.

National teacher attrition had become increasingly problematic. An Internet search using a popular search engine and the term “Teacher Attrition” resulted in 64,000 matches.

Colbert & Wolff (1992) believed that “only the strongest and most determined teachers survive the first few years of teaching. Some of the most talented find teaching frustrating, unrewarding, and intolerably difficult. Beginning teachers in difficult schools often feel like failures” (p. 7).

In a 1999 study, Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. reported that more than 20% of public school teachers vacated their positions within three years. It was also reported that an alarming 9.3% quit before finishing their first year of teaching.

Two years following the statistics generated by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., Jones (2000) estimated that over one third of novice teachers left the profession by the

end of the second year. This had become a troubling trend for school administrators, fellow educators, students and their parents.

Teacher attrition was higher in urban school districts. According to Black (2001), “thirty percent of new teachers – up to 50% in urban schools – leave their jobs within three years” (p. 1). Black’s study reiterated the findings of Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. by saying that 9% of all new teachers resigned before the official end of their first year in the classroom.

Urban schools, particularly those located in impoverished areas, were making a concerted effort to combat the high rate of teacher turnover. According to Jorissen (2002), “urban school districts are attempting to solve the problem by offering induction and support programs, providing alternative certification routes, and offering on-the-spot contracts and financial incentives for teaching in high-need areas” (p. 48).

On a national scale, Cromwell (2002) reported that “U.S. public schools will need an estimated 2.4 million new teachers by 2012, nearly as many as the 2.8 million currently teaching” (p. 1).

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER (Mezzacappa, 2003) expanded on the studies conducted by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., Jones and Black. While Mezzacappa concurred with the estimate that one third of all new teachers left the profession within three years, he took his research one step farther by saying that an estimated 46% left by the end of their fifth year. Only an estimated one half of all new teachers chose to remain in the teaching profession in excess of five years.

The National Education Association (2003) cited that, according to the National Center for Education Statistics Projections of Education Statistics to 2008, “2.7 million

teachers will be needed when taking into account declining student/teacher ratios based on nationwide class size reduction efforts” (p. 1). This estimated national shortfall was 300,000 teachers more than the number that was estimated in Cromwell’s 2002 study. In reality, whether the total projected number of teachers needed within the next decade approximated 2.4 million or 2.7 million, our nation was looking at an acute shortage of professionals who were fully qualified to educate a vast population who, by federal law, were required to attend school.

Hetzner (2003) blamed retirements as a major contributory factor in the teacher flight. However, research showed that a large number of new teachers were entering the field of education feeling passionate about the paths that they have chosen only to leave the profession, often within the first three years of their career, feeling so discouraged that they were leaving education in its entirety, in order to pursue employment opportunities within the private sector.

Review on the Problem

The problem was very simple and quantitatively verifiable. New teachers were leaving their careers as professional educators en masse in favor of employment opportunities outside of the schoolhouse. It was becoming increasingly more challenging for school districts, particularly those districts that struggle with the complexities associated with poverty, to attract and retain qualified professionals.

The National Education Association (2003) reported that almost two-thirds of today’s new teachers were younger than 27-years-old. In addition, almost half of the new teachers (42%) were recent college graduates who had no classroom experience.

There was a plethora of reasons why teachers were choosing to abort their chosen paths in favor of directions that might appear to be more desirable. According to Wasley (1999), “emerging teachers enter their first years of teaching with sound theoretical knowledge, but little practical skill” (p. 11). Deficiencies that resulted from college survey courses in educational foundations and abbreviated “hands-on” experiences were often precursors to teacher anxiety. Novice teachers were often unable to cope with routine classroom problems in an effectual manner (Wasley, 1999).

Tye and O’Brien (2002) surveyed teachers who had already left the teaching profession. They found many reasons for teachers not returning to the classroom. In rank-order, their reasons were: accountability, increased paperwork, student attitudes, lack of parental support, lack of administrative support, low status of the profession and salary considerations.

Cromwell (2002) believed that low pay, large classes, and lack of respect for the profession were just a few contributory factors that were found to escalate the growing trend of teacher attrition. Low pay often caused new teachers to obtain part time employment after school had finished for the day. Long hours on the job and little time to prepare for the next day often rendered new teachers feeling overwhelmed.

Eichenbrenner (2003) recognized that retirement was a contributory factor to teacher attrition. However, it was believed that the actual number of retirees was insignificant when compared with the whole. Teachers blamed their leaving the teaching profession on problems relating to staffing, family and personal, overall job dissatisfaction, and a longing to pursue new career opportunities.

Mezzacappa's (2003) findings concurred with the findings of Cromwell. Both researchers agreed that there were many reasons why people resigned from teaching so early in their careers. According to Mezzacappa's commentary, this disturbing trend was blamed, in part, on widespread perceived low status of the teaching profession coupled with low wages, growing demands that are inevitably placed on the shoulders of the classroom teachers, lack of support, and insufficient knowledge of subject material or weak classroom management skills.

Additionally, Mezzacappa (2003) pointed out that "in most professions, the newest recruits start at the easier jobs and work their way up to more difficult ones. In teaching, the opposite is true; they tend to begin their careers in the hardest jobs, and, if they last, end up in the easier ones" (p. 2). Novices were often asked to serve as proctors or coaches for extracurricular activities, teach a multitude of subjects that are sometimes unrelated to each other, or teach students in a number of different classroom locations daily. Districts often strongly encouraged the new teachers to take on more responsibilities than they could handle with little regard as to how well the job was being done.

One could not ignore that there was an impending crisis in the field of education. Districts sometimes offered a myriad of incentives in order to lure certified teachers to their schools. Cromwell (2002) examined solutions that had been successful. Some of these solutions included: poaching (luring teachers from other districts), salary and benefit incentives, advertising campaigns that targeted alternative route candidates and teachers from foreign countries, housing incentives and payment of student loans. In addition to tempting incentives, districts were turning inward and making modifications

to how they conducted business. Some districts were agreeing to reduce class size, raise salaries and hire teachers under the classification of emergency certification. Districts were also becoming more mindful in the area of teacher support. Cromwell's research revealed the key reason for 50% of teachers resigning within five years was lack of support and a feeling of isolation.

Problems as they related to teacher attrition could no longer be overlooked. According to Darling-Hammond & Sclan (1996) novice teachers were often left in a "sink or swim" position. Districts offered little in the way of structured support. Additionally, professional growth opportunities were infrequently offered.

The National Commission on Teaching (1996) warned that poorly organized, indiscriminate induction programs do more harm than good. Increased levels of teacher attrition were often the consequence of induction programs that were haphazardly implemented. Additionally, teacher ineffectiveness was another undesirable consequence of poor planning.

Breaux and Wong (2002) defined induction as "the process of training, supporting, and retaining new teachers by providing instruction in classroom management and effective teaching techniques, reducing the difficulty of the transition into teaching and maximizing the retention rate of highly qualified teachers" (p. 56). It was a district's way of telling all of those who were newly hired that they were happy to be their employer, they wanted to help them reach their goals and, perhaps most importantly, they wanted them for long term employment.

Clement (2002) believed that "induction and retention begin at the end of the interview. All schools should have planned professional development for their new

teachers that includes orientation before school starts, ongoing support seminars during the school year, and a mentoring program” (p. 21).

Hardebeck and Warne (2002) pointed out that effective new-teacher induction helped in the retention process because “new teachers frequently have an amorphous idea of what constitutes good teaching. Just because a recent college grad has a 4.0 GPA and glowing recommendations from a teacher or a West Point graduate arrives with 30 years of success in creating warriors, don’t assume that either of them can teach 14-year-olds. Train, train, train!” (p. 32).

Harry and Rosemary Wong (2003) were found to be highly regarded advocates of induction programs. “New teachers come into the profession having invested years of their lives and tens of thousands of dollars with the vision of making a difference in the lives of young people. It is a crime when they are just thrown into a classroom with no training or support” (p. 1). They shared the belief that effective professional development induction programs commenced before the first day of school. The Wong’s cautioned against waiting for unfavorable events to occur before implementing the professional development process. Instead, they suggested that districts meet with their new teachers before the first day of school.

Delisio (2003) asked a pointed question to Annette L. Breaux during an interview. Delisio questioned the difference between orientation and induction. Breaux’s response was clear, “Everybody has orientation! That’s where all new teachers come together for a day to learn about the policies and procedures of the school and district. That’s it – one day and it’s done. Induction, on the other hand, involves on going, systematic training and support for new teachers beginning before the first day of school and continuing

throughout the first two or three years of teaching. In other words, orientation is one small activity that takes place during an overall systematic two- or three-year training process known as induction” (p. 2).

The research has consistently demonstrated that many new teachers were aborting their chosen paths in education within five years. A revolving door of teachers has often been perceived as detrimental to school districts and students. Although there was a myriad of reasons for this unrelenting exodus, most exiting teachers cited lack of support as one of the major contributory reasons for this disturbing trend.

Weiss and Weiss (1999) stated that the quality and funding of induction programs varied between school districts and states. However, districts that offered induction programs benefited from increased teacher retention. In addition, it was also stated that the teaching capabilities of new staff members improved.

Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000) made a very profound statement, “A third of beginning teachers quit within their first three years on the job. We don’t stand for this kind of dropout rate among students, and we can no longer afford it in our teaching ranks” (p. 1). Formal induction programs have been linked to teacher retention by virtue of enhancing new teacher satisfaction. Teachers, who felt satisfied, were those who had improved their management skills and effectually demonstrated the transference of knowledge from theory to practice.

The NWT Teacher Induction website (2003) outlined the benefits of induction programs for both teachers and administrators. Teachers benefited from “accelerated success and effectiveness, greater self-confidence, heightened job satisfaction, improved personal and professional well-being, enhanced commitment to students, school and the

profession, and increased opportunity for building connections with the community”

(p. 1). Administrators recognized an improvement in principal-teacher relations, diminished teacher attrition, increased teacher collaboration, and increased student learning. Additionally, it was also noted that teachers were beginning to assume a more active role with respect to leadership.

Szuminski (2003) agreed with the benefits of teacher induction programs as presented by NWT Teacher Induction. However, Szuminski expanded on those findings to include an increase in certified teachers and a decrease in student discipline referrals.

ECCRSD piloted a teacher induction program in August 2003. This study tracked the progress of the newly developed induction program and evaluated data collected from the participants.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

General Description of the Research Design

Newly hired teachers who received support from school administrators, mentors, and peers were more likely to remain in Eastern Camden County Regional School District's (ECCRS) employ as opposed to those who were not supported. The retention of accomplished teachers has become an increasing challenge for school administrators. School districts have often competed for accomplished teachers. The implementation of teacher induction programs has become a popular means of orienting teachers to new procedures and surroundings while helping them to feel confident throughout their transition.

The implementation of this pilot program began prior to the opening of school. A meeting commenced for the sole purpose of developing a reasonable agenda for the entire year. Topics were carefully infused into the agenda according to timelines that were inherently predictable throughout the school year. A total of thirteen sessions were scheduled with dates ranging from late August through early May. Several meetings were scheduled to take place within the first few weeks of school and monthly thereafter.

On Friday, August 22, 2003 all newly hired teachers assembled at Eastern Intermediate High School for the annual New Teacher Orientation meeting. It was at this meeting that the teachers were greeted with a smile and presented with an agenda along with a packet of information that served as a guide for the day's activities. Morning

refreshments were served prior to the official welcoming addresses by school district officials. The welcoming addresses were followed by informational communication designed to inform everyone of the day's planned activities.

Following the orientation meeting, everyone was required to attend the mandated "Right to Know" presentation. Lunch was served immediately after the "Right to Know" session.

The luncheon buffet enabled the new staff members to meet with their mentors, buddies, and the administrative team in a casual setting before breaking into the final meeting of the day. It was at this meeting where the newly hired staff members were presented with a general overview of school policies and procedures. Everyone was dismissed at the conclusion of this meeting. On the following Monday the entire teaching staff reported to work.

All ECCRS D faculty members reported to work for the new school year one week before the students were scheduled to report to classes. During this one week period, in-service meetings commenced and attendance by all staff members was mandatory. In addition to the in-service presentations, teachers were given preparation time in order to have their classrooms ready to receive students.

It was on the second day of this week that the new teachers assembled once again as a group. Everyone in attendance was then guided through the introductory development of their Professional Improvement Plans (PIP). Following PIP development, the meeting continued and Jones' (2000) suggestions as they related to "Getting through Day One with Ease" were shared with this enthusiastic group.

The next New Teacher Induction meeting was held on September 9 at 2:20 p.m., exactly one week after the students arrived for classes. Refreshments were ordered and delivered to the meeting room by a member of the food service staff. The topics of the meeting focused on Jones' (2000) suggestions for managing effective classrooms. Techniques as they related to responding to defensive behaviors were also discussed. Emphasis was placed on seating arrangements, particularly the Interior Loop Design also developed by Jones (2000).

Two weeks later, another induction meeting was held. That meeting focused on Parent/Teacher conferences and the annual Back-to-School night. It was at this meeting that suggestions for a successful Back-to-School night were shared between the experienced mentors and the less experienced novice teachers. Mentors were careful to point out techniques that have been proven successful and, conversely, they freely shared ideas that have not worked as well as had been expected.

The next induction session was held on October 21, exactly one month after the previous meeting. It was at this meeting where two experienced and very effective staff members were invited to speak. The topics of their presentation focused on questioning techniques and effective student grouping. These highly regarded faculty members shared their experiences and ideas with the new staff. A question and answer period followed their presentation.

In an attempt to redirect the meeting format to one that was more interactive, four experienced and highly effective teachers were invited to lead small group discussions at the November meeting. This meeting took place in a very informal setting. The experienced educators were eager to share positive experiences with the newer members

of the teaching staff. Topics for discussion included: “Tips for Success”, “Effective Classroom Management Techniques” and “Classroom Rules”. The newer staff members were encouraged to share their concerns and experiences with the veteran teachers. This meeting was dialogue intensive. Everyone had something to contribute.

Midterm examinations were set to commence on January 29, 2004. In order to prepare the new teachers for the administration of these examinations, a meeting was held on January 13, 2004. An agenda was distributed along with an accompanying exam schedule.

The examination protocol was introduced. Topics were presented in such a way that everyone was “walked” through the procedure. Special attention was given to the administration of examinations for special education students and students with 504 accommodation plans. Post-examination reflection and collaboration with colleagues was encouraged. At the conclusion of the meeting, the weary teachers were reminded that they were almost half way through the school year.

On February 24, 2004 the new teachers reconvened. As teachers entered the meeting room they were handed a pencil, an electronic survey tally sheet and a survey (Appendix A) that was previously approved by the university’s Internal Review Board. The teachers were instructed to complete the survey anonymously and return it to the intern immediately upon completion. All surveys were returned prior to the introduction of the featured presenter.

A veteran teacher who had a reputation for being particularly adept at engaging students was invited to address the group and introduce a few of his innovative classroom

activities. He moved through the presentation efficiently. Teachers were eager to participate in the featured interactive activities and seemed to enjoy the presentation.

Future meetings were scheduled for March 2, April 30 and May 7, 2004. Topics that included the summative evaluation process, end of the year procedures and the end of the year reflections were placed on the agenda for further review and planning.

Development and Design of the Research Instrument

The goal of this research was to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of a comprehensive New Teacher Induction Program that was piloted throughout the school year 2003-2004. The population that was surveyed included all 21 newly hired faculty members who started employment with the ECCRS in September 2003.

In keeping with the goal of this project, a research instrument was developed that was designed to elicit information as it related to teacher satisfaction. As suggested by Gay and Airasian (2000), "Questionnaires should be attractive, brief, and easy to fill out. Respondents are turned off by sloppy, crowded, misspelled, and lengthy questionnaires, especially ones that require long written responses to each question" (p. 282). The survey inquiries were limited to a total of 25 questions, thus conforming to a "user-friendly" format. The goal of this researcher was to obtain thoughtful responses from those individuals who actually experienced the program.

In order for the survey participants to view the instrument as worthy of their very limited time, an introductory statement of purpose appeared just below the survey heading. This statement reassured the survey participants that their responses would be used to enable those parties responsible for the continuation of the Induction program to create a quality program that would benefit future teachers. The program was designed to

be a fluid model that was intended to be modified as necessary in order to deliver the maximum benefit for the maximum number of participants.

Approximately two thirds of the survey questions related directly to teacher satisfaction. Were teachers comfortable in their new positions? Were they pleased with the decision that they had made to accept the opportunity that had been offered them in becoming an ECCRS D employee? Were they using any of the techniques that had been presented at any of the Induction meetings?

A modified Likert scale was implemented using the following indicators: A = strongly agree, B = agree, C = disagree and D = strongly disagree. It was believed that participants would be comfortable using this scale, thereby motivated to respond in a timely fashion. The completed survey was submitted to the building principal for recommendations and approval. This document did not require approval by the Board of Education. However, once approved by the principal as an effective instrument that would be utilized as a means to evaluate the effectiveness of this piloted program, a copy was sent to Rowan University's Internal Review Board for their appraisal.

Sample and Sampling Technique

In this study, all of the 21 newly hired teachers who were required to participate in the New Teacher Induction Program performed the duty as survey respondents to a paper-and-pencil questionnaire that was distributed at a mid-year New Teacher Induction meeting. This targeted group of newly hired educators consisted of novice teachers, veteran teachers and alternate route teachers. All survey participants were qualified to provide the answers to all survey questions and were receptive to the idea of

communicating their feelings to the researcher in an effort to create a program of induction in which future participants would receive the maximum benefit.

Data Collection

In order to elicit an immediate response from the participants, the survey was personally administered by the researcher. The researcher distributed the surveys, tally sheets and the required #2 pencils. All participants were encouraged to answer every question. Time was allocated at the beginning of the meeting so that all survey participants were able to complete the anonymous questionnaire and return the completed document to the researcher before the meeting was officially adjourned.

Anonymous responses were recorded on specialized scanning paper and tabulated electronically.

Data Analysis Plan

The actual size of the sample as well as the overall percentage of returns was calculated. Every survey respondent did not answer every question. Therefore, the response rate for each question was calculated individually. Once the question response rate had been determined, similar questions were then grouped according to issues that shared a commonality.

The researcher was able to draw informed conclusions based on the collective responses of the survey participants. These conclusions were presented to school district officials for further consideration.

Chapter 4

Findings

Twenty-one newly hired teachers participated in the Induction Program that commenced in August 2004. The previously approved survey was conducted at the February 24, 2004 Induction meeting. Eighteen teachers were present at the February 24, 2004 meeting and were asked to complete the anonymous survey. Eighteen surveys were completed and returned; therefore, the findings were derived from 18 responses.

The findings of this study were tabulated individually and then generalizations were made as statements, along with the appropriate responses were grouped according to similarities. The survey responses were reported as follows and were based upon the implementation of a modified Likert scale that used the following response indicators: A = strongly agree, B = agree, C = disagree and D = strongly disagree.

1. Starting a new job at a new school is intimidating.
A. 11% B. 56% C. 33% D. 0%
2. Working in a large, regional high school is intimidating.
A. 6% B. 50% C. 33% D. 11%
3. I felt overwhelmed with information on the first day of orientation.
A. 22% B. 33% C. 39% D. 6%
4. I think that new teacher orientation should be presented over more than just one day in order to allow time for teachers to better process information.
A. 17% B. 61% C. 22% D. 0%

5. I think that 2 or 3 half days of orientation are better than one full day.
- A. 11% B. 44% C. 28% D. 11%
6. It was nice starting a day before the entire staff reported to work.
- A. 50% B. 44% C. 6% D. 0%
7. The administrators who were present at the orientation made me feel supported.
- A. 56% B. 39% C. 6% D. 0%
8. My mentor was warm and welcoming.
- A. 50% B. 28% C. 17% D. 6%
9. The new teacher orientation breakfast helped to make me feel comfortable.
- A. 28% B. 56% C. 11% D. 0%
10. I feel confident that I will work to meet Eastern's high standards.
- A. 89% B. 6% C. 6% D. 0%
11. Meeting all of the new teachers helped to ease my stress level.
- A. 33% B. 56% C. 11% D. 0%
12. During the first week of school, I received much help from veteran teachers.
- A. 56% B. 44% C. 0% D. 0%
13. During the first week of school, I received much help from my mentor (or buddy).
- A. 44% B. 17% C. 22% D. 17%
14. When I have questions or concerns, I am comfortable discussing them with either my supervisor or an administrator.
- A. 56% B. 33% C. 11% D. 0%

15. When I have questions or concerns, I am comfortable discussing them with my mentor (or buddy).
- A. 50% B. 28% C. 11% D. 11%
16. I would feel comfortable voicing my concerns to a nonbiased liaison as opposed to an administrator.
- A. 17% B. 28% C. 39% D. 6%
17. Veteran teachers have been very sociable and accommodating.
- A. 50% B. 44% C. 6% D. 0%
18. I have found someone at Eastern with whom I can discuss my questions and concerns.
- A. 78% B. 17% C. 6% D. 0%
19. The New Teacher Induction meetings have been informative.
- A. 11% B. 72% C. 11% D. 6%
20. I have learned at least one valuable classroom management skill from the New Teacher Induction program.
- A. 28% B. 44% C. 22% D. 6%
21. It is often difficult staying consistent with classroom management.
- A. 6% B. 11% C. 67% D. 17%
22. I make every attempt to read the handouts provided at New Teacher Induction meetings.
- A. 17% B. 67% C. 11% D. 6%

23. I have used classroom management strategies taken from the *Tools for Teaching* handbook.

A. 17% B. 56% C. 17% D. 11%

24. I felt prepared for my first observation.

A. 44% B. 50% C. 6% D. 0%

25. My first year at Eastern has been successful.

A. 77% B. 17% C. 6% D. 0%

While 67% of the respondents reported that starting a new job at a new school was intimidating, only 56% found that working in a large, regional high school was intimidating. Forty-three percent did not find the size of the school to be an issue of concern.

Although 55% of those surveyed found the first day of orientation overwhelming, 78% were in favor of extending the number of days to enable more efficient processing of information. Fifty-five percent of the respondents were in favor of extending the number of days set aside for orientation but reducing the length of the day by 50%. An overwhelming 94% enjoyed starting one day before the entire staff reported to work and an almost equal percentage (95%) of new teachers felt supported by the administrators who presided over the initial orientation. A continental breakfast was provided to the new teachers at the initial orientation meeting and 85% reported that they felt comforted by this gesture of hospitality. Additionally, 89% of those surveyed found comfort in meeting the other newly hired teachers on the first day of orientation.

While 78% of the respondents found their mentors to be warm and welcoming, a surprising 23% found otherwise. Sixty-one percent of the newly hired teachers thought

that they received much help from their mentor (or buddy) during the first week of school; conversely, 39% reported that they did not receive a significant amount of assistance from their mentor (or buddy). However, an overwhelming 100% reported that they received significant help from veteran teachers during the first week of school and 94% thought that veteran teachers continued to be very sociable and accommodating as the year progressed.

Most of those surveyed (89%) reported that they were comfortable discussing questions or concerns with a supervisor or administrator as opposed to a mentor, buddy or nonbiased liaison. Ninety-five percent of those surveyed have found someone at Eastern with whom they could discuss questions and concerns although 22% were not comfortable discussing problems with their mentor (or buddy).

Eighty-three percent of the New Teacher Induction Program participants reported the meetings to be informative and 84% believed that they were consistent in their classroom management practices.

While 72% of the respondents reported to have learned at least one valuable classroom management skill from their participation in the program, a surprising 28% did not learn anything that was considered valuable with respect to classroom management techniques. The handouts were read by 84% of the participants and 73% of those surveyed used a classroom management technique that was taken from the *Tools for Teaching* handbook.

Interestingly, three questions that were geared toward how the respondents perceived themselves received the same rating. Ninety-four percent of those surveyed reported that they felt prepared for their first observation. Ninety-four percent of those

surveyed felt that they have met Eastern's high standards. Ninety-four percent also described their first year at Eastern as being successful.

To what extent did newly hired teachers benefit from a comprehensive teacher induction program?

The purpose of this project was to evaluate an induction program that was designed to assist and support newly hired teachers as they commenced their first year of employment in a large, suburban high school. An area of contradiction was identified based on the survey results. Seventy-two percent of the respondents were reported to have learned at least one valuable classroom management skill from their participation in the program and a surprising 28% of the respondents indicated that they did not learn anything that was considered valuable with respect to classroom management techniques. This was a startling statistic since 83% of the respondents reported the meetings to be informative.

The survey results further indicated that an overwhelming majority of respondents, 94% felt prepared for their first observation. That same percentage of respondents felt that they were meeting the district's high standards and that they were experiencing success in their first year. These high percentages implied that the newly hired teachers were reaping the benefits of the support that they received this year. Their responses indicated that this newest group of staff members was comfortable and confident in carrying out their teaching responsibilities.

The components of the induction program included communication, communication and more communication. The program meetings were held throughout the entire school year. Many presentations provided information that was relative to events that were

taking place shortly after the induction meeting. Topics of discussion included: Professional Improvement Plan development, teaching expectations, Back-to-School Night strategies, midterm and final examination preparation and proctoring, and a myriad of presentations that focused on effective classroom management techniques. Veteran teachers often served in the capacity of presenter and shared proven techniques that were valuable in creating a positive learning environment for the teacher as well as the students.

In order for teachers to maximize a smooth transition into the school district, a program was needed that extended beyond a typical day of orientation. Fifty-five percent of those surveyed found the first day of orientation overwhelming and 78% were in favor of extending the number of days to enable more efficient processing of information. Based on the responses of the participants, one day of orientation creates confusion, a stressor. By extending the presentation of information throughout the year, it allowed for more efficient processing, thereby creating a more relaxed environment in which to work.

An important aspect of the program was one that might have presented as a hidden agenda. Each meeting started with refreshments and informal conversation. By having the participants assemble at various times throughout the school year, the program served as a conduit that encouraged dialogue between the new employees. It was observed that new employees became more comfortable conversing with each other as the year progressed. Open dialogue amongst colleagues was crucial if one was expected to assimilate into the role of a contented employee.

Another positive outcome of this program was the level of trust that was established between the newly hired teachers and their superiors. It was reported that 89% of the

program participants felt comfortable discussing questions or concerns with a supervisor or administrator. Ninety-five percent of those surveyed reportedly found someone at Eastern with whom they could discuss questions and concerns. Nearly every participant met a district employee who was willing to serve in the capacity as confidant.

An area that was identified as being in need of strengthening was that of mentorship. As reported earlier, 78% of the respondents found their mentors to be warm and welcoming and 23% found otherwise. Mentors, by virtue of their position, should create a supportive workplace environment that would encourage growth and professional development of the novice teacher. This area has been clearly defined as needing remediation.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

Conclusions

The study conducted at ECCRSD tracked the progress of the new teacher induction program that began in August 2003. It was not surprising to learn that two-thirds of the respondents viewed starting employment in a new school as an intimidating endeavor. Additionally, more than one half of the respondents agreed that the idea of teaching in a large, regional high school was also perceived as intimidating. The fears and concerns that were expressed by more than one half of the new teachers further reinforced the idea that the need existed for a comprehensive new teacher induction program that was designed to help alleviate some of the fears expressed by the participants.

All newly hired ECCRSD teachers who began employment at the start of the 2003-2004 school year were required to attend the district orientation session that was held on Friday, August 22, 2003. Eighty-five percent of the participants felt comforted by the district's hospitable gesture of providing a continental breakfast at the orientation meeting. The survey results also suggested that participant anxiety was reduced by the simple act of meeting others who were also beginning their employment at the same time. The survey indicated that 89% of the newly hired teachers found comfort in meeting their newly hired peers during the day-long orientation.

In spite of the positive feedback received concerning orientation, it was noted that more than one half of the participants found the first day of orientation overwhelming.

The respondents suggested that the number of days dedicated to orientation be extended while the actual time spent in sessions per day be shortened thus creating an environment that was more conducive to efficient processing of the information that was presented.

While the participants indicated a need to modify the time spent in orientation, seventeen of eighteen newly hired teachers enjoyed participating in the orientation process before the veteran staff members reported for work the following week. Coupled with the demonstrated need to conduct new teacher orientation over a period of several days as opposed to a single day, the time allocated to the new teacher orientation program should be scheduled prior to the arrival of the veteran teachers.

An overwhelming number of participants indicated that the administrators who presided over the day's activities exuded support for all of those in attendance. Ninety-five percent of the new teachers felt supported by the actions and words of the administrators who took part in the initial orientation activities.

The last week of August was designated as a week in which all faculty members were contractually required to attend professional development sessions. The entire staff reported to work on Monday, August 25, 2003. When the participants were asked to evaluate the actions of veteran teachers throughout the first week of school, an overwhelming 100% of the group felt assisted and supported by the veterans. A ratio of 17:1 reported that veteran teachers continued to provide assistance and support throughout the school year. The high number of participants who felt encouraged and supported by the veteran teachers were those who would most likely develop their teaching skills and morph into successful classroom managers.

Although the veteran teachers were overwhelmingly noted to be supportive of the efforts of the new faculty members during the first week of school and throughout the school year, the same could not be said for the mentors. Although 78% of the respondents found their mentors to be warm and welcoming, only 61% reportedly received substantial help from their mentors during the first week of school. It was also noted that 22% of the participants were not comfortable discussing problems with their mentors or buddies.

The overall process of communication scored high, however. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents stated that they were comfortable discussing their concerns with administrators or supervisors and 95% of those surveyed reportedly found someone at Eastern with whom they could comfortably discuss concerns.

Eighty-three percent of the participants found the induction meetings to be informative and 72% of the participants reportedly learned at least one valuable classroom management skill. The majority of the respondents found the handouts and *Tools for Teaching* (Jones, 2000) handbook valuable classroom management tools.

Participation in the induction program assisted new teachers as they began to put theory into practice. Most of the new teachers seemed receptive to the idea of incorporating a variety of tried and true methods into their daily teaching routines. The program meetings and literature assisted an overwhelming majority of participants throughout the transition period as many of the newly hired teachers morphed from college students or alternative route candidates into professional educators. An overwhelming 94% of the participants reported that they were prepared for their first observation, they had met Eastern's high standards and that their first year had been successful.

Implications

The resultant implications of this study were noted to be substantial. One of the goals of this program was to maximize professional growth of the newly hired teachers. The collaborative effort that was inherently fostered by the program model encouraged the participants to seek guidance from experienced educators. Success was enjoyed by 17 of 18 respondents. This high ratio of 17:1 indicated that peer collaboration had occurred, the feeling of isolation was not present and teachers felt supported. Cromwell (2000) described the feeling of isolation as a significant contributing factor toward the high degree of teacher attrition. According to the overwhelming degree of support that was reportedly available to the new teachers, it appeared unlikely that a significant number of new teachers would succumb to complications that were found to be inherently present when new teachers felt isolated.

The intern's leadership skills were markedly developed as a result of participation in this program along with the subsequent analysis of the data generated by the program participants. The intern learned the value of collegial communication and collaboration. The program encouraged sharing of ideas and open discussion during meetings. As a veteran teacher, the intern also learned new teaching methods from other veteran teachers who were invited to participate as program presenters. The participants communicated openly with fellow staff members and the result was very positive. A feeling of growth and support was instilled within the new staff members.

Another equally important lesson that the intern learned was the importance of developing a high level of trust between the administration and faculty members. The new teacher orientation that was held on August 22, 2003 was the first opportunity for

this group of new employees to meet the people who were in charge of the buildings. The program participants sensed that the administrators genuinely wanted them to be successful and that they were committed to helping them along the way. Based upon the survey results, this piloted program served as a conduit that encouraged excellence and support within the education profession.

Ultimately, the organization will become stronger as the program continues to grow. This year's participants expressed satisfaction with the program and the support that they received from administrators and colleagues. As new teachers are encouraged to support a collaborative environment, positive change will occur. Classroom instruction will be projected to improve, discipline matters will be projected to decline, and Eastern High Schools will reap the benefits connected with the employment of satisfied teachers who know that they are supported in their efforts as educators.

Further Study

Since teacher attrition has become problematic for a myriad of reasons, further research into the topic of induction programs will always be indicated. Administrators must maintain a broad knowledge base with respect to planning meaningful induction meetings designed to pique the interest of the newest faculty members. The avoidance of stagnation is the key to success whenever the motivation of people is of utmost importance. Induction facilitators must be keenly aware of strategies that have resulted in documented proof of increased teacher satisfaction and retention. Just as teachers are expected to modify and make every effort to improve their presentation of content each year, so must the induction program facilitators employ the same degree of scrutiny.

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Appendix A
Survey Instrument

New Teacher Induction Program Survey

In order to improve the quality of our New Teacher Induction Program, we are asking that you complete this survey. All responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Use the following indicators:

A = strongly agree

B = agree

C = disagree

D = strongly disagree

1. Starting a new job at a new school is intimidating.
2. Working in a large, regional high school is intimidating.
3. I felt overwhelmed with information on the first day of orientation.
4. I think that new teacher orientation should be presented over more than just one day in order to allow time for teachers to better process information.
5. I think that 2 or 3 half days of orientation are better than one full day.
6. It was nice starting a day before the entire staff reported to work.
7. The administrators who were present at the orientation made me feel supported.
8. My mentor was warm and welcoming.
9. The new teacher orientation breakfast helped to make me feel comfortable.
10. I feel confident that I will work to meet Eastern's high standards.
11. Meeting all of the new teachers helped to ease my stress level.
12. During the first week of school, I received much help from veteran teachers.
13. During the first week of school, I received much help from my mentor (or buddy).
14. When I have questions or concerns, I am comfortable discussing them with either my supervisor or an administrator.
15. When I have questions or concerns, I am comfortable discussing them with my mentor (or buddy).
16. I would feel comfortable voicing my concerns to a nonbiased liaison as opposed to an administrator.
17. Veteran teachers have been very sociable and accommodating.
18. I have found someone at Eastern with whom I can discuss my questions and concerns.
19. The New Teacher Induction meetings have been informative.
20. I have learned at least one valuable classroom management skill from the New Teacher Induction program.
21. It is often difficult staying consistent with classroom management.
22. I make every attempt to read the handouts provided at New Teacher Induction meetings.
23. I have used classroom management strategies taken from the *Tools for Teaching* handbook.
24. I felt prepared for my first observation.
25. My first year at Eastern has been successful.

