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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON CORE STANDARDS

AND TEACHER INTENT TO PERSIST

by

Eddie Miles Louis Smith

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2014

ABSTRACT

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON CORE STANDARDS

AND TEACHER INTENT TO PERSIST

by Eddie Miles Louis Smith

August 2014

The purpose of this study was to determine if the implementation of the Common

Core Standards (CCS) into schools had an impact on teacher intent to persist in the

classroom. Specifically, this study sought to determine if the implementation of the CCS

was a factor of novice and veteran teachers' intent to persist in schools located in south

Mississippi. A review of the literature indicated that teacher shortages were not primarily

due to recruitment and training, but rather, to a significant extent, were the result of

teachers leaving the profession long before retirement (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Data were collected and analyzed from 208 participants located in three school

districts in south Mississippi regarding their perspectives on the implementation of the

Common Core Standards and their intent to persist in the classroom. Results indicated

that there were no significant differences in teachers' perspectives by grade levels taught

or between novice and veteran teachers regarding the implementation of the CCS.

However, there was a small significant correlation between the implementation of the

CCS and teachers' intent to persist in the classroom. Reponses to the survey questions

suggest that teachers were happy in their current teaching positions and believe the CCS

will fade away like many other government mandates have done in the past.   The

implications of this study suggest that the implementation of the Common Core

Standards does have an impact on teachers' intent to persist in the classroom.

The University of Southern Mississippi

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AND TEACHER INTENT TO PERSIST

by

Eddie Miles Louis Smith

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Dr. David Lee_____
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August 2014

DEDICATION

I would like to thank God for empowering me with the motivation and determination to attempt, and more importantly, complete this venture in my life. This work is dedicated to a number of people I am blessed with as my support system throughout this process. First, I would like to thank my parents Aaron and Myra Smith, who have always been there when I needed them. I would not have been able to complete this milestone in my life without their support and encouragement. I would also like to thank my sister, Angelia Smith Powell, for the encouragement and support she has provided me. Finally, I would like to thank Emma and Sarah Smith. My two sweet daughters provide me with the motivation to better my life and be a role model for what I expect of them in the future.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Darwin stated in *Origin of a Species* (1958), when an animal is located in a new environment with new competitors, its life will be changed in a fundamental way. The strongest instinct that an animal has, the survival instinct, emerges in these types of situations. According to Darwin (1958), the ability to change is a part of that instinct. The purpose of this research study was to generate insight into teacher perceptions about the impact of implementing the Common Core Standards on teachers' intent to persist within the classroom.

Teachers and administrators engage in a constant cycle of change to improve the educational system to better meet the needs of all students (Ingersoll, 2002). According to Lortie (1975), the inability to retain highly qualified and high quality new teachers is a national problem that began before the twentieth century. Research indicates a correlation between more experienced teachers and increased student achievement (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). Therefore, if schools do not retain new teachers who become experienced teachers, the achievement gap will be hard to close (DeBrabander, 2000).

Ingersoll (2002) said that teaching was a "revolving door occupation in which there are relatively large flows in, through, and out of schools" (p. 42). According to Ingersoll (2002), this "revolving door" (p. 42) is costly to the educational systems in the United States. According to Garrison (2006), the national attrition rate for teachers is 40-50%; similarly, Ondrich, Pas, and Yinger (2008) remarked that in the U.S., 39% of new

teachers leave the teaching profession within the first five years with an 11% attrition rate in the first year alone.

Garrison (2006) believed retaining novice teachers, teachers with fewer than five years of teaching experience, is a nation-wide problem. The problem of retaining novice teachers is heightened by the movement of veteran teachers within the profession from school-to-school, district-to-district, and to other professions, creating challenging employment opportunities for new teachers (Ondrich et al., 2008). According to Ondrich et al. (2008), this means that new teachers are often left to teach in the most difficult situations because more experienced teachers have (a) advanced qualifications, (b) more experience, and (c) better relationships with administrators. The schools most impacted by this teacher movement are generally urban, high-needs schools (Ondrich et al., 2008).

Attrition adversely contributes to the achievement gap because students who need the assistance of experienced educators are often taught by those with less experience (DeBrabander, 2000). The achievement gap is also affected by novice teachers' lacking the proper classroom management skills necessary to teach in the more challenging environments of urban schools (Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner, 2007). Another factor influencing the achievement gap is that novice teachers' participation in formal teacher preparation programs does not adequately prepare them for the number of tasks or amount of clerical work they encounter (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2012). This is similar to Rosenholtz's and Simpson's (1990) findings regarding new teachers' need for support with tasks outside of instruction itself. These factors combine to create the high turnover rate experienced in many schools (Ingersoll et. al., 2012). Administrators then face the difficult task of preparing new teachers yearly (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990).

The challenge of attracting teachers to certain regions, such as those with high poverty and low student achievement, leads to the hiring of many teachers without full credentials (Liu & Johnson, 2006). This statement remains true even after the U.S. Congress passed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (Liu & Johnson, 2006). New teachers utilize provisional or emergency credentials in some schools without having any formal teacher training. In findings by Liu and Johnson (2006), teachers who obtain a teaching credential while working in a high-needs school later migrate to a school site that includes lower percentages of minority students and students who live in poverty. This migration contributes to the consistent cycling of teachers in high-needs schools where quality teaching cannot be guaranteed for all students (Liu & Johnson, 2006).

Teacher retention within a single school site is a larger problem in low-achieving urban schools with higher populations of minorities and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Scafidi et al., 2007). The challenge to retain effective teachers is exacerbated when new teachers leave schools after only one or two years (Ingersoll, 2001). In his quantitative study, Ingersoll (2001) found that schools with more than 50% of students from low-income families experienced higher turnover than schools with fewer than 50% of their students from low-income families.

Administrators of schools serving a high number of students who come from low-income families should consider research related to teacher retention to guide their employment decisions as they work to build capacity within their schools to provide high quality educational experiences and improve student academic achievement (Ingersoll et al., 2012). According to Ingersoll et al. (2012), administrators should also consider

research related to the impact on teachers' employment decisions with regard to attrition. Furthermore, recommendations based on sound research in educational policy need to be applied whenever possible (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speigelman, 2004). Educational leaders should also evaluate teacher retention policies and utilize that data in the future to reassess and address policy changes as needed. Teacher retention policies need to complement teacher evaluation policies to ensure that quality teachers are retained (Achinstein et al., 2004).

In the secondary education setting, new teachers are often assigned to teach lower-level classes and are given a variety of classes for which they need to prepare multiple lessons (DeBrabander, 2000). Due to the nature of their assignments, many novice teachers do not stay in their positions, and a consequence of this teacher movement is another novice teacher is hired in that position to continue the cycle (DeBrabander, 2000). Based on the research of Ingersoll et al. (2012), novice teachers need support such as mentors and support providers who must be committed to the work of helping new teachers. In addition to understanding the increased anxiety that teachers experience in the first months of a new assignment, Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990) found that mentors and support providers must have expertise in content, classroom instruction, and student engagement in order to meet the professional needs of novice teachers. Moreover, professional development that focuses on classroom instructional practices is necessary for novice teachers to become seasoned teachers (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990). In addition, new secondary level teachers need to have equitable class level assignments that do not place the new teacher in solely low-level tracks of classes

because that increases the difficulty of the teaching assignment (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990).

Beginning teachers need support because they experience high levels of stress related to being overwhelmed in a new, highly demanding job (Ingersoll et al., 2012). Teachers must plan all new lessons, sort through mountains of paperwork, search for materials, comply with the evaluation process, become familiar with the site and staff, and often perform extra assignments such as coaching a sport or advising a club (DeBrabander, 2000). These are some of the factors that may lead to teachers finding alternate employment as a means to increase balance in their lives (DeBrabander, 2000).

Moreover, administrators must remember that great teachers are not necessarily great mentors to new teachers and that finding the right mentor is imperative (Guarino et al., 2006). New teachers need to feel that the administration is on their side to assist them in improving instruction (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990). New teachers need to feel involved and that their voices matter instead of feeling like another warm body in the classroom (Ingersoll, 2001).

On June 28, 2010, Mississippi adopted the Common Core Standards and began to implement them in kindergarten through eighth grade in most districts (Stewart & Varner, 2012). A few school districts have fully implemented the standards at every grade level (Stewart & Varner, 2012). Furthermore, Mississippi has begun to make changes in educational policy with the adoption and implementation of Common Core (Stewart & Varner, 2012). Content found on the Mississippi Department of Education's (2013) website mirrors that found on the Common Core website (Stewart & Varner, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

A majority of available research focused on teacher retention has not evaluated the implementation of new federal initiatives such as the Common Core standards. It is unknown how these changes will affect teachers' intent to persist in the classroom. The rate of change and the course and nature of the changes are disturbing to teachers (Smyth, Dow, Hattam, Reid, & Shacklock, 2000).

The teaching profession has become an exceedingly stressful profession for novice and veteran teachers (Smyth et al., 2000). The federal government is increasing accountability, performance expectations, national testing, and national curriculum requirements, fostering an environment of high stress (Smyth et al., 2000). Research shows that the national teacher turnover rate for teachers is more than 16% and as high as 50% in urban schools (Ingersoll, 2003). Unfortunately, teacher vacancies are often filled with teachers who are unprepared and unqualified (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ingersoll, 2001).

Research by Ingersoll (2001), Darling-Hammond (2000), and Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990) has identified many factors affecting teacher retention. However, there is very little research on how government mandates such as Common Core affect teacher retention. The purpose of this study was to determine if the implementation of the Common Core standards into schools will have an impact on teacher retention. A study was designed to determine if the implementation of Common Core has an impact on the retention of novice and veteran teachers in schools located in south Mississippi.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

In this research, the following research questions guided the study:

This study investigated the impact of implementing the Common Core Standards and job satisfaction on teachers' decisions to remain in the classroom. Based on the literature, the following research questions were proposed:

1. Are there differences in teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards at the various grade levels (elementary, middle, and high school)?

2. Are there differences in novice teacher perspectives and veteran teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards?

3. Are teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards related to their intent to persist in the classroom?

The following related hypotheses were also examined. In light of the limited research on the relationships among the specific variables to be tested, the researcher chose to pose these as null hypotheses:

H_{01}: There are not significant differences in teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards at the various grade levels (elementary, middle, high).

H_{02}: There are not significant differences in novice teacher and veteran teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards.

H_{03}: There is not a significant relationship between teachers perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards related to their intent to persist in the classroom.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions provide clarity to the unique terms used in this dissertation project.

Alternatively certified teacher (ACT) - A teacher who obtains teacher certification through an alternative certification program (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Attrition - The reduction of workforce that occurs when teachers leave their current position for various reasons (Ingersoll, 2001).

Highly qualified teacher - A teacher who has at least a bachelor's degree, has passed all state requirement competency tests in the subjects he or she is teaching, and holds full state licensure or certification (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

Mentor - A teacher who has completed educator training and is teaching a similar grade level and subject matter as the certified teacher to whom he or she is assigned by the principal (New Teacher Center, 2006).

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 - A federal mandate that calls for schools to close the achievement gaps among student subgroups through high standards and accountability (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

Novice teacher - A teacher who is in his or her first four years of teaching (Kajs, 2002).

Professional learning community (PLC) - A group of collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all (DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006).

Retention – Refers to continuous employment of teachers in a given school building or school district or in the teaching profession (Guarino et al., 2006).

Student achievement - The measurement of what a student has learned during the course of a school year based on the results of standardized tests (Achinstein et al., 2004).

Teacher attrition -Teacher decisions to withdraw from the field of education (Guarino et al., 2006).

Teacher retention - Teacher decisions to remain within the field of education (Guarino et al., 2006).

School culture - "The set of norms, values, belief, rituals and ceremonies, symbols, and stories that make up the 'persona' of the school" (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 10).

Tacit knowledge - Knowledge gained from personal experiences and experimentation (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999).

Tacit learning - Knowing how to successfully deal with daily situations and components of the job that teachers were never specifically trained to handle *(*Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999).

Veteran teacher - A teacher who has been teaching five or more years (Ingersoll, 2001).

<div align="center">Delimitations</div>

This study was delimited to K-12 subject area teachers employed in the three school districts located in south Mississippi. Each school district began implementing the Common Core Standards during the 2013-2014 school year in grades K-12. Teachers' perceptions regarding the issues of retention referring to the implementation of the Common Core Standards were measured on a Likert-type scale with an instrument

designed specifically for the proposed study. The results of the study were generalized to novice and veteran teachers.

Assumptions

It was assume that participants answered the survey questions honestly. Anonymity and confidentiality were preserved. The participants were volunteers and could withdraw from the study at any time with no ramifications.

Justification

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, there has been an increase in the curriculum mandates delegated to teachers. This quantitative study sought to examine the perceptions of teachers in south Mississippi regarding the issues of intent to persist. The goal of this study was to determine if the implementation of the Common Core State Standards impacts teacher intent to persist within schools.

Having access to the results from this research study could impact decisions made by government officials, colleagues, and other school administrators in relation to the curriculum, instruction, professional development, and advising. The Results could also be helpful to administrators developing strategies for retaining new and veteran teachers. The retention of new and veteran teachers would then create an environment for student success.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

During the past 15 years, research by Ingersoll (2001) and others has been conducted in order to pinpoint and address the reasons that may lead teachers to leave the classroom, thus adding to the teacher turnover problem. Watkins (2005) stated that the average yearly turnover rate in education is 13.2% compared to 11% in other professions. Hope (1999) cited that many new teachers leave the teaching profession within the first five years. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) stated: "Teaching has long had alarmingly high rates of attrition among newcomers" (p. 29). According to Ingersoll and Smith, data show that teacher shortages are not primarily due to teacher shortages based on recruitment and training, but rather, to a significant extent, are the result of large numbers of teachers leaving the profession long before retirement.

Education reform, in one form or another, is a recurring issue that has been on the platform of every presidential election. In an effort to address the quality of public school education, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. According to Hill and Barth (2004), research showed that NCLB impacted teacher attrition. NCLB mandated a highly qualified designation for all classroom teachers, requiring all teachers to demonstrate competency in the subjects that they are assigned to teach (Hill & Barth, 2004). According to Brown (2003), much of the current emphasis being placed on assessment can be attributed to the NCLB of 2001 which "created a conflict between teacher learning and immediate students' needs and student assessment" (p. 18). Exstrom (2003) stated that NCLB "will displace longstanding, experienced teachers" (p. 26) if they are required to go back to school for additional

certification/college course work, organize portfolios to document proficiency, or if letters are sent home informing parents that their child is being taught by a teacher who is not qualified (Hill & Barth, 2004).

Dove (2004) believed that educational reform like NCLB mandates have required teachers to meet standards, adding to the complexity of the profession while increasing challenges and conflicts that create job dissatisfaction and make teaching less desirable. According to Hill and Barth (2004), job dissatisfaction is a significant factor leading to attrition. This finding was further supported by Bowler's work (cited by Hill & Barth, 2004) in which "75% of secondary and 33% of elementary teachers said that the 'Highly Qualified' designation would impact retention" (p. 175).

The federal government is promoting the adoption of additional educational reform including the Common Core Standards (CCS) by tying it to a variety of components within its Race to the Top funds (Duncan, 2009). CCS represents an important curricular policy shift for the educational system in the United States (Duncan, 2009). CCS has now been adopted by 45 states, the District of Columbia, and four U.S. territories as of May 2013 (Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011). According to the Porter, McMaken, Hwang, and Yang (2011), CCS are based on achievement data of U.S. students and input from critical stakeholders. Eilers and D'Amico (2012) stated:

> These stakeholders include scholars, teachers, school leaders, professional organizations, and parents, who developed a set of Common Core Standards that provide learning outcomes for all students in all schools across the United States. The Standards are a roadmap for schools, teachers, and parents. However, unlike some past initiatives that dictated curriculum, assessment instruments, and pacing

of instruction, these Standards do not dictate how teachers must teach. The development and implementation of curriculum to meet these goals is left to individual states, districts, schools, and specifically the school leaders. (p. 46)

School Reform

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* was released to the public. *A Nation at Risk* focused on public schools, low achievement scores, short school years, little homework, and the lack of rigorous curriculum (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). *A Nation at Risk* advocated the need for a renewed teaching profession that attracted top students, prepared them within an academic discipline with a de-emphasis on educational methods courses, and awarded them with adequate salaries and the prospect of genuine career advancement (Sears, Marshall, & Otis-Wilborn, 1994).

According to Sears et al. (1994), following the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, all but four states had convened commissions to study and recommend state reforms in public education. By mid-decade, teacher preparation had become a prime focal point for reformers (Sears et al., 1994). The U.S. Department of Education selected members for the National Commission on Excellence in Education, which spent two years to produce *A Nation at Risk* (Sears et al., 1994). *A Nation at Risk* focused on public schools, low achievement scores, short school years, little homework, and the lack of rigorous curriculum (Sears et al., 1994).

As Sears (1981) noted, the campaign to professionalize teaching was tied to the social, political, and economic transformations underway within the United States itself. With the development of a nationwide system of public schools and the creation of a managerial group to oversee it, the twentieth century delivered a highly bureaucratized

operational context for schooling that required professional teachers (Sears et al., 1994). The new system led to the inability of school districts to provide classrooms with an adequate supply of qualified teachers and has become a major educational issue that focuses attention on research, reform, and policy initiatives (Ingersoll, 2001). There is growing data supporting quality teaching as the cornerstone of educational reform that leads to teacher training and effectiveness (Ingersoll, 2001).

With expectations and accountability for teachers changing and increasing with the pressure to improve student performance, teacher effectiveness is essential in raising levels of student achievement, especially with student populations that are diverse and low achieving (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004). Studies report that induction programs offer new teachers opportunities to collaborate and socialize with their colleagues and provide valuable learning experiences (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004). Fletcher and Barrett have also found that the "nature of teacher collaboration impacts teacher learning and organizational learning" (p. 323).

Ingersoll (2003) stated, "few educational problems have received more attention in recent times than the failure to ensure that elementary and secondary classrooms are all staffed with qualified teachers" (p. 146). Fletcher and Barrett (2004) argued that highly qualified and thoroughly trained novice teachers often arrive at their first teaching assignment underprepared for the challenges they face. As a consequence, the emphasis placed on highly qualified teachers and assessment has created undue pressure on the resources of mentors and novice teachers while heightening tensions and accentuating value conflicts. In effect, "the NCLB mandates appear to be detracting both policy

makers and practitioners in their efforts to recruit and retain effective teachers" (Berry, 2004, p. 20).

According to Fletcher and Barrett (2004), novice and veteran teachers are challenged to meet unclear and poorly articulated legislative mandates. Novice teachers are also being required to enter the profession prepared to be productive in classrooms while learning and adapting to new environments and organizational structures (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004). Because novice teachers often arrive at their first teaching assignment unprepared to engage in participative learning and early pre- and in-service support, they often become disillusioned or discouraged and leave the profession (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004).

For years, educational researchers have examined novice teacher demographics, teacher backgrounds, professional environments, and support systems as issues of retention and attrition predictors (Greene & Puetzer, 2002; Inman & Marlow, 2004). Inman and Marlow (2004) reported family, personal circumstances, job dissatisfaction, disruptive students, uninvolved parents, and bureaucracy as factors that lead to demoralization and attrition. Also, emerging educational conditions compounded by complex working environments resulted in a form of classroom reality shock, indicating that novice teachers may have erred in their professional choice (Inman & Marlow, 2004). Research conducted by Inman and Marlow (2004) revealed that "items addressed within the areas of the beginning teachers' interpersonal environment deal with support systems and the concept of professionalism" (p. 611). Many teachers believe that they are not afforded the correct amount of respect and authority that they feel they deserve.

According to Inman and Marlow (2004), "professionals are usually distinguished by their specialty knowledge and skills, the unique contributions they make, the freedom afforded them to make decisions based on their professional judgment, and the opportunity to organize their time and direct their own work" (p. 611). The success of novice teachers also determines the success and achievement of students (Wong, 2004); yet, many novice teachers may still be underprepared for their first teaching assignment despite having experienced proper training (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004). Since the ultimate purpose of any school is the achievement of students, the mentoring relationship provides a "foundation for novice teachers to prosper in the teaching profession and to respond to the learning community's need by becoming mentor-teachers of the future" (Kajs, 2002, p. 58). Therefore, designing and developing mentoring program frameworks requires addressing the sources of collateral damage, identifying strategies that support leaning, keeping novice teachers in the profession, and meeting the demand for highly qualified teachers during shortages (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Kajs, 2002; Wong, 2004).

According to Whisnant, Elliott, and Pynchon (2005), novice teachers "are being swept up by rapidly moving currents of change in what they are expected to know and be able to do in the classroom, in national education policies, and in the population of students they serve" (pp. 1-2). In reality, the expectations for novice teachers may equal or exceed the expectations for experienced teachers in terms of student achievement (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004). Since many novice teachers feel that they are performing in isolation (Cornu, 2005; Erickson, 2004; Gilles & Wilson, 2004), unresolved value conflicts and lack of support create a revolving door: enthusiastic novice teachers

entering, with burned out, discouraged, and frustrated first year teachers exiting for good (Erickson, 2004).

Classroom responsibilities dominate time allocation for novice teachers as they attempt to bridge the gap between theories and practice (Ennis-Cole & Lawhon, 2004). While most novice teachers arrive for their first assignment with "tremendous enthusiasm for kids, and are in tune with the latest…education pedagogy" (Lach & Goodwin, 2002, p. 50), they may not have the experience for preparing exams, lesson plans, or classroom leadership.

In practice, "teacher education programs based on an explicit professional image of teaching may be presented in such a way that serves trainees as a starting-point for clarifying their personal motives for entering teaching" (Van Huizen, Van Oers, & Wubbels, 2005, p. 272). However, novice teachers "usually do not have many extrinsic rewards to count on, such as, high salaries, promotional opportunities, job security, and so forth. They need to achieve satisfaction from intrinsic sources, such as, their work and their contact with students" (Van Houtte, 2006, p. 248). Therefore, the need to recognize the interpersonal and environmental factors influencing teachers' decisions to stay or leave the profession becomes more prominent as school districts and their administrations strive to create mentoring programs that align the expectations of novice teachers and convey a concept of professionalism through the reinforcement of cultural values (Whisnant et al., 2005).

Professional Socialization

Teaching will be considered a profession and "education will be adequately and willingly supported when and *only* when it produces a society that understands and appreciates its function and worth" (Pullias, 1940, p. 268). According to Schlechty (1990), if one assumes that part of the image of teaching is the image of a serious scholar, then it would seem appropriate that recruitment criteria attend to evidence of scholarship. Schlechty (1990) poses a very relevant concept of viewing teaching as an occupation made up of C students.

Beginning teachers enter the field for various reasons. They often choose teaching on the "basis of powerful visions, ideals, or beliefs about what teaching will be like and the role they will play in learners' lives" (Liston, Whitcomb, & Borko, 2006, pp. 353-354). Nieto (2003) believed "most teachers enter the profession for noble reasons and with great enthusiasm" (p. 15). According to Wong (2004), "they want training, they want to fit in, and they want their students to achieve" (p. 47). Yet, the first few years of teaching are daunting and can be a nightmare (Erickson, 2004).

Given the relatively short time period for preparing teachers, decisions must be made about what content and strategies must be taught to prepare new entrants into the profession (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Hammerness et al., 2005). First, learning to teach requires that new teachers come to think about (and understand) teaching in ways quite different from what they have learned in their personal experiences as students. This problem of "the apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975, p. 62) refers to the learning that takes place by virtue of being a student. These experiences have a major effect on the preconceptions about teaching and learning that

prospective teachers bring to the task of becoming professionals. Secondly, helping

teachers learn to teach more effectively requires them to develop the ability to "think like

a teacher" (Lortie, 1975, p. 62) but also to apply what they know to practice. The third

problem involves the "problem of complexity" (Pullias, 1940, p. 268). Helping

prospective teachers learn to think systematically about this complexity is critical

(Hammerness et al., 2005). According to Hammerness et al. (2005), "prospective

teachers need to develop metacognitive habits of mind that can guide decisions and

reflection on practice in support of continual improvement" (p. 359).

Additionally, a formal induction program usually does not address the large body

of knowledge that new teachers learn tacitly (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999). Both

educational and anthropological experts agree that one of the main ways in which a

person learns a new culture, in this case that of a school, is through tacit learning

(Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999). According to Douglas and Brown (2011):

> Explicit knowledge lends itself well to the process of teaching by transferring
>
> knowledge from one person to another. Tacit knowledge, which grows through
>
> personal experience and experimentation, is not transferrable. Tacit knowledge is
>
> an experiential process as well as a cognitive one. Tacit knowledge is not about
>
> being taught knowledge; it is about absorbing knowledge. Tacit learning is
>
> knowing how to successfully deal with daily situations and components of the job
>
> that teachers were never specifically trained to handle. (p. 77)

Failing to acknowledge this type of learning can lead to unenlightened induction

programs that pull new teachers in the opposite directions (Hodkinson & Hodkinson,

1999). New teachers develop through phases in which they focus initially on themselves

and their teaching and eventually on concerns that are related to student learning (Fuller, 1969). This developmental progression- from early concerns of self to a gradual shift to a focus on issues related to students and student learning and ultimately on conditions of school and schooling is a natural progression (Fuller, 1969). In addition to developing knowledge and skills, teachers develop in other dimensions (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999). According to Hammerness et al. (2005), "developing an identity as a teacher is an important part of securing teachers' commitment to their work and adherence to professional norms of practice" (p. 383).

Liston, et al. (2006) suggested that teacher educators need to speak out in an attempt to provide adequate support for teacher education in university-based teacher preparation programs. By reaching out to new program graduates, building administrators, district administrators, and program critics, the need to respond to their voiced concerns may help to identify deficits in program content and teaching skills (Liston, et al., 2006). Since teacher education programs are being considered as a source for novice teachers who are unprepared for the challenges posed by their first years of teaching (Berry, 2004; Liston et al., 2006), Whisnant et al. (2005) stated, "beginning teachers—whether freshly emerged from the world of academe or first career entrants…are greeted by a world of keen expectations and challenging conditions different from those faced by their counterparts even a decade ago" (p. 24).

What excellent teacher education programs can and should do is prepare teachers for the realities of today's classrooms (Levine, 2006). Teacher education programs should educate teachers for a world in which the only measure of success is student achievement (Levine, 2006). The programs should also educate teachers for subject

matter mastery, pedagogical competence, and understanding of learning and development

of the children they teach (Levine, 2006). Education schools are now in the business of

preparing teachers for a new world: an outcome-based, accountability driven system of

education in which children are expected to learn (Levine, 2006).

Sergiovanni's (1996) theory of building schools as communities of learning is

based on inquiry, caring and mutual respect, and civic responsibility and shared purposes.

Sergiovanni's (1996) theory expands that of constructivist principles, which "point to

how adults learn and, for this reason, they are helpful in sorting out issues of collegiality,

action research, and teacher development as well as issues of teaching and learning for

children" (p. 39). Sergiovanni (1996) outlined how schools grow into communities of

understandings through questioning and through sharing of time and place. This sharing

creates a sense of identity and belonging, establishing relationships based on common

goals and shared values and conceptions of being and doing (Sergiovanni, 1996). In such

a community, new teachers want to belong, to contribute, and to feel that they are a part

of a school culture (Sergiovanni, 1996). Therefore, new teachers cannot be left in a

vacuum and instead must be allowed to participate in a professional community in order

to gain mastery in working with students and adopting teaching strategies (Howe, 2006).

Sergiovanni (2006) stated: "Effective training programs provide opportunities for

teachers to practice what they learn and then receive coaching as they actually begin to

use the new material in their classrooms" (p. 143). Sergiovanni goes on to identify the

following principles as requisites for learning:

Learning requires involvement and reflection; the identification of learning needs

and interests determine the structure and content of learning and should precede

the development of any learning program; learning takes place in a community; and learning is a perpetual movement of discovery and invention. (pp. 150-151)

In a true professional learning community, teachers regularly discuss teaching and learning with the intention of improving their practice and reaching shared goals for student learning. "Structures do not make a strong induction program, so practices do not define a professional learning community" (Birkeland & Feiman-Nemser, 2006, p. 1). Of equal importance are the shared understandings that support those practices (Sergiovanni, 2006). A shared vision by all stakeholders generates an understanding of the nature of teaching and learning to teach (DuFour, 2004). "The powerful collaboration that characterizes professional learning communities is a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. Teachers work in teams, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning" (DuFour, 2004, p. 9). This process, in turn, leads to higher level of student achievement (DuFour, 2004). Novice teachers are particularly vulnerable to the challenges and pressures of developing effective teaching skills while attempting to contribute to the building and maintaining of a professional learning community (Sergiovanni, 2006).

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) outlined several approaches to knowledge development, including the development of knowledge for practice, knowledge in practice, and knowledge of practice. The first approach refers to the kinds of knowledge that teachers may need to rely on in developing their practice - knowledge of subject matter content, content pedagogy, theories of earning and development, and research about the effects of various teaching strategies (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). The second approach emphasizes knowledge in action; this is what accomplished teachers

know as it is expressed in their practice, reflections and their narratives (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Finally, knowledge of practice emphasizes the relationship between knowledge, practice, and the theoretical aspects of both (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural Theory (SCT) is primarily based on the works of Lev Vygotsky, circa 1896 to 1934, used as means of analyzing the practice of policy with an orientation towards cognitive functioning and human development (Arievitch & Haenen, 2005; Thorne, 2005; Van Huizen et al., 2005; Walqui, 2006). Arievitch and Haenen state (2005), "Vygotsky's theory emerged out of the social and political context of the first decades of the 20th century and represented a new approach to psychology with tremendous promise" (p. 155). According to Thorne, SCT "unites the ontogeny of an individual with the cultural historical milieu and the variable process of participation in culturally organized activity" (p. 394). As summarized by Walqui (2006):

> The main tenets of SCT included: (a) Learning precedes development, (b) Language is the main vehicle of thought, (c) Mediation is central to learning, (d) Social interaction is the basis of learning and development, (e) Learning is a process of apprenticeship and internalization in which skills and knowledge are transformed from the social into the cognitive plain, and (f) The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the primary activity space in which learning occurs. (p. 160)

An appreciation of Vygotsky's (1978) best-known concept, the Zone of Proximal Development, is important in developing approaches to meet the needs of all students. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) referenced above refers to "the distance

between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving

and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under

adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

According to Walqui (2006), Vygotsky's (1978) work on the relationships

between affect and thought are central to understanding his work as a whole. ZPD is

strengthened by the role of affective factors in learning (Walqui, 2006). Confidence is

built through interactions in learning by all participants with students and other teachers

through creative collaboration (Walqui, 2006). Vygotsky used a micro view towards

studying how individuals learn in a given social situation (Thorne, 2005). In order to

understand his approach, it is necessary to examine the framework of his approach

(Walqui, 2006). According to Walqui (2006), theories are explanations of the human

phenomenon of learning about why individuals do what they do. The theories provide a

framework to explain how and why students learn (Arievitch & Haenen, 2005). Theories

are based on beliefs that direct theorists' questions they propose (Arievitch & Haenen,

2005). In this regard, Vygotsky (1978) adhered to a primary theoretical query which

largely directed his approach (Arievitch & Haenen, 2005). To address the main query as

to how students learn, Vygotsky explored how students construct meaning (Walqui,

2006).

Vygotsky (1978) believed that social experience shapes the ways of thinking and

interpreting the world (Arievitch & Haenen, 2005). Vygotsky (1978) noted that

individual cognition occurs in a social situation (Walqui, 2006). The two cannot be

separated, which correlates with the integrated nature of holism (Walqui, 2006). The

group is therefore vital to the learning process for all initiates who learn higher forms of

mental activity via more knowledgeable peers and adults who jointly construct and transfer this activity primarily through language (Walqui, 2006).

According to Thorne (2005), students learn through interacting with their peers, teachers, manipulatives, and their contextual setting. Vygotsky (1978) advocated this atmosphere and uses holism to unite the components of his approach. Vygotsky (1978) similarly employed the congruent concept of networking in his constructivist approach (Arievitch & Haenen, 2005). Vygotsky (1978) sought to determine how students make sense of themselves and their world via their learning experiences (Van Huizen et al., 2005). To do this, Vygotsky (1978) believed that teachers should obtain knowledge about how students categorize their world in order to devise interdisciplinary themes or schemata networks that correlate with the interests of students (Walqui, 2006). Teachers use thematic holism or networks by posing a theme to students, such as the zoo, where students can respond with subthemes, such as kinds of animals, types of animal noises, and formal scripted roles by staff (Walqui, 2006). Thematic holism and constructivism's theoretical application to reality is apparent in how teachers and students as humans relate to the learning settings of the formal and natural world (Walqui, 2006). Unlike traditional teaching, Vygotsky (1978) advocated a bottom-up teaching approach wherein the teacher facilitates, as opposed to directs, what and how students learn concepts both in and outside of the classroom (Thorne, 2005). Ideally, teachers would likewise employ participant observations of student actions to inductively and deductively ascertain how informants derive meaning from their social settings (Erickson, 1986). In symmetry with holists, constructivists address the question as to how students learn by focusing on how each individual constructs knowledge in a social setting (Erickson 1986). Vygotsky

(1978) noted that individuals interact with one another in social situations to socially

negotiate meaning (Walqui, 2006). Vygotsky's (1978) notion of *social* asserts that the

social is instrumental towards understanding and teaching (Walqui, 2006). The social

consists of the rules and norms of society that adults and more competent peers teach

their younger initiates (Vygotsky, 1978). Like a rite of passage in the school setting,

students learn via noneducative and educative experiences what society deems to be

appropriate behavior (Vygotsky, 1978).

The classroom then should be an equal setting, rather than a setting where

authority solely determines curricula (Arievitch & Haenen, 2005). Therefore, the

curricula should reflect both parties' interests as to facilitate the connection between

curricula and students (Walqui, 2006). If this does not occur in the classroom situation

and throughout the institutions of society, the social structure will break down because

nonparticipants feel disempowered (Walqui, 2006). All participants must feel they are

playing a fair game on a level field where the rules are equitable (Walqui, 2006). In

addition to the importance of active socialistic participation during the learning process,

Vygotsky (1978) emphasized experiential learning (Walqui, 2006).

Vygotsky (1978) wrote extensively about learning by doing. In his theory of

experience, he noted that meaning is gleaned from experience (Arievitch & Haenen,

2005). Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis upon experiential learning is further evident in the

role of the teacher as a facilitator of this phenomenon (Arievitch & Haenen, 2005). The

nature of the adult role is reflected in his or her zone of proximal development (Walqui,

2006). Thus, teachers of the Vygotsky (1978) mold must foster learning among students

that combines internal and external experiences (Walqui, 2006). These experiences represent an interplay of cognitive, emotional, and external interactions (Thorne, 2005).

Vygotsky (1978) called teachers – or peers – who supported learning in the ZDP as the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). MKO is anyone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the leaner (Vygotsky, 1978). Traditionally, the MKO is thought of as a teacher, an older adult, or a peer (Vygotsky, 1978). This aspect of Vygotsky's works strongly correlates to the transition of a novice teacher from student of teaching to a teacher of students (Tudge, 1990). In learning how to interact and effectively instruct students to improve achievement, teachers are simultaneously the student of the profession as they work with content specialists, coaches, and administrators to adapt to their specific learning communities and advance their knowledge of the field to advance their personal growth (Tudge, 1990).

Professional Development Strategies

Inductions is a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development process that is organized by a school district to train, support, and retain new teachers and seamlessly progresses them into a life-long learning program (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). The use of orientation or induction has long been a common practice in many occupations allowing new employees to adapt to the work environment; to understand job requirements and expectations, and to work, communicate; and interact with fellow employees and supervisors with appropriate and acceptable behaviors (Wong, 2004). In some occupations, new employees are assigned to veteran employees as apprentices or trainees as they learn and develop the skills required to perform their jobs with competence and confidence (Howe, 2006). According to Ingersoll and Smith (2004),

"historically, the teaching occupation has not had the kind of structured induction and initiation processes common to many white-collar occupations and characteristic of many traditional professions" (p. 28).

During the past 20 years, some schools have established teacher induction programs in an effort to initiate and retain high-quality teachers. The intent of all induction programs is to transform a student teacher graduate into a competent career teacher (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Podsen (2002) suggested that if schools are to retain quality teachers, schools must address retention risk factors, including school culture items such as beginning teachers needing to be accepted into the community and the isolation inherent with the profession. Podsen (2002) also included dealing with these risk factors without the support of a structured induction program as one of the career retention risks. This sink or swim mentality often leaves beginning teachers feeling unsupported and unsatisfied, and many new teachers leave the profession as a result (Breaux & Wong, 2003). In fact, teaching is too often referred to as the profession that eats its young (Halford, 1998). Podsen (2002) and others (Breaux & Wong, 2003) suggested that one way to minimize these risks and keep quality beginning teachers in the profession is through beginning teacher induction. A positive induction experience for new teachers can be the beginning of a successful and confident entry into the teaching profession, decreasing the number of teachers who leave early by orienting them to the school and principal expectations and building collegial relationships that enhance professional development (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (1999) indicated that induction may also contribute to teacher burnout. In this sense, the strength of the school culture, when combined with the

new teacher's desire to become an expert as quickly as possible, may result in "activities which go far beyond a typical teacher's normal role during the school day" (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999, p. 284). In other words, in their attempt to become an expert teacher, some novices believe that teachers must finish this process within the induction period (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999). This belief may drive new teachers to overachieve, which could result in teacher burnout (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999).

Researchers have identified and listed elements of induction programs that they describe as quality or effective programs and emphasize that there must be a coherent plan for effective change with all elements being important (Moir & Bloom, 2003). DeBolt (1992) listed several of these important elements:

Improving teacher performance, increasing retention of beginning teachers, promoting personal and professional well-being of new teachers, satisfying mandated requirements related to induction, increasing positive attitudes about teaching, initiating and building a foundation for continued learning, and transmitting the culture of the school system. (pp. 14-15)

New teachers long for opportunities to learn from their experienced colleagues and want more than social support (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). New teachers want to discuss curriculum implementation, get ideas about how to address specific students' needs, and gain insight from colleagues with experience in their subject areas (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). Providing emotional support is not as valuable as helping new teachers learn to create safe classroom environments, engage all students in worthwhile learning, work effectively with parents, and base instructional decisions on assessment data (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999).

Some school districts have induction programs in place that have been proven effective in attaining their objectives for improving teacher retention, quality, and effectiveness (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 1999). These programs have been described as model or exemplary because they provide opportunities for experienced and novice participants to learn together in a supportive environment that promotes time for collaboration, reflection, and acculturation in the teaching profession (Howe, 2006).

Beginning teacher induction should include practices that provide support and training and help new teachers acculturate to the school community and profession (Breaux & Wong, 2003). Exemplary beginning teacher induction programs have been shown to increase student achievement, teacher satisfaction, and teacher retention (Beaux & Wong). Exemplary programs are comprehensive by design, starting with orientation before teachers begin and providing training and support to beginning teachers through their second or third year (Beaux & Wong, 2003). These programs provide an organized orientation to the district and schools, including well-trained mentors and time to work with those mentors; professional development in a variety of areas including instructional practices, assessment, classroom management; and the opportunity to work in a supportive, collaborative environment (Beaux & Wong, 2003).

Another common element shared by exemplary programs is the utilization and input from the beginning teachers in the design of the program practices (Beaux & Wong, 2003). If the goals of productive induction programs include promoting the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers in the culture of the school system, then it is important to understand their perceptions of their first-year experiences (Beaux & Wong, 2003). Studies of effective teacher induction programs have revealed that they

have several attributes or elements in common and are well designed and well

implemented (Beaux & Wong, 2003). Induction programs involve new members in a

learning community that builds ongoing commitment to professional learning for all staff

members (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Moir & Bloom, 2003). Significant elements in

induction programs include guidelines and expectations, information sharing, mentoring,

professional development, and ongoing learning and evaluation (Ingersoll & Smith,

2003). Ingersoll and Smith (2003) found that induction programs that have several

different types of support and provide participation opportunities and collaborative

activities had the most significant effects in reducing teacher attrition.

     One of the critical findings in the study *What Matters Most: Teaching for

America's Future* (1996) was inadequate induction for beginning teachers (Fetler, 1997).

Schools with structured induction programs that successfully inculcate new teachers saw

positive consequences for student achievement and attendance as well as overall staff

morale (Fetler, 1997). As Fetler (1997) pointed out, schools with higher numbers of

experienced teachers, who are therefore more attuned to specific pedagogical cultures,

have higher student achievement rates and more collegial atmospheres, leading to

positive staff morale. Because of these benefits, "It is reasonable to suggest that

principals plan their school-based orientation and induction activities with the purpose of

retaining new teachers" (Hope, 1999, p. 54).

     Ingersoll (2001) analyzed data from the national Schools and Staffing Survey

(SASS) and found that as the number of reported components of induction increased,

teacher turnover was reduced during the first year of teaching. The seven induction

components identified consisted of a mentor, common planning time, new teacher

seminars, communication with administration, a support network, reduced teaching load, and a teacher's aide (Ingersoll, 2001). In Ingersoll's (2001) study, less than 1% of the sample reported receiving all seven components, and 3% recorded having no induction at all. Most received some sort of induction support, but there were no data examining which were deemed the most critical components (Ingersoll, 2001).

The establishment of a learning community that supports new teachers and values the ideas and experiences of all its members is necessary if school leaders are to retain and develop quality teachers; the lack of such a learning community jeopardizes teacher retention, curriculum continuity, and student achievement (Watkins, 2005). A common component of new teacher induction is the assignment of mentor teachers to provide beginning teachers with guidance and support (Ingersoll, 2001). The use of mentors is not relegated to schools alone; mentoring is a common strategy in other fields of business and professional fields. Effective mentors serve as role models, guides, and motivators to new professionals. In education, the challenges to establishing good mentoring relationships revolve around the nature of teaching itself (Wong, 2004). Veteran teachers are consumed with their own obligations, and they find it difficult to find the time to effectively mentor new teachers (Ingersoll, 2001).

Research has revealed that "the early part of the teaching career has the soundest empirical base in terms of what new teachers experience and how mentoring and induction can help them be more satisfied with their work" (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005, p. 98). Johnson et al. (2005) also report that half of the current teaching force was scheduled to retire by 2010, and further research reveals that "teaching has become a less attractive career than it was thirty years ago among both prospective and new teachers"

(Johnson et al., 2005, p. 1). Thus, the need for novice teacher retention through mentoring programs becomes more critical if beginning teachers are to enter and remain in the classroom (Ingersoll, 2001). During the past 15 years, various attempts have been made to "specify more closely a precise meaning of mentoring and the composition of its practice" (Rix & Gold, 2000, p. 47).

Teachers need assistance and guidance, especially during their vulnerable first years (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). To meet this need, school districts are arranging for experienced teachers (mentors) to guide novice teachers (mentees, or protégés) through the difficult and demanding induction period (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). The mentor plays a vital and unique role in the development and training of one new to the profession (Ingersoll, 2001). An effective mentor provides support and collegiality, alleviating the isolation often experienced in the early years (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). The goal of an effective mentor is to establish a relationship of trust over an extended period of time and to support and aid the novice through his or her evolution and development (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). A good mentor is a skilled teacher; is able to transmit effective teaching strategies; has a thorough command of the curriculum being taught; can communicate openly with the beginning teacher; listens well; is sensitive to the needs of the beginning teacher; understands that teachers may be effective using a variety of styles; and is not overly judgmental (Johnson & Kardos, 2002).

In many ways, mentoring is an unnatural activity for teachers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Good classroom teachers are effective because they demonstrate a seamless performance, monitor student understanding, and engage students in important ideas (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). But good classroom teachers may not know how to make

their thinking visible, explain the principles behind their practice, or break down complex teaching moves into components understandable to a beginner (Johnson & Kardos, 2002).

While mentoring may be commonly recognized as a primary tenet of teacher support (Brown, 2003; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), "without honest feedback from their mentors, mentees will find it difficult to develop the skills necessary to respond to the challenges and issues they face in the classroom" (Pitton, 2006, p. 53). A mentor is a single person whose basic function is to help a new teacher (Kajs, 2002). Typically, the help is for survival, not for sustained professional learning that leads to becoming an effective teacher. Mentoring is not induction but is a component of the induction process (Pitton, 2006). The issue is not mentoring; the issue is mentoring alone (Pitton, 2006). Mentors are an important component, perhaps the most important component of an induction program, but they must be part of an induction process aligned to the district's vision, mission, and structure (Kajs, 2002). For a mentor to be effective, the mentor must be used in combination with the other components of the induction process. In fact, in many induction programs, many of the mentors are the trainers of the other components (Pitton, 2006). However, for a mentor to be effective, he or she must be trained to the mission and goals of the district (Ingersoll, 2001).

As novice teachers need preparatory experiences to help develop a professional classroom identity (Liston et al., 2006), potential mentoring teachers and their protégés need to be provided opportunities to understand the mentoring process through small talk, conversation, dialogue, reflection, and idea and resource sharing (Pitton, 2006). It is through shared experiences with experienced mentors that novice teachers develop

explicit practical knowledge (Perry & Power, 2004). Viewing learning to teach through an inquiry lens reveals "learning to teach is not limited to mastering specific behaviors, but rather includes the study of diverse children, curricula and teaching strategies in context" (Perry & Power, 2004, p. 129).

According to Portner (2005), "over the next decade, more than 2 million new teachers will find themselves facing a full classroom on their first day, charged with the mission of transforming it into a learning community" (p. 59). To support the growth of these novice teachers, leaders are needed who possess the ability to "form the bedrock of strong mentoring programs" (p. 4). Mentoring would seem to be a natural progression in the teaching profession where experienced teachers have traditionally passed on their expertise and wisdom to new colleagues (Ingersoll, 2001). For the beginning teacher, the benefits of working closely with a mentor are great, no matter how extensive the pre-service education (Pitton, 2006). Beginning teachers are accountable for an array of unknown students, teaching colleagues, administrators, and parents. Stated by Jonson (2008), "even routine paperwork can be overwhelming when the teacher does not understand it and does not know where to look for help" (p. 8). In addition, school and community environments have norms and rituals that are obscure to a newcomer (Liston et al., 2006). The large number of actual and procedural unknowns can send the beginning teacher into shock if it becomes impossible to transfer previously mastered concepts and skills form the university to the K-12 classroom (Liston et al., 2006).

People who have developed expertise in particular areas are, by definition, able to think effectively about problems in those areas (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Understanding expertise is important because it provides insights into the nature of

thinking and problem-solving (Bransford et al., 1999). Research shows that it is not simply general abilities such as memory or intelligence, nor the use of general strategies that differentiate experts from novices (Bransford et al., 1999). Instead, experts have acquired extensive knowledge that affects what they notice and how they organize, represent, and interpret information in their environment (Bransford, et al., 1999). According to Bransford et al. (1999), "this knowledge affects their abilities to remember, reason and solve problems" (p. 31).

Mentors may support new teachers in several ways (Ingersoll, 2001). First, mentors provide emotional support or encouragement (Walqui, 2006). The mentor plays a vital role in the development and training of those new to the profession (Breaux & Wong, 2003). An effective mentor provides support and collegiality, alleviating the isolation so often experienced by novice teachers (Liston et al., 2006). What makes the mentor different from others who may help is that the mentor develops a relationship of trust with the beginning teacher over an extended period of time and remains with the mentee as he or she evolves and issues develop (Bransford, et al., 1999). By sharing frustrations and success, the beginning teacher learns that problems are normal, and this helps build confidence (Bransford, et al., 1999).

According to Villani (2009), "many new teachers feel a significant degree of self-doubt as they encounter the challenges of teaching students with diverse learning and emotional needs" (p. 12). This may be particularly important when teachers who have been specifically recruited and hired enter a school system. Mentors help new teachers learn the way things are done here in advance or notice when there are misperceptions

(Danielson, 2002). The mentor helps the new teacher sort through the misunderstandings (Bransford et al., 1999).

Many induction programs emphasize mentoring as a significant component in assisting novice teachers' successful entry into the profession. According to Darling-Hammond (2003), "a number of studies have found that well-designed mentoring programs raise retention rates for new teachers by improving their attitudes, feelings of efficacy, and instructional skills" (p. 6). Studies support that teachers grow professionally when they seek out peers for dialogue and turn to each other for constructive feedback, affirmation, and support (Danielson, 2002). Designing a mentoring program framework that keeps novice teachers teaching and improving while meeting the current demand for highly qualified teachers requires strategies that support teacher learning (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Kajs, 2002; Wong, 2004). Compounding program development, state and district administrators feel considerable pressure to recruit and retain teachers who can raise student achievement while receiving confusing messages about how to do so (Wong, 2004). Policymakers are communicating that pedagogy is essential when they describe qualified teachers as those who collect ongoing student assessment data to inform decisions about which scientifically based test practices are appropriate to use (Brownell, Hirsch, & Seo., 2004, p. 56).

The concept of learning through participation offers important messages for mentoring programs shaped by pre- and in-service activities driven by productivity (Van Huizen et al., 2005). Through collaboration with peers, mentoring programs open doors to interdependency (Bruffee, 1999), impart the realities of and assign meaning to teaching (Van Huizen et al., 2005), and lay a foundation for personal satisfaction and

organizational productivity (Kajs, 2002). Offering novice teachers sound mentoring experiences is also an effective means of providing professional development for veteran teachers, one that instills passion for their school culture (Moir & Bloom, 2003).

School districts have begun to review the elements or factors that form effective induction programs (Ingersoll, 2001). Howe (2006), in a review of exemplary international induction programs, stated: "The most successful teacher induction programs include opportunities for experts and neophytes to learn together in a supportive environment promoting time for collaboration, reflection and acculturation into the profession of teaching" (p. 287). Research by Moir (2003) supports this perspective: "The strongest induction programs will expend time and resources to prepare mentors for their new role as communicators of their knowledge and experience. Training mentors is as important as training the novice teachers they will serve" (p. 6).

Most mentoring models focus primarily on the potential benefits to mentees (Gilles & Wilson, 2004), yet, pedagogical discourse has emerged (Musanti, 2004) emphasizing mentoring that provides veteran teachers as well as novices an opportunity to learn in collaborative cultures (Cornu, 2005). Mentoring provides master teachers with benefits, rewards, and opportunities while removing the isolation that many teachers often feel (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Lach & Goodwin, 2002; Musanti, 2004). Since mentors are critical to the vitality of the teaching force (Gilles & Wilson, 2004), "inclusion of mentoring and collaboration as structural elements of in-service teacher development is a trend that continues to expand" (Musanti, 2004, p. 13).

According to Cornu (2005), the "current trend in teacher development is the establishment of professional learning communities that provide a positive and enabling

context" (p. 356) while facilitating teacher growth. This shift towards collegial learning may seem contradictory given the commonly viewed practice of mentoring as an experienced-novice relationship (Cornu, 2005). Cornu goes on to state that "much of the school reform work in the past decade has also focused on the development of skills as learning communities" (p. 356). This shift from traditional models of teacher development and mentoring highlights the influence of constructivist thinking (Cornu, 2005). Cornu believes that all teachers need support, which differs substantially from previous concepts of mentoring in where only beginning teachers were viewed as needing support (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000).

The goal of peer mentoring is that "pre-service teachers will have the confidence and willingness to participate actively in professional learning communities in the future" (Cornu, 2005, p. 364), while understanding that mentoring is at the heart of simultaneous renewal for both mentor and mentee (Gilles & Wilson, 2004). To delve further into the phenomenon of simultaneous renewal, Gilles and Wilson (2004) examined mentor growth and development in the context of an induction program in which mentors were released from classroom duties to mentor fellows, conduct professional development in their schools, and work with their institution. Gilles and Wilson (2004) validated the discovery of new understandings regarding exploratory talk as a means of creating new ideas through the brainstorming process. This enabled teachers participating in mentoring programs to be more explicit and reflective (Gilles & Wilson's, 2004). Mentors and mentees become "aware that the act of brainstorming had helped them to realize their growth" (Gilles & Wilson, 2004, p. 102). Critical reflective dialogue by mentors, mentees, and their colleagues promotes norms and values within the

professional community in which they work (Harrison Lawson, & Wortley, 2005), helping mentors to understand what happens when they move their role from the classroom to mentoring and collaborating with others as a form of professional development (Musanti, 2004). Effective mentor training requires infrastructures that engage novice teachers socially through a sustained focus that embraces novice teachers as contributing members as a community of professionals (Rix & Gold, 2000).

According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) sustained mentoring "becomes not just a way of supporting individual teachers but also a device to help build strong professional cultures of teaching in our schools" (p. 54) and a "pathway to knowledge construction while simultaneously helping to overcome teachers' isolation within and outside of the work environment" (Musanti, 2004, p. 14). Mentoring programs are a means of making shared connections to the teaching profession through a collaborative, collegial process as mentees engage in cooperative work and tackling challenging tasks (Missouri Center for Career Education [MCCE], 2006). Pedagogical discourse continues to emphasize mentoring and pre-collaboration practices as key components of teacher education programs (Musanti, 2004).

<div align="center">Motivational Change Theory</div>

In the 1950s and 1960s, Frederick Herzberg conducted a study that involved 200 predominantly male engineers and accountants, although he has since replicated findings with more diverse samples (Waltman, Bergom, Hollenshead, Miller, & August, 2012). Herzberg gathered stories by asking participants to talk about "a time when you felt exceptionally good or a time when you felt exceptionally bad about your job" (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959, p. 35). Waltman et al. (2012) state:

Herzberg then theorized that certain characteristics, called motivators, contribute

to a person's job satisfaction. These motivators tend to be aspects of the job's

content and the person's intrinsic attitudes about his/her work (e.g., the work itself

or a sense of achievement). Herzberg identified other characteristics, called

hygiene factors, which contribute to a person's job dissatisfaction. Hygiene

factors tend to be aspects of the job's context or extrinsic nature (e.g., policies or

working conditions). Herzberg's important contribution to the field of job

satisfaction research is this duality theory, or two-factor theory. (p. 414)

According to Herzberg (1968), "The factors involved in producing job satisfaction are

separate and distinct from the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction. The opposite of job

dissatisfaction is not job satisfaction, but no job dissatisfaction" (p. 56).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design and methodology that was utilized to implement this study. It also outlines the research questions and hypotheses, participants in the study, the research design, instrumentation, data collection process, and statistical process for the analysis of data. The goal of this study was to determine if the implementation of the Common Core State Standards impacts teacher intent to persist in the classroom.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study investigated the impact of implementing the Common Core Standards on teachers' decisions to persist in the classroom. Based on a review of the literature, the following research questions were proposed:

1. Are there differences in teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards at the various grade levels (elementary, middle, and high school)?

2. Are there differences in novice teacher perspectives and veteran teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards?

3. Are teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards related to their intent to persist in the classroom?

The following related hypotheses were also examined. In light of the limited research on the relationships among the specific variables to be tested, the following null hypotheses were proposed:

H_{01}: There are not significant differences in teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards at the various grade levels (elementary, middle, high).

H_{02}: There are not significant differences in novice teacher and veteran teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards.

H_{03}: There is not a significant relationship between teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards related to their intent to persist in the classroom.

Participants in the Study

The purpose of this study was to generate insight into teacher perceptions about the impact of implementing the Common Core Standards on teachers' intent to persist within the classroom. In order to implement this research, the researcher determined that the subject population for this study would consist of educators with varying levels of teaching experience ranging from less than one year to over 30 years. Age, ethnicity, and gender of the subjects also varied. The target study sample included 355 teachers from 14 schools (elementary, middle, and high) in three districts located in south Mississippi.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative design that utilized a survey methodology. The researcher developed a self-made questionnaire. The content included within the questionnaire met the standards necessary to conduct the intended research. The areas of focus include the perceptions of implementing the Common Core Standards and the intent to persist as a teacher.

The dependent variables for the study were teacher perspectives regarding the intent to persist in the classroom and the implementation of the Common Core Standards. The independent variables in the study were school level (elementary, middle, high) and years of teaching. These variables were based on literature that addresses the frustrations of teachers and the role of these frustrations in an educator's decision to either persist or leave the classroom.

<div align="center">Instrumentation</div>

Prior to instrument distribution, the researcher requested and received IRB approval through The University of Southern Mississippi (Appendix A). Quantitative data were collected via a self-designed survey instrument entitled Teacher Perceptions: The Impact of Select Factors on the Intent to Persist Instrument (Appendix B). Due to the lack of availability of an instrument with content that would allow the researcher to thoroughly address the purposes of this study, the researcher developed an instrument for distribution to teachers.

In order to provide the researcher with information about the participants, the instrument requests personal demographic information including gender, age, and race. This section of the instrument also requests information on the participants' professional status, education level, and number of years teaching. The instrument further solicited information concerning school characteristics (e.g., school level—elementary school (ES), middle school (MS), high school (HS)). The instruments were color-coded in order to inform the researcher of the district from which each returned survey came.

The items contained within the instrument were developed to allow teachers to describe their perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards,

professional development, and intent to persist. The survey used a Likert scale format, requiring responses from among five ordinal ratings in which *1=Strongly Disagree, 2 =Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.* The ratings provided to the participant were developed to allow neutrality.

Demographic Information

The instrument developed for this research study asked participants about their personal characteristics, including gender (Male/Female), age (21-26, 27-32, 33-38, 39-44, 45+), race (Black/White/Hispanic/Asian/Native American/other), and marital status (Married/Single).   The instrument contained a second set of demographic items requesting professional information, including education level (Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist, Doctorate, and/or National Board Certification) and number of years teaching. The final category of demographic information addresses school characteristics, including school level (Elementary/Middle/Jr. High/High).

Intent to Persist Questions

Twelve statements (Items 9-20) were designed to measure teachers' intent to persist in the classroom and address Research Question 3. Participants reflected on the statements using the previously described Likert scale with a possible average score of 5. A high overall average score within this section represents a high likelihood that the surveyed teacher would remain in the field of education.

Common Core Standards Perceptions

Ten statements (Items 21-30) were designed to measure novice and veteran teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the Common Core Standards and address Research Questions 1 and 2. Participants reflected on the statements using the previously

described Likert scale with a possible average score of 5. A high overall average score within these questions represented a high likelihood that there were differences in teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of the Common Core Standards at different grade levels between novice and veteran teachers.

Instrument Reliability and Validity

The researcher took steps to strengthen the validity and reliability of the instrument and determine its overall suitability for the implementation of this study. In order to ensure content validity of the developed instrument, the researcher assembled a panel of experts. These professionals included a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, and a district assistant principal. The profession experts were chosen because of their 12 plus years of experience working in the field of education and curriculum development. Each professional evaluated the instrument using the Validity Questionnaire (Appendix C). Evaluations were taken into consideration developing the final instrument to be used in the survey.

Reliability was verified by piloting the approved survey among 12 teachers. In order to ensure reliability, a Cronbach's alpha was used as a measure of internal consistency of the overall instrument. The data from the responses of the pilot test participants were analyzed using the statistical program SPSS. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient test was used to determine reliability. Items measuring the intent to persist in the classroom had a Cronbach's alpha of .74. The items measuring teachers' perceptions about the implementation of the Common Core Standards had a Cronbach's alpha of .81. Therefore, the instrument was proven to be reliable.

Data Collection

Three school districts in south Mississippi were selected for this study. The researcher distributed letters to the superintendents of qualifying districts (Appendix D) requesting approval to survey teachers currently employed within their schools. The letter explained that permission must be provided by the district superintendent and returned to the researcher before any surveys would be distributed to teachers.

The researcher contacted the human resource administrators within each participating district. The researcher outlined the purpose of the study and contacted each school principal within each district to gather a total count of teachers employed at the individual school. The researcher then sent surveys to each school site with the agreement that upon receiving the surveys, the principal would distribute them.

Each prospective participant was provided with a copy of the informed consent materials, including the cover letter (Appendix E), and the letter on informed consent (Appendix F). Within the consent letter, teachers were informed that their participation was voluntary. They also were informed that if they chose to participate, they would not be individually identified, and that all of their responses would be kept confidential and would not be shared with other persons in any form other than as summary information. They were also assured that they would not be individually identified on any of the surveys or reports.

The surveys were formatted and coded in a manner that allowed the researcher to determine the school district from which responses came. Participants also received assurance within the consent letter that there would not be any penalty if they decided not to participate. Teachers willing to participate in the study received the instrument as a

hard copy with a self-addressed stamped envelope. The researcher set a timetable of three weeks to complete the survey instruments.

The data collected for this study were viewed only by the researcher and his participating committee members. The participants in this study, as well as the superintendents and building principals, were provided with the researcher's contact information in case they wanted further clarification on any aspect of the study. Participants were further informed, while neither they nor their schools would be identified in the written results of the study, they could obtain copies of the results by contacting the researcher.

Analysis of Data

SPSS was used to analyze all of the data. Descriptive statistics were used to provide analyses of the data in the form of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. No individuals, schools, or school districts were identified by name.

The reliability and internal consistency of the variables were analyzed after responses for the full study were received. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient reliability was performed on each category of items in order to determine its ability to measure a single construct. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 or greater was considered to be acceptable. Hypotheses were tested using one-way ANOVA's and Pearson correlations. The .05 level of significance was used.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to generate insight into teacher perceptions about the impact of implementing the Common Core Standards on teachers' intent to persist within the classroom. It was also of value to determine if the variables of novice versus veteran teachers and school level influence their intent to persist. The study utilized survey methodology; questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers currently employed within select school districts located in the southern area of the state of Mississippi. This chapter describes the results of an analysis of data collected from the returned questionnaires.

The sample for this study included teachers from 14 schools within three districts participated in this study. Three hundred fifty-five survey questionnaires were sent to subject area teachers employed at the schools. Of the 355 questionnaires distributed, 208 were returned completed. This represents an overall return rate of 58%.

Descriptive Statistics of Participants

Demographic Items

Participants were asked to provide information about their gender, age, race, educational level, years taught, work history, national board certification, and school level. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographic information provided by the participants. Frequency tables were also generated for all variables. Of the 208 participants, the majority (n=183) were female. Table 1 outlines the frequencies and percentages.

Table 1

Frequencies of Participants' Gender (N=208)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	25	12.0
Female	183	88.0
Total	208	100.0

Table 2 outlines the frequencies and percentages for participants' age ranges. Out of 208, the majority, 108 (51.9%) were 45+ years of age. Only 16 (7.7%) were in the age range from 18-26.

Table 2

Frequencies of Participants' Age (N=208)

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
18-26	16	7.7
27-32	30	14.4
33-38	22	10.6
39-44	32	15.4
45+	108	51.9
Total	208	100.0

The 208 respondents categorized their ethnicity as follows: 198 (95.2%) White, 6 (2.9%) Black, 1 (.5%) Hispanic, 1 (.5%) Native American, and 2 (1.0%) Other. Table 3 provides the frequency and percentages for the ethnicity. The majority (n=198) of the

participants classified themselves as being White. Collectively Blacks, Hispanics, Native

Americans, and others represented less than five percent of the sample.

Table 3

Frequencies of Participants' Ethnicity (N=208)

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentage
White	198	95.5
Black	6	2.9
Hispanic	1	.5
Native American	1	.5
Other	2	1.0
Total	208	100.0

Table 4 identifies frequencies associated with the educational degree of the 208

participants. Participants categorized their highest degree obtained as follows: 116

(55.8%) Bachelors, 87 (41.8%) Masters, and 5 (2.4%) Specialists. A little over half of

the participants indicated that their highest degree was a Bachelor's degree. Very few

participants indicated that their highest degree was a Specialist (n=5). Table 4 reflects

these frequencies and percentages.

Table 4

Frequencies of Educational Degree Obtained (N=208)

Educational Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Certified, No Degree	0	0
Bachelors	116	55.8
Masters	87	41.8
Specialists	5	2.4
Doctoral	0	0
Total	208	100.0

Of the 208 participants who reported National Board Certification status, 13 (6.3%) were currently certified, and 195 (93.8%) were not certified. The majority of the participants (n=195) indicated they did not have National Board Certification. Table 5 reflects these frequencies and percentages.

Table 5

Frequencies of National Board Certification (N=208)

Certified	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	6.3
No	195	93.8
Total	208	100.0

Out of the 208 participants who reported working in another field, 90 (43.3%) reported they had worked in another field outside of education, and 118 (56.7%) reported

they had not worked in another field outside of education. Over half of all the

participants indicated they have not worked outside the field of education. Table 6

reflects these frequencies and percentages.

Table 6

Frequencies of Working Outside the Field of Education

Worked in Another Field	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	90	43.3
No	118	56.7
Total	208	100.0

Table 7 reflects the 208 participants who reported the school level they taught as

follows: 122 (58.7%) taught at the elementary school level, 33 (15.9) taught at the

middle/jr. high school level, and 53 (25.5%) taught at the high school level.   Over half of

the participants in the study indicated they taught at the elementary school level. The

lowest number of participants was at the middle/jr. high school level. Table 9 reflects

these frequencies and percentages.

Table 7

Frequencies of Participants School Teaching Level (N=208)

School Level	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary	122	58.7
Middle/Jr. High	33	15.9
High	53	25.5
Total	208	100.0

Descriptive Statistics for Key Research

The instrument included two sections that each provided items associated with the following variable subscales: Intent to persist in the classroom and Implementation of the Common Core Standards. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each subscale of the instrument and used in the analyses for the research questions and related hypothesis. The descriptive results from these analyses follow.

The first portion of the survey, Section A: Intent to Persist, included 12 items and required participants to select the corresponding Likert response scale option that best matched their perceptions of their intent to persist in the classroom. The scale for this section was as follows: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2 =Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

After the data were collected and analyzed, it was determined that items 13 (M=4.83) and 15 (M=3.50) were reverse oriented. Table 8 shows that Item 18 ("I enjoy teaching at this school.") had the highest mean (M=4.33). The ratings of 4 and 5 corresponds to the responses Agree and Strongly Agree, so the determined mean of Item 18 (M=4.33) suggests that overall, the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they would persist in the classroom. Item 14 ("I plan to teach in a school/district in another state in the next year or so.") had the lowest mean (M=1.53) for an item. The low mean 1.53 for Item 14 indicates that teachers do not plan to teach somewhere else.

Table 8

Descriptives for Intent to Persist in the Classroom (N=208)

Question	Mean	Std. Deviation
9. I accepted my current job position because my spouse/future spouse/companion has a job here.	1.54	1.16
10. I accepted my current job position because I wanted to live near family or friends that live in this area.	2.67	1.60
11. I plan to teach in this school/district for at least 10 years.	3.63	1.30
12. I plan to teach in this school/district for at least 3 more years.	4.08	1.10
*13. I plan to teach in another school/district in the next year or so.	4.83	.57
14. I plan to teach in a school/district in another state in the next year or so.	1.53	.83
*15. I plan to move into administration.	3.50	1.44
16. I would prefer to teach at a school that did not use the Common Core Standards.	3.08	1.15
17. I enjoy my teaching assignment.	4.27	.81
18. I enjoy teaching at this school.	4.33	.86
19. I plan on remaining in the classroom until I can retire.	3.86	1.22
20. I enjoy teaching in a school that uses the Common Core Standards.	3.00	1.04
Total	4.03	.76

*reverse-oriented item. Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2 =Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

In the second portion of the survey, Section B: Implementation of Common Core Standards, there were10 items and required participants to select the corresponding Likert response scale option that best matched their perceptions of their intent to persist in the classroom. The scale for this section was as follows: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

After the data were collected and analyzed, it was determined that item 26 (M=3.16) was reverse oriented. Table 9 shows that Item 26 ("The Common Core Standards is a government mandate that will not fade after another election.") had the highest mean (M=3.16). The rating of 3 corresponds to the response Neutral, so the determined mean of Item 26 (M=3.16) suggests that overall, the participants feel that the implementation of the Common Core Standards will not remain in place after another election. Item 30 ("The Common Core Standards will eventually be used in every state in America.") had the lowest mean (M=2.40) for an Item. The rating of 2 corresponds to the response Disagree. The low mean 2.40 for Item 30 indicates that teachers feel that the Common Core Standards will not be implemented in every state in America.

Table 9

Descriptives for Implementation of Common Core Standards (N=208)

Question	Mean	Std. Deviation
21. I have been adequately prepared to implement the Common Core Curriculum.	2.85	1.26
22. I prefer to use the Common Core Standards instead of the Mississippi State Standards.	2.88	1.10
23. The Common Core Standards are as comprehensive as the Mississippi State Standards.	2.96	1.09

Table 9 (continued).

Question	Mean	Std. Deviation
24. The time spent in Common Core Standards training has been well spent.	2.79	1.08
25. Administration is providing adequate professional development on the Common Core Standards.	3.03	1.24
*26. The Common Core Standards is a government mandate that will not fade after another election.	3.16	1.02
27. The Common Core Standards will help improve student performance.	2.89	1.09
28. Implementing the Common Core Standards is preparing my students for the future.	3.02	1.06
29. The implementation of the Common Core Standards will benefit students many years to come.	2.97	1.08
30. The Common Core Standards will eventually be used in every state in America.	2.40	1.00
Total	2.83	.78

*reverse-oriented item. Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2 =Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

Hypothesis Results

The researcher developed three research questions for this study. Each research question was assigned a related hypothesis. The goal for Research Question 1 was to determine if there were differences in the perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards depending on the school level (elementary, middle/jr. high, high) at which they were employed. The first hypothesis (H_{O1}) states: there are not significant differences in teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards at the various grade levels (elementary, middle, and high).

Using an Oneway ANOVA analysis, the researcher determined that there was not

significant differences ($F(2,205)=.268$, $p=.785$) in teachers' perspectives at the different

grade levels taught regarding the implementation of the Common Core Standards.

Therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The descriptive statistics for

teachers' perspectives at the different grade levels taught regarding the implementation of

the Common Core Standards are described in the Table 10.

Table 10

Descriptives for Participants Perceptions on the Implementation of the Common Core Standards at the Different School Teaching Levels (N=208)

School Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Elementary	122	2.82	.74
Middle/Jr. High	33	2.91	.88
High	53	2.78	.81
Total	208	2.83	.78

Scale: 1= Elementary, 2 =Middle/Jr. High, 3= High.

The goal for Research Question 2 was to determine if there were differences in

the perspectives of novice teachers versus veteran teachers regarding implementing the

Common Core Standards. The null hypothesis (H_{O2}) for Research Question 2 stated:

there are not significant differences in novice teacher and veteran teacher perspectives

regarding implementing the Common Core Standards.

Using an Oneway ANOVA analysis, the researcher determined that there was not

significant differences ($F(1,206)=.745$, $p=.389$) in novice versus veteran teachers'

perspectives regarding the implementation of the Common Core Standards. Therefore,

the researcher determined to fail to reject the null hypothesis. The descriptive statistics for novice and veteran teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of the Common Core Standards are described in Table 11.

Table 11

Descriptives of Veteran and Novice Participants Perceptions Regarding Implementation of the Common Core Standards (N=208)

Teachers	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Novice	46	2.91	.66
Veteran	162	2.80	.81
Total	208	2.83	.78

Scale: Novice (1-4 years of teaching), Veteran (5 year or more)

The goal for Research Question 3 was to determine if there were a relationship in the perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards and their intent to persist in the classroom. The null hypothesis (H_{O3}) for Research Question 3 predicted there is not a significant relationship between teacher perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards related to their intent to persist in the classroom. When teachers were asked if they would prefer to teach at a school that did not use the Common Core Standards, teachers indicated M= 3.08 they agreed.

The researcher determined that there was a small significant relationship (r(208)=.202, *p*=.003) between teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of the Common Core Standards and their intent to persist in the classroom. Therefore, the researcher determined to reject the null hypothesis. There was a small relationship between teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the Common Core Standards and

their intent to persist in the classroom. However, the results may differ with a larger

sample size. Teachers in this study indicated the Common Core Standards will go away

after the next election. Based on the findings, the researcher determined teachers are

happy in their current teaching position and the implementation of the Common Core

Standards will not impact their intent to persist in the classroom.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This study of the relationship of selected factors to the intent of teachers to persist

included 208 participants from 3 school districts in south Mississippi. Data for this

quantitative study were entered in SPSS to be statistically analyzed. Descriptive

statistics, ANOVA, and Pearson's *r* correlation were used to identify statistically

significant differences among the variables, and results were reported in this chapter.

The researcher determined there was a small relationship between teachers' perceptions

on the implementation of the Common Core Standards and their intent to persist in the

classroom. This means the implementation of the Common Core Standards has a

relationship to teachers' decisions to persist as a classroom teacher. The researcher also

determined there were no significant differences in teachers' perceptions on the

implementation of the Common Core Standards between veteran or novice teacher or

teachers teaching at the different school levels. Chapter V will provide an evaluation and

discussion of these results.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to generate insight into teacher perceptions about the impact of implementing the Common Core Standards on teachers' intent to persist within the classroom. It was also of value to determine if the variables of novice versus veteran teachers and school level influence their intent to persist in order to help school districts gain a deeper understanding of potential factors that contribute to teacher attrition. Additionally, the findings of this study may better enable school and state officials to address a work environment that promotes the retention of teachers in the classroom. This chapter includes a summary of the procedures, major findings, and discussion of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, and conclusions.

Summary of Procedures

The data for this study were obtained from teachers employed within elementary, middle, and high schools located in three school districts in south Mississippi. The study examined differences in teacher perceptions with regard to the implementation of the Common Core Standards and intent to persist in the classroom. For this quantitative study, responses were evaluated using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and Pearson's r correlation.

Letters requesting approval to conduct research were sent to three school district superintendents. Permission to conduct research was granted by superintendents in all three of the school districts; approval was provided for a total of 14 schools. Administrators at all of the schools distributed the surveys to teachers with instructions to return them to the secure survey box located at each school. Subjects were surveyed

surveys were administered at the beginning of the 2nd semester of the 2013-2014 school year. Participants had three weeks to complete and return the instrument in the provided envelope to the survey box located at each school. Of the 355 surveys distributed to the 14 schools, 208 were completed and returned. Data were accumulated and entered into SPSS for analysis. A Cronbach's alpha test for consistency was performed on each of the instrument subscales in order to test reliability. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and Pearson's *r* correlation were used to identify statistically significant differences among the variables.

<div align="center">Major Findings</div>

In order to fulfill the study's objectives, the researcher collected and analyzed demographic data and data on the perspectives of teachers regarding the implementation of the Common Core Standards relative to remaining in the classroom. The following content addresses the major findings from the demographic and descriptive data.   It further addresses the answers to the research questions established for this study.

The frequency data from the sample group portrayed that the majority of the participants were white females. Over half of the participants were over 45 years of age, indicating the sample group of teachers is primarily veteran teachers. There were very few participants in the age range from 18-26, indicating very few young novice teachers are entering the teaching profession in the schools surveyed.

With regard to practice, very few of the participants had 0-4 years of experience, indicating the majority of the participants survey were veteran teachers. The majority of the participants indicated their highest degree earned was a Bachelors degree. Therefore, the majority of the teachers participating in the survey were veteran teachers with the

lowest degree required to be able to teach. It was also discovered that over half of the teachers worked in an elementary school setting.

Major findings from analyses include results associated with the hypotheses. Research Question 1 asked if there were differences in teachers' perspectives regarding implementing the Common Core Standards depending on the school level (elementary, middle/jr. high, high) at which they were employed. Using an Oneway ANOVA analysis, the researcher determined that there were not significant differences in teachers' perspectives at the different grade levels taught regarding the implementation of the Common Core Standards.   The majority of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Common Core Standards would eventually be used in every state in America.

Item 26 ("The Common Core Standards is a government mandate that will not fade after another election.") had the highest mean indicating that the participants believe the Common Core Standards will remain in place for a while. However, the participants' responses suggest the participants believe the implementation of the Common Core Standards was inadequate and they are not sure if they will remain in place based on the participants' responses to Item 30 ("The Common Core Standards will eventually be used in every state in America."). The participants' responses indicate teachers believe that the Common Core Standards will not be implemented in every state in America.

With regard to differences in the perspectives of novice teachers versus veteran teachers regarding implementing the Common Core Standards, the null hypothesis (H_{O2}) for Research Question 2 predicted that research findings would reflect that there are not significant differences in novice versus veteran teachers' perspectives regarding the

implementation of the Common Core Standards. The researcher determined that there were not significant differences in novice versus veteran teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of the Common Core Standards. Novice teachers' responses and veteran teachers' responses indicate teachers disagree that the Common Core Standards are being implemented correctly and will remain in place.

With respect to data pertaining to intent to persist, participants were positive. Based on the findings, the majority of the teachers appear to be persisting in the role of teacher. Participants' responses to Item 18 ("I enjoy teaching at this school.") indicate the participants are happy with their current teaching position and plan to persist in the classroom. Participants' responses to Item 14 ("I plan to teach in a school/district in another state in the next year or so.") also indicate teachers are likely to remain in their current teaching position and plan to persist in the classroom. However, there was a small significant correlation between the implementation of the Common Core Standards and teachers' intent to persist in the classroom.

Discussion

Literature indicates teacher shortages are not primarily due to teacher shortages based on recruitment and training, but rather, to a significant extent, are the result of large numbers of teachers leaving the profession long before retirement (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Watkins (2005) stated that the average yearly turnover rate in education is 13.2% compared to 11% in other professions. This study investigated the impact of implementing the Common Core Standards on teachers' decisions to remain in the classroom. The federal government promoted the adoption of additional educational reform including the Common Core Standards (CCS) by tying it to a variety of

components within its Race to the Top funds (Duncan, 2009). CCS represents an important curricular policy shift for the educational system in the United States (Duncan, 2009).

The purpose of this study was to generate insight into teacher perceptions about the impact of implementing the Common Core Standards on teachers' intent to persist within the classroom. It was also of value to determine if the variables of novice versus veteran teachers and school level influence their intent to persist in order to help school districts gain a deeper understanding of potential factors that contribute to teacher attrition. Overall, the results from this study suggest the implementation of the Common Core Standards has impacted teachers' intent to persist within the classroom.

The majority of the participants in the study, both novice and veteran teachers, indicated they disagree or strongly disagree that the Common Core Standards will be implemented in every state in America. The majority of the teachers indicated they intend on persisting in the classroom. The findings from this study also indicated that most teachers were not provided adequate professional development training to implement the standards. According to DeBolt (1992), professional development increases teacher performance, increases retention of teachers, and helps teachers deal with mandated requirements.

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

There were some factors that limited the findings of this study. Eligible participants were limited to subject area teachers who worked in schools located in south Mississippi. With regard to the demographic item, findings reflected minority teachers were poorly represented. The majority of the feedback came from white female teachers

with more than five years of teaching experience, so factors addressed in this study may be skewed. Furthermore, though the response rate was considered adequate for analyses, it was not as high as the researcher desired.

The study was confined to the participation of teachers who were currently teaching; thus, the perspectives of teachers who actually chose to leave the profession were not included. Also, actual attrition rates were not measured by this study. It specifically focused on teacher perceptions of the implementation of the Common Core Standards and their intent to persist in the teaching profession.

Unfortunately, and unintended by the researcher, Questions 13, 15, and 26 ultimately behaved as a reversed item upon analysis, even though it was anticipated to behave positively. Those items could have been worded in a fashion that would have come across more clearly to the respondents. Other survey items could have been worded in a fashion that would have come across more clearly to the respondents.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The issue of teacher attrition is a national dilemma (Ingersoll, 2001). In order to counteract the trend of losing teachers, it is critical to recognize the complex influences that relate to teacher attrition and make necessary changes and accommodations that would foster the retention of teachers. If the nation is to comprehend what drives attrition and how to develop strategies to retain teachers, it must first understand how teachers view their work in schools (Inman & Marlow, 2004).

Due to a lack of literature pertaining to a teacher's decision to remain in the profession due to the implementation of the Common Core Standards, the researcher believed that further investigation into the impact of this variable could potentially

provide an enhanced understanding of efforts that need to be pursued in order to increase the retention rates of teachers. Furthermore, due to the limited amount of research regarding the influence of teaching experience factors on intent to persist due to the implementation of the Common Core Standards, the researcher also included this factor within the research goals.

Although there were no significant differences in the perceptions of the participants within this study, it was determined that teachers who showed intent to persist also reflected in a generally positive manner on their experiences with the implementation of the Common Core Standards. In regard to teaching experience impacting teachers' decisions about remaining in the classroom, there were not significant differences. Both novice and veteran teachers indicated their displeasure with the implementation of the Common Core Standards.

Based on the findings of this study and previous research, educational stakeholders need to consider implementing a variety of policies and procedures that may positively impact the issue of teacher retention. Many of the frustrations cited throughout literature, combined with the findings of this study, serve as a foundation for recommendations for policy and practice. This is an area of concern that the researcher believes needs to be better addressed through professional development training at the school level and in the practicum experiences for aspiring teachers at the university level.

In order to better prepare educators for government mandates, school districts need to provide opportunities for teachers to observe and actively participate in classroom settings demonstrating the new mandates. Exposing teachers to classrooms in which they can observe and address multiple disciplines further enlightens them about the demands

and obstacles that may face implementing the new mandates. This hands on approach to professional development could help teachers visualize what they are expected to do in their classrooms.

The researcher further suggests that universities make an effort to expose potential teachers to the realities of the field of education at an earlier point in the preparation program. Potential teachers are often not provided with the opportunity to actively participate in actual classroom settings until they begin student teaching. Providing potential teachers with training and familiarity with actual classroom experiences is crucial in making positive advances in retaining new teachers.

The researcher also recommends professional development opportunities for administrators. This is suggested with the intent of providing ideas, suggestions and/or resources that will better prepare school leaders to meet the needs of teachers as well as provide support that will ensure a higher rate of success among these teachers. The accessibility of administrators also has been shown to increase teacher persistence. Teachers appreciate consistent support and advice from their administrator(s). In fact, job satisfaction increases among teachers when they receive reliable and supportive feedback from their administrator (Danielson, 2002).

According to Ingersoll (2001), good teachers are more likely to remain in the classroom when they are appreciated and supported, are provided opportunities to learn from their colleagues, and are provided with an environment that allows accomplished teaching to thrive. Teachers who are not satisfied, but are compelled to remain in the profession because of limited opportunities elsewhere, could have a negative impact on overall student success. The researcher believes that the implementation of the

previously recommended suggestions could foster a stronger sense of job satisfaction with the hope of retaining good teachers.

Given the findings of this study, it is recommended that school district officials take these results and recommendations into account when addressing the training, and mentoring of teachers within their schools. The suggestions and findings are intended to enhance understanding and to educate administrators/policymakers regarding the needs of classroom teachers. In addition, the conclusions of this study can assist in teacher quality, thus, resulting in a more positive learning environment for students.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Future Research</div>

Future researchers studying issues relevant to the topics addressed in this study could focus on the following studies in order to produce additional understanding of the issue of teacher retention:

1. It is recommended that future studies include a broader geographic region in order to enhance potential sample size, expand the reliability of results, and enhance the degree to which such results can be generalized to other geographic locales.

2. Due to the currently limited amount of literature pertaining to teacher retention in relation to the implementation of the Common Core Standards, it is recommended that further research be conducted.

3. Overall, the sample for this study was too small to disclose significant differences among veteran and novice teachers. Further analysis of the variables analyzed within this study from the vantage point of the type of teacher is suggested.

4. Finally, future research should include investigation of novice and veteran teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of the Common Core Standards and their intent to persist in the classroom based on school level (elementary, middle, high). A larger sample size could potentially provide a more valuable understanding of the relationship and impact, if any, of the two factors, and disclose whether differences in the means between high school, middle/jr. high, and elementary school teachers are actually significant.

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5116 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional-review-board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
  Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **14010701**
PROJECT TITLE: **The Common Core Standards Implementation Effects on Teacher Intent to Persist**
PROJECT TYPE: **New Project**
RESEARCHER(S): **Eddie Smith**
COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education and Psychology**
DEPARTMENT: **Education Leadership and School Counseling**
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: **N/A**
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: **Exempt Review Approval**
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **01/09/2014 to 01/08/2015**

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B

INSTRUMENT

**Teacher Perceptions: The Impact of Select Factors on the Intent to Persist
Instrument**

Complete the survey below using your knowledge and experience as a teacher.

1. Gender: _____ female _____male

2. Age group: _____ 18-26 _____27-32 _____33-38 _____39-44 _____45+

3. Ethnicity: ___White ___Black ___Hispanic ___Native American ___Asian, ___Other

4. Please indicate your education and certification information. Mark all that apply.

a. _____ Certified, but not degreed   d. _____ Specialist's degree

b. _____ Bachelor's degree(s)   e. _____ Doctoral degree

c. _____ Master's degree

5. Are you Nationally Board Certified?   _____Yes _____No

6. I have taught for (to the nearest full year):

_____ year(s) in this school.   _____ year(s), in other district(s)

_____ year(s) in this district   _____ years total.

7. Have you ever worked fulltime in a field other than education?

_____ No   _____ Yes

8. I teach at a/an:

_____ elementary school _____ middle/jr. high school _____ high school

Continue on next page

Please read each statement and indicate its level of existence within your experience as a teacher by checking any one of the five (5) columns immediately following each statement. Possible responses range from (1)"Strongly Disagree" to (5) "Strongly Agree".

Intent to Persist					
Please put an (X) below the response that best matches your opinion about the following statements:	**Strongly Disagree** **1**	**Disagree** **2**	**Neutral** **3**	**Agree** **4**	**Strongly Agree** **5**
9. I accepted my current job position because my spouse/future spouse/companion has a job here.					
10. I accepted my current job position because I wanted to live near family or friends that live in this area.					
11. I plan to teach in this school/district on a long term basis.					
12. I plan to teach in this school/district for at least 3 more years.					
13. I plan to teach in another school/district in the next year or so.					
14. I plan to teach in a school/district in another state in the next year or so.					
15. I plan to move into administration.					
Continue on next page **Intent to Persist continued**					

Please put an (X) below the response that best matches your opinion about the following statements:	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
16. I would prefer to teach at a school that did not use the Common Core Standards.					
17. I enjoy my teaching assignment.					
18. I enjoy teaching at this school.					
19. I plan on remaining in the classroom until I can retire.					
20. I believe fellow teachers have left this school to pursue another career in education.					
Implementation of Common Core Standards					
Please put an (X) below the response that best matches your opinion about the following statements:	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
21. I have been adequately prepared to implement the Common Core Curriculum.					
22. I prefer to use the Common Core Standards instead of the Mississippi State Standards.					
23. The Common Core Standards are as comprehensive as the Mississippi State Standards.					
24. The time spent in Common Core Standards training has been well spent.					
Continue on next page					

Implementation of Common Core Standards continued					
Please put an (X) below the response that best matches your opinion about the following statements:	**Strongly Disagree** **1**	**Disagree** **2**	**Neutral** **3**	**Agree** **4**	**Strongly Agree** **5**
25. Administration is providing adequate professional development on the Common Core Standards.					
26. The Common Core Standards is a government mandate that will not fade after another election.					
27. The Common Core Standards will help improve student performance.					
28. Implementing the Common Core Standards is preparing my students for the future.					
29. The implementation of the Common Core Standards will benefit students many years to come.					
30. The Common Core Standards will eventually be used in every state in America.					

APPENDIX C

VALIDITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Teacher Perceptions: The Impact of Select Factors on the Intent to Persist Instrument

I would like to thank you for agreeing to provide your time and expertise in assisting in the development of this instrument that will be used to gather data for this study. Your input and feedback are extremely important and will be used to make any necessary adjustments in order to more effectively meet the criteria and overall goal of this study.

The purpose of the instrument you are evaluating is to gather feedback from teachers pertaining to the implementation of the Common Core Standards and their intent to persist within the classroom. The data collected through these surveys will hopefully provide valuable insight for possible adjustments to current approaches that may influence teachers to remain within the classroom.

Please take your time and review the attached questionnaire by answering either "Yes" or "No" to the questions below, as well as providing feedback for your reasoning(s) behind any responses that receive a "No" on the lines that follow.

Question	Yes	No	If you selected No, please provide feedback and/or suggestions that you feel would correct this item of the survey.
Do you believe the language used easily understood by the participants in this study?			
Do the survey statements allow the researcher to obtain sufficient information regarding teacher perceptions of implementing the Common Core Standards?			
Do the survey statements allow the researcher to obtain sufficient information regarding teacher intent to persist in the classroom?			
Do you believe any of the questions in the survey should be modified?			
Do you believe the survey items are free from the potential to come across as invasive and/or offensive to the participants?			

Question	Yes	No	If you selected No, please provide feedback and/or suggestions that you feel would correct this item of the survey.
Do you believe all the items within the survey should be included on the final version of the survey?			
Do you believe there is no need to add any additional items to the survey?			
Please provide any further suggestions, feedback, and comments that you feel would strengthen the validity of this questionnaire below:			

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

Date
Name of Superintendent
Name of School District
Address

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Superintendent _____,

My name is Eddie Smith, and I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program at The
University of Southern Mississippi. In order to fulfill the requirements of my dissertation, I
must conduct a survey that focuses on my topic of research. The ultimate goal of my survey
is to gather and examine teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction related to the
implementation of the Common Core Standards. The information I gather through my
research will hopefully provide educational leaders, administrators, and fellow educators with
insights into approaches and strategies that are effective in the retention of teachers.

The purpose of this letter is to request your permission to gather necessary information
that would allow me to contact educators within your district, conduct a short survey, then
assemble the data needed to complete my dissertation. If you agree to allow me to conduct
my survey, the information gathered will be compiled with the information provided by other
teachers in other school districts. Please rest assured that your district and your district's
teachers will not be identified anywhere in my research and findings.

The participants in this study will consist of all the subject area educators within your district
who are willing to participate in the study. This research will be conducted at the elementary,
middle, and high school levels. Participants will be surveyed via postal mail and/or hand
delivery. Surveys will be administered at the beginning of the second semester of the 2013-
2014 academic school year.

Please be assured that all educator responses will be confidential. The data will be reported
in percentages and summary form. No district, school, or individual will be identified; and
participation is voluntary.

Your approval to conduct this survey within your district will be greatly appreciated. Feel
free to contact me at 601-337-0508 or emlsmith@eagles.usm.net if you have any questions or
concerns. My committee chair is Dr. David Lee, who can be contacted at
david.e.lee@usm.edu.

If you agree to my request, please submit a signed letter of permission on your
district's letterhead acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this
survey within your school district. For your convenience, I have included a sample consent
statement that you can use on your school letterhead.

Sincerely,

Eddie M. L. Smith
Doctoral Candidate, The University of Southern Mississippi

Enclosures

Cc: Dr. David E. Lee, Committee Chair

Consent statement:

By signing and returning this form, I give Mr. Eddie Smith, a doctoral candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi, permission to conduct a research study in the _____ District. I acknowledge that Mr. Smith may meet with each school administrator and upon approval from the administrator, that Mr. Smith will deliver consent forms and questionnaires to teachers during the second semester of the 2013-2014 school year.

Approved by:

_____ _____ _____
Please print your name and title above   Superintendent's Signature   Date

APPENDIX E

COVER LETTER

Dear Participant,

I am currently a doctoral candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi. I am conducting a research study on the perceptions of teachers and the impact of implementing the Common Core Standards on the intent to persist in the classroom. I am interested in your professional opinion in regards to whether the above variables have any influence on your intent to remain in the classroom. Please take a few moments of your time to complete the enclosed questionnaire. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

The questionnaire contains 30 questions. The first portion of the questionnaire seeks to gather basic personal and professional demographic information about you as well as information about your current school of employment. The remaining sections of the questionnaire request that you rate a variety of statements on a scale of 1 – 5. Your selections will reflect your opinions about the Common Core Standards and intent to persist. Upon completion, information from all participants will be shared with my dissertation committee.

The data collected from the completed questionnaires will be compiled and analyzed. All data collected are anonymous and will be kept completely confidential and reported only in aggregate. To ensure confidentiality of teachers, no one will be identified by name. Upon completion of this research study, I will shred all surveys. As the researcher, I am very appreciative of your participation. However, you have the option to decline to participate if you so wish. If you decide to withdraw from participation at any time, there is no penalty or risk of negative consequence.

I will use the data you provide to update and strengthen the research bank on factors that currently affect teachers' intent to persist. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me: Eddie M. L. Smith, email: Eddie.m.Smith@eagles.usm.edu; phone: 601-337-0508. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. David E. Lee, The University of Southern Mississippi, email: david.e.lee@usm.edu; phone: 601-266-4580.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that all research fits the federal guidelines for research involving human subjects. Any questions or concerns about the rights of a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406, (601) 266-6820.

Sincerely,
Eddie M. L. Smith

APPENDIX F

INFORMED LETTER OF CONSENT

University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
(601)266-6820

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Date: October 15, 2013

Title of Study: The Common Core Standards Implementation Effects on Teacher Intent to Persist

Research will be conducted by: Eddie M. L. Smith

Phone Number: (601) 337-0508
Email Address: eddie.m.smith@eagles.usm.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. David E. Lee

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
Classroom teachers who are with less than one year to over 30 years of experience are being asked to take part in a research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to take part, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed with the intent to obtain information and knowledge that may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Below are the details about this study. It is important that you understand this information so you can make an informed choice about participating in this research study. You will be given the first three pages of this consent form and the researcher will keep the fourth sheet, which contains your signature. You should ask the researcher named above, or staff member who is assisting them throughout this process, any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this study is to generate insight into teacher perceptions about the impact of implementing the Common Core Standards on their intent to persist within the classroom. The goal of this research is to compare teacher feedback and determine whether the above factor is significantly related to a teacher's intent to remain in the classroom.

How many people will take part in this study?

If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately 355 participants in this research study.

How long will your part in this study last?

If you chose to participate, you will be asked to read and sign a consent form and will also receive a survey that will take you no longer than 15 minutes to complete. Your name or identity will not be asked for within the survey, nor will your personal information be reflected anywhere within this research. An envelope will also be provided in order to easily return the completed survey to the researcher. A report of my findings will be made available to you upon request at the conclusion of this study by emailing me at eddie.m.smith@eagles.usm.edu.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

Teachers willing to participate in this research will be asked to fill out a survey. The researcher will collect data from the survey. Throughout the process of analysis, the researcher will keep the survey in a locked box. The survey and consent form will be shredded upon completion of this project.

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?

Findings are also intended to provide potential assistance to school and state officials in creating and supporting a school work environment that encourages teachers to persist in their current positions as classroom educators.

Your answers to the survey items will contribute to study findings that school administrators can take into account when addressing the hiring, training, and mentoring of teachers in their schools.

The results of this study could also potentially play a vital role in the provision of valuable insight that can be shared with persons involved in the educational system, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, educational professionals and policymakers. These insights could potentially bridge gaps in understanding about these policy issues, thus resulting in enlightenment of administrators/policymakers regarding the needs of classroom teachers.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?

The risks that may be involved in this study are that the participant may not feel comfortable providing feedback pertaining to his/her personal opinions about the implementation of the Common Core Standards and his/her intent to persist. These concerns may be alleviated by the assurances of confidentiality for respondents that will be provided.

Only the researcher and faculty advisors will view the participant responses. All responses will be kept secure and locked in the researcher's home. Questionnaires and consent forms will be destroyed after one year.

How will your privacy be protected?

Participants will not indicate their identities on the questionnaire. They will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. Only the researcher and her

university faculty advisors will have access to these questionnaires. Questionnaires will be kept secure and locked in the researcher's home. Additionally, questionnaires and consent forms will be shredded after a year.

What if you have questions about this study?

You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, or concerns, you should contact the researcher listed on the first page of this form.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations.

Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406, (601) 266-6820.

Title of Study: The Common Core Standards Implementation Effects on Teacher Intent to Persist

Principal Investigator: Eddie M. L. Smith

Participant's Agreement:

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study by completing the survey provided to me.

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