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# TEACHER MOTIVATION

By  
Lisa Francks

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate School of  
Rowan University  
May, 2000

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
Professor

Date Approved May 2000

## Abstract

Lisa Francks

Teacher Motivation  
2000  
Dr. Ronald L. Capasso  
School Administration

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the causes of decreased teacher motivation in order to provide assistance to first year teachers and other novice teachers who were experiencing difficulties. In addition, the study determined whether teachers who went through a teacher assistance program sustained a higher degree of motivation and enthusiasm towards teaching than those who were not assisted. The study provided a basis for developing a beginning teacher assistance program. As a result, the intern developed a mentoring program to offer novice teachers a means of coping with many of the difficulties they periodically faced.

The intern used a sample of 30 teachers. The sample included first year teachers and non tenured teachers who were aided by a teacher assistance program and those who were not assisted. Surveys, questionnaires, and interviews were used to collect data, and the data was reported in percentages.

From the data analysis, the intern concluded that teachers who were aided by a teacher assistance program had a higher level of motivation and a more positive attitude towards teaching than those who were not assisted. Furthermore, the study concluded that student attitudes, bureaucratic paperwork, and too many demands from the administration had a negative effect on their enthusiasm for teaching.

## Mini-Abstract

Lisa Francks

Teacher Motivation  
2000  
Dr. Ronald L. Capasso  
School Administration

The purpose of the study was to determine the causes of decreased teacher motivation and to ascertain whether teachers who went through a teacher assistance program had a higher degree of motivation than those who were not assisted. The study concluded that teachers who assisted sustained a higher level of motivation towards teaching.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Focus of the Study

Each year thousands of new teachers enter the classroom to begin their teaching careers. Most have good intentions and high expectations and are committed to making a difference in students' lives. Beginning teachers have a high degree of motivation and are filled with enthusiasm at the prospect of starting a teaching career. In fact, they are so idealistic in the belief that they can make a difference that many new teachers are oblivious to the fact that everyone starting a new job has difficulties. As a result, when difficulties do arise, new teachers are often unprepared for the consequences that follow.

Starting a new job has its frustrations, and teaching is no different. Novice teachers are often confronted with difficult work assignments, problematic students, and inadequate resources; they also have unclear expectations. In addition, new teachers soon learn that they need to go through an adjustment period. Many times they do so in isolation for fear that asking for help may be perceived as a sign of incompetence. Moreover, many veteran teachers may not offer them assistance because they feel it is not their job or they feel that their efforts would be viewed as interference. As a result, the new job often evolves into a source of frustration for the new teacher.

The problems novice teachers face can lead to anxiety and disenchantment. New teachers need help and encouragement or they may experience frustration and a sense of

failure. Many novice teachers become less optimistic and develop a negative attitude. In addition, some become discouraged and do not make a strong commitment to the teaching profession. As a result, many teachers never reach their full potential as educators, and some actually leave the profession.

If someone does not address the specific problems and environmental difficulties of new teachers, there can be dire consequences. Teachers who are disillusioned and frustrated directly affect student achievement. Thus, it is crucial to avoid these risks at an early stage. Recent studies show that an organized mentoring program may be responsible for the professional success and well being of new teachers ( Gordon,1991). Teachers who are highly motivated and successful will produce students who achieve. Consequently, if mentoring programs have a positive effect on teacher motivation, it is important for school districts to implement these programs. The intern's research will focus on the effect of teacher assistance programs on teacher motivation, and whether those who have gone through a mentoring program have higher levels of motivation than those who have not.

### Purpose of the Study

A beginning teacher assistance program provides a systematic induction into the organization for new teachers. Many other teachers have experienced the problems that face new teachers, and a mentoring program furnishes support, assistance, and insight into their problems. The intern will use an action research design to ascertain the causes of decreased teacher motivation in order to provide assistance to not only first year teachers, but to other novice teachers who are experiencing difficulties. The intern's

research will focus on the efficacy of a mentoring program in maintaining teacher motivation.

Beginning teachers face a myriad of problems during their first year of teaching. They are challenged daily and encounter unexpected situations. The first few weeks of school are exciting and all encompassing, and many new teachers bring an idealism to the job. Most of them are motivated by intrinsic rewards such as pride in their work and the belief that they can make a difference (Johnson, 1986). The new teacher wants to be successful and sees new situations as a challenge. However, reality soon sets in and unforeseen difficulties begin to arise. Unless the new teacher is prepared to recognize and confront potential problems and dilemmas, he/she may begin to panic and create new problems. Thus, the new teacher must struggle to succeed and overcome these quandaries.

New teachers need to prepare realistically for their teaching assignments and to realize what is ahead of them. One of the goals of the mentoring program is to determine the sources which cause difficulties for beginning teachers and to address these immediately so as to give new teachers a feeling of success and accomplishment. Ultimately, this will result in positive attitudes and an ongoing feeling of motivation.

The intern's research will focus on whether teachers who have gone through a mentoring or teacher assistance program have a higher degree of motivation and success than those who have not. By implementing this project, the intern wishes to address common problems faced by new teachers, offer them assistance with these issues, and thus help them achieve the motivation and inspiration needed to be successful in the profession. Consequently, the first goal of the intern is to identify the perplexities that most new teachers face.



Research shows that many of the difficulties beginning teachers face are environmental in nature and part of the culture of the teaching profession (Gordon, 1991). Among the major hurdles to overcome are difficult work assignments, idealistic views, and the realities of the job itself. For example, teachers are expected to know what to teach and how to teach it, yet new teachers have little experience and are often given the worst teaching assignments. They are saddled with the largest classes, the most problematic students, and the least interesting courses, yet they are expected to perform with the expertise of veteran teachers. Also, new teachers have an idealistic view of teaching that is unrealistic; they believe that they are the ones who can make the difference and that the students will actually see them as different from the other teachers. They think that they will connect and all students will be eager to learn from them. Finally, they soon come to realize that teaching is not just about teaching; it includes many non academic duties such as completing paperwork, filling out forms, disciplining students, and being assigned to mundane duties such as hall monitor or cafeteria duty. As a result, the new teacher often becomes frustrated, less motivated by intrinsic rewards, and motivated by extrinsic rewards such as a paycheck or the promise of a promotion ( Johnson, 1986). Therefore, a teacher assistance program will provide help for new teachers in facing these dilemmas and will offer them successful teaching techniques and ways of coping with environmental difficulties .

The purpose of the study is to identify the needs of the beginning teachers by using an action research design and to meet those needs through a beginning teacher assistance program. The program calls for an induction team to work with new teachers to provide them with strategies to help them succeed and become highly motivated teachers who

make a positive contribution to the school. The study will determine whether teachers who have gone through an induction program have a higher level of motivation towards teaching than those who have not.

### Definitions

**Mentor-** The term mentor has its origin in Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus entrusted the education of his son, Telemachus, to a wise and learned man named Mentor ( Heller & Sindelar, 1991). Since then, a mentor has been a respected, experienced teacher who is provided to someone who needs help. A mentor is a seasoned, experienced teacher who acts as a guide, role model , and support person for a new teacher. A mentor should be available, approachable, and receptive ( as cited by Egan , 1986 in Heller & Sindelar, 1991). Mentors should be excellent teachers, have a positive attitude towards school, and they should match the subject area and grade level of the proteges.

**Protégé-** The protégé is the recipient of the assistance from the mentor. The protégé in this case is the beginning teacher. A mentor is assigned to the protégé to provide ongoing assistance and support.

**Mentoring-** This is a relationship where a respected, more experienced teacher is assigned to a novice teacher for the purpose of providing assistance, support, and insight. Mentoring offers help and advice to the new teacher and also provides a systematic induction into the school. The purpose of mentoring is experiential learning for professional growth and improved teaching performance.

**Orientation Program-** A program designed to familiarize new teachers with the layout of the school, its surroundings, and school policies and rules. An orientation does not actually provide support but rather acquaints the new teacher with the day to day

procedures. These may include such things as taking attendance, understanding discipline policies, acquiring supplies, and handling routine paperwork.

**Induction Program-** This is not just a one shot inservice program but an ongoing program that deals directly with the issues and problems experienced by first year teachers. The program should provide practical answers to immediate problems, and many people should be involved in the process. Meetings should be held periodically where the new teachers are brought together with veteran teachers to discuss different problems that the beginners are having. A mentor should also be assigned to the teacher for the entire year.

**Intrinsic Rewards-** Rewards that are primarily internal and intangible, such as pride in work or achieving a sense of efficacy (Johnson, 1986). Other intrinsic rewards may be a connection with the students or the achievement of the students themselves. Intrinsic rewards “consist entirely of subjective valuations made in the course of the work engagement” ( as cited by Lortie, 1975 in Johnson, 1986) and are usually responsible for teachers entering the profession.

**Extrinsic Rewards-** Rewards that are primarily external and material such as income, promotions, level of prestige, and power over others ( Johnson, 1986). Although extrinsic rewards are not a reason teachers usually enter the profession, it is often a reason many of them leave the profession.

#### Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations to the study. These are the personality and background of

the new teacher and the confinement of the study to limited school districts. All of these can affect the study.

First, it is not possible for any induction program to develop every new teacher into a model one. It is imperative that potential teachers begin with the background, ability, and the personality to develop and become acceptable educators. Most teachers are highly extroverted individuals. Consequently, it may be difficult to successfully mentor a new teacher who is introverted, non-communicative and resistant to change. Moreover, these types of individuals are more likely to become exasperated over situations like overcrowded classes, discipline problems and too many preparations. Thus, the mentoring program may be limited in how much it can help a poor prospect overcome severe difficulties.

Another limitation of the study is the confinement of the study to one building or even one district. The teacher assistance program may be successful in one school or district, but one could not necessarily apply the results of the study to all districts. In analyzing the data, one would have to compare teacher assistance programs and determine which components of the programs were successful. For example, if the program at Williamstown High School is successful, that does not necessarily guarantee a successful program at another school. Another school may attempt to model a teacher assistance program but may not include the components of the program that made the one at WHS a success. As a result, the study could not be generalized to all school districts.

### Setting of the Study

The setting of the study is Williamstown High School in Monroe Township, New Jersey. Monroe Township is a rapidly growing , suburban community located in Gloucester County, and it is twenty miles from Philadelphia, forty miles from Atlantic City, and one hundred miles from New York City. It has approximately 28,000 residents.

Monroe Township is actually made up of several small villages or towns. Among these are Williamstown, originally called Squankum, Cecil, Cross Keys, Downer, and New Brooklyn. In the late 1800's, Squankum was actually part of Washington Township, but the people of Williamstown applied to the state to divide Washington Township and create a new township. Monroe Township was then formed with Williamstown designated as the place for elections and meetings (Davis, 1976).

Historically, Monroe Township has been a blue collar community. In the 1960's the area started a slow transition from a rural community to one with a suburban character. The construction at one time of a substantial number of housing developments, which were purchased by people outside of the Township, caused an increase in population. Housing developments continue to emerge and flourish in all areas of the Township. Consequently, the school system has expanded considerably over the last two decades (Davis, 1976).

According to the NJ Municipal Data Book ,of the 28, 000 residents, 22, 874 are Caucasian, 3,300 are African-American, and the remaining are of other descent (1999). The median household income is \$35, 600 and 1,822 people are below the poverty level. The blue collar community is made up primarily of workers in sales, workers in service occupations, laborers, and technicians (1999). The form of government is MC' 50 and

the tax rate in 1998 was 2.720. Since 1992, voters only have passed two school budgets, one in 1996 when there was a cap waiver, and currently in 1999. There are three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school in Monroe Township. The total enrollment of students in the district is 4, 528. Williamstown High School is a new building which opened in September of 1997. The building has 305,000 square feet of area and a capacity of 1600 expandable to 1800+ students. The current enrollment is 1,407. There are 97 full time instructional personnel, 6 full time counselors, and one crisis intervention counselor. Of these, four are African-American, two are Hispanic, and the remaining personnel are Caucasian. 70% of the faculty have a BA/BS degree, 29% have a MA/MS degree, and 1% possess a PHD/Ed.D degree.

The instructional staff at WHS teaches 216 course offerings ranging from remedial classes to electives to advanced placement courses. There is an honors track, 12 AP courses, and a partnership with Gloucester County College. In addition, in September of 1999, WHS opened the Academy of Engineering Sciences . The Academy was designed to benefit all students with a special interest in the science, math, or technical fields. Students who successfully complete the Academy program and who achieve an SAT score of at least 1200 will receive automatic admission to the Rowan University College of Engineering.

#### Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it is important to ascertain whether a teacher assistance program will ultimately improve teaching performance. If beginning teachers are given ongoing support, it is realistic to believe that they will experience professional

growth. Accordingly, the students will experience more effective instruction and higher achievement, and the school will benefit from the retention of promising young teachers.

This study also should be conducted to determine which components of a teacher assistance program are most beneficial in helping new teachers. Most teachers attend an orientation program to help them become acclimated to the school, its surroundings, and its policies. It is important to recognize how much emphasis should be placed on each area in the orientation. New teachers are inundated with much information at the beginning of the year and it is crucial not to overwhelm them at this stage. After the initial orientation, the induction program takes over and is ongoing. The research will include both group mentoring and individual mentoring.

Another significant area of the study is the role of the mentor. The intern will analyze the recruitment of mentors, the matching of mentors to beginning teachers, and the responsibilities of mentors. The intern wants to determine the role of the mentor and how much assistance the mentor should give to the new teacher. The mentor plays a vital role in the development of the new teacher, and there needs to be a relationship based on trust, respect, and collegiality. According to the research of Gray and Gray (1985), exemplary mentors are secure, they take a personal interest in the careers of their protégés, and they encourage and help them develop new ideas. This study should be conducted to determine how mentors should be selected and the best way for mentors to help new teachers achieve confidence, competence, and professional growth.

Although the immediate goal of a teacher induction program is to offer assistance to new teachers, the ultimate goal is more effective instruction and higher achievement for

the students. This can be achieved through the benefits derived from the program by the new teachers and the mentors.

It is important to study whether mentors gain satisfaction from exercising leadership and from helping shape the professional growth of the protégés. Many mentors may have a new found confidence and find stimulation in working with a young teacher. Moreover, the protégé can be a source of inspiration and knowledge for the mentor. Sometimes the mentoring experience may give veteran teachers the impetus to participate in high quality professional growth experiences that can enhance their own teaching (Rowley, 1999). This all translates into more effective teaching.

Effective teaching will help create an effective school. Effective schools are characterized by shared goals, a safe and orderly environment, and high achievement. If the study proves that the teacher assistance program has a positive effect on new teachers, the program will help promote the qualities of an effective school. It will help nurture good teaching, which in turn will promote high achievement. Moreover, teachers who are systematically inducted into the organization usually adhere to school rules. This provides a safe and orderly environment. If this high level of motivation is sustained by the teachers, it will help produce high accomplishing students. Hence, the students will achieve, the parents will be pleased, and the school will be a fine example of an effective school.

#### Organization of the Study

The remaining chapters of the thesis will be organized as follows:



Chapter 2 will contain a review of the literature on mentoring new teachers and teacher motivation. The chapter reviews much of the new research and recent findings on this topic.

Chapter 3 will address the design of the study. This particular study will analyze the effect of teacher assistance programs on the motivation of new teachers. This chapter will discuss the design of the surveys, questionnaires, and interviews that the intern will use and will describe how the data was collected. The intern hopes to prove that teacher assistance programs are beneficial to new teachers. Thus, the intern will discuss the evidence she gathers to back up the study.

Through information that is gathered from new teachers, the intern will present the findings of the research. The intern will discuss the actual problems the new teachers encountered and discuss whether or not a support system gave them confidence or helped them sustain motivation. In addition, the intern will discuss the effect of the findings on overall teaching performance.

Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of mentoring programs on teacher performance. This chapter will also evaluate the intern's leadership development in the areas of helping teachers attain professional development, communicating with groups in a positive manner, and helping articulate the school's vision. Finally, the intern will discuss whether the mentoring has had a positive effect on the new teachers which translates into a positive effect on the school itself.

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

The article by Huling-Austin (1985) analyzes what realistically can and cannot be expected from induction programs. Induction programs are assistance programs for new teachers to help them have a smoother transition into the teaching profession. Many advocates of induction programs believe these programs are key elements in educational reform. However, the author realizes that induction programs are not a panacea for all of the problems new teachers face.

The article points out four realistic goals of teacher induction programs. First, they can actually improve teaching performance by providing ongoing assistance and support over a long period of time. New teachers do not have to rely solely on their own limited resources but can implement strategies given to them by veteran teachers. Next, induction programs help increase the retention of promising new teachers by providing support during the critical early months of teaching. Furthermore, induction programs help promote the professional and personal well being of new teachers. If novice teachers are to function successfully, they need a network of support to guide them. Finally, induction programs often satisfy mandated requirements for certification.

The author also points out the pitfalls of these programs. For example, induction programs cannot be expected to overcome all problems such as too many preparations, overcrowded classes, and poor student attendance. Also, just as is the case in any

profession, there are probably some teachers who have neither the background ability nor the personal characteristics to become an acceptable teacher. The author is quick to point out that providing support for a weak teacher may be making a teacher feel better about doing a poor job.

The author's conclusions appear to be valid and based on documented research. She is the director of the Strategies for Improving Teacher Education Program at the R & D Center , and she cites data from her teacher induction study which focused on induction programs in two states. Her final conclusion is that although beginning teacher assistance programs cannot reform education as a whole, they can help promising young teachers improve performance and experience a smoother transition into the profession.

A brief article by Carl Calliari (1992) describes the role of the mentor and discusses a strategy called brokering. According to the author, brokering involves the mentor matching up available resources with the protégé's identified need. The benefit of brokering is that the mentor is able to offer resources to the protégé without having to provide the expertise personally.

Calliari cites research from William Gray and Mary Gray , who are co-directors of the Mentorship Training Programs in Vancouver. In addition, the author himself was the director of the Beginning Teacher Induction Center at Rowan University. Although the article was written by someone with much experience on the subject, it was very brief and offered little insight into the role of the mentor.

John Goodlad is a leader in educational reform and is widely renowned in the field of education and wrote an article on the profession of teaching (1999). He has published extensively on school reform, and in this article he discusses teacher shortages, the

mission of schools, and ways of preparing teachers for the future. Much of the article centers on school reform and the idea of implementing change. According to Goodlad, society needs to raise the level of teaching, and teaching needs to be seen as a profession of high demand and high expectations. Although the article focused more on what can be done for teachers in general, Goodlad does offer some advice on preparing new teachers.

The article states that careful pedagogical nurturing and training should be provided to young teachers. Additionally, Goodlad asserts that we need educated leadership in high places such as the Department of Education. He also says that teachers need freedom to make professional decisions. According to Goodlad, if we do not make these changes, promising teachers will not enter the profession.

Goodlad's ideas seem somewhat idealistic and would require a national concerted effort. The article offers little information on what can be done in individual districts to help new teachers.

Susan Johnson's article on teacher motivation (1986) is quite inclusive and contains an abundance of information. The article appears to be well grounded in research; she cites several studies on motivation and uses numerous sources in her article. One problem, however, is that the article is somewhat dated.

Although the article discusses many aspects of teacher motivation, much of the article is aimed at teachers who have been teaching for a number of years, not just novice teachers. However, Johnson addresses some issues which are quite relevant to new teachers. She discusses the issue of intrinsic rewards versus extrinsic rewards. According to the author, research suggests that teachers stay in teaching because of intrinsic rewards such as pride in their work or a sense of accomplishment ; however, she

states that extrinsic rewards such as status and better pay are what cause teachers to leave the profession. Thus, in order to sustain outstanding new teachers, efforts should probably focus on helping teachers teach without disruption or financial hardship.

Johnson also discusses the issue of merit pay as a way of motivating teachers. Although Johnson points to districts where merit pay has been instituted in some way, she is quick to point out that the system is not likely to succeed. Her arguments seem well founded since she identifies pilot programs and cites statistics to prove it does not succeed as a way of motivating teachers. Research has identified some problems such as difficulty in assessing performance, the cost of maintaining the program, and the consequences merit pay programs carry. Finally, Johnson discusses career ladders which were probably a precursor to today's mentoring programs. At the time the article was written, career ladders and mentoring programs were a relatively new concept in education.

An article by James Rowley (1999) provides many valuable tips on formal mentoring programs and finding good mentors. This concise article is well grounded in research in that it uses information from several research studies, and it also provides the reader with available resources from the Mentoring Leadership and Resource Network of the ASCD. The article is informative and is written so that the reader can easily identify the qualities of a good mentor and then read how that quality is characterized.

The author is an associate professor who has worked with many districts designing new teacher/mentoring programs. The information he provides is based on what he has learned by observing what works and what doesn't with new teachers. According to the article, a good program requires formal training, provides specific roles and

responsibilities to the mentor teachers, and gives mentors frequent opportunities to participate in professional growth experiences. The author also asserts that quality programs have teachers and administrators who value mentoring highly. This article is informative and offers tips from the ASCD, a leader in mentoring programs.

Feiman-Nemser's article (1996) is a critical review of *The Digest's* examination of the spread of mentoring across the U.S., and it explores issues that are in need of research. The article is based on several studies and takes a critical look at the obstacles of mentoring programs. Many articles point out the positive aspects of mentoring. On the contrary, this article is comprehensive and realistic in that it examines the problems associated with mentoring programs and focuses on needed reform in the areas of policy and practice. The study uses a number of research studies which are cited in educational journals.

The author cautions readers that claims about mentoring have not been subjected to rigorous empirical scrutiny. She suggests that much more research is needed on the role of mentoring. Few would argue that mentoring has a positive effect on new teachers, but there are certain problems that are associated with mentoring. For one thing, mentors should assist and not assess, and some state programs, such as the one in N.J., use the mentoring program for the purposes of certification. Likewise, the author questions whether something as personal can be formalized into a program. Finally, she asserts that even if schools provide time for training for mentors, the training actually takes place before the mentors assume their responsibilities. She says that mentors need time throughout the mentoring process to develop their practice as mentors and to work with the novices on problems that do arise. In conclusion, the author asserts that mentoring

can help teachers develop tools for continuous improvement, but she cautions readers not to accept all mentoring programs at face value.

An article in the *NJEA REVIEW* (1996) explains the N.J. law on mentoring which requires local districts to provide mentors for new teachers, and at the end of the first year of employment, requires the building principal's recommendation for a permanent teaching certificate. The purpose of the article is to provide answers to questions that prospective mentors, building principals, or any association leaders may have. Thus, the article is written in question and answer format.

The article is comprehensive and well grounded in N.J. law. Many of the statements are backed up by references to the state code to which they apply. Topics covered are the actual state requirements to get a permanent certificate, the steps to be followed in the induction process, and the recourse for a teacher who has been denied a certificate. The second part of the article answers questions related to mentoring. Some of these deal with the role of the mentor, the role of the principal, and the district's responsibility to the support team. The article is informative and answers the questions in great detail. Also, it is quite inclusive since it covers all state regulations regarding the N.J. mentoring requirements, and it concludes with a sidebar written by the NJEA with tips for NJEA associations to ensure that the rights of mentors and first-year teachers are protected.

An article by Amy Gratch (1998) discusses several aspects of mentoring, including the socialization of beginning teachers, the relationship between teachers and mentors, and expectations for the mentor-protégé relationship. In fact, the article presents a case study of a teacher who had an unsatisfactory mentoring relationship with her mentor during her first year of teaching.

This article focuses on many of the same issues as do the other articles although the author takes a look at the socialization of beginning teachers. According to the author, one of the major challenges facing new teachers is that of socialization or learning how to fit into the social system of the school. Undoubtedly, new teachers are filled with anxiety about the unknown and a new teacher who enters a building where the climate is negative can experience an even more difficult adjustment period and a higher level of frustration. The author asserts that a good mentor-protégé relationship can help the new teacher adjust to the norms of the school.

The article points out the characteristics of a good mentor-protégé relationship. Some of these are loyalty, desire and ability to work together, respect for each other, and similar perceptions of work and the organization. The author warns against unclear expectations and uses a case study to make her point. The study is that of a first year teacher, who for various reasons, felt uncomfortable with her mentor. The experience dimmed her enthusiasm and optimism. The inclusion of this case study is interesting because most of the articles on mentoring dwell on the positive aspects of the mentoring relationship. Although this shows another side of the mentoring process, this case study can not be taken as the norm and generalized to all mentoring programs. Certainly it points out the fact that although mentoring programs seem to be working, they undoubtedly have many flaws.

An article by Caroline Lucas(1999) examines California's model for retaining new teachers. "The California model- California Formative Assessment and Support System for teachers- is a reflective assessment process based on the premise that teachers learn



good practices over several years of study, through consultation with experienced colleagues, and by utilizing reflective practice beyond academic preparation” (1999).

California is field testing the model which includes planning, teaching, reflecting, and applying.

What makes the California model different is that it goes beyond just the matching of new teachers with mentors. The CFASST is a system that is based on formative assessment, and new teachers just are not paired with one mentor but with a support team made up of veteran teachers. The formative assessment system uses peer observations and structured inquiries as a plan for professional development. New teachers establish their objectives and then accomplish them by planning and teaching lessons, reflecting on the results, and then making informed changes. The veteran colleagues who are assisting are called support providers.

This article is somewhat one-sided and biased. For one thing, the author is a veteran teacher and support provider in Santa Clara County, California. She presents a very idealistic view of the program and does not address any of the possible drawbacks of the program. Also, she offers little evidence in the way of case studies or empirical research.

## Chapter 3

### Design of the Study

The intern used an action research design for the study. Since it was assumed that most teachers would experience some problems in their initial year of teaching, the study was done to assess specific needs of beginning teachers and to develop a plan for assisting them.

New teachers enter the world of teaching with a positive outlook and hopes for success. They are often ill equipped to deal with the myriad of difficulties they will face. Also, the beginner's perception of situations as major problems may be seen as minor problems by veteran teachers. Thus, determining the problems and needs of novice teachers was crucial in order to assess the needs of an induction program.

The intent of the research was to determine whether a teacher assistance program helps sustain teacher motivation. If new teachers' needs were not met and their difficulties were not addressed, they may have experienced a plethora of problems. Research indicates that many beginning teachers report becoming more impulsive, less responsive, more reserved and more boring as a result of their early teaching experiences(Wright and Tuska 1968 as cited in Gordon). Thus, the research was designed to determine if an organized teacher assistance program actually benefits new teachers, and the intern used the research instruments with several different groups.

Several types of research instruments were used in the study. The intern used surveys, interviews, and questionnaires. Surveys were used as a type of needs assessment technique and as a method of determining levels of motivation. The surveys were designed to be administered at the beginning of the school year and at the end of the study. The initial survey consisted of questions that dealt primarily with teacher motivation. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the level of motivation and the expectations that new teachers had at the start of the school year. New teachers were surveyed on their attitude towards teaching, their level of motivation, their speculation on problems they might encounter in teaching, and their feelings on how well prepared they were. A similar survey was administered at the end of the study. This allowed for a comparison of data and provided a more accurate picture of teacher needs and areas to be addressed in future teacher assistance programs.

Additionally, another survey was administered to the new teachers at the mid point of the study. This was a needs assessment survey. Beginning teachers were asked to choose items that most nearly indicated their level of need for assistance in the area described. This survey was used to develop topics for later teacher assistance meetings.

Questionnaires were also used as part of needs assessment. Questionnaires consisted of open ended responses with some multiple choice questions. These types of questions were more difficult to analyze but allowed respondents to provide in-depth answers in their own words.

In addition, interviews were conducted with beginning teachers and were done on an ongoing basis throughout the study. The intern used a set of carefully constructed

questions that once again dealt with teacher motivation, problems the new teachers were encountering, and areas where the new teacher needed assistance. The purpose in asking the same types of questions in an interview was to facilitate ongoing assessment of the beginner's needs.

The intern used several groups to gather samples. The research instruments were used with four different groups: first year teachers who went through a teacher assistance program; first year teachers who were not assisted by a program; non-tenured teachers who went through a teacher assistance program; non-tenured teachers who were not assisted by a program.

First, the intern used the teachers at Williamstown High School as part of the sample. Beginning teachers who went through the teacher assistance program and non-tenured teachers who were not assisted by a program were used. Next, the intern used teachers from other schools as part of the study. The intern gathered the teachers for the sample in two ways. Names of beginning teachers were obtained from other schools in the district. These subjects were used as part of the sample that went through a teacher assistance program. Then the intern administered research instruments to teachers from various other schools in the area. These were used for the sample of teachers who did not go through an assistance program.

The intern collected the data in several ways. Interviews were conducted one on one. Through discussions with the beginning teachers, the intern was able to listen to their problems and concerns and help clarify any information that was unclear. The intern used a set of carefully constructed questions with the intention of asking each new teacher the same questions in the same sequence. Sometimes the intern asked additional

questions to either clarify that response or to expand on the information given. The intern recorded responses during the interview by taking notes and later using the notes to analyze data.

Interviews were conducted on an individual basis. Interviews allowed for a systematic collection of information and assured the intern of data returns. The intern acted as the interviewer and had a set of previously constructed questions. The intern asked the questions, raised topics during the interview, and followed up on some of the responses concerning the questions and topics. One advantage of the interview was that it allowed the intern to identify individual needs.

The main goal of the study was to determine whether teachers who had the assistance of a mentoring program had higher levels of motivation and success and experienced less frustration than those who did not. The data was used in several ways. First, the surveys that were administered at different intervals and to different samples were compared to determine the objective of the study. Furthermore, this data was used to decide if new teachers had greater levels of frustration at the end of the school year. Some of the outcomes that were analyzed were the new teachers' skills, attitudes, and concerns.

The questionnaires and interviews were compared to identify common needs of both the new teachers and the school district. In addition, the data was analyzed to identify what the beginning teachers want to happen during instruction as compared to what is actually taking place. Finally, the data was analyzed to determine what changes need to be made in future teacher assistance programs.

## Chapter 4

### Presentation of the Research Findings

Surveys were administered to beginning teachers in September of 1999. The purpose of the surveys was to ascertain the level of motivation and the expectations that new teachers had at the start of the school year. A similar survey was administered to the same teachers in March of 2000. A comparison of data was done to determine if teachers who were not aided by teacher assistance programs sustained the same level of motivation as those who had assistance. In addition, the data provided information about the needs of new teachers. Furthermore, surveys were administered to non-tenured teachers who did not go through a teacher assistance program. The results were used to analyze their levels of motivation and attitudes towards teaching as compared to teachers who were not mentored.

The intern sent out 30 surveys to beginning teachers who went through a teacher assistance program. These same teachers were surveyed later in the study in order to compare results. At the outset of the study, all new teachers responded that they were somewhat apprehensive about their teaching assignment. One hundred per cent said that they felt they could benefit from a teacher assistance program. This same percentage of respondents also felt that their teaching program in college prepared them for the actual job of teaching. Predictably, when asked to state their level of motivation towards teaching on a scale of 1-5, all of the respondents had the highest level of motivation.

This is consistent with the fact that most new teachers feel that they can make a difference; consequently, they have a higher degree of motivation and enthusiasm. Those entering the profession are usually somewhat apprehensive but have high expectations for their careers as educators. Thus, they have a high degree of enthusiasm.

When surveyed later in the year, 100% of this same group still felt that having a mentor was beneficial. Although the level of motivation of 20 % of the group dropped from a 5 to a 4, 90 % of the respondents claimed that they were no longer apprehensive about their teaching assignment. This would indicate that as the novices became more comfortable with teaching, they became less apprehensive, but some of them had a slight drop in their level of motivation. This drop was not significant enough to suggest anything other than normal frustration.

A teacher's attitude towards his job often translates into his attitude towards the students. Attitude also has a significant effect on motivation. The new teachers were asked the following about their attitude towards teaching: whether they felt teaching was their ultimate goal; whether they were almost certain it was their goal but they had to wait and see how the year progressed; whether they questioned if they would teach forever and they were exploring other options; whether they were only teaching until they could enter another profession. Initially, 90% of those surveyed asserted that teaching was their ultimate goal and they planned to retire from the profession while 10% said they were almost certain it would be a lifelong profession. None of the respondents thought of exploring other options for a career. These responses indicate that the beginning teachers had a high level of enthusiasm and that they were idealistic about their teaching careers.

These teachers were surveyed before they even had a chance to do their job or interact with their students, yet most of them felt that teaching would be their lifelong career. Presumably, most of them probably had a good student teaching experience and based their expectations on that. However, what they failed to realize was that as student teachers, they still did not have the full responsibilities of teaching. In addition, during student teaching, if the student teachers experienced problems, they always had the cooperating teachers to fall back on. Consequently, the vision of what teaching would actually be like was someone clouded by the unrealities of student teaching.

When the same group was surveyed later in the study, there was only a slight change in their attitudes towards teaching. While 70% said teaching was their ultimate goal, 30% now said they were almost certain. This implies that most of the teachers with mentors had a high level of motivation towards teaching.

If a teacher's enthusiasm begins to wane, it can be attributed to a variety of factors. Some of these include student attitudes, problems with parents, unclear expectations, attitudes of other teachers, and lack of assistance from fellow teachers. Additionally, difficult work assignments such as poor schedules and overcrowded classes, bureaucratic paperwork, and too many demands from the administration adversely affect a teacher's attitude. When asked at the beginning of the year which of these they thought might have a negative effect on their enthusiasm for teaching, the respondents overwhelmingly cited student attitudes. The other responses were spread among the other categories with no clear indication toward any one item in particular. When surveyed later in the study, the same teachers still denoted student attitudes as their main concern with teaching; however, 50% stated that bureaucratic paperwork was negatively affecting their attitude



towards teaching. 50% also stated that they were troubled by too many demands from the administration. Furthermore, approximately 40% of those surveyed said they were hindered by difficult work assignments. Clearly, the novice teachers were beginning to realize that the profession involves much more than just teaching the students. Their responses revealed that they are beginning to understand the effect of many outside factors on their teaching and the learning of the students.

At the outset of the study, new teachers were asked to list areas of teaching where they felt most confident. The majority felt that their areas of greatest confidence were using a variety of teaching methods, planning instruction, and organizing and managing their classrooms. On the contrary, high areas of concern were maintaining student discipline, handling problems with parents, and diagnosing student needs. When surveyed later in the year, the group still felt confident in the same areas, but some now also cited motivating students as one of their strengths. Likewise, while the group still felt that maintaining student discipline was an area where they felt least confident, they now added maintaining a high level of enthusiasm for their work. Certainly, once the excitement of the initial weeks of teaching subsided and reality set in, the new teachers realized that they could not maintain the same level of enthusiasm on a daily basis.

First and second year teachers who did not go through a teacher assistance program were surveyed in March. Their responses to the same survey differed significantly from the teachers who went through a program. Of the 30 teachers who responded, all said that they felt a teacher assistance program would have helped them. Eighty five per cent of these teachers felt that their teacher preparation program in college prepared them for the actual job of teaching while 15% felt that they were not prepared at all. Since all of the

respondents said that they could have benefited from a teacher assistance program, it appears as if all new teachers desire some type of mentoring during their first year of teaching.

The results from the questions on motivation differed significantly with this group. When asked to rate their level of motivation on a scale of 1-5, the results were as follows:

5- 20%

4- 50%

3- 20%

2- 10%

In addition, 45% of the respondents answered that they were not quite certain if they would teach forever and said they were open to exploring other options. The group of teachers who did not have the benefit of mentoring assistance had a significant drop in their level of motivation. Since all of the teachers responded earlier that they could have benefited from a teacher assistance program, the intern surmised that those who did not have the benefit of a program did not sustain the same level of motivation as those who were mentored.

It is important to decipher what factors have a negative effect on one's enthusiasm for teaching so that problems can be addressed early on. The responses of the teachers who did not have a teacher assistance program were consistent with those who did. An overwhelming majority still cited bureaucratic paperwork and demands from the administration as having a negative effect on their enthusiasm for teaching. Although both groups chose this response later in the study, at the beginning of the year new teachers thought only student attitudes would negate their enthusiasm. Interestingly,

55% of the respondents who did not have mentoring assistance cited maintaining a high level of enthusiasm as the area where they felt most confident. The intern concluded that without the assistance of a program or mentor, new teachers were overwhelmed by administrative demands and paperwork and thus found it difficult to be enthused about their job.

New teachers in both groups were personally interviewed. All teachers were questioned about some of the major problems they were experiencing. Most cited classroom management, organizing everything that must be done, and motivating students. When asked how they could be helped with these problems, all responded that either their mentors or fellow teachers in the teacher assistance program had offered them valuable tips. The group of teachers who were aided by a teacher assistance program discussed their attitudes towards teaching and towards being helped by mentors. The majority were still enthusiastic and excited about the profession. Some were much more at ease after a rocky start. These teachers felt that the teacher assistance program helped everything fall into place. Some said they became less idealistic but having a support system helped put things into perspective. Finally, most of those interviewed asserted that they enjoyed coming to work, and that if they had a problem, they knew there was always someone to help them.

On the other hand, the interviewees who had not been mentored seemed to have slightly different views. Some felt that it was difficult to maintain a fair balance between work and their personal life. They also felt that they were confronted by many challenges that they did not know how to handle. In addition, the teachers claimed that they often felt depleted of new ideas for the classroom. The majority of the interviewees felt that

if they had the opportunity to talk with others through a teacher assistance program, perhaps they would have felt more confident knowing that others were going through the same experiences.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

Beginning any new profession can be quite an undertaking and when one experiences trauma at the start of a career, the results can be disastrous. Teachers who have unsuccessful early experiences often do not make strong commitments to the profession. Part of the problem is that teachers have to answer not only to their superiors but to students and parents also. With new policies and procedures, parents and students can cause even the most competent teachers to lose confidence. Consequently, if the problems of the new teachers are not addressed, they can develop into problems that are eventually unsolvable. Thus, it is important to devise ways for the successful transition of new teachers into the profession. The intern's research found that providing a teacher assistance program greatly reduces the stress experienced by first year teachers.

The intern's research found that beginning teachers were excited about entering the profession. While they had apprehensions that are normal for anyone starting a new job, the novices were genuinely eager to enter their new found career. Positive attitudes were evident in the early part of the school year and their enthusiasm seemed all encompassing. Through questionnaires, surveys, and interviews, the intern learned that the proteges were confident that they would be the ones to make a difference. The beginning teachers were quite certain that their teacher preparation programs in college prepared them for the job of teaching, and they were sure that they could motivate

students and students would respond to them. In addition, most of the new teachers felt that teaching would be their lifelong profession. At the start of the school year, all of the new teachers admitted to being highly motivated.

The intern conducted research on the effect of teacher assistance programs on teacher motivation. Through various data gathering methods, the intern determined that offering new teachers assistance helped them sustain their initial degree of motivation. The teacher induction program provided the new hires with assistance to help them make the transition into teaching and to help them become highly motivated..

Prior to the start of the school year, the intern and the administrators presented a new teacher induction workshop. One objective of the program was to provide the novices with an orientation into the school system. This was extremely important since new teachers feel like strangers in their new surroundings, and it was essential to make them feel as comfortable as possible. The orientation familiarized the new teachers with the layout of the school, its surroundings, and some of the key people with whom they would be working. The program also focused on educational goals. For example, the intern provided tips to relieve the anxieties of the new hires so that they could eventually reach their full potential as educators. In addition, beginning teachers were assisted with developing a professional growth plan to ensure short and long term success. They were also familiarized with the characteristics of effective teachers so that they could model these characteristics in their classrooms. Also, they were given a lesson design model as a framework for planning and implementing lessons for their students. New teachers were matched with veteran teachers as mentors while they were also paired with a non-

tenured teacher who could give them moral support and offer them insight into what it was like to be a first year teacher.

As the year progressed, the new teachers were helped with a variety of problems. Among the problems were difficult schedules, problematic students, idealistic views, and bureaucratic paperwork. The intern distributed a checklist to mentors at the beginning of the school year. The checklist outlined things to do to help new teachers in both the working environment and in the area of instruction. The intern also made herself available to all new teachers for any assistance they might need throughout the school year. Furthermore, the intern held new teacher meetings quarterly on specific topics such as handling phone calls from parents and conducting oneself in parent/teacher conferences. The meetings also provided a time for the sharing of common problems among the new teachers.

Through a variety of data sources and data gathering methods, the intern concluded that those who were assisted by a teacher assistance program had a higher degree of motivation and a more positive attitude towards teaching than those who were not. The intern also concluded that some of the major problems confronting new teachers were handling difficult schedules, too many demands from the administration, motivating students, and maintaining student discipline. The results of the study will be used to improve the teacher assistance program for the future.

The school saw a positive change with the teacher assistance program. In fact, the principal desired to expand the program even further next year. Mentors and others who participated in the study offered invaluable assistance to the proteges. They listened, acted as a sounding board, and gave advice; they stood by the proteges in critical

situations; they helped them avoid negative patterns of behavior. As a result, the school had a group of beginning teachers who were both confident and competent. There were less discipline referrals from new teachers than in the past, and they displayed a high degree of competence in the classroom.

The goal of the program was for it to be non-threatening and supportive and to foster an easy flow of communication between new and experienced teachers. Some veteran mentor teachers who had become somewhat complacent in their jobs appeared to be enthusiastic about imparting their expertise to the proteges. The reward of seeing a new teacher model their teaching ideas or behaviors gave them satisfaction. Furthermore, there was more camaraderie between the new and veteran teachers. Often new teachers band together and they are fearful of approaching the inner circle of the experienced staff. The induction program allowed the novices to interact with most members of the staff and thus provided an opportunity for interaction.

The study helped the intern's leadership development in a variety of ways. The intern took a leadership role in developing the teacher assistance program and initiated and managed discussions, meetings, and workshops. Through the meetings with the new teachers, the intern practiced communication skills and also used appropriate decision making techniques. Furthermore, the intern used the group meetings to enhance the motivation of the new teachers and to help them create opportunities for professional development experiences. Finally, the study helped the intern apply human relations skills in interacting effectively with others.

In conclusion, the mentoring of new teachers should be studied over a longer period of time to freely understand the long term effects of a teacher assistance program. Although



the program appeared to be successful, the program can be improved and should be extended to a 3 year program so that it will serve all non-tenured teachers. Workshops and training sessions need to be made available to mentors and workshops for the new teachers need to be enhanced. Finally, encouraging everyone to participate in a collaborative effort to help new teachers will result in a more effective assistance program and will help elevate the motivation of beginning teachers.

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Appendix A  
Research Instruments

## SURVEY ON TEACHER MOTIVATION

1. Do you feel that having a mentor is beneficial?

\_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_\_maybe

2. How apprehensive are you still about your teaching assignment?

\_\_\_\_\_very apprehensive \_\_\_\_\_somewhat apprehensive \_\_\_\_\_not apprehensive

3. How well do you feel that your teacher training program in college prepared you for the actual job of teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_very prepared \_\_\_\_\_somewhat prepared \_\_\_\_\_not prepared at all

4. On a scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest, how would you rate your level of motivation towards teaching at this time?

\_\_\_\_\_5 \_\_\_\_\_4 \_\_\_\_\_3 \_\_\_\_\_2 \_\_\_\_\_1

5. Which best describes your attitude towards teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_Teaching is my ultimate goal and I plan to retire from the profession.

\_\_\_\_\_I am almost certain that this will be my lifelong profession; however, I'd like to see how this year progresses.

\_\_\_\_\_I am not quite certain if I will teach forever and I am open to exploring other options.

\_\_\_\_\_I am only teaching until I can enter another profession.

6. Which, if any, do you think has had a negative effect on your enthusiasm for teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_student attitudes

\_\_\_\_\_attitudes of other teachers

\_\_\_\_\_problems with parents

\_\_\_\_\_unclear expectation

\_\_\_\_\_bureaucratic paperwork

\_\_\_\_\_too many demands from the administration

\_\_\_\_\_difficult work assignments

\_\_\_\_\_lack of assistance from fellow teachers  
(poor schedule, overcrowded classes, etc.)

(over)

7. Place a + next to the two areas where you feel the MOST confident  
Place a - next to the two areas where you feel the LEAST confident.

\_\_\_\_\_motivating students

\_\_\_\_\_using a variety of teaching methods

\_\_\_\_\_planning instruction

\_\_\_\_\_organizing and managing my classroom

\_\_\_\_\_maintaining student discipline

\_\_\_\_\_handling problems with parents

\_\_\_\_\_managing my time and work

\_\_\_\_\_evaluating student progress

\_\_\_\_\_diagnosing student needs

\_\_\_\_\_maintaining a high level of enthusiasm

7. In a sentence or two, describe your attitude towards teaching at this time.

Thank you for your time and effort. All responses will be held strictly confidential.

NAME (optional)\_\_\_\_\_

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS

Please choose the response for each item that most clearly indicates your level of need for assistance in the area described in the item.

Possible responses:

- A. Little or no need for assistance in the area
- B. Moderate need for assistance in the area
- C. Very high need for assistance in the area

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Organizing and managing my classroom
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Maintaining student discipline
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Obtaining instructional resources and materials
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Planning for instruction
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Managing my time and work
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Diagnosing student needs
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluating student progress and student work
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Motivating students
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Communicating with parents
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Communicating with administrators
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Assisting students with special needs
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Using a variety of teaching methods
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Dealing with differences among students
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Understanding my responsibilities as a teacher
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Dealing with stress

List any professional needs you have that are not addressed by the preceding items.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NEW TEACHERS**

1. What are some of the major problems you are experiencing? How can we help you with these problems?
2. How have you experienced success in the classroom?
3. What topic would you like to discuss at further meetings?



## SURVEY ON TEACHER MOTIVATION (#2)

1. Were you given any type of mentoring when you started teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no

2. If not, do you think having a mentor or a new teacher assistance program could have helped you?

\_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_\_maybe

3. How well do you feel that your teacher training program in college prepared you for the actual job of teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_very prepared \_\_\_\_\_somewhat prepared \_\_\_\_\_not prepared at all

4. On a scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest, how would you rate your level of motivation towards teaching at this time?

\_\_\_\_\_5 \_\_\_\_\_4 \_\_\_\_\_3 \_\_\_\_\_2 \_\_\_\_\_1

5. Which best describes your attitude towards teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_Teaching is my ultimate goal and I plan to retire from the profession.

\_\_\_\_\_I am almost certain that this will be my lifelong profession; however, I'd like to see how this year progresses.

\_\_\_\_\_I am not quite certain if I will teach forever and I am open to exploring other options.

\_\_\_\_\_I am only teaching until I can enter another profession.

6. Which, if any, do you think might have a negative effect on your enthusiasm for teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_student attitudes

\_\_\_\_\_attitudes of other teachers

\_\_\_\_\_problems with parents

\_\_\_\_\_unclear expectation

\_\_\_\_\_bureaucratic paperwork

\_\_\_\_\_too many demands from the administration

\_\_\_\_\_difficult work assignments

\_\_\_\_\_lack of assistance from fellow teachers  
(poor schedule, overcrowded classes, etc.)

7. Place a + next to the two areas where you feel the MOST confident  
Place a - next to the two areas where you feel the LEAST confident.

\_\_\_\_\_motivating students

\_\_\_\_\_using a variety of teaching methods

\_\_\_\_\_planning instruction

\_\_\_\_\_organizing and managing my classroom

\_\_\_\_\_maintaining student discipline

\_\_\_\_\_handling problems with parents

\_\_\_\_\_managing my time and work

\_\_\_\_\_evaluating student progress

\_\_\_\_\_diagnosing student needs

\_\_\_\_\_maintaining a high level of enthusiasm

7. In a sentence or two, describe your attitude towards teaching at this time.

Thank you for your time and effort. All responses will be held strictly confidential.

NAME (optional)\_\_\_\_\_

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