The Impact of Mentoring on Retention, Quality, Commitment of Graduates from One School-University Partnership

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THE IMPACT OF MENTORING ON
RETENTION, QUALITY, COMMITMENT OF
GRADUATES
FROM ONE SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

A Dissertation in
Curriculum Studies

Brenda Kraber

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Abstract

The Impact of Mentoring on Retention, Quality, Commitment of Graduates From One School-University Partnership

This study examined the impact of mentoring on retention, quality and commitment of graduates from one school-university partnership. This project explored this issue through a review of relevant literature on effective teaching, components of quality teacher preparation programs, beginning teachers, mentoring and Professional Development Schools.

How to best prepare teachers for the multi-faceted, challenging job that needs to be done has been a question that has faced universities and school districts for many years. With the growing numbers of veteran teachers now ready to retire and the increasing need for more teachers, the proportion between experienced and inexperienced teachers is going to change. This phenomenological study looked at a specific group of students from one school-university partnership to learn from their experiences in order to determine how a mentoring program affected their retention, quality and commitment to teaching.

The findings from this study indicated that the mentor support that this group of students received was critical to their development as teachers and how well prepared they felt as they entered their own classroom; however, having a mentor was not the only support that was needed for this group. Being schooled in a collaborative and teaming environment was also instrumental.

Another finding from this study is the importance of having extended clinical hours in an actual classroom before taking one over. Teaching is an art and
a science and it is hard to learn all that needs to be learned in a traditional ten or sixteen week student teaching period. This group of students had an entire clinical year where they observed, co-planned, co-taught and then took over the classroom. This experience was invaluable and helped the transition between clinical and full time responsibilities.

Having a mentor program does not insure that new teachers will get the support they need. There needs to be a collegial and shared responsibility attitude within the environment. Teachers need to model good instructional practices and collaborate with one another so that ideas can be shared. A strong support system for novice teachers is crucial to develop and retain quality teachers.
Acknowledgement

The guidance, support and mentorship of friends, family and respected colleagues have contributed to not only this research but this entire professional journey. I have had the opportunity to work with and learn from some of the most talented educators in both the public schools and higher education. Each of them has played a significant part in my meeting this challenge and I am forever grateful for their example. Specifically I would like to acknowledge:

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Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

Young athletes who want to be professional baseball players enter the field by being drafted out of high school or college. They are recruited and then placed in the minor leagues. They may spend four to seven years in the minor leagues, learning how to hit, field, or pitch. They learn from coaches and other mentors not only skills but strategies in order to perfect their game. Baseball players learn their job by applying the skills and strategies in games so that hopefully they will be called to the show which is the major leagues. Unfortunately, many new teachers come into the field of teaching without having enjoyed many opportunities to be at bat in the minor leagues before experiencing the major league responsibility of having their own classrooms.

In the last five years, the teaching profession has seen a great increase of new teachers coming into the field. In fact, the total number of elementary and secondary teachers increased 27 percent between 1988 and 2001 and is projected to rise even more through the year 2013 (Equality of educational opportunity, 2002). The goal of teacher preparation programs should be similar; insuring a highly qualified highly effective teacher in every classroom.

The question that still exists is how to ensure that more high-quality teachers enter and stay in American classrooms. There has been little evidence on how best to prepare, retain, and use effective teachers (Viadero, 2005); because of this, there are differences of opinions on what is the best approach. Programs aimed at supporting new teachers have been few and have not adequately addressed the issue of how to retain them (Goodlad & McMannon, 2004). Of
those who do choose to enter classrooms, many do not stay; as many as 35 percent of new teachers leave the profession within five years (Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek & Morton, NCES, 2006).

New teacher attrition has long been a problem, especially in high-poverty urban districts. In most states, the educational and financial burdens of this attrition fall disproportionately upon the districts and students least able to afford them. Schools in which language barriers and cultural diversity present special challenges tend to experience the worst rates of attrition. This means that a high percentage of teachers coming into the profession will find themselves recruited into the most challenging situations (Moir, 2003). Retaining new teachers matters for many reasons. School improvement efforts require a reasonable degree of staff stability. It is almost impossible to create change with a transient, inexperienced staff. School systems with high teacher turnover typically fill many vacant positions with teachers who have emergency teaching certificates or licensed teachers who are teaching subjects for which they are not fully prepared to teach, making it harder to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind Act that all teachers be ‘highly qualified’ (Claycomb, 2000).

With attrition and the need for more teachers, many teacher candidates are moving from other careers to enter teaching. The events of September 11th 2001, the loss of jobs in business, and the desire to do something meaningful with their lives have launched people into teacher certification programs (Gerald & Hussar, 2003). In fact, according to the National Center for Education statistics in Washington D.C., half of the students admitted to post-baccalaureate teacher-
training programs are coming from other careers such as banking, business and advertising. Fifteen years ago, that figure was three percent and in 1998 nearly three in ten individuals who completed their teacher training in 1998 already had at least a bachelor’s degree.

With news of the growing shortage of highly qualified teachers, many states have offered a range of incentives to lure new teachers to their states. Maryland has offered mortgage subsidies for new recruits while Mississippi promised to forgive student loans. Texas education officials recruited Oklahoma’s teachers with offers of higher salaries and better working conditions (Blair, 2000; Bradley, 2000). Despite these efforts to add to the teaching profession, schools in most parts of the country are unprepared to meet the challenge presented by this shortage. A large proportion of the retiring teachers had made teaching a lifelong career for the first time in United States history (Grant & Murray, 1999) and, thus, decades have passed since most schools have mounted an intensive search to recruit and hire teachers (Johnson, 2004).

In the past 20 years, we have seen changing demographics in the teaching profession. The career longevity of the cohort of teachers hired in the 1960s and 1970s, along with the reduced demand for teachers in the 1980s, has had a significant effect on the distribution of teachers (Johnson, 2005). From 1971 to 1983, the largest proportion of the teaching force was under the age of 35. This same group still constituted the largest group between 1983 and 1991 and again, at age 45, after 1991 (Wirt, 2000). This fact, coupled with the increase in new
hires, has changed the look of the teaching force. One population peak of the educators is getting set to retire while the other peak is beginning to teach.

For many years, the teachers who now approach retirement had no formal training or real responsibility for the induction of new colleagues, because so few entered and those who did usually received little attention or support. As a group, this cohort was accustomed to working alone and even endorsed isolation, they enjoyed the autonomy they had in their classrooms. They committed their adult working life to helping students achieve but did little to understand or feel responsible for helping new teachers (Johnson, 2004).

There is now a shift in the proportions of veteran and novice teachers in schools. An increased need for newly hired teachers is expected over the next decade. The problem is that as a group elementary and secondary teachers are significantly older than the general labor force (Gerald & Hussar, 2003). The median age for teachers was forty-four in 1994; for other fields, it was thirty-eight (Gerald & Hussar, 2003). The burden of replacing large numbers of retiring teachers is coming at a challenging time with enrollments increasing into the next decade. With this, the balance between experienced and novice teachers is rapidly shifting. With some programs accelerating the certification process, teachers are coming into the field with different needs. How do these teachers compare with experienced teachers? What kind of support do they need so that they and their students can succeed? Preparing for the classroom is not like preparing for the big leagues. Teachers do not have the luxury of spending much time in the minors, learning from others before going to the big show. So, how can teacher
education programs provide the “minor leagues” experiences and knowledge necessary to prepare effective teachers? With an increasing number of teachers coming from other fields, and the multiplicity of demands that teachers face, mentoring becomes critical. A strong and effective mentoring program can help new teachers as they learn the culture of the district and can provide these teachers crucial support they need as they become effective and strong leaders in the teaching profession.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to discover and determine the impact of mentoring on teacher quality, teacher retention, and teacher commitment on teachers in one preparation model. Specifically, this research will focus on graduates of the Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program* and their experiences as they began their teaching careers. Through interviews and surveys, the researcher will gain an understanding from the teachers themselves and administrative perspectives on how the program’s mentoring experience had an effect on their teaching, their retention, and their overall sense of professionalism.

The following research questions will guide the study:
What is the impact of mentoring on teacher retention for graduates from one teacher preparation program?
What is the impact of mentoring on quality teaching for graduates from one teacher preparation program?
What is the impact of mentoring on teacher commitment for graduates from one teacher preparation program?

*Pseudonym
Chapter II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

At the heart of cognitive learning theories is the assumption that learners construct their own knowledge (Resnick & Collins, 1996). In constructivist theory, this assumption finds life in the belief that learning is enhanced by the ability to use content and context experiences to link and structure prior knowledge with new information in meaningful ways (Newman, et. al., 1989). Situated learning theory builds on this by describing how support for individuals’ knowledge construction is fostered through authentic learning context (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed the situated learning theory in which learning occurs as part of a situated activity with its main characteristic known as legitimate peripheral participation. Legitimate peripheral participation occurs when “learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). Learners need to participate in an activity with a more experienced expert in order to gradually become more proficient in the activity. Becoming part of the social process helps the newcomer learn specific knowledge and skills (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Situated learning stems from research on apprenticeship. The study of how these apprenticeships operate uncovered the importance of “situated activity” to learning, meaning that all activities are situated because of the relationship between the knowledge gained and the learning process. Situated activity
illustrates the importance of a “comprehensive understanding involving the whole person rather than ‘receiving’ a body of factual information about the world; on the activity in and with the world; and on the view that agent, activity, and the world mutually constitute each other” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 33). The notion of situated activity is important for understanding learning because it reinforces the development of meaning, understanding, and learning in a specific context.

The Main Principles of Situated Learning

Based on this early work in situated activity, Lave and Wenger (1991) developed the notion of legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice by studying tailors. This research concentrated on how the apprentices participated in and learned about certain tailoring activities without being specifically taught the skills. Most of the tailors also became esteemed and accomplished master tailors as a result of the involvement in the tailoring community. According to Lave and Wenger (1991),

The notion of situated learning now appears to be a transitory concept, a bridge, between a view according to which cognitive processes (and thus learning) are primary and a view according to which social practice is the primary, generative phenomenon, and learning is one of its characteristics. (p. 34)

Stated differently, learning occurs within the social community and real-world context in which an activity takes place. Not only does learning occur by doing, but also happens as “an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice” that is encapsulated “under the rubric of legitimate peripheral participation” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 31).

A key component of situated learning is moving from the peripheral of an activity to participating in it. Definitions of the components are:
Peripheral. Not only should the novice be involved in the social world of the profession, but the novice also should move from peripheral participation to full participation under the guidance by an expert who increases the novice’s involvement in the profession. Lave & Wenger (1991) studied how this played out in five different forms of apprenticeship: midwives, tailors, supermarket butchers and recovering non drinking alcoholics in Alcoholics Anonymous. The forms of apprenticeship they studied ranged from informal to formal relationships. All these examples demonstrated the importance of having access to peripheral participation in order to fully learn all the skills and knowledge surrounding the profession, as well as to develop their professional identity.

Participation. Learning occurs best in active settings, through “doing” and creating knowledge in the actual context as opposed to receiving abstract pieces of information to apply in the future. Lave & Wenger (1991) focus on the varieties of social interaction and the suitable contexts for learning to occur, rather than the cognitive and conceptual processes involved. “Participation is always based on situated negotiations and renegotiations of meaning in the world” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 51). In other words, Lave & Wenger’s theory (1991) means that experiencing learning in a social situation is essential to understanding and must occur within a specific learning context.

Legitimate participation in a community of practice. The legitimacy of participation is an important concept for describing how one belongs to the community of practice. Belonging can range from being a passive observer or newcomer to the activity being an active instructor; however it mostly is about
being involved in the social community surrounding the activity throughout the learning process. It is through this involvement that people develop knowledge and construct identities in order to feel a part of the profession. The learners see themselves and their identities as part of the learning process and feel they are doing the job (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

In each of the apprentice studies, Lave and Wenger (1991) report that there was only a small amount of observable teaching and the more important occurrence is the learning that transpires within the communities of practice. The learners do not follow a specific curriculum for obtaining the information, but learn through legitimate access and involvement in the activity.

While Lave & Wenger (1991) did not utilize the context of school in their formulation of situated learning theory, they do feel that using legitimate peripheral participation within a community of practice is important to rethink schooling as a modern form of social practice. Therefore, the theory of situated theory can be used to understand how teachers who have been mentored learn the nuances of teaching.

Situated learning theory is important to understanding the research on mentoring based on one of the two main principles. The first principle states that when knowledge is presented it needs to be in the appropriate context. Learners need to observe and participate in a setting in which the information is normally utilized. The second principle, and the central element of this research, states that learning occurs in a social situation; learners need to be actively involving in the community of practice.
The key behind learners gaining knowledge within a community of practice is that people learn from their more experienced peers. In a mentoring relationship a novice might look for someone more-experienced to gain knowledge and skills in that area. In this case, the novice teachers are learning from their mentor and perhaps others in the school setting. This is important so that new teachers have the support they typically need to stay in teaching, to become effective teachers and eventually to be able to give back to the teaching profession.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective Teaching

Quality teaching is one of the most important factors in student performance (Darling-Hammond, 1997; DeLeon, 2003; Goldhaber, 2002; NCTAF, 1996; Stronge, 1997). As early as 1966 in the Coleman Report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, teacher effectiveness was found to account for the largest variation in student test scores (Goldhaber, 2002). The main issue in education is that all students need high-quality, effective teachers to make maximum achievement gains and meet high learning standards (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Goldhaber, 2002). One of the first premises of the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF, 1996) is that the skills and knowledge bases of teachers have a significant impact on student learning (Darling-Hammond & Ball, 1998; DeLeon, 2003; Goldhaber, 2002).

School reform efforts can be hindered or maintained by the availability of quality teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Presently, there is a lack of consensus on how to define a ‘qualified’ or ‘quality’ teacher. Questions of how much education, what types of training, and which kinds of teacher preparation are necessary for a teacher to be considered ‘qualified’ are a few of the factors influencing the debate (Ingersoll, 2001).

What makes an effective or quality teacher is difficult to determine definitively since the research findings are mixed. Linda Darling-Hammond (1999) suggests that a teacher’s verbal ability is related to student achievement. Slavin (2003) found that instructional effectiveness is instruction that is
coordinated around the learner, not the subject. A positive influence seems to be a teacher’s educational coursework, according to studies by Ashton and Crocker (1987) and Evertson, Hawley, and Zlotnik (1985). Darling-Hammond (1999) suggested that it may be the interaction of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge that reinforces or diminishes teacher effectiveness. Cruikshanks (1992) maintained that a teacher is judged to be ‘good’ by significant others when the teacher meets their unique needs. These significant others include students, parents, colleagues, administrators, and the public at large.

In Fenstermacher and Richardson’s (2005) examination of teaching, they distinguished between good teaching and successful teaching. Their analysis suggests that any determination of quality in teaching must account for both the worthiness of the activity (good teaching) as well as the realization of intended outcomes (successful teaching). Quality teaching can be understood as teaching that produces learning, but any assertion that such teaching is quality teaching depends on students learning what the teacher is teaching.

Good teaching is not the same as successful teaching, nor does one logically entail the other. According to Fenstermacher & Richardson (2005), for teaching to be both good and successful, it must be conjoined with factors well beyond the control of the classroom teacher. These factors include:

- Willingness and effort by the learner;
- A social surround that is supportive of teaching and learning; and
- Opportunity to teach and learn.
Fenstermacher & Richardson (2005) identified three elements in good teaching. They grouped the various methods of teaching into three categories of practice. The first element is the logical act of teaching. This includes activities such as defining, demonstrating, explaining, correcting and interpreting. The second element is the psychological act of teaching. It encompasses variables such as motivation, encouragement, rewards, punishments, planning and evaluation. And finally, the third element is the moral act of teaching. This element is displayed when the teacher both exhibits and fosters such moral traits as honesty, courage, tolerance, compassion, respect, and fairness.

Conflicting information is evident in studies of quality or effective teachers. Some studies suggest a variety of aspects related to the teacher as reasons for effectiveness; however a consensus of these aspects is not widespread. In researching teacher effectiveness, Darling-Hammond (1999) found consistent results: the relationship between teachers and achievement when the teachers use a range of strategies and interaction styles rather than one single instructional approach. She also concluded that a teacher’s ability to deal with the more complex activities of higher-level thinking and problem-solving are likely associated with all of the factors mentioned: verbal ability, educational experiences, subject matter knowledge, and strategies used. Stronge and Hindman (2003) maintained that there are six areas that synthesize the research on effective teachers: (a) knowledge gained through education and experience; (b) the caring, motivated, dedicated person; (c) classroom management and
organization; (d) instructional planning; (e) instructional implementation strategies; and (f) student monitoring progress.

In a study of research on effective teaching, Cruikshanks (1992) found that research prior to 1960 focused on the identification of teacher traits considered exemplary by administrators and supervisors. Conclusions from this research found no general agreement on what constituted the essential characteristics of a competent teacher and that seeking teacher candidates with these character traits by themselves cannot predict effectiveness. He determined that since 1960, research had focused on identifying teaching behaviors that were exhibited when students were successful. These behaviors were observed in classrooms using an anecdotal instrument to determine how and to what extent teachers performed a group of precise actions and the extent to which they were related to learning. Cruikshanks (1992) found a lack of agreement on the outcome variables to establish effectiveness due to the innumerable goals for teaching; however, he created a composite picture of the findings including: (a) seek high goals; (b) provide adequate opportunities to learn; (c) teach systematically; (d) give immediate feedback; (e) task involvement; (f) teach in a variety of ways; (g) be knowledgeable with content and a variety of delivery methods; (h) be efficient and tolerant; and (i) set and apply clear rules consistently. This study was limited since they only tracked the frequency of the behaviors rather than the appropriateness, quality, and timing involved in evidencing them.

Effective teaching requires making difficult and principled decisions, exercising careful judgment, and understanding one’s professional
responsibilities. In addition to the technical knowledge and skills teachers use in their daily practices, they also must be aware of the ethical issues of the profession. Teachers must master a repertoire of instructional methods and strategies, while at the same time remain reflective on their practice. It’s important to realize that good teachers must have a multitude of subject matter and technical knowledge including knowledge and skills needed to deal with a diverse population.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2006) outlines five core propositions used in identifying teachers who effectively enhance student achievement. They are:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning;
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and have the necessary pedagogical knowledge;
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning;
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; and
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

The mission of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, in addition to codifying professional standards, also includes establishing a voluntary system for assessing and certifying teachers, plus advancing educational reforms to improve student learning (Harman, 2001). The NBPTS is an organization run by teachers and is meant to improve teaching and to recognize advanced practices. Accomplished teachers can achieve national certification
through a process of performance-based assessments and a series of written exercises. The NBPTS standards are based on research that recognizes sound educational practices resulting in improved student achievement (NBPTS, 2002). For the purpose of this dissertation, the definition of effective teaching will be the 5 core NBPTS propositions mentioned earlier.

Through the process of earning national certification, teachers often need to change their practices to encourage higher level thinking skills and student-centered approaches. They may be called upon to make changes in their fundamental beliefs (Crawford, Hjelm, & Mohor, 2003). Berg (2003) maintained that National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) are better for students because they are well trained, able to change the culture of mediocrity, and their research-based practices increase the quality of learning experiences for children.

Research conducted by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and private researchers have demonstrated that students with NBCTs achieve at higher levels than their peers in classrooms with teachers who do not hold national certification (Bond, Smith, & Baker, 2000; Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004).

In fields ranging from mathematics and science to reading, elementary education researchers have found that teachers who have a greater knowledge of teaching and learning are more highly rated and are more effective with students (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Furthermore, measures of pedagogical knowledge, including knowledge of teaching and learning, teaching methods, and curriculum, influence teaching performance and have stronger effects than subject-matter knowledge (Ashton & Crocker, 1986; Begle & Geeslin, 1972).
All children deserve quality teachers. The focus on teacher quality and teacher education has never been more evident in the rhetoric of policy makers. Educators now understand that teachers make a difference but what is not clear is how to best prepare the new generation of teachers.

**Components of Quality Teacher Preparation Programs**

Today’s schools face enormous challenges. We are an increasingly complex society. Our technology keeps changing and schools are being asked to educate the most diverse student body in our history, while at the same time achieving higher academic standards (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Many agree that this task cannot be teacher-proofed through systems, testing mandates, or even curriculum packages. Achieving levels of student understanding requires immensely skillful teaching and schools that are designed to support teachers’ ongoing learning for modifying and enlarging their pedagogy.

Over the past decade, education schools have been criticized as being ineffective in preparing teachers for their work, unresponsive to new demands, removed from actual practice, as well as being barriers to recruitment of bright college students into the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond, 2000). In more than 40 states, policy makers have enacted alternative routes to teacher certification to create pathways into teaching other than those provided by traditional four-year undergraduate programs. Some of these programs are carefully structured post baccalaureate programs, but others are little more than emergency hiring options.
A controversial study that looked at the successes and failures of university-based teacher education programs (Levine, 2006) concluded that a majority of the graduates were prepared in universities that have low admission and graduation standards. For decades, universities have used their teacher education programs as a way to make money to offset other academic programs on their campuses. This has forced education schools to increase enrollments and lower the admission standards. This study revealed that too many of the teacher education programs still hold on to the outdated methods which focused on theory more than practice. The findings came from the analysis of 28 teacher education programs by surveying alumni, principals, education school deans and faculty. In addition, this study relied on the Northwest Evaluation Assessment to link teacher preparation with student achievement.

One conclusion from this study (Levine, 2006) was that teachers were not adequately prepared. In fact, 62% of the alumni did not feel they were prepared to teach or cope with the demands of the classroom once they graduated. Principals also gave low scores to teacher education programs with respect to preparing new teachers in the area of technology. The inconsistency of the curriculum also was noted as a problem. The length of programs varied from institution to institution while the balance between theory and practice ranged from ten weeks in a classroom to an entire year. Another issue that came from this study dealt with the faculty at the university. Many participants felt that there was a disconnection between the faculty and the classroom. Integration of class work and field work was little or nonexistent. They want to lower standards in
order to bring in the money. Levine (2006) makes five recommendations from the study; they are:

1. Transform education schools from ivory towers into professional schools focused on school practice;

2. Focus on student achievement as the primary measure of the success of teacher education programs;

3. Make five-year teacher education programs the norm;

4. Establish effective mechanisms for teacher education quality control; and

5. Close failing teacher education programs, strengthen promising ones, and expand excellent programs. Create incentives for outstanding students and career changers to enter teacher education at doctoral universities (Levine, 2006, p. 9-11).

Voices within the profession (Holmes Group, 1986) also have expressed dissatisfaction with teacher education programs. They have urged the redesign of teacher education to strengthen its knowledge base, its connections to both practice and theory, and its capacity to support the development of strong teaching. There are several views of how to change teacher education, albeit at polarized ends of the spectrum. One approach would be to replace university-based preparation with on-the-job training that focuses on the pragmatics of teaching, while the other would expand professional training to prepare teachers for more adaptive, knowledge-based practice, while simultaneously tackling the redesign of schools and teaching.
In the past decade, alternative teacher certification has spawned many new pathways that provide various transitions into a teaching career. The most dramatic change in the past few years has been a shift toward people beginning their preparation to teach later in life. Alternate routes to certification began in the 1980s as an effort to ward off projected shortages of teachers. According to Feistritzer (2005) this movement now has become a more acceptable, prime source for recruiting highly qualified individuals who wouldn’t have entered teaching otherwise. The fastest growth in alternative routes to teacher certification has occurred since 2000 with most of these routes administered by colleges and universities.

Adelman (1986) described alternative routes to certification as programs that enroll “noncertified individuals with at least a bachelor’s degree, shortcuts, special assistance, or unique curricula leading to eligibility for a standard teaching certificate” (p. 24). Darling-Hammond (1989) classifies nontraditional teacher preparation programs in three categories: (a) nontraditional recruitment programs, (b) alternative certification programs, and (c) retraining programs. Another definition comes from Roth (1989), who explains an alternative route to certification as one that allows the teacher to take charge of a classroom before completing the usual preparation program. Roth’s definition also includes programs that accept nontraditional students (i.e. with bachelor’s degrees in other fields or those with experience in business and industry) and might even bypass traditional preparation programs through nontraditional or accelerated ways.
By the late 1990s, common characteristics of alternate routes began to emerge and then were used by the states to create such programs. These characteristics include:

- A program that was specifically designed to recruit, prepare and license talented individuals who already had at least a bachelor’s degree and often other careers in fields other than education;
- A rigorous screening process;
- A field-based program;
- Coursework in professional education studies that would be delivered before and during teaching;
- A strong mentoring program; and
- High performance standards that would be used for completion of the program.

The shortage of qualified teachers in math and science has resulted in the development of various alternative certification programs. Such programs enable individuals with exemplary backgrounds in math and/or science to become classroom teachers without having to spend much time in education courses. One model of an alternative certification program is a summer boot camp of approximately four weeks followed by an academic year internship, monitored by an experienced teacher (Lederman, 2003). The rationale behind this type of a quick certification program is the notion that teachers in the future will need to be ‘highly qualified’ in certain specific areas (science and math) in order to show progress in this data driven society. The hope is that experts in the areas of
science and math might be lured to a shorter certification program in order to get more of them in the classrooms (U. S. Department of Education, 2002).

Although different definitions for alternative certification programs exist, for the purpose of this dissertation the term will be used for a process that allows individuals with at a minimum a bachelor’s degree in a field other than education to become certified while applying the theory to practice in classrooms. For example, this might describe a person who has a degree in advertising who now wants to become a teacher, takes preparation courses while at the same time is observing, practicing and applying the teaching skills in a supported classroom setting.

While most agree that there is knowledge and skills for teaching, many proponents of alternative certification still believe that anyone can teach, or at least know a subject well enough to teach it. The review of literature on Darling-Hammond (2006) suggests otherwise. Reviews of the research over the past 30 years have concluded that even with the weaknesses of current teacher education and certification, fully prepared and certified teachers are generally better rated and more successful with students than teachers without such preparation (Ashton & Crocker, 1986; Evertson, Hawley, & Zlotnik, 1985; Greenberg, 1983).

Teacher preparation programs must have well-chosen courses that include the core knowledge for teaching, but at the same time, it also is important for these programs to incorporate the prospective teachers’ experiences so that they can integrate and use their knowledge in the classroom. This can be challenging when designing a teacher education program. The prospective teacher must
worry not only about what to teach but also how the knowledge of teaching actually fits with the practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

This learning-to-teach idea needs to be addressed in teacher preparation programs. For most, learning to teach requires new teachers to understand teaching in ways that were different from how they were taught. Lortie (1975) called this problem “the apprentice of observation,” which means that learning has taken place by being a student for 12 years. Another challenge is that learning to teach requires teachers to learn to act like a teacher as well as think like a teacher. This includes understanding that teaching is multifaceted. The teacher must do a variety of things, many of them simultaneously. A third challenge for teacher preparation programs is helping new teachers understand that learning to teach requires them to respond to constant demands in the classroom. Tension is commonplace for teachers as they juggle and balance as well as learning academic goals everyday (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

A comprehensive study that researched four-and five-year teacher education programs suggested that a five-year program that included an internship with university supervision may help novice teachers weather the problems that beginning teachers often face (Andrew, 1990). These problems were feelings of isolation, difficulty with discipline, classroom management and program concerns, instructional decisions and communicating with parents and administration (Andrew, 1990). This study included 1,394 graduates of 11 teacher preparation programs in ten different states. One conclusion from this study was that students in the five-year or extended program were more likely to
have been involved in curriculum development in their school district. A second conclusion was that the five-year graduates seemed to be more ambitious than the undergraduate program alumni and more eager to engage in collaboration with their colleagues. They also seemed to be more committed to staying in teaching and were far less discouraged by time, money, or status. The findings from this study suggest that the graduates from the five-year teacher preparation program are good candidates for additional responsibilities, professional development activities and collaborative curriculum development projects early in their careers (Andrew, 1990).

What is the best way to prepare future teachers in order to address these challenges of learning to teach? Darling-Hammond (2006) selected seven programs that exemplify what she sees as the most important aspects of high-quality teacher preparation. This study examined the programs from Alverno College, Bank Street College of Education, Trinity University, University of California, University of Southern Maine, University of Virginia, and Wheelock College. Seven common distinguishing features that produced graduates who were well prepared for their first days as teachers were identified. They included:

- A common, clear vision of good teaching that threads through all course work, and clinical experiences so that a coherent set of learning experiences is had by all;
- Well-defined standards of professional practice and performance that are used to assess course work and clinical work;
• A strong core curriculum taught in the context of practice and grounded in child development theory, an understanding of social and cultural contexts, curriculum, assessment, and subject-matter pedagogy;

• Extended clinical experiences of at least 30 weeks of supervised practicum and student teaching;

• Extensive use of case methods, teacher research, performance assessments, and portfolio evaluation that apply learning to real problems of practice;

• Explicit strategies to help students confront their own beliefs and assumptions; and

• Strong relationships, common knowledge, and shared beliefs among school-and university-based faculty who jointly engage in transforming teaching, schooling, and teacher education (p. 305-306).

The curriculum for teacher education should be shaped both by what the teachers need to learn and by how they learn. Content should be organized so that teachers understand what is involved in effective teaching and what factors influence student learning.

It is also important to design teacher education in terms of how teachers learn so that curriculum is organized in a scope and sequence that capitalizes on teacher development-moving from a focus on self to a focus on student learning and from the foundations of learning theories that relate to their implications for teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2006).
Darling-Hammond (2006) identifies three important pedagogical points that are essential to achieve a radically different teacher preparation program. The first is a tight coherence and integration among the courses and between these courses and clinical experiences. There should be a smooth experience between the courses and time in schools. The faculty should plan and work together so that the courses build on one another. In addition, there should be application of the coursework with the clinical experience and these should be clinical classrooms carefully selected so that preservice teachers observe the kind of practices that are taught in the courses. In coherent programs, the core ideas are shared across courses and the assignments are consistent across the curriculum.

According to Darling-Hammond (2006) the second important feature of an effective teacher preparation program is an extensive and intensely supervised clinical program that is integrated with the coursework. This allows the teacher candidates to learn from experts in the field while incorporating new pedagogies.

Some traditional versions of teacher education have had the students take the coursework early on, leaving the student teaching or experience in the classroom for the end of the program. By contrast, the most powerful programs require students to spend a great deal of time in the classroom throughout the program so that they can observe, study, and apply the concepts and strategies. Such programs usually require at least a full academic year of student teaching while under the direct supervision of a qualified cooperating teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2006).
There is a growing body of research that supports the belief that novice teachers who have had more clinical experience are better prepared when they begin teaching. They are able to apply the theory to the practice in order to increase student learning (Baumgartner, Koerner, & Rust, 2002; Denton, 1982). Often, though, the clinical part of teacher education is unorganized and not always in classrooms with quality teachers. The key is to make sure students are entering into classrooms that have experienced teachers who can model the strategies.

The third feature of a quality teacher preparation program, according to Darling-Hammond (2006), is a strong relationship between the university and schools. There needs to be strong models of collaboration with these institutions. Neither group can educate future teachers in isolation. It is impossible to teach someone a strategy without ever seeing it in the classroom. In such partnerships, teachers are immersed in strong and shared cultural norms as well as strong models for practice and collaboration.

Teacher preparation programs can help support teachers in their preservice time but as they begin their career, beginning teachers need unique and specific help. This helps needs to move from the university’s teacher preparation program to the school districts.

**Beginning Teachers**

A great deal of research literature documents the extent to which beginning teachers struggle in their early classroom years (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). Simon Veenman’s (1984) international review of perceived problems among beginning teachers found remarkable consistency,
across both time and differently structured education systems. Among the greatest challenges perceived by rookie teachers was classroom management, motivating students, dealing with the individual differences among students, assessing students and creating relations with parents (Veenman, 1984).

Research on the experiences of beginning teachers confirms that the likelihood of long-term success for many is impaired by the absence of expert guidance, support, and opportunities to reflect on their efforts (McDonald, 1980; Tisher, 1978; Veenman, 1984). Initial teaching experiences have far-reaching effects, for they influence the attitudes and confidence as a teacher develops and grow. Not having the support can even affect decisions about staying in the field (National Institute of Education, 1979).

One of the central problems with some teacher education programs is that the theoretical body of knowledge taught in schools of education is not often the kind of knowledge that teachers draw upon while teaching. Often, they have limited opportunities in an actual classroom to establish the positive, organized learning environment for them to teach and students to learn. Many teachers enter the teaching field directly from university teacher preparation programs, where they mastered minimal pedagogical knowledge or skills (Freiberg, 2002). They need to learn organizing strategies which include; time management, time on task and pacing. If a student teacher comes in the classroom in the middle of the year, they can miss some of the classroom management strategies that set the tone for the year.
Not surprisingly, the attrition rate for beginning teachers has always been high, with nearly one third of them leaving the profession within the first three years. This revolving door creates a permanent core of inexperienced teachers who can put a burden on school districts. Teacher turnover drains the energy and resources as well, requiring administrators and experienced teachers to constantly focus on bringing people up to speed.

It is important to know that beginning teachers face numerous issues and problems as they start their careers in the classroom. Just how successful are internships and induction-year experiences in preparing novice teachers? According to one study teacher education students who have the opportunity to be supported and mentored benefit greatly from the experience of veteran teachers (Vaughn & Coleman, 2004). They feel they spent more time on issues directly related to curriculum and student achievement during their internship (Owens, Williams, & Wiggins, 1996). Mentors can help new teachers with instructional planning which allows the novice to see the big picture. During instructional planning, veteran teachers make decisions on the basis of learner, content, and context. This planning is a critical skill for beginning teachers and with the help of the mentor, lessons can be more effective. Combining the theoretical with the practical can help the beginning teachers apply strategies and techniques in the classroom.

A study that compared the attitudes and perceptions of graduates of two teacher preparation models described the importance of providing support for the new teacher (Owens, Williams & Wiggins 1996). The major components from
both groups were course work, clinical experiences and support given throughout the program. Addressing the concerns of beginning teachers is imperative and from these concerns one can identify common problems that most face. This comparative study included college graduates who were changing careers to become elementary teachers. One was a university-based model while the other was a district-based model. The university-based model offered courses at the university in the evenings and on Saturdays. Course work included theoretical and methodological classes. Along with the course work, the students were assigned 100 hours of clinical hours in a variety of classrooms followed by a supervised student teaching experience for ten weeks. During the second year, the students completed a research project and two induction courses. The program led to a master’s degree and elementary certification.

The district-based model was a full-time three year program. The first year was described as an intern year during which the students worked in the schools as supervised and mentored full-time teachers while taking courses in the evening. The courses were taught jointly by university faculty and district personnel. In the second and third year, the student, now known as a “resident”, had a classroom of his/her own while receiving routine and consistent support from a mentor. At the end of the three years, the students earned an elementary teaching certificate as well as a master’s degree. Teachers felt the amount of time and types of guided support they received in this latter program in a classroom before actually having the sole responsibility for one was extremely important and valuable. Participants who had many opportunities to be involved in assuming
teaching responsibilities throughout the preparation program felt they had more
time to concentrate on curricular issues instead of classroom management.

What do beginning teachers need in order to be effective in the classroom?
The review of literature suggests that there are common practices of effective
teachers and that they rely on three general areas of knowledge; these include:

- Knowledge of learners and how they learn and develop within social
  contexts;
- Understanding of the subject matter and skills to be taught in light of the
  social purposes of education; and
- Understanding of teaching the content and learners to be taught, as
  informed by assessments and supported by a productive classroom
  environment (p. 5).

First, beginning teachers need to understand how a student learns. This
includes recognizing their strengths, interests and preconceptions. It is also
important that novice teachers identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes that we
want children to acquire and how they may be organized so that students can use
and transfer what they have learned. A third key component is the ongoing
assessment of students. This assessment helps the teacher identify what learning
has occurred, which then drives further learning. Finally, understanding how
students learn also includes offering ways for students to learn not only within the
walls of the classroom but also by embracing the community resources.

Understanding children, how they develop, and how they learn is critical
for effective instruction. Teachers who have this knowledge of development are
more effective in managing the classroom, can select appropriate tasks, are more able to guide the learning process, and can maintain the students’ motivation (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

Knowing how to support the students’ growth by understanding their developmental progression, makes it easier to plan instruction for individual differences. Teachers need to understand the tasks they assign and what those tasks require so that they can choose assignments that are appropriate for each student. A mentor is critical in developing these skills.

**Mentoring**

Mentoring, in a general sense, is helping someone else to learn something that he/she otherwise would have learned less well, more slowly, or not at all (Bell, 1996). The word “mentor” comes from Homer’s *The Odyssey*, in which a trusted family friend, Mentor, served as tutor to the crown prince Telemachus while the prince’s father, King Odysseus, fought in the Trojan War. Mentor exhibits both wisdom and sensitivity as he guides and coaches young Telemachus in his newly assumed role of king (Tolentino, 1999). Today, a mentoring relationship has come to mean:

A developmental, caring, sharing, and helping relationship where one person invests time, know-how, and effort in enhancing another person’s growth, knowledge, and skills, and responds to critical needs in the life of that person in ways that prepare the individual for greater productivity or achievement in the future (Shea, 1994, p. 2).

Teachers who are new to the profession often experience stress in their initial teaching experiences. In addition to the traditional burdens of managing
school rules, and deadlines, state as well as national testing, today’s schools present many new challenges. Teachers are busier than ever with new content, new technology and new methodologies. All of this contributes to burnout and attrition. For school districts around the country mentoring has been used to support individuals as they tackle these challenging issues. (Gagen & Bowie, 2005).

In many states, novice teachers may be fully certified, or not-yet-certified but working under the oversight of a provisional or alternative certification program. Sometimes, these programs abbreviate the teacher-training process to move teachers into the classroom. The teachers from these programs need more mentoring support than those from the longer, more traditional programs because the traditional approach usually provides more instruction and practice time (Gagan & Bowie, 2005).

Mentors can provide critical support for a novice teacher by establishing an environment of empowerment and by offering reassurance that the novice teacher is capable of performing the job. This type of support may make the difference between being overwhelmed and being motivated to find a way to succeed (Gagan & Bowie 2005).

The mentoring supports that were identified as being most valuable in a survey given to 222 teachers in Georgia school districts were (a) giving new teachers opportunities to observe other teachers; (b) having a mentor assigned to them; and (c) receiving feedback. Being able to talk with others about teaching strategies or classroom management is important for beginning teachers (Gilbert,
The way schools are set up, there is very little time built in for this to happen however. There are ways; such as building learning communities, providing staff development or even setting up smaller classes for new teachers to provide this scaffolding. With whatever strategy is used, one thing is clear, teachers need opportunities to talk about their teaching, observe each other, and reflect on their own practices.

Developing a good mentoring program can be a challenge for school districts. Hargreaves & Fullan (2000) state that mentoring practices may not measure up because we fail to regard mentoring as an integral part to teaching and the profession. They argue that the old model of mentoring, where experts who are certain about their craft can pass on its principles to novices, no longer applies. While there are some teachers who possess a wide range of new teaching strategies, these individuals are a scarce resource and can become overburdened. The reality in many schools today is that while assigned mentors may know more than new teachers about certain areas such as classroom management, the new teacher sometimes may know more about new strategies. If the school assumes the mentor always knows best, innovative new teachers might quickly experience the mentor relationship as an oppressive one (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000).

Mentoring is a means to a larger end: that of creating a strong, improvement-oriented profession in schools. According to Hargreaves & Fullan (2000) future mentoring programs should move more in the direction of being an integral part of the professional culture. Their main needs to be focus on developing new teachers’ ability to form strong relationships with colleagues and
parents, along with collaboration skills for sharing strategies and knowledge (Hargreaves & Fullan 2000).

Teacher education students who have the opportunity to be supported and mentored benefit greatly from the experience of veteran teachers. Mentors can help new teachers with instructional planning which allows the novice to see the big picture. As explained above, during instructional planning veteran teachers make numerous and myriad decisions on the basis of each learner, content, and context. This multifaceted planning is a critical skill for beginning teachers to hone. With the guidance and knowledge input of the mentor, new teachers’ lessons can be more effective. Expert influence on combining the theoretical with the practical can help beginning teachers apply more practiced strategies and techniques in the classroom.

A study that compared the attitudes and perceptions of graduates of two teacher preparation models described the importance of providing support for the new teacher (Owens, Williams, & Wiggins 1996). The major components from both groups were course work, clinical experiences and support given throughout the program. Addressing the concerns of beginning teachers is imperative and from these concerns one can identify common problems that most face.

Darling-Hammond (2001) points out that having a mentor is just the beginning. The real key is that novice teachers need to be mentored by “experts”, and or experienced teachers. The beginning teacher needs to gradually take on more and more independent practice—to start by co-planning, co-teaching and observing how various kinds of problems are handled. In time, the novice teacher
takes on more responsibility for the classroom, where she/he becomes more confident about her/his decisions and teaching.

Too often, mentoring programs are designed as “buddy systems” in which experienced educators are paired with new teachers on an informal basis. In this buddy model, mentors are not trained for this role nor are they given time to carry out its demands. Many mentors are treated like the novice teachers and are allowed to sink or swim, with only good intentions to keep themselves afloat (Moir, 2003).

Effective induction or mentoring programs conceive the role of the mentor as “teacher of teachers.” Mentors use their expertise to help support beginning teacher development in ways that are responsive to the unique needs of new teachers. This job is complex and very different from teaching students. To have a real impact, induction programs must have the same kind of support for mentors that the mentors are in turn providing to new teachers.

The Prince George’s County Schools (Kelleher & Maher, 2003) began a mentor program in 1997 when the state required schools with high teacher turnover to provide master teachers to guide their professional growth. The district found that 51% of their new teachers resigned by their second year, and many left mid-year because they felt unprepared. The district created a mentor program that began with week-long professional development and followed up with monthly meetings and workshops. These meetings concentrated on reflection, observation, and sharing best practices in instruction as well as assessment.
Prince George’s County program set clear standards and goals for improving teacher retention and student performance. They established a systematic data collection system throughout the program including mentor-led action research. The heart of their program occurred at the school level and focused on three specific goals:

- Reduce the attrition rate of teachers in their first three years;
- Reduce the number of provisionally certified teachers; and
- Increase student achievement (Kelleher & Maher, 2003)

Mentors worked with a cohort of up to 15 new teachers to meet their individual needs which might have been classroom management techniques, instructional practices or handling parent concerns. Mentors also provided support by coaching, modeling lessons and assisting in planning.

Each mentor also was a part of a mentor study group that focused on instructional issues that faced the new teachers. This became a support group for them as they regularly participated in online discussions with one another and the program coordinator. The mentors also had regular meetings with the principals.

The program was evaluated by collecting reflections in journals; analyzing mentor process notes, data from time spent with the mentees; portfolios that reflected the work throughout the year; and data from interviews and focus groups.

The results of the program where mentors were assigned for at least two years showed both student achievement and teacher retention improved and met district targets. Through the assessment of the program, key themes emerged.
One theme the district learned was that mentors cannot work alone. They need as much support as the novice teachers. Secondly, the mentors’ primary purpose was to assist new teachers. Other commitments such as committee work and developing school improvement plans should be given to others. A third feature included analyzing journals and weekly schedules which told the coordinators a great deal without the mentors saying anything directly.

This helped in the ongoing evaluation process. Finally, by reviewing mentor-mentee weekly schedules, the coordinators determined common needs in order to plan ahead. The analysis of this mentor program continues to be an ongoing part. The conscious, focused attention to their goals and the ongoing evaluation of the program attributed to the success of the mentor program according to the district (Kelleher & Maher, 2003). Before the creation of the mentor program, 17% of new teachers left the district due to little or no support. After the program had been in place, only 4% left saying they had no support. The district concluded that the continual evaluation was valuable and a necessity for future success. At the conclusion of each yearly program cycle, the district has a symposium to make public its recommended improvements. After the first year, 11 recommendations were made and the program changed accordingly.

Creating a profession that will support and mentor beginning teachers is important for effective teaching as well as teacher retention. Many universities have joined with local school districts to create Professional Development School networks in order to provide sites for authentic experiences that are organized to support the training of incoming and new professionals.
Professional Development Schools have been a way of shifting teacher preparation programs toward models that involve complex partnerships among teacher education programs, individual schools, and in some instances, school districts. These school-university partnerships are often conducted through a Professional Development School (PDS) model that is “for the development of novice professionals, for continuing development of experienced professionals and for the research and development of the teaching profession” (Holmes Group, 1990, p. 1). The shift to school-university partnerships evolved to address criticisms of both traditionally-oriented teacher education programs and the K-12 educational system. PDSs are understood as both a place and concept. As a place, PDSs are (1) located in public, private, charter schools; (2) are involved in reform efforts; (3) collaborate with universities, colleges, districts, and professional associations; and (4) base their practice on research and experience. And, as a concept they emphasize collaboration between university and school (Haqq, 1995).

Collaborative relationships between the university and school was the vision of the Holmes Group (Holmes, 1990), a consortium of large United States universities offering teacher education and devoted to systemic reform of teaching and teacher education. This is the group that developed the term PDS as a vehicle and to foster relationships between schools and training institutions (Holmes, 1990). One important characteristic of this collaborative approach is that the two institutions would form partnerships with three main goals in mind:
• Rethinking the preparation of preservice education students Darling-Hammond, 1994; Holmes Group, 1986);

• Ensuring continuing development of experienced professionals (Holmes Group, 1990); and

• Modeling exemplary practices that will lead to school student achievement of a high order; and provide a sustained, applied inquiry for both students and faculty (Holmes Group, 1986, 1990).

There are embedded benefits of the Professional Development School because it integrates resources, focuses on the teaching and learning skills, provides close supervision and accountability and uses reflective practice. According to Clark (1999) a few other benefits includes:

• Students enrolled in professional development schools perform better than other students on common measures of student in basic subjects;

• Teachers prepared in professional development schools are better able to elicit student learning than those assigned traditional internships;

• Teachers prepared in professional development schools are more familiar with the practices required in today’s schools than those who obtain clinical experience in other ways;

• Administrators prefer to hire teachers whose clinical training occurred in a professional development school;
• Universities benefit from teachers who are prepared in professional development schools because these teachers help enable students to perform more successfully at the university level;

• New teachers prepared in professional development schools exhibit more reflective practice than teachers prepared through other kinds of clinical experiences; and

• New teachers prepared in professional development schools assume leadership roles among their peers more quickly than teachers prepared in other ways (p. 24-25).

Professional Development Schools are creating new frames for teacher learning. There used to be clear distinctions between expert and novice, teacher and learner that separated and isolated each other, but in professional development schools, these distinctions begin to disappear. Veteran teachers are learning from the students by engaging in conversation, reflection, and researching. Beginning teachers and veterans both learn in new ways as they work collaboratively (Darling-Hammond, 1994).

What is collaboration? According to an Intelligence Community Collaboration (1999) study, collaboration can be defined broadly as the interaction among two or more individuals encompassing a variety of behaviors, including communication, information sharing, coordination, cooperation, problem solving, and negotiation. Friend and Cook (1992) offer a definition, specific to the needs of educators, of school-based collaboration as joint planning, decision making, and problem solving that may occur in a variety of formal or
informal group configurations for the purpose of accomplishing a common goal (Cook & Friend, 1991; Laycock, Gable, & Korinek, 1991). More definitively, Friend and Cook (1992) list salient characteristics of successful collaboration as: (a) being voluntary; (b) requiring parity among participants; (c) based on mutual goals; (d) depending on shared responsibility for participation and decision making; (e) consisting of individuals who share their resources; and (f) consisting of individuals who share accountability for outcomes. Professional collaboration then includes empowering citizens for democracy by building community through partnerships. Such partnership includes parents and community and can take the form of (a) consultation (Gerber, 2000; Howland, 2003; Stanovich, 1996); (b) coaching (Lam, Yin, & Lam, 2002; Little, 1982; Joyce & Showers, 1982; Sparks, 1986; Singh & Shifflette, 1996); (c) teaming (Correa, Morsink, & Thomas, 2000); or (d) a combination of all three.

Traditionally, teachers have taught students in isolation. Collaboration among teachers has not been the norm historically (Sarason, 1996). Rosenholtz (1989) argued that isolation was probably the greatest impediment to learning to teach or improve existing skills because it forced teachers to rely on trial and error and to fall back to their own memories of schooling for models of teaching.

Overall, studies on professional collaboration paint a promising picture of success resulting in student needs being met by the most highly qualified people working together toward a common goal (Howland, 2003; Lam, et. al., 2002; Singh & Shifflette, 1996; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2004). In a study of 57 university-school collaboration projects measuring variables including program
quality, outcomes, and success, Kirschenbaum & Reagan (2001) found collaborative endeavors to be typically long standing, varied in type, serving large numbers of school students, satisfying to university partners, and perceived as generally achieving their goals. Programs with high levels of collaboration were judged to be more successful than those with limited levels of collaboration.

Recent reform efforts in education have included an emphasis on increasing teacher collaboration (Brownell, Yeager, Rennels, 1996). In fact, Morse (2000) suggested that collaboration is imperative for educational reform. The more teachers collaborate, the more they are able to converse knowledgably about theories, methods, and processes of teaching and learning, and thus improve their instruction.

Hausman and Goldring (2001) view schools as potential “communal organizations” characterized by, among other constructs, “enhanced collegiality and collaboration.” (p. 31) There are many formal and informal opportunities for collaboration. It might be when special educators and general educators sit down to work out the needs of students with disabilities. Middle school teachers may follow a team model in which they collaborate to improve instruction. It can also occur when teachers talk about their professional work (e.g. during planning periods). According to Hausman and Goldrigh (2001), “teachers must be central to any meaningful change in schools.” (p. 44)

In a study of teacher autonomy and control, Smylie et al. (1996) found that individual teacher autonomy was negatively associated with student achievement; and on the other hand, when a team has control over resources and accountability
there is an increase for student success. These results imply that by having a shared responsibility for students help to improve instruction and student learning.

Mentor training and experiences can have additional benefits. They can build the mentors’ capacity for leadership through structured professional development including training and experience in classroom observation and coaching skills. Mentors become recognized for their valuable knowledge and expertise in these areas and are sought out for various school and district leadership roles. It is not uncommon for mentors to move into leadership positions as a result of their success as mentors. For example, Freiberg (1998) found that at the end of their tenure as mentors, 100 percent of the ninety-one mentors in her study were offered unsolicited positions as a result of their experience in the mentoring program, and the positions offered provided opportunities to build on what they had learned as mentors or combined elements of mentoring and teaching (Freiberg, 1998, Zbikowski, & Ganzer, 1998). These leadership opportunities are important for mentees to see and share. Gardner (1996) defines leadership in this way:

A leader is an individual (or, rarely, a set of individuals) who significantly affects the thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviors of a significant number of individuals. Most acknowledged leaders are “direct.” They address their public face to face. But I have called attention to an unrecognized phenomenon: indirect leadership. In this variety of leading, individuals exert impact through the works that they create. Whether direct or indirect, leaders fashion stories: principally stories of identity. It is important that a leader be a good storyteller,
but equally crucial that the leader embody that story in his or her life. When a leader tells stories to experts, the stories can be quite sophisticated: but when the leader is dealing with a diverse, heterogeneous group, the story must be sufficiently elemental to be understood by the untutored, or ‘unschooled’ mind. (preface).

For the purpose of this dissertation, leadership will be defined as having the ability to exert influence; directly or indirectly, motivating and inspiring, helping others realize their potential, leading by example, selflessness and making a difference. It is important that a mentor possess leadership skills in order to be able to support and provide guidance as one begins teaching.

A generation of veteran teachers is beginning to retire from careers in education. Filling these vacancies will be a contingent of beginning teachers from across a number of generations and careers. Some younger, some older but all will experience certain challenges that need to be addressed. Understanding what these novice teachers need in order to be successful is imperative for our future generations.

Preparing for the classroom is not like preparing for the big leagues. Teachers do not have the luxury of spending time in the minors learning from others before going to the big show. We must find a way to provide the ongoing support in a way that does not put added pressure or constraints on veteran teachers. Trying to acculturate and integrate the changes, complexities, and realities of teaching can be an overwhelming experience (Veeman, 1984). As a profession, we need to find a way to develop a minor league system, where the
veterans coach and mentor new recruits. The school-universities partnerships can foster the professional development and mentoring that is necessary for our future teachers.

Teachers, like other professionals, need time in which to hone their skills, but they seldom get the time they require. Beginning teachers need the time to improve their skills under the watchful eye of experts, and time to reflect, learn from mistakes, and work with colleagues as they acquire good judgment and tacit knowledge about teaching and learning. With so many new teachers entering the profession, this issue is critical.

The culture of teaching has been predominately independent. Teachers still work on their own and have limited opportunities to collaborate or learn from colleagues. This environment can be stressful and cause good teachers to leave the field. The PDS framework could be seen as a way to provide more support to not only novice teachers but also to experienced professionals.

In this research study, graduates from one school-university partnership were studied in order to understand from their experience the impact of their mentor program on retention, teacher quality, and leadership and commitment.

Although schools have always faced enormous challenges, we are looking the changing face of the teaching force. The number of veteran and novice teachers is shifting which will add pressure to the schools. Teachers will also have to respond to an increasingly complex society whereby schools are being asked to educate a very diverse student body. This task cannot be teacher-proofed through mandates or curriculum packages. At the root of teacher education programs is
how teachers are prepared and how schools can be organized in order to have continuous professional development.
Chapter III: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

A qualitative research design framed this study in order to understand the essence of the shared experience of the individuals who have been a part of the Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program. Qualitative research has its roots in the behavioral and social sciences and is widely used to study individuals, groups and organizational cultures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Patton, 1990). In describing the characteristics of qualitative research, Bogdan and Bilkin (1998) noted the following:

1. It is naturalistic. Qualitative research has actual settings as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.

2. It includes descriptive data. Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected take the form of words or pictures rather than numbers.

3. It is concerned with process. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes and products.

4. It uses inductive reasoning. Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.

5. It makes sense out of meaning. Meaning is of essential concern to the qualitative approach. Researchers who use this approach are interested in how different people make sense of their lives. (pp. 4-7)

Qualitative research has been separated into five traditions of inquiry: biography, phenomenological study, grounded theory study, ethnography, and case study. Although each of these traditions is unique, Moustakas (1994) has
identified the following common bonds that link qualitative researches.

Qualitative Research:

1. Recognizes the value of qualitative designs and methodologies, studies of human experiences that are not approachable through quantitative approaches.

2. Focuses on the wholeness of experience rather than solely on its objects or parts.

3. Searches for meanings and essences of experience rather than measurements and explanations.

4. Obtains descriptions of experience through first-person accounts in informal conversations and interviews.

5. Regards the data of the experience as imperative in understanding human behavior and as evidence for scientific investigations.

6. Formulates questions and problems that reflect the interest, involvement and personal commitment of the researcher.

7. Views experience and behavior as an integrated and inseparable relationship of subject and object and of parts and of whole. (21)

Research Framework

Given the desire to fully understand the essence of the shared experience of those involved in this teacher preparation program, the phenomenological approach to qualitative research seemed to best meet the desired outcomes. This decision was reached after reading Creswell's (1998) scholarly work which indicated "...a phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon" (p. 51).

As a means to help understand the objective of this research model, Patton (1990) found "phenomenological inquiry focuses on the question: “What is the structure
and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?” (p.69). The phenomenon explored in this study was to understand-the impact of mentoring on the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model—was best told from the voices of those individuals who have lived through this experience. Understanding the experience by listening to the participants' voices is the basis of phenomenological research and what Patton (1990) describes as the essence or essences to (the) shared experience. These essences are the core meanings mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced. The experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed, and compared to identify the essences of the phenomenon.

**Role of the Researcher**

In qualitative research, the researcher is viewed as the instrument (Patton, 2002, p.14; Maxwell, 2005). The primary data collection method for phenomenological studies is in-depth interviewing that takes place in naturalistic settings. The researcher does not manipulate, stimulate, or externally impose structure on the situation (Wiersma, 2000, p. 239). To further illustrate this point, Patton notes that, “A human being is the instrument of qualitative methods. A real, live person makes observations, takes field notes, asks interview questions, and interprets responses” (Patton, 2002). However, the researcher maintains openness, also described as taking a “stance of neutrality” while collecting data (Patton, 2002). Interpersonal skills of the researcher are important to the success of qualitative study. The researcher’s ability to: listen and observe, respect participants, their perceptions, and their settings; communicate information about the study clearly and concisely; build trust and maintain positive reciprocal
relations; and be mindful of ethical issues will all contribute to the success of this study. As the researcher that conducted this qualitative study, I had experience as a teacher in the Boone School District for more than 20 years. As a result, I have successfully built rapport and working relations with many people in this district. Those experiences also helped me to become familiar with multiple school environments. The experiences fostered the sensitivity and awareness I needed to gain entry with participants, gather data from them, and represent their perceptions.

Through interaction with participants, I also was responsible for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting the data, findings, and conclusions of this study. As a career educator, I had served both as a teacher and a mentor. Through those experiences, I had to understand that even though there were some common components found with the graduates, the meaning each constructed for his or her experiences and the perception each held was different. This understanding allowed me to set aside my own perceptions and meanings regarding the impact of mentoring on new teachers. Setting these aside permitted me to conduct this study from an open or neutral stance that was appropriate for the design of this study.

A Description of the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model Teacher Preparation Program

The Harrison/Boone Clinical Model Program is a teacher preparation program that began in 1990 with the joint partnership of Harrison
University and Boone School District. This program provides a three year sequence where college graduates earn an Elementary teaching certificate and a Master Degree in Teaching and Learning. Participants work in the Boone School District the first year as an intern and as a resident teacher for the following two years. During these three years, the participants also take coursework at Harrison University two evenings a week.

The Clinical Model Teacher Preparation Program is designed to integrate the theory and practice with an extensive clinical experience. The program is a collaboration endeavor between Harrison University and the Boone School District.

During the internship year, students gain experience in primary, intermediate, and middle school grades. Students co-plan and co-teach with a mentor teacher from Boone. Harrison University meets regularly with mentors and students to provide guidance and support. The internship is divided into 4 sections. The first part is a 6 week period in which the intern has experience in primary, intermediate and middle grade schools. The second phase is 16 weeks in which he/she are placed in a classroom and where co-planning and co-teaching takes place. The third phase is another 16 weeks where the intern takes on more of the classroom responsibilities under the guidance of a mentor and Harrison University faculty. The fourth phase is 3 weeks and set aside to observe at the grade level of the residency placement.

For the next two years the residents have full teaching responsibilities in their own classrooms. A mentor is assigned for these two years. The mentor
ideally is someone who is at the same grade level as the resident. At the end of the 2 years, the resident is then free to apply for teaching positions.

The course work is delivered throughout the three years. The first year, interns take methodology courses which include reading/language arts, science, and math. These courses integrate Harrison’s course work with Boone’s curriculum as much as possible. Participants are encouraged to apply what they have learned in the courses in the classroom on an ongoing basis. During the second year, resident teachers take two courses: an induction course which focuses on issues relevant to the first year of teaching, and a research design course. The third year of the program, the resident takes the research courses at Harrison University, has full teaching responsibilities at Boone, finishing up the year with a master’s degree in education and 2 years of teaching experience.

Over the 14 years, the way the course work has been delivered has been modified. Early on, there was more co-planning and co-teaching between Harrison University Professors and Boone Teachers. Over time, because of time and cost constraints, this share of teaching has dwindled with more of the course work being taught at Harrison University.

The Participants

Since the purpose of this study was to understand the essence of the experience of those individuals who have been involved with the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model, I invited all graduates to participate in this project. There were a total of 121 graduates from the inception of the program. I found current contact information for 72 graduates (60%). A packet was sent to graduates of the
program. Included in the packet was a letter explaining the purpose of the research study, a survey and consent form. I sent out 72 surveys and received 41 completed survey responses. The demographics of the survey participants are delineated in Table 1. At the end of the survey, I asked for volunteers to participate in individual interviews. The only stipulation was that the graduate needed to have been out of the program for at least three years. In the end, nine individuals were selected, three who had graduated between the years of 1993-1997, three who had graduated between the years of 1998-2000 and three who had graduated between the years of 2001-2004. Of those who agreed to be interviewed, nine were selected based on the following criteria:

- schedule of the participant and researcher,
- the year they graduated
- their willingness.

In addition, three building administrators were also interviewed. These administrators were selected because of their involvement in the clinical model as well as the amount of time they have been in the district. Table 2 and Table 3 provide relevant data.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Table 2

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<th>Interview Graduate Participants*</th>
<th>Year Graduated</th>
<th>Years Teaching</th>
<th>Current Employment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Susie</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Teaching at Boone School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Teaching in another state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Teaching in a suburban school in Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Teaching at Boone School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teaching at Boone School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teaching in another state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teaching in a suburban school in IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhonda</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teaching in Boone School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lara</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teaching in a suburban school in IL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews Administrators*</th>
<th>Number of years in the Boone School District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>19 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pseudonyms

Data Collection

Data collection occurred from June 2007 through November 2007. As with any study that attempts to contact past participants in a program, locating the graduates proved to be somewhat difficult; however, the researcher used different ways to locate as many graduates as possible. After identifying the 121 program graduates contact information was acquired through district directories from the past and internet searches. The researcher contacted potential participants through email, asking if they would be willing to send their address for the survey. In the end, 72 graduates were located. Surveys were sent out to these graduates during the month of June 2007. Included in the packet was a consent form, survey, and a letter explaining the purpose of the study (see appendix M).

As the surveys were returned, care was taken to separate the consent form from the survey so that the survey could remain anonymous. The surveys were collated; the data were tallied on a spreadsheet. The comments that were attached were typed and categorized in 3 time periods: 1993-1998, 1999-2003, and 2004-
2007 (see appendix F, G & H). This way, the researcher could look for patterns across the years.

At the end of the survey participants indicated a willingness to be interviewed. All 29 who were eligible (graduated before 2005) consented to be interviewed. In July participants were emailed to see if they were still willing to be interviewed. Nine individuals were chosen. Things that were taken in consideration when selecting the participants for interviewing included the schedule of the participant and researcher, the year they graduated and their willingness. I looked for gender balance, date they graduated, as well as the location of their present job.

I was trying to find as many participants as I could who were teaching outside the Boone School District as possible. In addition, three building administrators still in the district were interviewed. These administrators were selected because of their involvement in the clinical model as well as the amount of time they have worked in the district.

Before each interview began, the participant signed an informed consent agreement (see appendix N) that was collected. To help familiarize the participant with my background and to establish credibility, I briefly reviewed my professional background, educational preparation, and summarized the intent of the project. Interviews with the key participants were conducted at the convenience of the participant and occurred in a location that was mutually agreed on. The interview lasted for approximately 90 minutes, with some follow-up interviews conducted, which lasted between 30-60 minutes each. Each participant
was asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions as well as follow-up questions (see appendix J & K), which were asked in order to gain greater insights or to clarify information. As the researcher, I paid careful attention to avoid making any judgments concerning the information that was shared during the interview, allowing the participant to fully recall the details of their teacher preparation program. These steps were consistent with Moustakas' (1994) description of the interview process: The phenomenological interview involves an informal, interactive process and utilizes open-ended comments and questions. Although the primary researcher may in advance develop a series of questions aimed at evoking a comprehensive account of the person's experience of the phenomenon, they are varied, altered, or not used at all when the co-researcher shares the full story of his or her experience of the bracketed question. (p.114)

Each interview was tape recorded after obtaining permission from the participant. The tape recorder was switched on after permission was given and set aside in order to minimize any distraction from the interview itself. Tapes were replaced as discretely and quickly as possible so as to not interrupt the flow of data gathered in the interview process with each participant. Specific precautions were taken to ensure the proper working of the tape recorder and tapes. The batteries were replaced in the tape recorder prior to the beginning of each interview and were recorded only on new mini-cassette tapes. No technical difficulties occurred during the data gathering.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures**

Wiersma (2000) described data analysis in qualitative research as “a process of categorization, description, and synthesis” (p. 204). Marshall and

Data analysis in qualitative research can be a daunting task due to the voluminous data that are collected and the generally interpretive nature of the qualitative research paradigm. Patton (2002) offered guidance in his statement to qualitative researchers. He said, “The challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making-sense of massive amounts of data. This involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal.” (p. 432)

Marshall and Rossman (1999) described six typical phases for analysis in qualitative research: “(a) organizing the data; (b) generating categories, themes, and patterns; (c) coding the data; (d) testing the emergent understanding; (e) searching for alternative explanations; and (f) writing the report” (p. 152). These phases were used to guide the data analysis and interpretation in this study. The researcher heeded advice provided by Maxwell (2005) in not “letting your analyzed field notes and transcripts pile up” (p. 95). Instead, analysis began following the first interview and observation. Following a review of data collected
from each participant, the researcher made process notes that addressed initial understandings and thoughts about the perceptions of the participants. The researcher reviewed field notes made during the in-depth interviews. Audio files were replayed and transcribed to identify emerging categories, themes, and patterns that were used to organize data.

This process was followed after each encounter with a participant. As common themes emerged, they guided adjustments made to questions for interviews with the remaining participants. Common patterns as well as differing viewpoints were noted and analyzed. Reduction of data using categorization and coding made interpretation of rich descriptions of the perceptions of participants more manageable and were used as the basis for findings and conclusions.

**Data Verification**

Qualitative researchers have long included data verification as an essential element of the research methodology. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe this classification of procedures "whereby the naturalist's alternative trustworthiness criteria may be operationalized. (p.301) Creswell's (1998) review of the literature identified eight verification procedures commonly used to verify qualitative data and recommended as a standard that at least two be utilized in any given study. For the purposes of this project, I have selected the following three:

1. Triangulation. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) traced triangulation in qualitative studies to its original meaning, which was the verification of facts through the use of documents, other research, photographs, histories, etc. However, these authors indicate that with today's research the term has been expanded to not only include
its origins but also to "mean that many sources of data were better in a study than a single source because multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena..." (p.104). As indicated earlier, I used the survey, interviews of the graduates, and the interviews of the administrators for the purposes of triangulation.

2. Clarify researcher bias. Creswell (1998) identified that this is a critical data verification issue for qualitative researchers, indicating that the "researcher comments on past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations..." (p. 202). The section in this chapter dealing with my background as a researcher attempts to provide the reader with relevant insights into my background, which may have influenced this study.

3. Utilization of rich, thick description. The researcher provided the reader with detailed descriptions of the Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program as well as background information on each of the participants. Additionally, the voices of the participants were used and organized thematically to tell the story of their experiences in the program. In doing so, the researcher created a study that is rich and thick in description. As a result, "the researcher enables readers to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred..." (p. 203).
Chapter IV: THE DATA

The classroom is the best place for prospective teachers to learn the nuances of teaching. In fact Darling-Hammond (2006) states that one of the most important aspects to a quality teacher preparation program is an extended clinical experience of at least 30 weeks. The graduates of the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model had what translated to forty weeks of supervised practicum and student teaching. They were assigned to three different levels (primary, intermediate, middle school) in their first six weeks. The participants received two 16-week stints in two different levels. The first extended period is primarily for co-planning and co-teaching while the second extended period is designated for planning lessons, units and student teaching.

Having these six weeks at all levels helped the graduates see the continuum of the development of students from age 5 to 14. These initial experiences at observing and being in a school set the tone for the year-long internship. Even though a few of the participants felt that the six weeks was a little long, in retrospect they felt it was a crucial time to learn about teaching, kids and the culture of the district. Jill describes her experiences:

The classroom experience I got on a daily basis can’t be replaced and I felt having the initial experiences in different grade levels was eye opening. It helped me see the big picture of schooling. I was able to observe kids in the different levels and this helped me put in perspective right away how difficult teaching is.
Pat discusses her first six weeks:

I really liked the first six weeks when we were in three different classrooms and three different buildings. I came into the program thinking what level I wanted to teach but it sure changed once I was in all of the classrooms. I really thought I wanted to teach at the middle school, but once I was in the kindergarten class, I was totally confused. It really helped me to see all the possibilities. It also helped me to see the differences in the buildings. I think it was a good way to learn about the district’s culture.

After the initial six weeks, participants in the Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program are placed in a classroom for two 16 week periods and are assigned to a mentor. During these two phases, the interns observe, co-plan, co-teach and then finally complete the student teaching phase. These extended phases helped the graduates learn how to write lesson plans, differentiate the curriculum and classroom management strategies. Seeing a number of teachers in action helped the prospective teachers figure out their own style and the type of teacher they want to be. Lara explained it this way:

To be able to see different classrooms and to see different people teaching gave me such a broad perspective to figure out what my style was. You don’t know what your style is initially but you can always see things you like and pull from all of them in order to create your own.

Having the opportunity to spend an entire year learning about teaching while being in a school and classroom environment was one of the most important reasons why the graduates felt prepared as they entered their resident year. There was no one who indicated that he or she would have changed the way the intern
year was set up. This time was such a learning experience that the graduates who had been out of the program for a number of years had no difficulty talking about what they had learned and giving specific examples of what was helpful.

Sam, 1996 graduate, reflects on his intern year in this way:

I think the thing that sticks out to me the most and the part I promote to other people, would be the exposure to other classrooms and teachers. Seeing how a wide variety of teachers set up their classrooms, how they handle classroom management and what they have to do when differentiating curriculum was so powerful. I remember watching a teacher create a lesson where she had the same objective for all the kids but she designed different lessons and activities for the different levels of kids in her class. I couldn’t help but think, wow, that is what teaching should be, not one size fits all.

The administrators also noted that this internship year was crucial to preparing new teachers for the difficult job of teaching, Adam describes his viewpoint:

The full year internship gave them a basic full year of student teaching. This is huge, because it happens in a variety of settings, they have a better idea of the big picture. I think they have a better perspective of primary, intermediate or middle school kids than many people coming out of other teacher preparation programs. When I know they are getting 40 weeks of student teaching, I know they have had more hands-on experiences with good guidance from the mentor and principal.

Graduates indicated on the survey (see appendix C) that their mentor during their intern year was either very helpful or helpful in almost every area. The strongest areas were learning classroom management strategies (40 out of 41), getting feedback on lessons (41 out of 41), establishing parent
communication (39 out of 41), learning how to write lessons and units (41 out of 41) and integrating the coursework into the classroom (37 out of 41).

Being able to apply the theory to the classroom through this intern year was also important. All nine teachers interviewed stressed that being able to see how teachers applied various strategies was beneficial in their own growth as a teacher. Joseph felt that he was more cognizant of the process of teaching and learning and was open to ideas because he was seeing it all in action. The ability to learn the methods of teaching a certain subject and then apply it immediately in a classroom situation was helpful in the preparation of these prospective teachers. One of the strengths of this program from the graduates’ perspective was being able to implement strategies that were taught simultaneously at Harrison University. This connection between theory and practice helped the learning process. Joseph sums it up this way:

We learned the teaching methods in classes but then were able to practice these strategies and apply the methods in the classroom. One of the things I loved and is the strength of the program is that you would learn something and then be able to see it in action with kids. So when you are talking about theories, you learn about it and then bam there it is the next day.

All of the graduates of the Boone/Harrison Clinical Model felt prepared to teach after their intern year. They felt comfortable with their ability to handle the classroom routines as well as the curriculum. The graduates had the fortunate opportunity to be placed in the school and team at the end of their intern year to prepare for their resident years. This gave them a chance to observe classrooms, get to know the staff as well as begin to learn the curriculum. This type of
preparation is rare in education today. All of these experiences helped build the confidence of the graduates. The graduates seemed to notice the differences they had in their preparation program and were grateful for their opportunities. They often talked about their student teaching experiences and the obvious differences they had. Natalie mentions that she felt more prepared to teach than another first-year teacher who was down the hall.

Without a doubt, I was far more prepared than one of my colleagues on my team. I saw her struggle with managing time and with the curriculum. I felt that I was far more prepared with being able to write lessons and finding ways to differentiate for my students. The things she was struggling with is what I struggled with during my intern year. I am so grateful I had that time before getting my own classroom.

Gina also felt that the full year internship was important in preparing her for a teaching career:

I felt that first full year of watching and trying out things really laid the ground work for me to really get into the teaching and I felt comfortable trying things and because of this, I think I brought more to the table during my resident year. I especially felt comfortable writing lesson plans and also having the ability to work with some challenging kids that first year was so helpful when I had my own classroom.

Lara had this experience:

Being able to spend time at primary, intermediate and middle schools was extremely helpful in determining which grade level was most comfortable for me. It allowed lots of observation time with master teachers. I felt so grateful
that I was provided with great co-teaching experiences which came in helpful later in my teaching career.

Another important aspect in the preparation of these teachers was how their coursework at the university was delivered. There were conscious decisions about how they were taught and what the curriculum would be. They still needed to address the same standards but some of the assignments could be applied right into the Boone classrooms. This made the assignment more meaningful and relevant for the graduates.

Going to grad school and learning how to be a teacher was a lot of work but it was helpful that most of the Harrison assignments were able to be applied in the classroom. I would learn how to teach a science concept in my night class and then be able to write a lesson plan, and then use it with an actual classroom.

Understanding the aspects of the Boone/Harrison Teacher Preparation Program was also important for supporting the interns and residents. The core of the program was the application of what was taught in university coursework to the actual practice of seeing it in the classroom. If this wasn’t seen in the Boone classrooms it was noted:

My first placement was with a 1st grade teacher. I planned a phonics-based activity for the students which I had read about in one of our textbooks for class. The teacher did not really like the lesson and was unhappy about it. This really surprised me, how closed minded some people/teachers were and how teachers’ decisions impact the students. It seemed that this teacher’s inability to observe/try other ideas seemed opposite of the program (Natalie).
Another graduate explained her experience:

The mentor I had for my resident one was terrible. She did not understand the program and provided little or no help. Her teaching methods and style were completely different than what was taught in the Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program. I found it very hard to go to her with questions or issues (Gina).

Most of the graduates (39) felt their teacher preparation program and the way the coursework was designed was excellent. Only 2 graduates felt that the way the classes at Harrison University were designed were disjointed and didn’t allow for enough time to really understand the subject area. One of the problems came from where the intern was placed. One might be in the middle school and taking the primary reading methods course and therefore not be able to fully apply what you were learning. Another problem that was raised was the cyclical nature of the courses. The graduates might take a science methods class for six weeks, then move to math, the go back to science and then finish up with math. This cyclical process of coursework was designed in order to make the learning between university courses and classroom practice more authentic. That system for taking classes posed some challenges for the graduates. But overall, the graduates felt that they learned the instructional strategies through being in the classroom on a daily basis and working with a mentor or team on writing and designing lesson and unit plans.

While the interns and administrators felt prepared to take on their first-year of teaching, there was this underlying notion that they were not “real”
teachers. They were called residents which distinguished them from other first year teachers. Gina reflects on her experiences:

One problem I had during my resident years was that I was not thought of as a teacher. At least that is how I felt within the building; you were given that position because you were a clinical model person and they had to give it to you. You were not someone that the staff would have chosen, you were referred to as a clinical model, not as a teacher.

Although the administrators noted how well the interns were prepared and that they felt more comfortable with a resident than a traditional first-year teacher, they did not see them as full-time teachers. One administrator described them as a “teacher in training”. Pat talks about the residents in this way:

It has been a little difficult to help parents understand why their child’s teacher is called a resident. On one hand they are still learning how to be a teacher and technically not certified, but are responsible for a classroom. As an administrator, I have to walk a fine line between defending the resident and understanding the feelings of the parents. I would hear things like, why isn’t my child’s teacher certified? Why should my child be a guinea pig? This has lessened over time but I still don’t think the community understands that these teachers are ready for the classroom.

There seemed to be confusion at least in the early years of the program in the parent community about what a “resident” meant. They had provisional certificates and the parents were not sure they were prepared for their own classroom. The district worked with this impression at least on the public side by assuring the parent community that the residents were fully prepared to take on their own classroom. One policy that was put in place to help this was that there would be an effort to make sure a child would not have a resident for a teacher
two years in a row. What is striking is that this policy did not apply to new teachers, however even with this underlying feeling that the residents were not full teachers this did not dampen their spirits.

Research on the experiences of new teachers confirms that for them to be successful, they need to have expert guidance, support and opportunities to reflect on their practice (Johnson, 2004). Many teacher preparation programs do not demand extended time in the classroom that this program requires nor do they have the opportunity to have a mentor for the entire year. The participants of the Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program had these components and more. This support came from a number of places; not only was the mentor important but also the team and the cohort group.

Support from the mentor was for the most part positive and helpful during the intern and resident years. The data from the survey indicates that there was more support given in the intern year and less in the resident years (see appendix A & B) which is natural because they were no longer in a classroom with their mentor. All 41 graduates felt that the mentor was either somewhat helpful or very helpful in developing lesson plans. During that intern year, they had numerous opportunities to write and implement a variety of lessons and then get immediate feedback. The survey results are fairly consistent throughout the years (see appendix F, G, & H). There is a noted decrease of mentor support between the first years (1993-1999) and the last (2004-2007) in the areas of understanding curriculum, helping with parent communication and reflecting on their teaching. At the beginning of the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model Program, the mentors had
to apply and get the support from their team and building principal, however over the past five years, many mentors were left on a list without needing to reapply or getting the principal’s support. This could be a reason why there were several decreases in the survey results from the beginning of the program to the end.

The reflective process was also weaved in and out of the Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program. The survey indicates that 38 out of 41 graduates felt that their mentor was instrumental in helping them be reflective about their practice. Graduates were not only encouraged but expected to observe and reflect on what was happening in the classroom. This did not happen just with their teaching but also from watching their mentors. This reflective practice not only helped the graduates with learning about the classroom but also with understanding how students learn. This was a benefit for the mentor as well:

My mentor also helped me to be reflective of my own practice. We did this usually by conversation. We would have great conversations and she would encourage me to ask questions. She definitely created an environment where questions were encouraged. She would say I am doing this mentoring because I want to get something out of it too, by you asking questions, I have to think about my own practice. (Susie)

Jill also found reflection an important piece of her program:

My mentor supported me on what I needed to learn. She allowed me to try things and to make mistakes in an environment that made it safe for me. One thing that was so helpful was helping me to reflect about what was going on in the classroom. I kept a notebook so that I could think through what had happened throughout the day. I still have that journal and go back to see how much I have grown. When I think about my intern year, one of the most important pieces had
to answer the why question. Why am I using this text, why am I picking out this essential skill? I found that every time I had to do this, it honed my skills and helped me to refine what was important. This continuous learning or improvement theory was very engaging.

The support the graduates were given helped the interns not only acquire the set of skills that they needed for classroom management and classroom routines but also to understand what good instruction looked like. An administrator, Pat shares it this way:

A lot of interns come in focused on classroom management and most of them in their eyes see instruction separate from that, and you see that it doesn’t blend at all when they first come into the program. Good mentors are able to tell them management is about instruction and sometimes kids are bored or confused because of the design of the lesson or what the teacher is doing.

While overall, the support from the mentor was positive, seven graduates made a point that there were inconsistencies in the experiences they had with individual mentors. It was the luck of the draw which mentors an intern was assigned to. In the early years of this program, mentors had to apply, go through an interview, and have their team and principal sign a form stating they support the person who wants to mentor. Over the years, this policy eased up and the principal was the only one who signed off. Some of the problems the graduates specifically noted included: not being available, not understanding the Boone/Harrison Teacher Preparation Program, having too much responsibility in the classroom, being micromanaged, and not being a mentor for the right reasons:

I had one very good mentor who helped me learn a lot about teaching, assessment, pacing,
management, parent communication, and organization. We worked together a lot to reflect on lessons and plan ahead. My other mentor was not nearly as available or helpful and was not proactive in helping me reflect or understand expectations. She did not understand the program and provided little to no help. Her teaching methods and style were completely different than what was taught in the program. I found it very hard to go to her with questions or issues. In some ways I wonder if Boone could do a better job of finding mentors who are doing it for the right reasons.

Another graduate explained her experiences this way:

The one challenge was the great variation in experiences and mentoring of those in my group. Some had amazing mentors while others had average ones. I did not receive the level of support from my mentor during my Resident One year that I was expecting. Much more and better support should be provided. As a resident, I felt I received mixed messages as to my place/status in the school and district.

Even though there was inconsistency in mentors, the graduates spoke positively to the support they received from a team of teachers. The culture of the Boone School District encourages collaboration and teaming. The schools are organized in teams which might consist of grade level, multi-age or interdisciplinary teams. These teams work together to determine how to spend their budget, how kids will be organized for instruction as well as identifying curricular needs. This teaming approach supported the interns and residents as much as the mentor. It also was a place where the intern and resident felt that they were sharing their expertise with the veteran teachers:

I was placed in an incredibly supportive school and on an outstanding team of veteran teachers, so I had a wonderful experience. I was able to incorporate
my master’s degree coursework across the team and energize my teammates with new ideas. It was a
win-win for all of us. Whenever challenges came up, I had not only my mentor to help, but a great
staff to consult for ideas. (Gina)

The team helped the new teacher by answering questions and sharing the load of responsibility.

Well, I think the most support was from the mentor teacher but a close second was the team. My team
was incredible in helping me and answering so many questions. I was placed in an incredibly
supportive school and on an outstanding team of veteran teachers so I had a wonderful experience.
The mentoring wasn’t so much from one person as it was from the entire team.(Rhonda)

Joseph also had the team to help him get through his first year of teaching:

There is a lot of support not only with the mentor but also with the team. The team setting helps a lot
with questions and planning. As a new teacher I had many concerns and it was the team who helped
me with how to plan lessons and gave me feedback on how I was doing. It was so valuable for me to
have a group to go to. I didn’t feel like I was over taxing one person. This team approach was such a
warm, supportive group.

Finally, Susie explains how her team supported her through the tough times of the
first year of teaching:

My entire team was amazingly supportive of me! We developed and co-taught. I felt very
comfortable going to my team with any concern – even curricular, and they would guide me to the
right resources. I was confident because I knew they were there for me. Together they helped me
believe I could really be a successful teacher. Our team met at planning time for a half an hour
eye every day in order to collaborate. We were committed to that time. Even to this day, I know I am a better teacher when I collaborate with another teacher or colleague. I love the process of problem-
solving and planning together because it generates much stronger ideas for learning. We bring our own style to the actual teaching piece. (Susie)

Collaboration is a part of the culture of the Boone School District. They have a collaborative labor agreement where teachers, board members and administration are all part of the decision making process. In this district, teachers are expected to collaborate with others and learn from one another. This collaborative atmosphere seemed to be important in providing a foundation where teachers were open to learn from one another, were receptive and willing to open their classrooms to interns and student teachers and were open minded about different ways to teach students.

I had a wonderful mentor for my intern year. When she was teaching, I wasn’t at a table in the back watching, I was part of the lesson. She would pull up a chair to me and say, let’s do it together so it was extremely collaborative. She really helped me get to that how and why from the beginning. (Susie)

The cohort group was also a support system for the interns and residents. Having the group of peers that were going through the same things at the same time helped relieve the stress and challenges. The group would attend classes together twice a week and would meet weekly to talk about their experiences, learn about the culture of the district as well as have a forum for learning from each other. The intern year was stressful as they were learning a new career, attending graduate classes at night, preparing lessons for the classroom and communicating with parents and Boone teachers. This cohort group became an important group in order to handle the stress.
I think the cohort group itself provided tremendous peer support. There was a lot of empathy and understanding from that group because we were all going through the same thing at the same time. We became a support system where we could come together and share struggles, challenges, or successes. We would come together and discuss our successes as well as our failures. I relied on this group for moral support. This group helped us keep our balance during that very busy intern year. (Sam)

The cohort group helped immensely because it provided emotional support during those times that were especially stressful. The three years were intense with very high expectations. Having a group of peers to commiserate with and share was very helpful. It was great to hear how others implemented ideas at different grade levels or tackled problems. My cohorts helped me gain perspective and empathize in difficult moments. (Mary)

Mentoring requires a relationship where one invests time, know-how and effort in working with someone else on their growth. There can be a flip side of this type of relationship. All three administrators talked about how this intense mentor relationship can become a negative thing. The amount of time that a mentor spends with a resident is intense and it is natural that the mentor will advocate for the resident. With the Harrison/Boone Program, graduates have the opportunity to apply in the district after their resident two year. Over the years this practice has had its challenges. The close mentoring that takes place can lead to problems. It at times has kept people from seeing a clear picture. This has led to some hard feelings in the district. As Pat explains:

One problem with so much support is that the mentor becomes protective of them. They are committed to their success and become personally
and professionally involved in helping the teacher. Then when the resident years are done and they are ready to apply for a job, the mentor lobbies for the resident and at times it is not appropriate.

Another administrator saw it this way:

When I first heard of the new policy (not being able to hire the resident from your building) I rejected it but that goes back to the very first when the program began. At the beginning, the idea was that we wouldn’t hire the residents, that the purpose was to prepare new teachers and then they would go out and get hired in other districts. The principals then went to the district and asked if this could be reconsidered because we have spent time and energy into helping and developing the residents. So we as a district did hire many residents for several years. We have had a couple of instances lately where the teachers have wanted to hire a resident but the principal did not. This has caused some hard feelings. I have to agree with the new policy now because I don’t think we have the same quality of clinical model interns and residents. (Adam)

The graduates of the Harrison/Boone Program had a variety of support systems for their three years. This support included; a mentor for three years, a cohort group and professors from Harrison University. Overall, the experiences were positive and made a difference in the careers of the teachers interviewed. The support that was given came in different forms. Because of the inconsistencies in the quality of the district mentors, the team as well as the cohort group was critical. The team allowed the intern and resident to learn from even more teachers and gave them the ability to get their questions and concerns addressed without having to rely heavily on one person. The cohort group
provided the emotional support that was important when one is involved in a stressful but learning environment.

Learning classroom management strategies is important in any pre-service teacher preparation program. During their intern year, 40 out of 41 graduates either felt their mentor was either helpful or very helpful in modeling and sharing these strategies. In the resident year, 30 out of 41 graduates indicated this support too. The time they spent in classrooms observing, co-planning and co-teaching was crucial in their preparation. This came from being in the classroom on a daily basis. They were able to learn a variety of instructional strategies from a number of teachers in order to become an effective teacher. This learning was not always easy but seeing master teachers do it on a daily basis was valuable.

Classroom management is generally at the forefront of a new teacher’s mind. They are concerned with being able to handle the behavior of the students. However, there is so much more to teaching than being able to control a classroom. During a teacher preparation program, new teachers have to move from a focus on self to a focus on student learning and from the theories of learning to their implications for teaching. This was quite evident with the graduates of the Harrison/Boone Program. Thirty-nine out of 41 graduates agreed that the mentor or team helped them not only develop classroom management strategies but also learning instructional strategies. The Madeline Hunter framework for writing lesson plans also helped to provide a structure for daily plans. In addition to a daily lesson framework, the graduates also felt that having
to write a unit plan using the Dimensions of Learning Framework (Marzano & Pickering, 2006) was important in understanding the process of learning. One graduate explained it this way:

I remember one of the most difficult but powerful things I did was writing the Dimension Unit. Through that process I really began to understand the way concepts should be taught with making sure there were ways that kids could use the knowledge in meaningful and authentic ways. I learned how to write short and long term goals through this process. I still use this unit today. When I write units today, I still use the process. (Sam)

Susie also found that having a structure for lesson planning was helpful in learning how to plan for instruction:

I found using the Madeline Hunter framework was helpful to having a structure at the beginning of my teaching career. It is a huge learning curve when you begin to take on all the subject areas. You really have to take time to really understand how to teach each particular area. You have to devote a lot of time on each subject in order to know what is really important to be able to differentiate the lesson for your students.

Pat, an administrator felt that the mentor impacted the intern in helping them learn the instructional strategies that are needed for an effective teacher:

Mentors help the interns understand what good instruction is from using wait time for student response to planning a balanced lesson. They also, in our school, get a good foundation in balanced literacy because we have a centers approach for our guided reading groups. This is good experience for the interns that are assigned for the sixteen weeks. They have a lot of experience designing centers that facilitate good reading instruction.
Gina felt that her mentors were helpful in modeling what good instruction looked like and then giving her the chance to try it herself:

I would say my mentors had a lot of impact on my instruction. You know I have stolen from just about all of them, classroom management techniques, strategies and much more. That observation piece was invaluable. One mentor especially was great at modeling how to get kids to use color when editing their papers. This way it was more visual for kids. I remembered that and use that strategy today in my class. This is where other teacher prep programs are inferior, there isn’t enough time in programs to be able to watch and observe and then apply what you just learned.

One area that five graduates felt less prepared or adequate was in the teaching of reading. Perhaps it was that the Boone District uses a curriculum guide for reading instead of a basal. Teachers have to use this guide and the standards and then create their own lessons. One graduate summed it up like this:

Even though I learned about how to teach reading in my methods class, I was still not confident teaching it, I wasn’t totally ready for the planning without materials in my resident year. I don’t remember seeing the curriculum guide during my intern year. I do remember my resident mentor was the first to show it to me. I will never forget it when she said, the curriculum guide is the curriculum not the books. I wasn’t prepared for that type of planning.

Another important piece to the teacher preparation program was the strong emphasis on being encouraged to try things, make mistakes and then try again. Being able to take risks in a safe environment was important to the interns and residents. There was the sense that it was ok to make mistakes but it was important to reflect on these and figure out a way to improve on them. This ability to try different ideas they were learning in their coursework and by being in the
classroom with a mentor helped fuel this reflective process. This allowed the graduates with immediate feedback which helped to refine and revise. Susie explains:

I had a very strong mentor who was completely supportive of the program and believed in its mission. She modeled for me what it meant to be a self-reflective teacher who is really committed to trying new ideas to improve students’ learning. She really celebrated when instruction worked well and thought about what she would do differently when it didn’t. She took chances and was not afraid to make mistakes, all with the kids in mind. This helped me as I was first starting out. She was energizing to work with.

Boone School District is one that looks to ways to be on the cutting edge whether it is with technology or classroom practice or being involved in a collaborative teacher preparation program. There is a high level of emphasis put on the responsibility of one to continue to learn and grow by being involved either at the district or building level. This collaborative culture that the school district has built benefited the graduates with having people around them understanding what was needed for them to learn. This sense of giving back to the school and district was a thread that permeated throughout the administrators and graduates interviews.

We as a district have grown with the clinical model. I think teachers in the district understand their responsibility to give back to the profession. It was one way for us to give back when we developed the model and I think mentors in the program truly believe that. We have the opportunity to give back in a meaningful way.
Another administrator spoke this way:

I think this professional community is more devoted to new teachers. It is a part of our culture here at Boone. When this program was designed, I think the district was ready for it, everyone was in it together. It became a part of our culture and who we were.

The high expectations that are placed on teachers in this district also seemed to affect and heighten a person’s sense of responsibility. In this district, teachers are expected to be involved; they have collaborative planning time where the expectation is that teachers come together to talk about kids. In addition, teachers are asked to become involved in school and district committees so that they become a decision making member. Graduates from the Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program were schooled in this culture. All graduates became involved in either school or district committee work during one of their resident years. One graduate explained it this way:

My mentors were involved in the district, both were learning specialists. It was helpful having a mentor who was involved in district committees because it gave you a more of a global look at things. I remember my mentor telling me that teachers needed to be on committees and involved so that they could stay current with new initiatives. I learned during those 3 years that teaching should not be isolating, but you have to work on it and force yourself outside of the classroom. It can get overwhelming being in the classroom on a daily basis. I was always encouraged to be involved. I always felt comfortable speaking my voice and they were supportive of me taking that role.

Everyone involved in this teacher preparation program had to make huge commitments. Harrison University had to commit to offering the type of
coursework in a way that would fit best with students being in a classroom everyday. Boone School District had to commit to having a place/classroom for the residents to teach in and the participants had to commit to a three year program. The rigor of this program made a difference in how others saw them. They were respected for changing their career, choosing a time consuming program and being willing to be open minded and flexible. Adam describes it this way:

I think there is definitely a higher level of professionalism with the clinical model. It is a rigorous program and you have to be committed to the process. They are under a lot of scrutiny and have to learn and integrate information quickly. I think as a district we respect the clinical model groups because they do have a high set of standards set for themselves. They are changing their career and putting themselves out on a limb.

The graduates also understood that this program was intense and understood that this was a different type of teacher preparation program. They understood that this commitment to three years was going to be difficult, challenging but rewarding. Joseph describes it this way:

We had to be willing to make sacrifices and we knew from the beginning what was needed to succeed. I always found the graduates from this program more open minded to learn about new things. I think they go into the profession truly wanting to learn as opposed to just getting into teaching. I think if they just wanted to get into teaching they would choose another program. There are easier one year certification programs out there that don’t demand as much time. It is not easy to work all day in a school, go to classes at night, and then prepare lessons for the next day but I wouldn’t do it any other way.
The graduates of the Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program described the challenges and strengths of this type of teacher certification program. One challenge for this program was definitely the time commitment that was needed for these three years. To learn a new career, go to school at night and still prepare for teaching the next day was exhausting and demanding. However, not one graduate said they would change anything that they did. They felt strongly that this type of preparation was necessary in order to be an effective teacher.

Even with these challenges, the graduates experienced a great deal of support. They felt that the program prepared them for their first years of teaching in giving the graduates the year long internship in order to learn the classroom management and instructional strategies that were needed in order to be successful teachers. The graduates had the support from a variety of places in the educational institution. They included support from the cohort, team and mentor. All three of these support systems were needed. Even though this intense three-year program was challenging it was a great place to learn, share and give back.

Susie continues to give back:

One thing I learned from my mentor and I try to pass onto people I mentor is that teaching is a circle. She said there will be days, not many, but a few days that you will live on the top of the circle, it feels good and you sort of have this out of body experience. Everything is great, however these days are few and far between but we learn to love them and appreciate them and there is the bottom of the circle when you say, oh my, I have to get home and open a bottle of wine. This is when the parents are crawling out of the woodwork, the kids are freaking out and you feel like, why did I teacher
today? I didn’t get anything done today, I was just putting out fires all day. She said to me, remember when you are at the bottom, it will come around again and you will be back on top. If you can keep on the sides give yourself credit and you will never veteran yourself out of the bottom. Some years you will have more times on the bottom and more on the top but it is a cycle and it is a part of what teaching is. This really helped me during my first year of teaching keep things in perspective and it is the same message I give to the new teachers I mentor today.
Chapter V: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This final chapter of this study first presents a summary of the research problem, methods used to conduct the study and results of the study followed by the researcher’s conclusions, an explanation of the significance of the study and implications for future research and practice, and limitations of the study.

As described in chapter one, the teaching profession has seen a great increase of new teachers coming into the field. There is currently a shift in the proportion of veteran and novice teachers with more teachers at the retirement state (Johnson, 2004). This has sparked more alternative certification programs where one can receive their teaching certificate with little classroom experience (Ingersoll, 2003).

At the same time the No Child Left Behind legislation calls for a highly qualified teacher in each classroom which then begs to question, what is highly qualified? The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2006) points to five core qualities that effective teachers possess. These teachers are committed to students and their learning, they know the subject that they teach and have the necessary pedagogical knowledge, they understand classroom management techniques which lead to student learning, they are reflective about their own practice and they are a part of a learning community. The question is how best to ensure that high-quality teachers enter and stay in the classroom.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to uncover the actual lived experiences of graduates from the Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program.
The three research questions guided the study, were:

1. What was the impact of mentoring on teacher retention from graduates from one teacher preparation program?

2. What was the impact of mentoring on quality teaching for graduates from one teacher preparation program?

3. What was the impact of mentoring on teacher commitment for graduates from one teacher preparation program?

Qualitative methods were used to conduct this phenomenological study. A phenomenological study was undertaken because of the desire to understand the perceptions and experiences from the graduates and administrators. It was not the intent of the study to discover universal truths or to predict what others would experience in a teacher preparation program, but to determine the intrinsic components of the program for a selected group of participants.

Data were collected through written surveys sent to 72 program graduates and through recorded, in depth, face to face individual interviews with nine graduates and three administrators in naturalistic settings. The nine graduates were solicited through a pool of 72 graduates who were sent a survey. From those who offered, participants were selected on a basis of the year they graduated and the location of where they were teaching. The administrators were chosen because they had had been in the district the longest and had the experience with this teacher preparation program. In addition to the interviews, data were also collected through a survey that was sent to 72 graduates. The information that was collected from this tool was collated and analyzed for themes.
Discussion

Many beginning teachers struggle in their early years because of classroom management issues, individual differences among the students, the assessing of students and communicating with parents. In addition, many beginning teachers have limited practical experiences in a classroom which keeps them from having a broad repertoire of classroom strategies (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002).

Finding 1: Having extended clinical experiences makes a difference in learning classroom management and instructional strategies.

The graduates from the Harrison/Boone Program had extensive time observing, co-planning and co-teaching in a classroom before having responsibility for their own classroom. Analysis of the results provided evidence that at least from the perspectives of Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program the year long internship was crucial in helping them feel confident as they entered their first year of teaching. This year provided the necessary time to be able to observe many different teachers. Being able to learn from a variety of teachers in different classrooms was important as the new teachers began to develop their own style.

Also, being a part of the school community for an entire year helped the graduates see the holistic picture of what being a teacher means. They were able to observe the opening of school, participate in parent teacher conferences, curriculum nights, report cards and become a part of the school community. They were able to learn and see in action a wide variety of repertoires that teachers
used. It is clear that this was essential for their preparation and helped them in the first few years of their teaching career.

In order to plan instruction, teachers need to understand general developmental progressions, as well as individual differences in development, so that they are able to determine when children are prepared to learn specific things in particular ways. Having that intern year where the graduates were in K-8 classrooms, helped them gain an overall view of the developmental stages of kids.

Working in so many classrooms, observing many teachers during the intern year, helped the graduates learn classroom management strategies. Most beginning teachers come into their first year concerned with how to manage the numerous responsibilities of the classroom. It generally takes time for the new teacher to move from their own concerns to what the students need. Darling Hammond (2005) states that understanding children, how they develop, and how they learn is critical for effective instruction. Teachers that have this knowledge of development are more effective in managing the classroom, can select appropriate material and are able to guide the learning process.

The graduates felt that they had good support in writing lesson plans, designing units, and getting consistent and timely feedback on their teaching from their mentor. All 41 graduates indicated on the survey that the mentor was helpful in writing lesson plans while 39 felt that they were supported with unit plans. Joseph remembers his experiences:

Learning how to write a unit plan was hard but rewarding. I thought the Dimensions format was great and it really helped me write lesson plans. I remember thinking that it was a lot of work to write
lessons from scratch but it made me realize what it takes to come up with appropriate objectives, activities and assessments. This was the first time I received good constructive feedback from my mentor. I learned the process of not only teaching but what really learning is. I still use the Dimension format when I write unit plans.

In addition to learning how to teach from working side by side with teachers during this clinical year, the graduates also had many opportunities to reflect about their practice. Preparing teachers as they learn about teaching requires a set of tools that develop the skills and practices of systematic inquiry and critical reflection. This can be facilitated by the university and mentor. Jill again describes how using a reflective practice helped her to understand teaching:

My mentor supported me on what I needed to learn. She allowed me to try things and to make mistakes in an environment that made it safe for me. One thing that was so helpful was helping me to reflect about what was going on in the classroom. I kept a notebook so that I could think through what had happened throughout the day. I still have that journal and go back to see how much I have grown. When I think about my intern year, one of the most important pieces had to answer the why question. Why am I using this text, why am I picking out this essential skill? I found that every time I had to do this, it honed my skills and helped me to refine what was important. This continuous learning or improvement theory was very engaging.

Finding #2: The ability to closely align university coursework with classroom practice helps in the integration of theory and practice.

According to Freiberg (2002), a problem with teacher education has been the disconnect between what is taught in teacher education programs and what knowledge beginning teachers need as they enter the classroom. This ranges from
classroom management strategies to the pedagogical knowledge of skills. Most of the data show the ability to take university classes along side of being in the classroom helped the graduates apply what they were learning. In fact, 40 out of the 41 graduates surveyed stated that being able to integrate course work with daily work was either helpful or very helpful. Harrison University designed many of the classes so that the graduates could use their assignments in the classroom. This created a good, hands-on experience so that the theory could be put into practice almost immediately. For example, in the math course, the graduates learned about the steps of problem solving and the strategies children need to use in order to complete a problem. Then the students were able to teach the strategies to a group of kids in the classroom and were able to reflect with their mentor on how the lesson went.

Finding #3: Although mentoring new teachers is important it may not be enough. New teachers also value other support systems including; teacher teams, cohort groups and a collaborative environment.

Another theme that came out of this study was the tremendous amount of support that a new teacher needs in order to be effective. Mentors can provide critical support for a new teacher by establishing an environment of empowerment, offering reassurance with classroom practices and answering the hundreds of questions that come up on a daily basis. Being able to talk with others about teaching strategies or classroom management is also important for beginning teachers (Gilbert, 2005).
Good teachers are often assumed to be good mentors. However, it takes preparation and professional development for most teachers to mentor effectively. Some of the skills requisite for quality mentoring includes: knowing what to observe and how to provide feedback, understanding how to keep communication open and resolve conflicts, being able to study one’s own teaching and to communicate our own processes so others can learn from them, providing appropriate challenges for the novice, and fostering reflective thinking (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). School districts need to develop mentor programs that attract mentors that can demonstrate the above qualities. Because the graduates from the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model found the side by side mentoring helpful with consistent feedback, mentor programs need to find ways to provide release time for mentors to be able to work with their mentee in classrooms. There needs to be a culture developed where the mentee can feel safe in learning from mistakes.

The participants of the Harrison/Boone Program were assigned a mentor in each of their phases during the intern year. They then were assigned a mentor in the school for their resident years. From the survey, 41 out of 41 graduates indicated that the mentor they had helped them to understand how to write and develop daily lesson plans, 38 out of 41 indicated that the mentor helped them learn how to assess students and 39 felt that the mentor was helpful in learning how to communicate with others. The graduates had a lot of time working side by side with a teacher during this intern year. This was the time where they were able to observe their mentor, co-plan and co-teach. This learning process was vital to
their development as a teacher. Working closely with good teachers was an obvious strength of this program. One graduate explained it this way:

My first long term placement was with Carrie on a combined 1st and 2nd grade class with a bilingual component. Carrie was excellent in helping me to develop “big picture”lessons and units. Perhaps more importantly, Carrie taught me about the political aspects of a life in a school and district. We would sit down together and plan out a lesson, then we would teach the lesson together so that I could lead sometimes and support her at times. It was a great way to learn how to teach various subjects with different delivery methods.

This ability to learn “on the job” with the right type of support is at the heart of the situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This theory states that learners need to participate in an activity with a more experienced expert in order to gradually become more proficient in the activity. This is exactly what takes place during the intern year. The intern learned from being in the classroom with the guidance from a mentor everyday.

As important as the mentor was for the graduates, being able to consult a team of teachers was equally important. The team was important for several reasons. One of the problems that came from the data was the quality of some of the mentors. Many of the graduates talked about inconsistencies from mentor to mentor. They differed in knowledge, quality and commitment. Because a participant might have up to five mentors during the intern year, he or she could be placed in a classroom with a less than adequate mentor. Initially there was a process by which mentors were selected; they needed to apply and receive their team and principal’s approval. This process seemed to break down over the years
for some mentors. This caused problems for some of the graduates. But in the end they were resilient and found other resources in order to get the support they needed. For example one graduate explained it this way:

My mentor tried to be helpful, but was mostly ineffective. I didn’t have the same level of trust with him as I had with my other mentors. But, I loved working with with my team so I mostly figured it out on my own and with my team.

There were several benefits for being a member of a team. The first benefit was the chance to learn styles and strategies from more than just their mentor. Boone School District encouraged and promoted the concept of teaming. Most schools try to preserve common planning time so that teams of teachers can meet and discuss curricular issues and kids. This was the place where the graduates were able not only to learn from others but also share what they were learning through their courses. This idea of collaboration helped not only the student but also the veteran teachers. This became the learning community or the community of practice that Lave & Wenger (1991) described. It means that one must be involved in the social community throughout the learning process and that it is through this involvement that people develop knowledge and construct their identity in order to feel a part of the profession. The team provided this by being a place where graduates could learn, reflect and share.

Another benefit of teams for the new teacher was the ability for them to go to other teachers. It was difficult to match personalities and styles between mentor and mentee and sometimes the match just didn’t work. When the graduates of the Harrison/Boone Preparation Program were assigned a mentor that
was ineffective, more often than not, there was a team that they could turn to. The graduates were able to be resourceful and seek out the support that was needed.

In addition to the team structure, being in a collaborative environment was important for these graduates. The feeling that classrooms were open and that teachers welcomed the interns and residents was widespread. This collaboration fostered the type of learning and sharing that was necessary for the graduates to be able to take risks. When teachers collaborate, they share experiences and knowledge that can promote learning for instructional improvement. This type of learning can help teachers solve educational problems. This seemed to be an important piece to the graduates’ experiences. Whether it was talking about instructional practices or issues with students, the ability to communicate with others was crucial. It helped to keep the stress that often comes with being a new teacher at bay.

Another support system that was valuable to the graduates was the cohort group. Being able to go through this intensive three-year program with a group of people helped to ease the stress. The cohort group was a sounding board where the graduates could discuss their successes as well as their failures. It was also a place where they could learn from each other. This group developed a strong bond as they took classes together at night and for the most part had the same learning curve.

While there is a lot of research on mentoring and how a program can help beginning teachers, participants noted the importance of being a part of a team,
working in a collaborative environment and having a cohort group were also key points in helping beginning teachers. The graduates reached out to many teachers during their three years. Being able to talk about instruction with a mentor or a team of teachers was important. Developing this culture where teachers talk with teachers, plan with each other can be a tremendous asset for mentoring new teachers.

Finding #4: Providing a support system for new teachers for the first several years can help to retain effective teachers.

While the attrition rate for beginning teachers is close to one third within the first three years, this is clearly not what happened with the graduates of the Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program. Out of the 121 graduates of this program, 72 were contacted and sent a survey. Forty-one graduates returned the survey indicating 35 were either still teaching or in education in another capacity. Eighty-five percent of the graduates who sent back their survey are either teaching or in education in another capacity while 80% are still teaching today. The support that was given to this group of people during the three years can probably be linked to the favorable retention in teaching. In fact without the guidance, support or reflection with expert teachers, many beginning teachers will leave the profession within three years (McDonald, 1980, Tisher, 1978, Veenman, 1984). It is quite clear that the graduates were provided a great deal of support throughout the three year program and this support gave them the confidence, preparation and tools that they needed.
Finding #5: Designing a rigorous teacher program with high expectations attracts committed candidates to the teaching profession.

Even though the intern year was extremely stressful, not one of the graduates would revise their teaching preparation program. The graduates were told of the expectations and time commitment up front. They understood that it would be a rigorous program. Only one of the graduates who sent back his/her survey, quit after the resident one year. This was the type of commitment that this group exhibited and frankly was expected. Knowing that one was going to have to commit to three years in order to get a teacher certificate and masters in education brought in a different breed of people. There are certainly other programs that take less time, effort and work but may not demand the same type of commitment that this program did. Pat describes this type of commitment:

I think the Harrison/Boone Preparation Program is probably the ideal as far as teacher preparation programs. It is very rigorous in teaching because 2/3 of the preparation is in the classroom. Even though it is a challenging program, being in the classroom everyday, and then taking course work at night is difficult but I think that is why we see the teachers in this program are more effective and ready for their classroom than other new teachers.

Mary explains it this way:

I think there is definitely a higher level of professionalism with the clinical model. It is a rigorous program and you have to be committed to the process. We had to be willing to make sacrifices and we knew from the beginning what was needed to succeed. I always found the graduates from this program more open minded and willing to learn about new ways of doing things. I
think the clinical model participants go into the profession more open minded and truly want to learn as opposed to just getting into teaching. I think if they just wanted to get into teaching they would be in another program. There are much easier programs out there that don’t demand as much time commitment. It is not easy to work all day in a school, go to classes at night, and then prepare lessons.

The candidates had to write essays, go through several screenings which included an open house and several interviews by a group of people that included Harrison and Boone personnel. Going through this lengthy process set the tone for the group. They were keenly aware that they were in a select group and had a responsibility to do well. There was a rigor to their teacher preparation program and it was noticed and accepted by the participants.

From the beginning, the graduates were expected to be a part of the district in every way. They went to meetings with their mentor, attended parent teacher conferences and any other committee meeting that was appropriate. This district expected teachers to be involved in decision making so the graduates learned this from the beginning.

Many of the mentors were also involved in other district and building committees. This was a good way for the graduates to see that one needed to be involved in order to have a voice. They understood that their responsibility did not stop at the classroom door, and that teaching was much more than just writing lessons. Nancy talks about the expectations of the district:

In this district, teachers are expected to be involved whether it is at the building or district level. Our mentors are especially good role models for the interns. We expect them to be actively involved in
not only their learning but also with the broader community. They have to collaborate and work with others which helps model for our interns. I can’t think of one mentor who is not on several committees beyond their classroom.

Susie talks about needing to speak up in the district:

I think we are responsible to our students to make sure they are learning, but I also think it is our responsibility to create an environment in the building where people can speak up on issues. I was always encouraged to be involved. I always felt comfortable speaking my voice and my mentor was supportive in me taking that role. If you weren’t involved then you didn’t have a voice in decisions.

Today, eight out of the nine graduates that were interviewed are involved in leadership roles in their districts, one is the chair for the district’s math committee, one is a learning specialist who is responsible for staff development for their building, two are mentors themselves, and all graduates who were interviewed felt it was a part of their job to be involved in school or district committees. An administrator talks about the involvement of graduates in this way:

I think about the people who have been in this teacher preparation program and they are teacher leaders. They are involved on committees and they do try to do things at the district level. I see them playing a big role in what we do here. It seems to me that the graduates are the first to volunteer for committees and to help out in any way they can. They see teaching as more than just being in the classroom.

Finding # 6: Being responsible for the profession means classroom, school or district but not the profession as a whole.
When asked about what responsibility teachers have to the profession, many of the graduates talked about needing to stay current on best practices and being able to differentiate the curriculum within their classroom. All but one graduate looked at their profession as being their classroom, school and at times the district. Only one mentioned the profession as a whole or as a broad group.

Lisa talked about the profession in this way:

I think it is their responsibility to teach using best practice and stay current with that. I think it is their responsibility to allow everyone parents and children the right to an open and honest beginning. Their responsibility is also to give everyone that opportunity to learn.

Gina also looked at professional responsibility in this way:

I think that we need to really find comfortable ways to share our successes with each other so that positives can be shared and when something is working in our classroom share it and not say, look I am great but find a means to have an open and honest articulation with other teachers.

Adam, the administrator also describes being responsible for the profession in terms of the classroom, school and community:

It is one of treating kids respectfully. They are able to know what their needs are and in a warm and compassionate way deliver services to them that helps them improve from where they were. I think their first responsibility is to the kids. The second responsibility is to the parents to make sure they have involved the parents in the education of the child and have listened to the parents in order to learn how they feel their child learns best. I also think they have a responsibility to their teammates and colleagues to be good listeners and to share what they think is important and implement what others think is important too.
The mission of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is to establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do; to develop and operate a national, voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet these standards, and to advance related education reforms for the purpose of improving student learning in American schools (NBPTS, 2000, p.1). These standards are now being used to identify effective teachers. Using these standards as a lens might help to evaluate the perceived success of the graduates from Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program.

One way the graduates of the Harrison/Boone program perceived their success in the classroom was having extended clinical experiences. They felt that learning how students develop and learn by being in the various levels (primary, intermediate and middle) gave them the broad view of child development. This links directly with proposition one of the NBPTS where effective teachers understand how students learn and develop (Table 4). In addition to learning about the various ages, the graduates also had the luxury of being in many different classrooms where they were able to learn how to differentiate lessons for individual students.

Being in a variety of classrooms during their intern year also gave them the opportunity to learn different classroom management strategies and ways to deal with students’ needs. The NBPTS Proposition 3 states that teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning. The graduates had the chance to observe effective teaching practices from their mentors. This modeling
was crucial for the graduates as they learned how to write lesson plans and assess student learning. The ability to co-plan and co-teach during phase 2 gave them guidance and support before moving to their own classroom. (Table 4)

The graduates perceived the ability to use reflective practice on an ongoing basis was important for their growth as a teacher. The mentors would ask questions such as; how did the lesson go, why did it go that way, what could have been better? These opportunities helped the graduates think about their instruction in order to revise and improve. The ability to reflect and think about one’s practice links to the NBPTS core proposition 4. (Table 4)

Finally, being an effective teacher based on the core propositions from NBPTS is being a part of a learning community. The graduates from the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model were a part of a collaborative environment. Being a part of a collaborative system helped them learn and grow in a safe and supportive atmosphere. This learning community fostered a place where the graduates could try different strategies and ideas. The program allowed the participants to take risks so that they could reflect on their practice and learn from their mistakes.

Table 4  National Board Propositions

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Proposition 2</th>
<th>Proposition 3</th>
<th>Proposition 4</th>
<th>Proposition 5</th>
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<tr>
<td>Learned how to work with families in this area</td>
<td>Learned how to teach different students with different needs</td>
<td>Learned various classroom and instructional strategies from mentors and teams</td>
<td>Full year of internship allowed risk-taking and trying new ideas</td>
<td>Learning occurred between mentor and intern/resident Teams met regularly and were committed to that time to discuss students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structure of intern year provided the overview of k-8 kids and curriculum

University coursework was applied to the classroom immediately

Mentor modeled lesson and unit plans

On going self reflection was built in the program

Used the cohort group, team as support systems

Able to see children develop over time

Good mentors who helped with understanding assessment, pacing and organization

Planned, conferenced, and reflected with mentor daily

Collaborative culture fostered the sharing of ideas

Throughout this study, much of the discussion has been from the point of Boone School District. The role of Harrison University in this partnership is not mentioned as much by the participants through the survey or interviews; however it was an instrumental piece in this teacher education program. Nine out of the 41 surveys mentioned the strength of the Harrison courses. Rhonda shares her thoughts:

The greatest strength was the connection between the theory presented by Harrison Staff and the Boone teachers. It was amazing to see and experience what the theories looked like in action. I don’t think the program would have been as effective if Ruth* had not been as available or supportive. She was always there to answer questions or help us navigate the system.

Ruth was the liaison for the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model. She organized the program, was the support system for the participants at the university and designed the coursework. This type of connection between Harrison and Boone was helpful for communication and connections between the coursework and the classroom.

*Pseudonym
One reason for this unbalanced view of the Harrison/Boone partnership might be the nature of the researcher’s questions. The questions focused on how the mentor impacted their practice and development of the teacher. Since the mentors came from Boone School District, there was little opportunity to discuss the role of the university in this area.

Another reason could be that this study focused on a group of participants who had graduated as long as 14 years ago. The time away from the program could have made a difference in their answers.

Although Harrison University was not explicitly mentioned throughout this study, the School Of Education’s conceptual framework came through in the answers of the graduates. This framework was designed from an array of theorists and research data, and experiences with best practice in the field. One aspect of this framework is the integration of theory and practice. The graduates of the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model talked about how important it was to be able to apply what they were learning in their coursework into the classroom.

Being self-reflective in order to learn from mistakes and make changes that are necessary is another key characteristic of Harrison’s conceptual framework. The graduates perceived reflection helped them in their lesson planning and learning what worked and what didn’t. This reflective practice was weaved in and out of their 3 year program.

Another aspect of the conceptual framework is being a life-long learner. The graduates by being in school, were committed to learning a new career and
taking risks in a new environment. They articulated the goals they had for themselves and what was expected of them.

Although the graduates don’t discuss Harrison University’s role, it is displayed in their answers and how they perceived their preparation.

The researcher’s position as a teacher in Boone School District might also have biased the participants into thinking about the classroom at Boone versus the classroom at the university. One might want to ask whether a Harrison University researcher would have found different perspectives. But whatever the reasons might have been, this program could not have happened without the efforts of both Harrison University and Boone School District.

Who is responsible for preparing our future teachers? Colleges of Education and school districts need to share the responsibility. Having a partnership between the University and school district can provide new teachers with the connections between clinical experiences and formal coursework, support from a variety of sources plus the ongoing professional development opportunities.

Limitations

This phenomenological study concerned itself with the perceptions of the participants regarding the phenomena of their own teacher preparation program. The insights and themes that emerged and were presented in Chapter IV of this study were self-described perceptions and interpretations provided by the participants in the study who were self selected to participate. The results of this
study cannot be generalized to all teacher preparation programs. The conclusions drawn can be open to other interpretations and analysis.

Implications

With many teachers approaching retirement age, there will be a need to hire many teachers in the future. The balance between veteran teachers and new teachers will begin to tip the scale with more novice teachers in schools. This can create a need to figure out a way to get more teacher candidates certified quickly. There are already many alternative certification programs designed to help candidates become certified in a quick way. The results from this study would caution against this road to certification. The year long internship was very important in helping the graduates really prepare themselves for teaching. Teacher preparation programs can’t and shouldn’t bypass the time in classrooms in order to get certified teachers in classrooms. Darling-Hammond (2006) suggests that an effective teacher preparation program includes an extensive (30 weeks or more) and intensely supervised clinical program. Graduates from the Harrison/Boone program felt that they needed that intern year to be effectively prepared for the demands of the teaching career. This model does have its challenges. The costs on both the part of the university and school district can be prohibitive. In addition the schedules of both the university and school district can be difficult.

Another implication from this study could be restructuring or examining the curriculum of the university. Integrating theory with practice can help make instructional connections for teacher preparation programs. University personnel
need to assure there are ample opportunities in methods and practicum courses to integrate theory and practice. This can happen naturally if there are opportunities for universities to observe pre-service teachers. Schools of Education might want to examine how they can design pre-service hours or clinical hours that are closely supervised by university faculty. This would mean that professors would need to be in classrooms often, working with their students in order to provide guidance and support as they write and implement lesson plans.

Developing and designing support systems for new teachers can be a challenge but it can be an opportunity to look at it in other ways. School districts should design and develop support systems for new teachers which include: mentoring, a team structure and cohort groups.

A mentor program for first year teachers may not be enough. Because there are different types of personalities, it is hard to always have a positive mentor-mentee relationship. Beginning teachers have many questions and they do not want to overload one person. This is why having a team structure where the novice teachers can receive support from a group of teachers is important. One might say, “it takes a village” in order to develop a teacher.

Having a culture where teachers are open to having others in their classroom, are willing to collaborate and are able to build an environment where one can take risks is another implication. New teachers need to be able to try out strategies in a supportive environment where the feedback will be constructive and encouraging. Building this type of collaborative setting should be encouraged and modeled with school districts and universities.
One way to help new teachers collaborate with others is the Illinois New Teacher Collaborative website. This was developed in 2004 by a group of educators, state agency representatives and business professionals. The goal of this website is to have a place where novice teachers can go to find a coordinated network of services. There are online communities where teachers can share and reflect about their practice. This could be a place for both mentors and novice teachers to share their expertise.

Another implication might be to use the NBPTS’s proposition and standards to provide a framework for pre-service teacher-education programs. The NBPTS is leading the efforts to reform education by improving the quality of teachers and this could be a way to prepare teacher candidates by building their capacity for teaching and learning. This includes the understanding of the set of skills needed for teaching, the knowledge that students should learn, the appropriate instructional tools, the data a teacher uses in order to differentiate lessons and commitments needed to effectively impact student learning. This framework might be useful to identify and define effectiveness in the classroom.

Preparing new teachers should be a collaborative process between the University and School Districts. It can’t be done with just one of these institutions. The Professional Development School is one collaborative model. We need to increase the partnership between the University and school districts. More dialogue needs to be done on the possibilities of having a closer connection between these two institutions. Instead of eliminating Schools of Education as
Levine (2006) suggests, school districts could use the expertise of universities in researching best practices and being a part of the induction program.

Looking at how a Professional Development School partnership could build a culture of teaming and collaboration within the school community could be a topic for future study. It might also be helpful to take a look and compare different types of teacher preparation programs. Another topic for future study could be to look at difference in quality of teachers who came from another career before getting their teaching certification. Are teachers more prepared because they come into teaching after another career?

Finally, another implication for school districts and universities might be to look at how we are defining a profession. It was surprising to the researcher that no one described the profession outside the classroom, school or local district. No one really felt responsible for the profession of teaching. This could be the culture of education and teaching. How can we change the image of teachers, attract more qualified teachers and retain them in the profession without having a sense of the greater whole? If we only are responsible for our classrooms or maybe committees in the school, we won’t have a say in the direction of education in the future. Doctors and lawyers have a way to make sure that their members are meeting high standards and they are schooled in the environment that they need to “police” their own profession. Perhaps by expecting prospective teachers to be responsible beyond their classroom, school and district we can build a more cohesive profession.
Summary

The participants of the Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program overwhelmingly felt that their experiences were extraordinary. They had a lot of passion as they reflected on their intense but rewarding program. Building the expertise in teaching for an entire year through the close relationship with mentors was crucial in the development of these teachers. This group of individuals were committed to a program that was intensive, time consuming and actually costly because of the three year commitment. However, despite all of this, they had a sense of the enormous responsibility that teachers have and pursued a program that would provide the instruction, support and leadership that was needed.

We need to look at ways of making teacher preparation programs rigorous and competitive. Teaching is not an easy job and should not be advertised as that. One can’t learn the job in a few short months. It takes time, hard work and a willingness to continue to learn to be an effective teacher. There is not a substitution for being in the classroom. Teacher candidates have to have ample time to be able to observe, co-plan and co-teach before doing it independently.

Teaching is complex, and one can’t do it alone. Schools need to build a structure that fosters collegial collaboration between beginning and veteran teachers. One might be a grade-level team that coordinates instructional planning. Such teams can provide a support system for beginners who are learning how to plan curriculum and instruction.

Schools that support teachers over time succeed not only in hiring new teachers, but also in retaining and developing them. They leave little chance and
do not assume that good teaching inevitably flows from innate talent, best
nurtured in privacy and isolation. Rather, they purposefully engage new teachers
in the culture and practices of the school, right from the beginning. This was
certainly the experiences of the graduates from the Harrison/Boone Teacher
Preparation Program. The collegial support they encountered in their schools,
allowed them to succeed in the classroom and refine their teaching skills over
time.

Maybe preparing teachers in the future should be compared to how major
league baseball players are prepared. Learning how to hit a major league pitcher
takes time, effort and skill. Much practice needs to take place before a player can
hit a ninety mile an hour fast ball. Learning how to teach should require the same
amount of work, time and effort. There are skills that one needs to learn, practice
and refine before tackling it on your own and we have an obligation to require
teacher candidates to master them. The profession needs to step up and see that
teacher preparation programs do not shortchange the learning experience. Joseph
provides this example:

I think we have to speak often and loud about what
a noble profession teaching is. I get questioned all
the time, why I would leave law and go into
teaching. I think we have to give people the
message that it is important and that we have to
work hard to do a good job. We need to walk the
talk and increase the requirements for becoming
a teacher. To be effective, you must be committed,
willling to put in long hours and continue to study
and learn. I think it is our job to communicate this
message about our profession.
The Harrison/Boone Teacher Preparation Program provided a solid foundation for the participants to start their teaching career. Natalie sums it up this way:

My resident years were stressful, enlightening and worth every second of it. I didn’t see it then, but I was well prepared when I began interviewing for a position after my resident years. Without preparing for an interview, answers to questions simply rolled off my tongue. I was speaking from experience. Starting at a new school also helped me realize how well prepared I was to teach. I was confident in my abilities and this confidence helped my transition to a new school and new environment. I still feel this program is one of the best teacher prep program. I would not have changed one thing.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Total Survey Results

Intern

Intern Survey Results

- Number
- Descriptors

1. Very Helpful
2. Some help
3. Little Help

- Climate and expect of school dist.
- Observing and providing feedback
- Understanding curriculum
- Developing lesson plans
- Developing unit plans
- Developing assessment
- Developing instruction
- Helping to reflect on teaching
- Developing ways to assess learning
- Using assessment to inform instruction
- Establishing parent communication
- Analyzing student work independently
- Integrating course work effectively

Interns

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35

122
Appendix B

Total Survey Results
Resident

Resident Survey Results

Descriptors

Number

Very Helpful
Some Help
Little Help
Not Discussed

Observing and providing feedback
Developing classroom mang. strategies
Understanding pacing of units
Using assessment to inform instruct.
Preparing for open house-conferences
Helping to reflect on my teaching

0
5
10
15
20
25
30
## Appendix C

### Raw Survey Results

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Appendix D

Interns 1993-1998

Interns 1999-2003

Interns 2004-2007
Appendix E

## Appendix F

### Raw Data from Interns 1993-1999

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Appendix I

Number of Graduates (who sent back survey) still in Education

Retention of Graduates who Sent Back Survey

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Appendix J

Interview Protocol
Graduates of Harrison/Boone Clinical Model

_Preparation_

Please describe your overall experiences in your teacher preparation program.

In what ways did you feel prepared for your first year of teaching?

Reflecting back now, what things would have been helpful to know before that first year of teaching?

Describe what skills, strategies you learned from your mentors?

Please describe the support you received during your intern and two resident years.

_Relationships_

Describe your relationship with your mentors.

How did you and your mentor communicate about: students, parents, and curriculum?

What impact, if any did your mentors have on your instruction?

What type of support did you receive from your mentors?

How, if at all did your mentors influence your current practices?

_Leadership/Commitment_

How would you define a leader in a school?

What activities or roles did your mentors have outside the classroom?
What impact, if any did your mentor experience have on your decision to pursue a teaching position?

What activities are your presently involved in at your school, district and beyond?

What opportunities have you had to go to conferences, workshops or other professional development activities?

What responsibilities do you feel teachers have to their profession?
Appendix K
Interview Protocol-Administrators
Graduates of Harrison/Boone Clinical Model

**Preparation**

From your experiences, how prepared are graduates from the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model? In what ways?

Please describe the type of mentor program that Boone has.

From your experience, what skills and strategies do clinical model participants learn from their mentors?

What impact, if any do mentors have on instruction?

Are there ways that the participants could be better prepared for their teaching career?

**Relationships**

Describe the relationship from your perspective between mentors and participants of the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model.

How did mentors communicate about with the participants of the program about students, parents, and curriculum?

**Leadership/Commitment**

How would you define a leader in a school?

What activities or roles did participants and/or graduates have outside the classroom?

How would you evaluate the amount of involvement that interns, residents and graduates have at your school, district and beyond?

What opportunities do interns, residents and graduates have to go to conferences, workshops or other professional development activities?

How, if at all, do mentors influence current practices?

What responsibilities do you feel teachers have to their profession?
Appendix L

Dissertation Survey
Impact of Mentoring on Retention, Teacher Quality and Commitment from One School-University Partnership

In what year did you graduate from Harrison University *?

________________

Current Position

_____ Teaching (where)___________________________

_____ In Education (what position)_________________________

_____ Other (please explain why you are no longer teaching)

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Male___________ Female___________

Current Age ________________
This survey will be asking you to reflect on your experiences during your intern year and then your resident years. For the following questions, please think back on your intern year.

How helpful were your mentors during your intern year in providing support related to the following issues and practices?

**Understanding the climate and expectations of the school district**

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Helping me to reflect on my teaching

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<th>2</th>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Not Sure</td>
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<td>Somewhat Helpful</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little Help</td>
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<td>Did not Discuss</td>
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<td>Not Sure</td>
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Establishing parent communication

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<tr>
<td>Little Help</td>
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<td>Did not Discuss</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not Sure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyzing student work

4 3 2 1 Not Sure
Very Helpful Somewhat Helpful Little Help Did not Discuss

Integrating course work with daily lessons

4 3 2 1 Not Sure
Very Helpful Somewhat Helpful Little Help Did not Discuss

Please go on for questions about the resident years……

Did you have the same mentor for your Resident One and Resident Two years? Yes________ No________

Now for the following questions, please reflect on your experiences in your Resident One and Resident Two years.

How helpful was your mentor during your Resident years in providing support related to the following issues and practices?

Observing and providing feedback

4 3 2 1 Not Sure
Very Helpful Somewhat Helpful Little Help Did not Discuss

Developing classroom management strategies

4 3 2 1 Not Sure
Very Helpful Somewhat Helpful Little Help Did not Discuss

Understanding curriculum

4 3 2 1 Not Sure
Very Helpful Somewhat Helpful Little Help Did not Discuss
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>Somewhat Helpful</th>
<th>Little Help</th>
<th>Did not Discuss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the pacing of units throughout the year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing instructional strategies</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using assessment to inform instruction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assisting with parent communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for open house and parent-teacher conferences</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing student work</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping me to reflect on my teaching</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Please reflect on your overall experiences during your Intern year.

Please reflect on your overall experiences during your Resident years.

Additional comments:

What do you feel were the strengths of your teacher preparation program?

What do you feel were the challenges of your teacher preparation program?

Thank you so much for your time!

Request for Interview

I also am looking for people who have graduated from the program in 2004 or earlier to be a part of an interview. If you would be willing to do this, please indicate on the line below. I will contact you soon in order to make arrangements at your convenience (I am willing to travel to you). If you would prefer to submit your survey results without any identifying information, but are willing to be interviewed, please feel free to mail your survey results and email me with your interest in being interviewed.

_________________________   __________________
Name                        The year I graduated

_________________________
Phone number

_____________________
E-mail address
Brenda Kraber (kraber@sbcglobal.net)
Appendix M

Dear Harrison/Boone* Clinical Model Graduate,

My name is Brenda Kraber and I am a doctoral candidate from Harrison University. I am inviting you to be a part of a research study which will focus on the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model*. Specifically, this study will try to learn the impact of mentoring on teacher quality, retention and commitment to teaching from your perspective and experiences.

While there is no direct benefit being a part of this study, your experiences will add to the body of knowledge about mentoring programs and could also lead to recommendations for the Harrison/Boone Clinical Model Program.

Enclosed in this envelope, you will find a consent form and a survey. If you choose to participate, please sign the consent form and survey and send them both back in the self addressed envelope.

Thank you for your time and valuable experiences.

Brenda Kraber
Doctoral Candidate
Harrison University

*Pseudonym
Appendix N

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH-Survey

The Impact of Mentoring on Retention, Quality, Commitment of Graduates from One School-University Partnership

What is the purpose of this research?
I am asking you to be in a research study because we are trying to learn more about your experiences in the Harrison/Boone* Teacher Preparation Program. You are invited to participate in this study because you have graduated from this program. This study is being conducted by Brenda Kraber, a doctoral candidate at Harrison University.

How much time will this take?
This study will take about 30 minutes of your time.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate in this study?
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to answer some questions through a survey which is included in the packet. A self addressed envelope is enclosed to insure anonymity.

What are the risks involved in participating in this study?
The risk is minimal and involves only the level of risk involved in reflecting on your own past and current experiences in the program. Pseudonyms will be used and identifying information will be removed.

What are the benefits of my participation in this study?
While there is no direct benefit being a part of this study, participants may feel satisfaction expressing their experiences in this program. The research about mentor programs will add to the body of knowledge and inform a broader educational community.

Can I decide not to participate? If so, are there other options?
Yes, you can choose not to participate. Even if you agree to be in the study now, you can change your mind later and leave the study. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate or change your mind later.

How will my privacy be protected?
The records of this study will be kept private. In any report we might publish, we will not include any information that will identify you. Research records will be stored securely and password protected and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Whom can I contact for more information?
If you have questions about this study, please contact Brenda Kraber. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Coordinator of the Harrison University’s Institutional Review Board.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.
Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have all my questions answered. I consent to be in this study.

Signature: _____________________ Date ______________

*Pseudoym
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH-Interview

The Impact of Mentoring on Retention, Quality, Commitment of Graduates from One School-University Partnership

What is the purpose of this research?
I am asking you to be in a research study because we are trying to learn more about your experiences in the Harrison/Boone* Teacher Preparation Program. You are invited to participate in this study because you have graduated from this program at least 3 years ago. This study is being conducted by Brenda Kraber, a doctoral candidate at Harrison University.

How much time will this take?
This study will take approximately 1 to 2 hours of your time.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate in this study?
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey and answer open-ended questions through an interview which will be audio taped. The tape is for my use only in making sure that I accurately represent your responses.

What are the risks involved in participating in this study?
The risk is minimal and involves only the level of risk involved in reflecting on your own past experiences in the program. I will be audio taping the interview process. If for example, you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about answering certain questions then you may request we stop. Pseudonyms will be used and identifying information will be removed.

What are the benefits of my participation in this study?
While there is no direct benefit being a part of this study, participants may feel satisfaction expressing their experiences in this program. The research about mentor programs will add to the body of knowledge and inform a broader educational community.

Can I decide not to participate? If so, are there other options?
Yes, you can choose not to participate. Even if you agree to be in the study now, you can change your mind later and leave the study. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate or change your mind later.

How will my privacy be protected?
The records of this study will be kept private. In any report we might publish, we will not include any information that will identify you. Research records will be stored securely and password protected with only the researcher having access to the records.

Whom can I contact for more information?
If you have questions about this study, please contact Brenda Kraber. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Coordinator of the DePaul University’s Institutional Review Board.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have all my questions answered. I consent to be in this study.

Signature:_________________  Date:_________________

*Pseudonym
VITA
Brenda Kraber

Earned Degrees

Ed.D Curriculum Studies
DePaul University

Administrative Certificate
University of Illinois
Type 75 Certificate K-12

MA in Education
Maryville University, St. Louis, MO

BS in Education
Truman University, Kirksville, MO

Professional Experience

1995- Present Glenview Public Schools District #34 Created, developed and implemented a Technology Rich Educational Environment Program. In this setting, students, teachers and parents collaborate in a project-based learning system which delivers curricular content to multi-age groups of children.

1985-1995 Glenview Public Schools District #34 Taught 6th grade students.

1976-1985 Parkway School District, St. Louis, MO Taught 3rd, 5th and 6th grade students.

Related Experience

2001- Current Adjunct Professor for DePaul University

Scholarly Presentations

1998 Presented at the NCTE International Conference on Language and Literature in Bordeaux, France


Publications:


Professional Organizations

1985 – present Member of National Education Association

1988 – present Member of ASCD (Association, Supervision, Curriculum Development)

1996 – present Member of Illinois Reading Council