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A phenomenological study: Professional profiles, induction processes, and reasons veteran teachers exit the profession

Margie Gonzales Westmoreland

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A phenomenological study: Professional profiles, induction processes, and reasons veteran teachers exit the profession

By

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of Mississippi State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Elementary, Middle, and Secondary School Administration in the Department of Educational Leadership

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Candidate for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Background: For decades, teacher shortages brought concern in educational systems throughout the United States. As more classrooms were left without teachers, prior researchers focused on strategies and policies to address the problem of teacher turnover and attrition. States such as Wisconsin had fewer qualified candidates to fill positions and saw a 35% decrease in teacher education programs in the past decade.

Purpose: This study sought to examine how the induction process was related to teacher attrition for experienced or veteran teachers (five or more years of experience). In addition, the study sought to determine factors that contributed to professional satisfaction or dissatisfaction as related to teaching longevity. By examining these components collectively and including conversations with current teachers, the researcher presented a holistic view of why veteran teachers make the decision to leave the profession.

Setting: Northeastern Wisconsin public school districts serving populations from kindergarten through 12th grades in urban, suburban and rural locations.
Subjects: The participants were five veteran teachers with five or more years of experience who left the profession before retirement.

Research Design: Qualitative phenomenological study

Data Collection and Analysis: The participants were interviewed about their induction processes, professional satisfaction and professional dissatisfaction during their teaching careers. The data were analyzed for commonalities and emergent themes among the shared teaching experiences of the participants to determine the reasons they left the profession.

Findings: Common themes were identified through the participants’ interviews. The findings showed the induction process for veteran teachers did not meet the needs of these participants. Further, professional satisfaction during their teaching careers were related to intrinsic motivating factors such as improving and aiding in student academic achievement, collegial support, and “making a difference.” The findings indicated the former teachers’ professional dissatisfaction stemmed from challenging behaviors, lack of support, overwhelming responsibilities, monetary deficiencies, and lack of respect for the profession.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates that veteran teachers leave the profession as a result of a combination of challenges during their teaching assignments. The study also uncovered that the participants of this study contemplated their decisions to leave their positions years before actually departing the profession.
DEDICATION

This dissertation study is dedicated to my three sons, Chris, Marcus, and Matt, who gave me the inspiration and motivation to accomplish all my goals since the first day of my educational journey. Their love and support throughout the years made the difficult times bearable and the achievements gratifying. I hope that I have inspired them and future generations to reach for the stars, which are never out of reach. To my Chelsea, for encouraging me and being my best friend throughout my dissertation undertaking. At one point she was my night-in-gale, as she took care of me during my medical ordeal, that almost derailed my studies. She has and will always have a special place in my heart.
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“A Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins with a Single Step”
Lao Tzu

No one ever takes the journey of life alone, so many people impact and influence the direction of our future. I was blessed to have the support of family, friends, colleagues, teachers, and professors while on my educational journey that began many years ago. First, I would like to thank God, my faith gave me the strength to realize this monumental accomplishment.

To my husband, the love of my life, Tim Westmoreland, for all the love and support he gave me and the patience he had while I worked on this huge undertaking. He always believed in my ability to fulfill and accomplish my dream. To Bree, because she patiently waited for me to spend time with her. Hopefully, I have been a good role model, I always want her to believe in her ability and all that she can accomplish. To Blake and Tyler, I know one day they will understand the hard work that goes into achieving your goals and dreams.

To my family (mother, brothers, sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews), I am thankful for their love, support, and understanding while I worked toward a life-long dream. I know that it was not always easy to have patience and that I had to miss family functions and events because of assignment deadlines and endless hours of research. I love my family for always believing in me and for loving me.
To the participants of the study, thank you for your valuable insights and perspectives which added to the discourse about veteran teacher attrition and to the possibilities of finding solutions to teacher shortages.

A special thank you to Dr. Frankie Williams, my committee chair. Dr. Williams was instrumental in helping me accomplish this worthwhile goal. She provided guidance, direction, feedback, and encouragement during the dissertation process. To my committee members, Dr. Stephanie King, Dr. Leigh Ann McMullan, and Dr. Eric Moyen, thank you for allowing me to conduct my study and providing feedback so that my dissertation had a meaningful direction and contributed to the field of educational leadership.
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

DEDICATI0N.......................................................................................................................... ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS....................................................................................................... iii

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................... ix

LIST OF FIGURES .................................................................................................................. x

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY ................................................................. 1

   Statement of the Problem ......................................................................................... 2
   Purpose of the Study ................................................................................................. 4
   Research Questions .................................................................................................. 4
   Conceptual Framework of the Study ..................................................................... 6
   Theoretical Framework of the Study ....................................................................... 7
   Definition of Terms ................................................................................................... 7
   Overview of Research Methodology ......................................................................... 10
   Delimitations of the Study .................................................................................... 11
   Significance of the Study ......................................................................................... 11
   Organization of the Study ....................................................................................... 12

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH ................. 14

   Teacher Turnover and Teacher Attrition ................................................................. 15
      Factors Influencing Teacher Attrition ................................................................. 17
      Teacher Quality and Student Achievement ....................................................... 17
      Wisconsin Teacher Turnover and Shortages ....................................................... 18
   Costs of Teacher Turnover ..................................................................................... 20
   Solutions for Teacher Shortages ........................................................................... 22
   The Induction Process as a Solution ................................................................. 23
      The Purpose of the Induction Process ................................................................. 24
      An Effective Induction Process ........................................................................ 25
   Teacher Mentors for Retention ............................................................................ 26
   Reasons Teachers Leave the Profession ............................................................... 27
      Professional Dissatisfaction ............................................................................... 28
   Teacher Retention .................................................................................................. 29
      Professional Satisfaction .................................................................................... 30
Summary notes on the relevance of the context and content of the induction process .................................................. 67
Interviews ................................................................. 67
Summary of recommendations for improving the induction process .................................................................................. 68
Secondary Research Question 3: Professional Satisfaction as a Teacher. 70
Overview of field notes related to professional satisfaction ....... 71
Secondary .................................................................................................................................................. 71
Research Question 3A: What do participates describe as their perceptions of professional satisfaction related to teaching longevity? .......... 71
Interviews .................................................................................................................................................. 71
Summary of perceptions of professional satisfaction related to teacher longevity ................................................................. 72
Secondary Research Question 3B: What do participants describe as their career rewards (intrinsic or extrinsic) related to teaching longevity? ?72
Interviews .................................................................................................................................................. 72
Summary of career rewards (intrinsic and extrinsic) ...................... 73
Secondary Research Question 3C: What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in professional satisfaction related to teaching longevity? ........................................................................ 73
Interviews .................................................................................................................................................. 73
Summary of administrator’s role in contributing to professional satisfaction related to teaching longevity ........................................... 74
Secondary Research Question 3D: What do participants perceive as the primary motivating factor that caused them to remain in the teaching profession? 74
Interviews .................................................................................................................................................. 74
Summary of reasons participants remained in the profession ...... 76
Summary notes of professional satisfaction ................................................................. 77
Secondary Research Question 4: Professional Dissatisfaction as a Teacher 78
Overview of field notes related to professional dissatisfaction. ... 78
Secondary Research Question 4A: What do participants describe as their perceptions of professional dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity? ........................................................................ 79
Interviews .................................................................................................................................................. 79
Summary of perceptions of professional dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity ................................................................. 80
Secondary Research Question 4B: What do participants describe as their career challenges (intrinsic or extrinsic) related to teaching longevity? ........................................................................ 80
Interviews .................................................................................................................................................. 80
Summary of career challenges (intrinsic or extrinsic) related to teacher longevity

Secondary Research Question 4C: What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in professional dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity?

Secondary Research Question 4D: What do participants describe as the reasons for leaving the profession?

Other Non-Structured Interviews/Conversations

Conversations with current teachers.

Principal discussions.

Summary of Results

V. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes for Secondary Research Question 1: Participant Demographics and Professional Profiles

Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes for Secondary Research Question 2: Veteran Teacher Perceptions of the Induction Process

Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes for Secondary Research Question 3: Professional Satisfaction as a Teacher

Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes for Secondary Research Question 4: Professional Dissatisfaction as a Teacher

Discussion

Limitations

General Recommendations for Practitioners and Policymakers

Recommendations for Future Research

REFERENCES

A. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACCEPTANCE

B. PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER

C. CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

D. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
**LIST OF TABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Composite Table of Demographics and Professional Profiles</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher Induction Process</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Professional Satisfaction as a Teacher</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professional Dissatisfaction as a Teacher</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Summary of Emergent Themes Related to Demographics and Professional Profiles</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Summary of Emergent Themes Related to the Teacher Induction Process</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Summary of Emergent Themes Related to the Professional Satisfaction as a Teacher</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Summary of Emergent Themes Related to the Professional Dissatisfaction as a Teacher</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study.................................................................6
CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

For decades, teacher shortages created systemic concern in educational systems throughout the United States described as early as the 1920s by the National Education Association (NEA). As more classrooms were left without teachers, researchers focused on strategies and policies that could provide solutions to the problem of teacher turnover and attrition (Glazerman et al., 2010; Ingersoll, 2001). One such solution, the teacher induction process, was implemented in the United States as an effort to resolve teacher shortages by providing support to new teachers (Arends & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2000). This demographic group represented the highest teacher turnover and attrition rates which resulted in a sizeable body of research on the induction process as a solution to curtail the shortages of early career teachers in the United States (Arends & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2000; Brock & Grady, 1998; Ingersoll, 2012; Kang & Berliner, 2012; Killeavy, 2006; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). Ingersoll and Smith (2004) described the induction process as a variety of activities ranging from new hire orientation, seminars, classes, workshops, and mentoring assignments. While, Counts (2012) asserted the teacher induction process was utilized to acclimate new teachers to their new environments as an effort to train and retain teachers. According to Kang and Berliner (2012), the teacher induction process for teachers, whether experienced or novice, varied from school district to school district, yet no school system found the correct formula to make the process completely effective for all teachers. Studies reported that while the strategy of induction was mostly effective, teacher shortages continued to plague American schools (Arends & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2000; Brock & Grady, 1998; Ingersoll, 2012; Kang & Berliner, 2012; Killeavy, 2006; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017).
DiGilio, 2000; Ingersoll, 2012). Generally, researchers found limited research was conducted to determine if an induction process were beneficial in retaining teachers who were considered experienced or veteran teachers (teachers with five years or more experience) and were new to a district.

While many studies investigated teacher induction processes that focused on beginning teachers, this study sought to examine how the induction process is related to teacher attrition for experienced or veteran teachers. In addition, the study sought to determine factors that contributed to professional satisfaction or dissatisfaction as related to teaching longevity. By examining these components, the researcher sought to determine reasons veteran teachers leave the teaching profession.

**Statement of the Problem**

According to The Alliance on Excellent Education (AEE, 2014), over 3.4 million teachers leave the profession every year either by moving to different districts or leaving the profession altogether. Further, the AEE estimated the costs of teacher attrition at approximately 2.2 billion annually. In addition to monetary costs, Bill Wise, AEE’s former president, stated teacher attrition impacted teacher quality and negatively affected student learning outcomes. Because of the importance of retaining quality teachers, particularly those with experience, this study investigated veteran teacher attrition.

The retention of new and current teachers continues as a major concern for school districts as a large number of teacher leave the profession each year (Ingersoll, 2001; Sykes & Dibner, 2009). These rates are comparatively higher than those of other professions as almost 50% of teachers between their first and third year leave the profession every year (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Moreover, an analysis of national data showed teacher shortages were impacted
significantly by teachers who left the profession as they were approaching retirement (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). These alarming statistics indicated the primary cause of school staffing problems faced by school administrators every school year (Carroll, 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Further, these statistics illustrated how teacher turnover led school officials to find solutions to their teacher shortages created by turnover and attrition (Ingersoll, 2012). For example, Wisconsin school districts reported using emergency certified personnel to fill positions due to a shortage of qualified applicants (Goff et al., 2018).

The United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, n.d.) stated the following about the teacher shortage crisis:

Teacher shortage is a significant contributing factor that widens equity gaps in education access and learning. Assessing and monitoring teacher attrition is essential to a sufficient supply of qualified and well-trained teachers as well as their effective deployment, support and management (para. 1).

The teacher turnover rate also created financial concerns and issues of quality for administrators trying to fill their teacher vacancies (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Synar & Maiden, 2012). Studies indicated the costs of replacing teachers in terms of recruiting, training, and hiring were estimated between $4300 to 17,800 per teacher unit (Barnes & Crowe, 2007; Carroll, 2007). While other research reported teacher turnover negatively impacted student achievement and teacher quality (Goldhaber et al., 2018). As schools struggled to find highly qualified teachers, some states were left to fill their positions with less qualified personnel as a result of a teacher shortages within their state (Goff, Carl & Yang, 2018).
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate the lived experiences and acumens of experienced or veteran teachers in school districts regarding their respective teacher induction processes, experiences during their teaching careers, and subsequent reasons for leaving the profession. Through narrative discussion from interviews with veteran teachers who left the profession before retirement, the study examined their induction processes and other factors related to professional satisfaction and dissatisfaction, that influenced their decisions to exit the teaching profession. Further, the study yielded added perspectives from current teachers contemplating leaving the profession. By including these narratives and conversations from four current teachers, the study revealed added perspectives into the problem of veteran teacher attrition. Also included are conversations with current principals about their role in the teacher induction process and administrative support.

Research Questions

The following overarching research question guided the study: How do teachers who left the profession describe their professional profiles, induction processes as veteran teachers, and reasons for subsequently leaving the teaching profession?

The following secondary research questions were used as semi-structured interview questions and guided the study.

1. Participants’ Profiles
   A. What are the participants’ profiles (gender, age, race/ethnicity)?
   B. What do participants describe as their career paths (years of experience in teaching profession, degree level, subject/discipline)?

2. Teacher Induction Process (as a new teacher and a veteran teacher)
A. What do participants describe as their induction processes?
B. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in the induction process?
C. What do participants describe as the relevance of the context and content of the induction process?
D. What recommendations do participants offer for improving the induction process for new or experienced veteran teachers?

3. Professional Satisfaction as Teacher
A. What do participants describe as their perceptions of professional satisfaction related to teaching longevity?
B. What do participants describe as their career rewards (intrinsic or extrinsic) related to teaching longevity?
C. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in contributing to their professional satisfaction as related to teaching longevity?
D. What do participants perceive as the primary motivating factor that caused them to remain in the teaching profession?

4. Professional Dissatisfaction as a Teacher
A. What do participants describe as their perceptions of professional dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity?
B. What do participants describe as their career challenges (intrinsic and extrinsic) related to teaching longevity?
C. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in contributing to their professional dissatisfaction as related to teaching longevity?
D. What do participants describe as the reasons for leaving the teaching profession?
For this study, participants were selected based on five years or more of teaching experience and who left the teaching profession before reaching retirement. The research questions were designed to elicit responses about their teaching experiences to ascertain if commonalities existed.

**Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The conceptual framework of the study is shown in Figure 1. The components of the study included experienced or veteran teachers as participants. The participants shared their experiences with their induction processes as veteran teachers and their reasons for subsequently exiting the teaching profession. The researcher interviewed each participant to garner detailed explanations and descriptions of their lived teaching experiences. Emergent themes were presented by analyzing the participants’ experiences.

![Figure 1](image.png)  
*Figure 1.* Conceptual framework of the study.
Theoretical Framework of the Study

Included as secondary research questions the participants were asked to give accounts related to professional satisfaction and dissatisfaction during their teaching careers. Therefore to ground and guide the research, the theoretical framework of the study was based on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation theory (Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000) which helped explain and examine common motivating factors related to the perceptions of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction during the participants’ careers. “The term extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome, and thus, contrasts with intrinsic motivation which refers to doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself,” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 71). The participants identified both sources of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation during their teaching careers. According to Larabee (2009), professional job satisfaction increases the likelihood that teachers will stay in the profession. Whereas, professional job dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the teaching profession was reported as a leading cause for teacher turnover and attrition (Ingersoll, 2001; Larabee, 2009).

Definition of Terms

The following key terms were defined for meaning and clarity during the study. The terms are used throughout the study.

1. Administrative support consists of the principal, assistant principal, or anyone that serves as an administrator or appraiser for a teacher. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2004), some strategies the building administrator may use to support new teachers include:

   Spend time with teachers, visiting their classrooms and looking at their lesson plans; Be available for individual conferences; Set up a mentor program and
arrange meetings for first-year teachers; Make professional development opportunities available; Enable teachers to work closely with one another, through meetings and team-teaching assignments; Allow for planning time; Avoid assigning all the most challenging children to the new teacher; Hold an orientation to the school, Provide adequate supplies, and clarify what items teachers will have to buy; Advocate for teachers to parents and students; Create a disciplined environment; and Help teachers with difficult situations with parents (para. 26).

2. Beginning/Initial teacher refers to an individual who has taught a total of less than three complete years in a public-school system. (Ed. Gov. Title IX, § 9101.3).

3. Experienced or veteran teacher refers to an individual with five or more years of teaching experience while he/she participated in an induction process (Dorcé, 2014).

4. An Emergency License/Permit is a temporary licensure given to teachers who have a valid teaching license but are asked to teach outside of their area. This changed to a 1-year license with stipulations (Wis. Admin. Code ch. PI 34, § 34.028).

5. Highly qualified teacher was defined by the United States Department of education and is used with respect to any public elementary school or secondary school teacher teaching in a State, meaning --

   (i) the teacher has obtained full State certification as a teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes to certification) or passed the State teacher licensing examination, and holds a license to teach in such State, except that when used with respect to any teacher teaching in a public charter school, the term means that the teacher meets the requirements set forth in the State's public charter school law; and
(ii) the teacher has not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis (Ed. Gov. Title IX, § 9101.23).

7. Long-term substitute teacher licensure, according to Wisconsin code, authorizes the holder to be either a short-term substitute teacher or a long-term substitute teacher in the subject area or position and grade level of the license, as determined by the license the applicant has held or is eligible to hold under this chapter or the equivalent license issued by another state (Wis. Admin. Code ch. PI 34, § 34.033).

8. Teacher mentoring includes activities that —

   (A) consist of structured guidance and regular and ongoing support for teachers, especially beginning teachers, that — (i) are designed to help the teachers continue to improve their practice of teaching and to develop their instructional skills; and part of an ongoing developmental induction process — (I) involve the assistance of an exemplary teacher and other appropriate individuals from a school, local educational agency, or institution of higher education; and (II) may include coaching, classroom observation, team teaching, and reduced teaching loads; and (B) may include the establishment of a partnership by a local educational agency with an institution of higher education, another local educational agency, a teacher organization, or another organization (Ed. Gov. Title IX, § 9101.42).

9. School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. “School climate is based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals,
values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures” (Cohen, 2009).

10. Short-term substitute teacher permit, according to Wisconsin code, authorizes the license holder to teach as a short-term substitute in any subject and in any grade level for a maximum 45 consecutive days (Wis. Admin. Code ch. PI 34, § 34.032).

11. Teacher attrition refers to teachers who leave the teaching profession before retirement (UNESCO, n.d.).

12. Teacher induction refers to the systems and processes used to acclimate teachers to their new school districts, particularly new teachers to the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

13. Teacher turnover refers to teachers who leave a school district but not the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2001).

14. Unqualified teacher was defined by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction as those teachers of record who have not completed an approved educator preparation program and are teaching on an emergency permit or teachers teaching out-of-field on an emergency license. That is, emergency credentialed teachers are considered unqualified within the plan (WDPI, 2017).

**Overview of Research Methodology**

A phenomenological study was selected as the research design for the study. A phenomenological research study involves obtaining in-depth data about a small number of participants in order to examine their lived experiences to make inferences about a phenomenon (Yin, 2013). This phenomenological study used interviews with open-ended questions to query
participants, who were former teachers. The research site included three school districts located in northeastern Wisconsin. Data analyses were conducted by analyzing the experiences of the participants to find commonalities and emerging themes from their responses.

**Delimitations of the Study**

The researcher selected participants for the study who were residing in the northeastern part of Wisconsin. The participants were chosen based on the accessibility to the researcher. The participants were selected if they had five or more years of experience, were no longer in the teaching profession, and exited before or near retirement. The timeframe of the study was approximately six months which limited the recruitment process. In addition, the study was conducted solely through interviews with the participants, no other data were used to analyze the findings.

**Significance of the Study**

This research study was significant for three reasons. First, results of this study contributed to the existing research related to teacher induction, teacher retention, and teacher attrition. Second, the findings have provided essential knowledge that can be used to guide school administrators in restructuring or enhancing current teacher induction and practices within their school districts, particularly policies directed toward experienced and veteran teachers. Third, the findings from the study added to the narrative about retention of teachers and the importance for schools not only to acquire but to keep highly qualified personnel within their school systems.
Organization of the Study

This study was organized in five chapters. Chapter One highlighted the critical importance of retaining teachers in an ever-growing shortage of professionals in the field. This chapter provided a concise background on the importance of teacher induction processes as they pertain to attrition and retention of teachers to a school district. In addition, the chapter discusses the purpose of the study, states the research questions, provides a list of key definitions, gives an overview of the method and research design, outlines delimitations, and offers valid and valuable reasons for the significance of the study.

Chapter Two examined the literature for trends regarding teacher induction processes to ascertain if these processes can predict teacher attrition and teacher retention. The chapter described how previous research provided a basis for the current state of teacher attrition and teacher retention. The literature review included an account of teacher turnover and shortages in the state of Wisconsin. In addition, the review examined costs related to teacher turnover in terms of budgetary concerns as well as costs related to teacher quality and student achievement. The chapter offered a narrative of historical content and emergent trends in the teacher induction process, including the purpose of the induction process and descriptions of effective induction processes. Also, included was an examination of reasons teachers leave the profession and teacher retention strategies. The chapter concluded with a description of the role of the principal in the induction process and retention of teachers.

Chapter Three outlined the methodology and research questions used to guide the research study. The chapter described the qualitative research design, the research context and research site, the role of the researcher, participant descriptions and recruitment procedures, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. The chapter concluded with explanations of validation and credibility of the study and summary of the chapter.
Chapter Four presented the results of the study based on the evidence gathered by the researcher. The chapter provided a description of the phenomenological study with a presentation of the participants. The participants’ interviews were used to present an accurate account of the findings based on the research questions. The summary of the chapter communicated the researcher’s analysis and central themes of the collected data.

Chapter Five articulated the key findings of the study and summarized emergent themes found in the study regarding the primary and secondary research questions. The chapter included a discussion, limitations, general recommendations for practitioners and policymakers, and recommendations for further research related to teacher retention and attrition for those teachers currently in the profession.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

This chapter provided a review of current and past research literature describing teacher shortages due to teacher turnover, teacher attrition, and declining enrollments in teacher preparation programs. First, the researcher examined literature reporting the trends and causes of teacher shortages in the nation (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Ingersoll, 2001). Second, the financial components related to teacher turnover and attrition were examined. The investigation of the financial aspect of recruiting and retaining teachers revealed the challenges placed on strained school budgets (Bland et al., 2014; Carroll, 2007; Synar & Maiden, 2012). Third, literature related to the induction process as a solution to retain teachers was presented, with an examination of the components found to increase the likelihood that teachers will remain in the profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Counts, 2012). Fourth, explanations were given about the working conditions and other factors found to contribute significantly to teacher turnover and teacher attrition for both new and veteran teachers (Ladd, 2011; Larabee, 2009). Fifth, an examination of effective teacher retention strategies was described (Renbarger & Davis, 2019). Finally, the importance of the principal’s role as part of the induction process and retention strategies was presented (Brock & Grady, 1998; Brown & Wynn, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2007; Peronto, 2013; Watkins, 2005).
Teacher Turnover and Teacher Attrition

The NEA first identified teacher turnover in the 1920s (Holcomb, 2006). One hundred years later, this phenomenon continues to be a concerning topic along with teacher attrition, for educational policymakers and school administrators (Holcomb, 2006). Teacher turnover is the occurrence of teachers who leave their teaching positions but not necessarily leave the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2001). Whereas, teacher attrition is the number of teachers exiting the profession in a given school year (UNECSO, n.d.). According to the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF, 2010), both teacher turnover and teacher attrition contribute substantially to teacher shortages for school districts across the country. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) postulated teacher shortages were not due to lack of new teachers alone but rather these shortages occurred in different fields and locations within school districts as a part of teacher attrition. Further, Ingersoll and Smith (2003) asserted attrition rates for the teaching profession were higher than other professions.

The average yearly education turnover rate was estimated to be 13.2% compared to 11% in other professions (Bland et al., 2014). For example, Counts (2012) reported turnover rates in South Carolina were 10% of the state’s teaching population. While, Boyd et al. (2011) stated 84% of teacher turnover was due to teachers who transferred to other schools or left the profession. In addition, Michigan’s teacher turnover rates were highest among new or early career teachers (Cowen, Brunner, Strunk, Drake, & Robinson, 2018).

Whereas, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) reported teacher attrition was a result of beginning and mid-career teachers leaving the profession which left school districts with many teacher vacancies to fill each year. The researchers also reported less than a third of teacher attrition could be attributed to teacher retirements (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond,
Similarly, Boyd et al. (2011) found 16% of teacher attrition was attributed to retirement. Further, based on their analysis, Sutcher et al. (2019) estimated teacher attrition rates would remain constant at 8%, while teacher supply would decrease due to a 35% decline in preparation programs. A study conducted in Michigan reported the state’s teacher attrition rates, which had been relatively stable, began to increase 1% per year after 2011 following teacher reforms enacted the previous year (Cowen et al., 2018). In their 10-year study, the researchers discovered approximately 4% of teachers had left the profession every year (Cowen et al., 2018).

Earlier research indicated new teachers left the profession at alarmingly high rates, an estimated 40% to 50%, within the first five years of teaching (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). As substantiated by Kirby & Grissmer (1993) in their longitudinal study of Indiana teachers, the researchers found young inexperienced teachers were more prone to attrition than veteran teachers. However, the Center for Public Education (CPE) reported newer estimates of new teacher attrition in some school districts declined to approximately 17% to 20% while high-poverty and high-minority districts continued to have higher percentages (Barth et al., 2016).

Newly hired teachers are not the only ones departing from the teaching profession, Ingersoll and Smith (2001, 2004) reported that teachers leaving before retirement contributed to the teacher shortages more than the actual number of retirees. This is consistent with the findings by the NCTAF (2003) in which the report cited the number of teachers leaving for other reasons was three times greater than the teacher retirement rates (as cited in Barnes & Crowe, 2007).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2014), approximately 8% of veteran teachers are leaving the profession each year an increase of approximately 3% in the last 20 years.
Factors Influencing Teacher Attrition

Research studies sought to identify the factors influencing teacher turnover and attrition. For example, Boyd et al. (2011) found teacher attrition could be predicted by teacher background characteristics and their work experiences, citing that higher turnover existed among the younger and older teachers. A North Carolina study (Ladd, 2011) examined the reasons teachers leave the profession, such as compensation levels and work environments and found these were related to teachers’ decisions to remain or leave their teaching positions. According to Kelly et al. (2019), working conditions affecting teacher attrition were identified as overwhelming workloads which included hours worked and quantity of non-related teaching duties.

Teacher Quality and Student Achievement

According to Ingersoll and Smith (2003) teacher shortages in school districts were not the only problems caused by teacher turnover and attrition. Teacher turnover and attrition were found to affect the quality of teachers, the planning and continuity of school district plans, the costs of hiring and recruiting new personnel, and student learning outcomes (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013) found “empirical evidence for a direct effect of teacher turnover on student achievement” (p. 30). The researchers provided evidence suggesting students’ math and English test scores were significantly and negatively impacted by teacher turnover, particularly in low-performing schools.

Research from the Education Policy Analysis Archives suggested teacher quality was related to teacher content knowledge, formal coursework completed, passion for learning, traditional teacher certification, teacher induction programs, and state licensing scores (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Other studies showed a strong correlation between teacher quality and student
achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). For example, Hanushek, Rivkin, Rothstein, and Podgursky (2004) found teacher quality contributed to raised math test scores in underprivileged student populations. To further illustrate the importance of experienced quality teachers, Carroll and Foster (2010), in a NCTAF study, reported teachers who developed effective teaching practices, had a direct relationship with teaching quality. Furthermore, the report cited teacher quality as a key contributor to student success.

While studies asserted that teacher attrition was detrimental to schools, Kirby and Grissmer (1993) posited in their teacher attrition theory that patterns existed in teacher attrition and turnover and suggested that some teacher attrition was unavoidable. Similarly, The New Teacher Project (TNTP, 2012) suggested some teacher attrition was necessary to replace low-performers while retaining high-performers. The TNTP’s contention was that the act of retaining teachers to give the impression of lower teacher retention numbers did not indicate good teacher quality.

Previous research indicated good teacher quality correlated to higher student achievement (Hahnel & Jackson, 2012). Yet, in many states with a higher number of teacher shortages such as California, North Carolina, and Washington, some school districts filled teacher vacancies with less-qualified personnel (Goldhaber et al., 2018; Hahnel & Jackson, 2012). Likewise, Sutcher et al. (2019) stated that national teacher supply and demand varied by state with some states filling their teacher vacancies with less-qualified alternative solutions due a lack of qualified applicants.

**Wisconsin Teacher Turnover and Shortages**

In a recent study by the Wisconsin Center of Education Research at the University of Wisconsin, researchers discovered that the teacher attrition rates in the state of Wisconsin...
remained relatively high after the passage of the teacher reform bill the Wisconsin Budget Repair Bill known as Act 10 (Madland & Rowell, 2017). The Bill created changes affecting the teacher profession, with a reduction in collective bargaining between teacher unions and school districts and a decrease in state benefits, as a result of its passage a large number of teachers retired (Madland & Rowell, 2017). The progressive advocacy group Center for American Progress posted the following report analysis on their organizational website following Act 10:

Wisconsin teachers saw a median compensation decrease of 8.2%, adjusted for inflation, in the 2011-2012 school year. The average teacher salary decreased by over $1,200 between the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years, while retirement and healthcare benefits dropped nearly $6,000. The year immediately following Act 10’s passage saw a spike in teachers over 55 who retired, growing from about 15% of teachers over 55 retiring in 2010 to nearly 35 percent the following year. Act 10 effectively removed collective bargaining rights for most public employees in the state. The percentage of teachers who left the profession spiked to 10.5% after 2010-11 school year, up from 6.4 before Act 10 was implemented. Exit rates have remained higher than before, with 8.8% of teachers leaving after the 2015-16 school year (Madland & Rowell, 2017, para. 4).

In addition, Goff, Carl, and Yang's (2018) working paper on teacher supply and demand found a decline in enrollments in teacher preparation programs (an estimated 35% decrease since the state enacted Act 10). As a result, a task force was commissioned in the spring of 2019 in the state to investigate the reasons for the decline in teacher preparation programs (University of Wisconsin, 2019). Further, national statistics showing degrees conferred in teacher education programs declined from 105,000 in 2005 to 91,600 in 2015 (McFarland et al., 2017). According
to the researchers, following the exodus of many teachers the state filled 30% of their vacated teacher positions with emergency licensed personnel who held an emergency license or emergency permit, or long-term substitutes, and short-term substitutes (Goff et al., 2018).

Researchers of the Learning Policy Institute of NCES analyzed data from the School and Staffing Survey for Wisconsin’s schools and concluded that full-time alternatively licensed personnel were 25% more likely to exit the profession than teachers with standard certifications (Madland & Rowell, 2017). The analysis indicated the teacher retention rate would continue to be a problem in the state of Wisconsin as teachers continued to exit classrooms (Madland & Rowell, 2017).

Costs of Teacher Turnover

The NCTAF (2007) estimated the cost of teacher turnover in public schools at approximately $7.3 billion a year. This is significantly higher than the $4.9 billion estimates reported by the Alliance for Excellence in 2005. As a result, these costs drained valuable school resources while classrooms were being filled with less qualified teachers and impeded the progress on closing student achievement gaps (Carroll, 2007).

According to Crampton, Wood, and Thompson (2015), school districts allocated 80% of their budgets toward personnel costs providing a basis for evaluating the cost of teacher turnover. In their comprehensive report model, Synar and Maiden (2012) reported that the financial impact of teacher turnover for a sample school district was between $3.76 to $4.75 million a year. The researchers used a 4-component Teacher Turnover Cost Model (TTCM) to determine the costs associated with teachers departing a school system: separation costs of 2.29%, hiring costs of 8.64%, training costs of 48.15%, and performance productivity costs of 40.92%. The study
estimated the cost of teacher turnover at $14,508 per teacher unit. Additionally, Johnson (2006) reported costs for school districts ranged from $355 to $5,166 in Texas to $10,329 in Chicago per teacher unit. Similar findings estimated teacher replacement costs per teacher unit were between $10,000 in Grandville County, North Carolina, $15,325 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and between 15,800 to 26,500 in Chicago, Illinois (Barnes & Crowe, 2007). Further, Barnes and Crowe’s (2007) study revealed that teacher replacement costs were substantial, and at-risk schools spent more of their funding on teacher turnover measures than did high-performing schools (Barnes & Crowe, 2007). Other researchers suggested that these higher costs were attributed to teacher retention programs designed to decrease teacher turnover (Watlington et al., 2010).

While the monetary costs strained school budgets, another concern was the loss of effective teachers, who took with them experience and expertise (Johnson, 2006). In addition to increased administrative costs for recruitment and new staff hiring, teacher turnover and attrition can result in negative outcomes for a school district, such as disrupted school continuity and poor student achievement (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Moreover, educational reforms such as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) enacted as positive measures to create change in the teacher workforce, were created specifically to attract more qualified teachers to meet the requirements of the Act. However, these reforms impacted teacher retention and created negative consequences for student learning (ESSA, 2015). According to Madland and Rowell (2017), Wisconsin’s Act 10 reform Bill was created with the intent of implementing merit pay and rewarding teachers based on performance, thereby attracting “brighter more effective teachers” (para. 2). However, immediately following Act 10,
the state saw a substantial increase in teacher attrition rates (Madland & Rowell, 2017). In their report, Madland and Rowell (2017) cautioned state policymakers regarding the use of similar restrictive policies citing that these measures had negative consequences for both schools and the general public. Michigan’s teacher reforms had similar outcomes as teachers exited the profession at higher rates after 2010 when the state’s education legislation bill was passed (Cowen et al., 2018).

**Solutions for Teacher Shortages**

Studies confirmed that attracting and retaining high quality teachers is a challenging task for school districts particularly in the areas of monetary compensation and administrative support (Bland et al., 2014). Kang & Berliner (2012) identified two approaches used by school districts to alleviate school staffing problems: (1) the recruitment of new teachers through alternative licensing programs and (2) the use of emergency teaching certifications. Goff, Carl, and Yang (2018) reported Wisconsin school districts were forced to use these approaches to fill teacher vacancies. Madland and Rowell (2017) suggested the practice of filling positions with unqualified personnel does not alleviate the teacher shortage in the long-term, since the probability of departing the profession is higher in this group of teachers. Further, a recent study in Sweden revealed retention of current teachers was a more viable solution than re-recruiting teachers after they left the profession (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). While Johnson (2006) contended that talented and effective teachers could be retained if improvements in workplace conditions were made, particularly in hard-to-staff low-income and high-minority schools. For example, in states like Mississippi where of the 151 school districts, 47 were reported as critical shortage areas (Anthony, Franz, & Brenner, 2017).
Other studies noted that teacher attrition could be lowered through collegiality (Abdallah, 2009). Gonzalez (1995) cited feelings of isolation and lack of positive involvement with colleagues as a primary reason for teacher attrition. Consistent with this finding, Project Lead reported 50% of exiting teachers stated feelings of isolation from colleagues and administration as a main reason for their departure (as cited in Abdallah, 2009).

As a solution to retain beginning teachers, the group with the highest attrition estimates, many school districts implemented an induction process to support new teachers and integrate them into the profession (Bland et al., 2014). Researchers identified components for successful induction processes include strong support from mentors and administration, clear instructional goals, and amiable working conditions (Bland et al., 2014).

However, Cowan et al. (2016) contended that the teacher shortage was not due to the decrease in new teacher production, but rather the inability of school districts to hire the new teachers. Moreover, Ingersoll and Smith (2003) stated that policymakers were not formulating the correct solutions to the teacher shortages, the researchers posited that by attempting to recruit new teachers with a variety of incentives this could force schools to lower their standards.

**The Induction Process as a Solution**

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education reported the possibility of severe teacher shortages in elementary and secondary schools. Following the report, research began to examine the process of induction for new teachers as an effective strategy to retain teachers in the profession (Arends & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2000; Counts, 2012; Ingersoll, 2001; Olebe, 2005). The Department of Education (1998) published a report describing promising
practices and new ways to improve teacher quality. The report cited the need to improve induction programs to give new and experienced teachers the support they needed to succeed.

Induction of new teachers encompasses processes that introduce teachers to the school policies and procedures, school culture, and the school staff (Bland et al., 2014). The goal of the induction process is to guide a beginning teacher to be successful in the school system and to increase the likelihood that the teacher remains in the profession (Kirby & Grissmer, 1993). While the induction process is primarily tailored to meet the needs of first-year teachers, teachers who enter the teaching profession from other professions are considered the same as first-year college education graduates, thus also in need of induction activities (Watkins, 2005). The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (CGTL, 2019) investigated multiple studies on induction and mentoring which revealed moderate to strong evidence to support these types of practices as effective measures for teacher retention with no significant negative effects.

The Purpose of the Induction Process

The induction process was implemented to address teacher attrition; however, according to Olebe (2005), induction does not mean retention. The process of induction involves several components and strategies and when implemented correctly, should yield positive results (Arends & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2000). Nonetheless, some school districts do not structure such programs to meet the needs of their new teachers (Fry, 2010). Further, Fry (2010) posited that attrition rates have not declined as induction participation rates have increased. Moreover, induction programs must be individualized to meet the specific needs of each individual teacher instead of a one-size-fits-all mentality (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Hill (2007) contended that
induction programs were not being designed effectively and thus have not succeeded in reducing teacher turnover.

An Effective Induction Process

Ingersoll (2012) identified the need for more comprehensive and differentiated induction programs for teachers to yield better teacher retention rates. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) suggested that when high quality induction is established it can reduce attrition rates in many states. Counts (2012) suggested that multi-year comprehensive induction programs can effectively increase teacher retention. When designing effective induction programs, Arends and Rigazio-DiGilio (2000) recommended the following: setting clear goals and purposes of the induction, providing research-based teaching strategies, examining learning theories for teachers, creating defined roles and delivery systems, providing beginning teachers with a lighter teaching load, providing mentors with incentives to help new teachers, developing effective training and professional development to implement induction programs, incorporating informal induction processes, and developing effective evaluation measures for the induction program. However, Glazerman et al., (2010) stated not all school districts were able to provide comprehensive teacher induction due to “high costs ranging from $1,660 to $6,600 per teacher per year (p. 1).” Zugelder (2019) reported North Carolina school districts attrition costs were higher at an estimated $12,500 compared to induction costs estimated at $2,200 per teacher unit. Zugelder’s (2019) study revealed when school districts, working in conjunction with the university, provided a comprehensive and effective induction program for beginning teachers, it resulted in lower attrition rates and improved student achievement. Warsame and Valles (2018) corroborated the need for school district and university collaboration. The study reported
beginning teachers perceived school-based support was more conducive to their needs than university-based support (Warsame & Valles, 2018).

**Teacher Mentors for Retention**

One component of the induction process includes teacher mentoring to introduce new teachers to their teaching environments through collegial support (Arends & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2000). Numerous studies showed that providing mentorships to beginning teachers is an important part of the teacher induction process (Counts, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Kang & Berliner, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 1998). However, there must be a systematic approach to selecting mentors (Doering, 2018; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 1998). Vital to the success of the mentorship process is an induction mentor preparation program, program support, time to develop meaningful experiences, and time and opportunities for reflective practices for both the mentor and mentee (Doering, 2018).

Hanson & Moir (2008) suggested that allowing veteran teachers to participate in full-release programs (programs that allow teachers to focus solely on their mentor duties) could provide a better solution for teacher mentoring for new and beginning teachers and provide veteran teachers with motivation to stay in the profession. These programs allowed mid-career teachers to fulfill their mentorship roles for three years instead of adding to their teaching duties. The researchers reported teachers’ satisfaction with the program led to their intent to remain in the school districts. The study reported that 91% of the 50 former mentors continued working for their school districts or in teacher training programs. The study also provided a basis for teacher retention strategies for both the teacher mentor and teacher trainee (Hanson & Moir, 2008).
Reasons Teachers Leave the Profession

Studies have identified many reasons teachers leave the profession. According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017), the predictive factors for leaving included a lack of administrative support, school size/classroom size, minority students, and low salaries. Consistent with this finding, Ingersoll (2001) found attrition rates were greater in schools offering lower salaries, limited professional opportunities, poor administrative support, and student behavioral problems. Predictive factors found to contribute to teacher turnover also included the extent of teacher preparation and mentoring, age and experience, along with compensation and working conditions (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Consistent with previous research, Boyd et al. (2011) reported, in a study of different public-school districts, a significant relationship existed between a school’s working conditions and teacher attrition. The study examined various school-related components for correlative attributes in teacher attrition (i.e. teacher influence and administrative support, staff relationship, characteristics of the student body, facilities, and safety). Likewise, Cowen et al. (2018) found increased teacher attrition rates in Michigan were higher in schools where student characteristics included higher poverty, lower ACT scores, and higher drop-out rates. Ladd’s (2011) study examined teachers’ perceptions regarding working conditions and school leadership. The data were analyzed from teacher responses to questions specifically regarding the working conditions in North Carolina schools. The results of the study showed significant statistical correlations existed between teachers’ negative views about school-related working conditions and intent to leave their positions (Ladd, 2011). In support of these findings, the CPE found that improved working conditions and administrative support contributed to teachers’ decisions to remain in a school district (Barth et al., 2016).
A policy brief by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) noted teacher turnover was the leading cause of teacher shortages (Fuller et al., 2018). The UCEA policy brief also reported numerous causes of teacher turnover particularly in high-needs schools and high-minority schools. In addition, the brief cited teacher working conditions, principal effectiveness, school resources, and school characteristics had the greatest effect on teacher turnover (Fuller et al., 2018). While, Ladd (2011) reported, in a North Carolina study of teacher attrition, the two categories for leaving the profession were related to the teacher’s sense of self-efficacy and a negative school environment; “lack of student respect, bullying, harassment, absence of discipline, and possibly safety risks” (p 236). Whereas, Ingersoll (2001) found five reasons for teacher turnover and attrition included retirement, school staffing, personal reasons, pursuit of other employment opportunities, and dissatisfaction with their positions. Ingersoll (2001) also examined the different types of dissatisfaction reported by teachers and discovered that the two factors with the highest percentages were lack of administrative support followed by poor teacher salaries.

**Professional Dissatisfaction**

Generally, teachers who taught past the initial years were less likely to leave the profession; however, studies suggested that veteran teachers also contributed to the teacher attrition and turnover (Barth et al., 2016; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). This group contributed substantially to the attrition rates in the teaching profession more so than teacher retirement (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). In addition, dissatisfaction with their teaching assignments was the key contributor to teachers leaving the profession (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Sutcher et al. (2019) stated teacher attrition before retirement caused by dissatisfaction of
teaching and other factors constituted two-thirds of the attrition rate in the 2015-2016 school year. To further exacerbate the teacher turnover problem, Lindqvist and Nordänger (2016) reported the odds of teachers returning to the profession to fill the teacher shortages were extremely low. Further, Lindqvist and Nordänger (2016) suggested that providing mentorships and support were not effective for all participants in the study and did not alter their decision to leave. In his qualitative research study, Buchanan (2012) interviewed 22 former teachers with varying lengths of service from a few months to 20 years to ascertain the reasons for their departure from the profession and if the possibility of returning to the profession existed. Consistent with other research, Buchanan’s (2012) findings revealed that the former teachers attributed their departure to working in isolation, lack of support, poor salary, problematic student behavior, and work overload as primary causes for their decision to exit the profession. While many of the participants felt remorse about leaving some of their better students, none showed serious interest in returning to the classroom. Other research studies described the need for school reform policies and procedures to include veteran teacher retention, rather than new teacher recruitment alone (Carroll, 2007; TNTP, 2012).

**Teacher Retention**

Cochran-Smith (2004) postulated that increasing teacher retention would decrease demand thereby decrease the teacher shortage. A report by the NCTAF asserted that retaining current teachers was most essential in keeping schools staffed and maintaining continuity (Carroll, 2007). Earlier research also suggested the problem was not recruitment of new teachers, but rather the retention of current teachers (Merrow, 1999). Similarly, TNTP (2012) maintained that “the real retention problem was not just retaining teachers but retaining the right teachers”
The TNTP used the term “Irreplaceables” to identify teachers who were successful and almost impossible to replace, who had left the profession as a result of feelings of neglect and inattention from the school districts in which they were employed.

**Professional Satisfaction**

According to Dorcé (2014), teachers remained in the profession for both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons, and these factors influenced their decisions to continue their career path. Dorcé (2014) identified three intrinsic motivating factors for the longevity of veteran teachers which included “influencing students’ lives, the joy of working with children, and the joy of teaching” (p. 15). While, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) found predictive factors (extrinsic motivation) for teachers staying in the profession included maximum salary scales, adequate teacher preparation, and significant administrative support. Kelly et al. (2019) maintained that by improving working conditions for teachers, the intended result should yield less teacher attrition.

Teachers attributed their decision to stay in the teaching profession and remain in their schools to positive school environments, good working conditions, administrative support and leadership opportunities (CPE, 2016; Ladd, 2011). However, according to Cooper and Davey (2011), some teachers identified the reason they stayed in the profession was attributed to “occupational embeddedness” where teachers felt trapped in the profession. The study revealed through narratives comprised of mid-career teachers, in which the participants stated their decision to remain or return teaching resulted from financial or familial concerns. This institutionalized view did not indicate quality teaching for these women, but rather it harvested resentment (Cooper & Davey, 2011).
Retention Strategies

The CPE (2016) identified three key points in “fixing the hole in the teacher pipeline”: (1) through teacher preparation, (2) through teacher recruitment, and (3) through teacher retention. While recruiting and retaining teachers posed a challenge for many schools, several strategies were identified, if implemented, could decrease teacher attrition (p. 2). These strategies included creating a recruitment plan, establishing a network of teacher support and offering monetary incentives (Bland et al., 2014). Notably, policymakers attempted for years to shrink the teacher shortages by increasing the number of applicants entering the teaching profession (Barth et al., 2016). Contrariwise, Ingersoll and Smith (2003) stated that simply increasing the supply of teachers would not solve the retention problem. The researchers suggested schools define retention strategies to keep current teachers in their school systems (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Strategies related to teacher retention include increased teacher salaries, performance-based compensation plans and teacher induction programs (Kirby & Grissmer, 1993; Podolsky et al., 2019; Sykes & Dibner, 2009). Consistent with this line of research, studies validated the need to reform school activities to create positive school climates in order to help retain teachers (Cohen et al., 2009). In addition, teachers need professional development to obtain mastery of their subject, adequate support, and autonomy in instruction (Bland et al., 2014). According to Johnson (2006), teachers looked for opportunities where the principal actively improved workplace conditions and encouraged collaboration among teachers.

Strategic Retention of Teachers

Grissom & Bartanen (2018) noted not all teacher turnover is viewed as a negative impact when ineffective teachers are the ones who leave or are replaced. According to the researchers,
strategic retention was utilized to retain effective teachers and remove ineffective teachers from their positions (Grissom & Bartanen, 2018). Drake et al., (2015) concurred that effective administrators look for strategies to retain the high-performing teachers. TNPT (2012) cited several recommended strategies for retaining high-performing teachers: recognition of accomplishments and contributions, praise and encouragement, helpful feedback, and opportunities for leadership roles. In contrast, administrators could find ways to create turnover in low performers by using strategies which include non-renewal of teacher contracts, implementation of improvement plans, or tactics that focus on making those teachers leave on their own (TNPT, 2012).

**The Role of the Principal**

National and local research studies indicated the role of the principal and the leadership ability of the individual as a strong predictor of teachers’ decisions to remain in their teaching positions (Boyd et al., 2011; Broquard, 2010; Brown & Wynn, 2009; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Peronto, 2013). Further, research studies determined teacher retention was affected by the role of the principal in managing and creating school environments that fostered positive reasons for teachers to remain (Fuller et al., 2017; Grissom & Bartanen, 2018). In addition, the effectiveness of a teacher induction process is strongly influenced by the role of the principal as part of the support system (Brock & Grady, 1998; Watkins, 2005). An effective support system of new teachers in a district can make the decision to stay in the school system a greater possibility (Watkins, 2005). Grissom and Bartanen (2018) found effective principals retained teachers by creating positive school climates, offering greater support, and providing better working conditions. Similarly, Brown & Wynn (2009) maintained that schools with higher
levels of administrative support had less teacher attrition and migration. In addition, Ladd’s (2011) study in North Carolina revealed teachers who perceived their school leaders as highly effective expressed lower intent to leave their schools. To further emphasize the importance of an administrator’s role, the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (SECTQ) reported that South Carolina and North Carolina teachers cited administrator accessibility as a reason for their decision to stay in their teaching positions (Berry, Luczak, & Norton, 2003). Boyd et al. (2011) revealed in their findings that school administration directly affected a teacher’s career choice. Similarly, The UCEA stated effective principals can influence teacher turnover through administrative behaviors that foster positive relationships and school climates (Fuller et al., 2018).

**Lack of Administrative Support**

The lack of support from the school principal was identified as a predictive factor in teachers’ decisions to leave school districts (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). For example, in a study conducted by Cochran-Smith (2004), teachers reported lack of support from administration as a main contributing factor that led to their departure from the profession. Similarly, Boyd et al. (2011) reported beginning teachers in New York cited lack of support from administrators as the primary reason for leaving their teaching positions. According to Luther and Richman (2009), participants of a qualitative study conducted in Eastern states, cited lack of administrative support as a difficult aspect of their teaching assignments. Watkins’ (2005) findings noted the challenge and obligation for principals to develop ideal environments where teachers can thrive, feel supported, and want to remain in the school system. Whereas, Brock and
Grady (1998) concluded that new teachers needed year-long support from administration and effective mentoring programs to assist them in refining their skills.

In their study, Williams and Gillham (2016) examined the Ohio Resident Educator Program for quality and effectiveness in providing training and support to beginning teachers.

The study found one component of the program indicated that the role of the administrator in providing adequate support was crucial in establishing an effective induction program.

**Principals and Teacher Retention**

A number of studies concluded that one of the greatest predictors of teacher retention every school year was the quality of the school administration and leadership (Boyd et al., 2011; Johnson, 2006; Ladd, 2011). Grissom and Bartanen (2018) through a six-year data collection model found effective principals could reshape the climate of their schools through strategic retention, by retaining high-performing teachers through merit-pay incentives and acknowledgement for their valued performance, while dismissing low-performing teachers through improvement plans, non-renewal, or “counseling-out” methods. Further, other researchers similarly suggested a significant relationship existed between effective principals and lower teacher turnover rates (Brown & Wynn, 2009). Brown and Wynn (2009) examined the leadership styles of effective principals whose schools had low teacher attrition and transfer rates. Principals practicing and using effective administrative strategies and situational leadership were able to retain effective teachers and thus were able to reduce teacher attrition rates (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Grissom & Bartanen, 2018). Fuller et al. (2017) asserted the following in describing the role of the principal:
Can directly and profoundly affect teacher turnover rates in their schools by focusing on enacting research-based effective leadership behaviors. In doing so, principals create the type of working conditions that are strongly associated with the increased retention of teachers—especially in schools that traditionally suffer from relatively high teacher turnover rates. (p. 2)

Gordon (2018) suggested principals need to understand that their perceived level of support may be higher than teachers’ perceived level of principal support, which influences a teacher’s decision to stay in an assignment. Gordon (2018) intimated educational leaders must recognize their role in the commitment and retention of teachers. Gordon (2018) stated, “Principals must have the flexibility to adjust their leadership behaviors to support, encourage and enhance the performance of all teachers” (p. 90).

Chapter Summary

The review of the related research and literature demonstrated how teacher turnover and teacher attrition are part of a larger problem related to teacher shortages. The issue of teacher shortages continues to demand a solution. The high costs of teacher turnover and attrition can place a monetary strain on school districts across the country, particularly in hard-to-staff areas. Teacher turnover can also create a large quantity of unqualified teachers who were hired to fill the gaps left by qualified teachers who leave.

As a solution to teacher turnover and attrition, the induction process has become an important component in the retention of beginning teachers. More effective and comprehensive induction activities would provide an even greater retention rate. Based on the research, one of the key factors in the induction process is the need for administrators to provide appropriate or
adequate support and guidance to all new and current teachers. Numerous studies reported that teacher retention was influenced by the role of the principal through their leadership activities.

While much of the focus has been on retaining beginning teachers, veteran teachers leaving the profession after five or more years require attention of policymakers and school administrators. Various research studies indicated that teacher attrition rates can be reduced by keeping current teachers in the profession and using these teachers as quality mentors for beginning teachers. Further, veteran teacher attrition could lead to the loss of teacher expertise and continuity in a school district. The focus of this study was to examine veteran teacher attrition and provide an analysis of the phenomenon.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter was to present the details of this qualitative research study which investigated the lived experiences of veteran teachers who subsequently left the teaching profession in Northeastern Wisconsin school districts serving K-12 populations. The researcher sought to identify reasons these teachers exited the profession. The goal of the researcher was to determine which aspects of the induction process and other factors of the participants’ professional experiences led to veteran teacher attrition within these school districts.

The chapter provides an explication of the research design and research methodology used in the phenomenological study. Included in this chapter are explanations for the selection of the research design, the research questions that guided the study, the research context and site, role of the researcher, and participant characteristics. Other sections include descriptions of the recruitment procedure, and data collection and data analysis procedures. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the validation and credibility of the findings and a summary of the methods.

Research Design

A qualitative phenomenological research design was selected to conduct the research study. The researcher selected this design to investigate the lived experiences of former teachers who had exited the teaching profession. The goal of this phenomenological research study was to better understand the lived experiences of the participants in relation to the phenomenon of teacher attrition based on components related to teacher induction and other career-related
factors. Included in the narratives are the teachers’ perceptions of professional satisfaction and professional dissatisfaction as related to teaching longevity. Phenomenological research allows the researcher to obtain in-depth data about a small number of participants and compare their experiences and analyze the data for commonalities (Creswell, 2014). For practical reasons, a phenomenological research design is the appropriate choice to examine real-world contexts using narratives of former-teacher participants sharing their personal experiences related to their teaching careers (Yin, 2013). The participants shared their stories in individual interview sessions, in which they expounded on their teaching careers and stated their reasons for exiting the teaching profession. Qualitative narratives or personal history stories were used to determine if there were common themes or patterns among the participants’ lived experiences regarding their teaching careers and subsequent departure from the profession.

The researcher used extrinsic and intrinsic motivation theory to examine common motivating factors related to their perceptions of teaching during their careers. Further, an examination of the veteran teachers’ career paths regarding the teaching profession, was investigated which included professional satisfaction that motivated them during their careers to remain in the profession, and professional dissatisfaction during their teaching careers that led to their subsequent departures.

Terrell (2016) described an emic perspective as that of a researcher having an insider viewpoint. The researcher for the study used an emic perspective (insider perspective) to collect the data by having direct involvement, collaboration, and interaction with each research participant. In addition, field notes about the interactions and research site were taken to provide the context of the interview environment. The study included demographic, descriptive and
background information about the former teacher participants to give a holistic account of their profiles, teaching backgrounds and experiences.

Patton (2014) suggested listening to the voices of the participants and providing “thick descriptions.” The researcher selected the interview process as the data collection method in order to assemble qualitative data of the participants’ voices with “thick descriptions” describing the factors that contribute to teachers’ decisions to leave the profession. By using the qualitative inquiry technique, the participants were able to share and reflect on past teaching experiences. These interviews allowed the participants to also express their attitudes, share their perspectives and provide deeper insights into reasons veteran teachers gave for leaving the profession.

**Research Questions**

This study addressed questions concerning the induction processes of veteran teachers and the teachers’ reasons for leaving the teaching profession. The following overarching research question guided the study: How do teachers who left the profession describe their professional profiles, induction processes as veteran teachers, and reasons for subsequently leaving the teaching profession?

The following secondary research questions were used as semi-structured interview questions and guided the study.

1. Participants’ Profiles
   A. What are the participants’ profiles (gender, age, race/ethnicity)?
   B. What do participants describe as their career paths (years of experience in teaching profession, degree level, subject/discipline)?

2. Teacher Induction Process (as a new teacher and a veteran teacher)
   A. What do participants describe as their induction processes?
B. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in the induction process?

C. What do participants describe as the relevance of the context and content of the induction process?

D. What recommendations do participants offer for improving the induction process for new or experienced veteran teachers?

3. Professional Satisfaction as Teacher

A. What do participants describe as their perceptions of professional satisfaction related to teaching longevity?

B. What do participants describe as their career rewards (intrinsic or extrinsic) related to teaching longevity?

C. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in contributing to their professional satisfaction as related to teaching longevity?

D. What do participants perceive as the primary motivating factor that caused them to remain in the teaching profession?

4. Professional Dissatisfaction as a Teacher

A. What do participants describe as their perceptions of professional dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity?

B. What do participants describe as their career challenges (intrinsic and extrinsic) related to teaching longevity?

C. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in contributing to their professional dissatisfaction as related to teaching longevity?

D. What do participants describe as the reasons for leaving the teaching profession?
The first component, professional profiles, was chosen for the study to describe the participants’ demographics and teaching experiences. The second component, the teacher induction process, was chosen to identify parts of the process that may be related to veteran teacher attrition. The last two components, professional satisfaction and professional dissatisfaction, were selected to focus on attributes of their teaching experiences to explain reasons they remained and to elucidate the reasons they left the teaching profession. The participants were asked to reflect on their teaching experiences from their first to their last assignments to give a representation of their entire teaching careers.

**Research Context and Site**

The participants selected for this study consisted of experienced veteran teachers who exited their professions before retirement from school districts in Northeastern Wisconsin. These participants were former teachers at school districts that served students in urban, suburban and rural schools with K-12 populations. For the feasibility of this study, these specific sites were chosen due to the accessibility to potential participants and familiarity of the schools to the researcher. At the time of the study, the researcher served as a substitute teacher in three Northeastern Wisconsin school districts. The study was conducted using semi-structured interviews with the participants in sites selected by the participants based on mutually agreed upon times and locations. One interview was conducted at a public library, three at the participants’ workplaces, and one at the participant’s home. The participants were given the option of in-person interviews or telephone interviews to accommodate their schedules and for convenience. All participants agreed to in-person interviews.
Role of the Researcher

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) recommended establishing reliability and validity in qualitative studies by focusing on the trustworthiness of the study, which includes four factors: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Further, according to Patton (2001), validity in qualitative studies relies on the credibility of the instrument, meaning the instrument must be skilled, competent, and rigorous. In this case, the researcher is the instrument. The researcher was a 17-year veteran teacher within a secondary educational environment, with vast knowledge about teaching and learning environments, and who left the teaching profession before retirement. Furthermore, the researcher had first-hand knowledge about the school environments and culture in which the participants taught through substitute teaching assignments. In addition, the researcher held a bachelor’s and master’s degree from an accredited university and was guided by the dissertation chair during the investigation process. To further the dependability and confirmability of the study, the researcher maintained an audit trail detailing how the data were collected.

The study sought to address researcher bias by examining and including contradiction evidence, or deviant cases, to provide an analysis of both sides (Anderson, 2010). A possible personal bias included the fact that the researcher was employed as a substitute teacher and teacher in the public school districts included in this research study. However, the researcher attempted to limit any personal bias by selecting teacher participants with whom there was no affiliation.
Participants

This phenomenological study consisted of five human subjects or participants. Participants for this study were former teachers with varying teaching certifications and years of service who volunteered to participate in this research. These participants were selected based on having five or more years of teaching experience and having departed from the profession in their school districts. Each participant exited the profession before retirement eligibility. Persons who continued employment or planned to return to the teaching profession were excluded from the study.

Snowball sampling (Goodman, 1961; Krathwohl & Smith, 2005; Patton, 2014) was used to recruit participants. This method employed a practice in which the researcher’s colleagues suggested possible participants who then suggested other participants with the desired characteristics. The population sample was recruited from the Northeastern part of Wisconsin. The participants were selected based on criterion sampling (Patton, 2014) which limited the group to include only the necessary criterion: teachers with five or more years of experience who exited the teaching profession before retirement, regardless of teaching assignment. Since the phenomenological research approach was used in this study, the number of participants was limited to a small sample size to allow for an in-depth examination of the veteran teachers’ lived experiences regarding their teaching careers and subsequent departure.

Recruitment Procedure

Prior to contacting the potential participants, the researcher sought approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB) through Mississippi State University (See Appendix A). Once IRB approval was granted, the researcher began locating participants through current teachers and principals in the school districts where the researcher was employed as a substitute teacher. One
participant was located through a local news station that reported and interviewed former teachers about the teacher shortage in Wisconsin. An advertisement describing the study and participant recruitment with researcher contact information was placed in the Wisconsin Education Association Council newsletter. Former colleagues from Mississippi also provided possible participants for the study. Overall, a total of 18 possible participants who met the criteria were identified through snowball sampling, and one by local news media. Of those participants, two were excluded due to early retirement and the intent to return to the profession. Five former teachers agreed to participate in the study.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher utilized qualitative inquiry techniques to collect the data, and the data collection was conducted over a 6-month timeframe with five participants from Northeast Wisconsin. The researcher contacted the participants through electronic correspondence which included the participation invitation letter with an explanation of the purpose of the study and statement of voluntary participation (See Appendix B). Once participants acknowledged interest of participation, the researcher provided each participant with a consent form for participation in the study (See Appendix C). Consent from all participants was obtained prior to conducting the interviews. The consent document explained the reason for the study, the participant’s role and rights, the approximate study time, study location information, possible risks and benefits to the participant, and researcher contact information. To protect the rights of the participants before, during and after the study, the consent document indicated participation was voluntary and the participant could choose to discontinue participation at any time. The document indicated any participant could elect not to answer any question which might cause discomfort without any negative consequence. Finally, the document expressed the researcher’s gratitude for the
participant’s valuable contribution to the study. Each participant read and signed the consent forms prior to beginning the interview. Each participant selected a convenient time and place based on their schedules to conduct the interview process.

Prior to beginning the interview sessions, each participant was provided with a research interview protocol (See Appendix D). The data were collected using the semi-structured open-ended questions about the participants’ professional profiles, participation in induction processes for during their careers, teaching experiences related to teacher longevity, and their specific reasons for leaving the profession. The researcher administered the interview questions through face-to-face interaction in approximately 45 minute to 1-hour sessions. Each participant answered the research questions in as much detail as he or she could provide. Each participant provided his or her perspectives about the induction process, narratives about their teaching experiences and explanations on their reasons for leaving the profession. In addition, the researcher took field notes regarding the interview environment and participant demeanor throughout the interview. To ensure anonymity, the participants in the study were not identified by their real names, and no personal identifying information were included.

The interview questions prompted the participants to provide in-depth explanations to the research questions. Patton (2001) advocated that the researcher should “ask questions that would elucidate and illuminate that particular subject” (p. 343). The researcher asked the participants questions regarding their induction processes and teaching experiences related to professional satisfaction and dissatisfaction during their teaching careers to ascertain reasons the participants remained and reasons they left the profession.

All interview sessions were audio recorded on two separate devices to ensure sound quality when transcribing the interviews, and field notes about the interactions were taken to
provide the context of the interview environment. The study included demographic, descriptive and background information of the teacher participants. The interviews were then transcribed to ensure accuracy of the participants’ responses. After all interviews were completed, the researcher input the data into the analysis software. The researcher reviewed the transcribed responses for completeness and accuracy. The digital recordings and transcribed files were stored in the qualitative software program *NVivo 12 Plus* on a password protected computer as well as a fireproof safe on a digital storage device.

The collected data also included conversations and narratives from current teachers who shared their experiences and contemplations about leaving the profession. These conversations emerged during the recruitment of participants for the study. All current teachers and principals signed the participant consent form allowing the researcher to use their information in the study. However, while these participants did not answer the research questions, their stories were shared and collected as a result of knowing the nature of the study.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

As recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), following each interview, the researcher transcribed the audio files the same day as the interview. The data were organized based on the conceptual framework and secondary research questions for the study (participant profiles, professional satisfaction, and professional dissatisfaction). The analysis process was guided by six recommended steps outlined in qualitative research methodology (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). These steps included 1) organizing and preparing the data for analysis; 2) reading the transcripts thoroughly; 3) reviewing summary of the notes and artifacts; 4) assigning codes for the interviews and notes; 5) generating descriptions and themes; and 6) conveying and describing the findings in narrative passage. To code the data, the eights steps for coding
suggested by Tesch (as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2017) were utilized. Those steps are: 1) reading the transcriptions carefully; 2) assessing each document or artifact; 3) making a list of topics; 4) abbreviating the topics as codes; 5) finding descriptive code words; 6) selecting and organizing final codes; 7) assembling the data by codes; and 8) evaluating if recodes are necessary.

After the collection of data from all participants, the data analysis was conducted to search for common themes regarding the teacher induction processes, and career-related experiences that led to professional satisfaction and professional dissatisfaction. The teacher participants were given pseudonyms to ensure their teaching experiences would remain confidential and anonymous.

In the transcription process, the researcher uploaded the audio files of the interviews into the automatic feature NVivo Transcription to create word documents. After completion of the transcription process, the researcher reviewed the documents for accuracy by listening to the audio files while reading the transcribed word document. The transcriptions were saved as Microsoft Word documents for ease of sharing with the participants during the member-checking process.

After the transcription process, NVivo Transcription data files were reviewed before categorizing and classifying the data into themes. The transcribed data files were uploaded and saved to the project file on the qualitative software NVivo 12 Plus (QSR International, Cambridge, MA). The qualitative analytical software NVivo 12 Plus was used to store, sort, analyze and document the data. Using tree nodes in NVivo 12 Plus, the interview data were then coded into categories based on the conceptual framework and research questions of the study. The researcher utilized this software to develop quantifiable schemes for coding data sets. Codes,
known as nodes in the qualitative software, were created from the transcripts. The data were given open codes by creating labels for “chunks” of common data. These codes were based on commonalities of the teachers’ lived experiences which included components of the induction, their perceptions of career rewards and challenges, the administrative roles in professional satisfaction and dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity and reasons for remaining and exiting the profession (Terrell, 2016).

Using an interpretivist epistemology, the researcher employed inductive reasoning to discern common themes based on the data collected to make generalizations about the induction process, professional satisfaction with the profession, and professional dissatisfaction that led to the teachers’ departures from the teaching profession. Interweaving narrative excerpts as suggested by Connelly and Clandinin (1990) were used to compare the former-teacher participants’ teaching accounts and the current teacher accounts. The goal of the researcher was to accurately report the participants’ viewpoints and meanings. The researcher then offered explanations about veteran teachers’ attrition and reasons for the attrition based on the discovered common themes. To add further comparative analysis of teacher attrition, the conversations with current teachers and current principals were included.

Validation and Credibility of the Findings

The researcher employed several strategies to provide accuracy and credibility to the study. These included member-checks, thick-rich descriptions, clarification of bias, and negative or discrepant information. The researcher followed the recommended protocol of spending adequate time on research activities (Creswell, 2014). This included reviewing the literature, conducting interviews, transcribing, coding and analyzing data, and writing the study’s final results. The researcher also observed similar or actual school districts in which the participants
taught to gain insight into the school culture and school environment of these demographic areas of Wisconsin. The researcher used member checking as one method to strengthen the validity of the study’s data. This included having participants review their transcripts from their interviews to determine the accuracy of the information contained and for verification of meaning (Maxwell, 2013). Further, the entire research study was supervised and externally audited by the researcher’s doctoral advising chair. In addition, the advising chair guided the research and provided feedback for the study.

**Summary of Methodology**

This research study was a qualitative study utilizing a phenomenological research design that examined the lived experiences of teachers with five or more years of experience who left the teaching profession before retirement. These participants provided in-depth descriptions of their induction processes along with details of professional satisfaction and dissatisfaction related to their careers to explain reasons for leaving the profession. By examining their accounts, the researcher developed common themes among the responses from the participants to explain the phenomena of veteran teacher attrition investigated by this study.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings from this comprehensive phenomenological study of veteran teacher attrition. A phenomenological research method was employed to explore the teachers’ experiences about their professional experiences that included their induction processes. The data were examined to determine how the teachers’ experiences with the induction process and other school-related factors contributed to their decisions to depart from the profession.

The analysis of the study used recommended steps outlined in qualitative research methodology. These steps included 1) organizing and preparing the data for analysis; 2) reading the transcripts thoroughly; 3) reviewing summaries of the notes; 4) assigning codes for the interviews and notes; 5) generating descriptions and themes; and 6) conveying and describing the findings in narrative passage (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

In the coding process, the eights steps for coding suggested by Tesch (as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2017) were used to create data codes. The steps included 1) reading the transcriptions carefully; 2) assessing each document or artifact; 3) making a list of topics; 4) abbreviating the topics as codes; 5) finding descriptive code words; 6) selecting and organizing final codes; 7) assembling the data by codes; and 8) evaluating if recodes are necessary.

This chapter begins with an introduction and explanation of the analysis of the study based on the research question, followed by a description of the study. Included in this chapter
are demographic data of the participants at the time of the study, findings, emergent themes and excerpts from the participants’ interviews. The presentation of the findings followed a narrative format through which the participants’ viewpoints were described and emergent themes were presented. The secondary research questions and conceptual framework were used to organize and analyze the data of this qualitative study.

The data analysis of the study was conducted from the interviews and field notes collected during the study. The participants were interviewed and answered questions related to their participant profiles, teacher induction processes, professional satisfaction as a teacher, and professional dissatisfaction as a teacher. These questions guided the investigation and examination of reasons these teachers left the profession before retirement.

The central overarching research question that guided the study was as follows: How do teachers who left the profession describe their professional profiles, induction processes as veteran teachers, and reasons for subsequently leaving the teaching profession. The secondary research questions were as follows:

1. Participants’ Profiles
   A. What are the participants’ demographics (gender, age, race/ethnicity)?
   B. What do participants describe as their career paths (years of experience in teaching profession, degree level, subject/discipline)?

2. Teacher Induction Process (as a new teacher and a veteran teacher)
   A. What do participants describe as their induction processes?
   B. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in the induction process?
   C. What do participants describe as the relevance of the context and content of the induction process?
D. What recommendations do participants offer for improving the induction process for new or experienced veteran teachers?

3. Professional Satisfaction as Teacher

A. What do participants describe as their perceptions of professional satisfaction related to teaching longevity?

B. What do participants describe as their career rewards (intrinsic or extrinsic) related to teaching longevity?

C. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in contributing to their professional satisfaction as related to teaching longevity?

D. What do participants perceive as the primary motivating factor that caused them to remain in the teaching profession?

4. Professional Dissatisfaction as a Teacher

A. What do participants describe as their perceptions of professional dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity?

B. What do participants describe as their career challenges (intrinsic and extrinsic) related to teaching longevity?

C. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in contributing to their professional dissatisfaction as related to teaching longevity?

D. What do participants describe as the reasons for leaving the teaching profession?

The chapter concluded with a comprehensive analysis for this phenomenological study in which the findings and emergent themes were reported and summarized.
Research Study Description

The study examined veteran teachers’ perspectives about induction processes and school-related factors that led to their departure from the teaching profession. These teachers were past the initial educator years between year one and three and had acquired years of teaching experience. The study would focus on this group of teachers to ascertain the reasons for their departure as part of the national teacher shortage. To show that this occurrence was not limited to one sector of education such as elementary levels, the selected sample population had varying certifications and experience in K-12 school environments.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, “the issue of educator shortages is linked to the ability of schools and districts to recruit, retain, and support and develop staff” (p. 1). The state of Wisconsin underwent a major educational change with the passage of The Wisconsin Recovery Act in 2011, also known as Act 10. This piece of legislation would change the educational landscape, and with it a mass exodus of teachers would follow. Initially mostly retirement-eligible teachers left the professions as they feared their retirement benefits would be negatively impacted. Other teachers followed suit as their financial security was in a state of the unknown. The negative aspects of Act 10 associated with this Bill included the elimination of collective bargaining agreements and reduction of worker benefits. The changes were meant to bring about positive results, by eliminating seniority and tenure and then recruiting the “brightest and best teachers” into the profession. However, the intended results did not materialize and left the state filling positions with long-term and short-term substitutes. In some cases, positions were eliminated if a qualified applicant was not found. Another negative outcome for teachers was the decrease in wages and benefits following the enactment of the legislative bill. Further exacerbating the teacher shortage in the state is the decreasing enrollment
in teacher preparation programs which has continued to decline since 2010. In the spring of 2019, the local media reported that a task force had been assembled to investigate ways to induce students to enter these programs. To investigate the current scope of the teacher shortages, the researcher accessed the Wisconsin Education Career Assess Network (WECAN), an employment job search website available to certified teachers in the state of Wisconsin. At the time of the study, during the fall semester of 2019, there were more than 600 unfilled certified teaching positions.

The Recruitment Process and Response Rate

The study included a state with known teacher shortages and was familiar to the researcher. During the recruitment stage, the researcher contacted 18 former teachers who were referred by colleagues and current teachers. All possible participants were contacted via email. One former female teacher contacted the researcher after a former colleague mentioned the study; however, she did not respond to follow-up emails. Three former female teachers who left because of medical reasons indicated initial interest in participating; however, they did not respond after the first initial contact. One former female teacher left the profession to be a stay-at-home mom but indicated that she would be returning to the profession. Seven other possible participants were referred; four males and three females were contacted via email. Six did not respond, and one responded and said he would be willing to participate but did not respond to follow-up emails. One individual initially agreed to participate but was not comfortable being audio-recorded. Five was the final number of selected participants for the study. These five participants held varying certifications and taught various years indicating that veteran teacher attrition occurs across different disciplines. During the recruitment process, current teachers shared their stories and the reasons they were contemplating leaving the profession. These
reasons mirrored the ones reported by the participants. In addition, two principals agreed to speak to the researcher about induction processes and support systems for teachers within their schools.

**Presentation of Participants in the Study**

Five former veteran teachers from the state of Wisconsin participated in the study. Demographic information related to their age, gender, race, subject/discipline, education level and years of experience were included. To protect the participants’ identities, each person was assigned a pseudonym.

**Participant Descriptive Attributes**

Olivia, who was 49 years of age, left her full-time position at a middle school that served Grades 5-8. Olivia held two master’s degrees, one in French and one in World Language Education. She taught for a total of 21 years, with only one year at her last position. Olivia had experience teaching French in three different states where she held certifications. Her licensure included grades K-12. She admitted that in her younger years, she was interested in “having a lot of different experiences in a lot of different schools.” Her priorities in her later teaching career changed to “wanting a stable secure, just let me teach situation.” At the time of the interview, Olivia was looking for full-time employment.

Tracy, who was 38 years of age, left a full-time position as a health education teacher. She had 6 years of total teaching experience at the middle school and high school levels. She also taught in higher education for 3½ years. She held K-12 certifications and a master’s degree in community health education. She stated her challenge after leaving the teaching profession was finding another career path. “It’s challenging to transfer those skills to other career professions.”
At the time of the interview, Tracy worked for an organization that advanced minority and women’s causes.

Trisha, who was 41 years of age, left her full-time position as an elementary education teacher in a charter school during the first semester after school began. She had a total of 19 years of teaching experience, with 11 years of part-time assignments during that time span before returning to full-time employment. Trisha served in various educational roles during her career including literacy coach, reading interventionist, teacher education instructor and English as Second Language (ESL) teacher. At the time of the interview, Trisha was not employed, choosing to stay home to care for her children.

Frank who was 28 years of age, taught a total of 5 years in an elementary education environment. He held a bachelor’s degree in elementary education. He stated that he participated in varying student teaching assignments as a means for him to assess if the profession was the right career path. He initially entered the teaching profession because his father was a former teacher and Frank saw first-hand the influence his father had on students. At the time of the interview, Frank held a management position for a medical-related industry.

Sam, who was 34 years of age, had a total of 11 years of teaching experience in elementary education. He held a bachelor’s degree in elementary education with a master’s degree in educational technology. During his teaching career, Sam used his technological skills to present staff development training sessions. Sam’s current occupation at the time of the study was in a technological capacity. He stated that his position allowed him greater work flexibility, decreased stress and greater opportunity for advancement.
Secondary research question 1A: Participant demographics

The demographic information included the participants’ gender, age, race/ethnicity, and professional profiles (years of experience, subject/discipline, degree level). For each demographic category, descriptive narratives are provided with a composite table following.

Gender.

Five former veteran teachers from the state of Wisconsin participated in the study. Three of the participants were female (60%) and two were male (40%).

Age of Participants.

At the time of the interviews, the participants ranged in age from 28 years of age to 49 years of age. The age of the participants helped established that the former teachers were at pre-retirement age when they departed from the profession.

Race/Ethnicity.

The race was included to determine if the sample population was diverse. A report by the Education Commission of the States (ECS) found 86% of teachers were white and 79% were female (Allen, 2005). Table 1 shows that the participants who taught as public school teachers are representative of demographics described by the ECS. Through researcher observations during substitute teaching assignments, the race and ethnicity of teachers were found to be predominately White. The researcher did not observe any Black teachers; however, a small number of Asian teachers were present in some schools that included three area school districts ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade. Hispanic teachers were employed at a bilingual school and paraprofessionals were employed at schools with a greater number of Hispanic students in one of the school districts included in this study.
Secondary research question 1B: Professional profiles and career paths

The five participants were teachers with varying years of teaching experience past the initial beginning teacher years. Two of the participants with the greatest number of teaching experience, Olivia and Trisha, both acknowledged that their perceptions regarding their teaching experiences had changed from their beginning years to the end of their careers. Olivia commented on how her career goals changed over her teaching career, “When I was younger, I would go, I think the longest I was at a school was six years. I wanted to have a lot of different experiences in a lot of different schools. When I was older, I really wanted to have that stable secure, just let me teach situation.” Olivia stated that in later teaching assignments sometimes she had to take part-time positions when full-time world language assignments were not available. Trisha commented on the changes in student behavior. She explained how student behavior changed drastically from her first teaching assignment to her last one, “I feel like it’s a culture in education that students’ behavior really have been just more and more as acceptable and allowed and excused”. Sam also shared his thoughts on helping behaviorally challenging students make academic gains, “I know I don’t have those qualifications because that student needs mental health, something way beyond what my skill set can give him.” Trisha and Sam both described student behavior as a challenging aspect of teaching that changed over their teaching careers.

The participants taught different subjects and grade levels in K-12 settings. Two of the participants, Tracy and Trisha, also taught at post-secondary institutions during their teaching careers. The educational attainment of the participants included four who held master’s degrees and one who held a bachelor’s degree.

Table 1 is a composite table representing the study participants’ demographic information and professional profiles.
Table 1

*Composite Table of Demographics and Professional Profiles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Study Participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Three participants were female</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two participants were male</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>One participant was in the age range of 20-30</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two participants were in the age range 31-40</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two participants were in the age range of 41-50</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>All participants were white</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td>One participant had between 5 to 10 years of experience</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three participants had between 11 to 20 years of experience</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One participant had between 21 to 30 years of experience</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject/Discipline</td>
<td>One participant taught world language</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One participant taught health education</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three participants taught elementary education</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/Degree</td>
<td>One participant held a bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four participants held master’s degrees</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher Perceptions of Their Teaching Experiences

This section of the research findings includes a narrative on perceptions of the participants during their teaching experiences related to various teaching assignments. These teacher experiences included (a) the teacher induction process, (b) professional satisfaction as a teacher, and (c) professional dissatisfaction as a teacher.

Secondary Research Question 2: Teacher Induction Process

The following secondary research question related to the teacher induction process helped guide the study.

How do the participants describe their teacher induction process as an experienced teacher?

The participants were asked four questions related to the secondary question about the teacher induction process.

A. What do participants describe as their induction process?
B. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in the induction process?
C. What do participants describe as the relevance of the context and content of the induction process?
D. What recommendations would do participants offer for improving the induction process for new or experienced veteran teachers?

Overview of field notes during the interview process.

During the interviews it was clear that the participants had to ruminate about their induction experiences with expressions such as, “Um, let’s see” or “Let me remember.” The participants were asked to describe their experiences related to teacher induction. Each person
recalled what those processes included and described those in as much detail as they could provide. The participants included in their descriptions both their beginning teacher and experienced teacher induction processes.

**Secondary Research Question 2A: What do participants describe as their induction process?**

*Interviews.*

Olivia’s induction and new teacher orientation at one school district was conducted at the beginning of the school year and occurred over several days. She was assigned a mentor with whom she would meet monthly for the duration of the school year. In her last full-time position, Olivia’s induction included the assignment of a mentor with no established regular meetings. However, she did feel comfortable asking questions and requesting feedback of her mentor throughout the year. Olivia commented that her induction process in some of her later positions included the same activities as the beginning teachers. The process included how to maintain a classroom, write lesson plans, and do attendance and daily routines, as well as insurance and benefit informational sessions. In her opinion, she felt school districts could acknowledge that experienced teachers did not need the same orientation as “brand new beginning teachers.” Her overall impression of the induction process left her frustrated, as she felt it was not beneficial and that she needed a different process, “I felt sometimes confused and overwhelmed just because every school is different.”

For Tracy, the induction process was non-existence at times. In one of her earlier teacher assignments, the main objective for the school district was filling teacher vacancies and if a person was available to teach, he or she was hired. Tracy was hired following her interview; however, she did not participate in an induction process. Tracy also stated that there was no
administrative support in this particular school district. In another position at a charter school, she recalled that the induction process was a 3-day session which included basic entry-level information such as, “general expectations, processes, systems and reporting with no mentorship or ongoing strategic support.” She further stated, “None of that was integrated into a long-term strategy for teacher retention.”

Trisha recalled her first induction process included an unstructured year-long mentorship. She met with her mentor occasionally, stating, “It was someone to talk to and ask questions.” After that initial induction, she could not recall an induction process for other positions. The administration, in her last teaching position, informed Trisha that she would be assigned “a buddy teacher”, a person who could give her some support, but she was not considered part of the induction program because of her years of experience.

Frank’s induction process included a week of orientation for all new teachers whether beginning or veteran. These sessions were scheduled before the district staff meeting for all teachers. When asked about the content of the induction Frank stated, “They kind of went over district philosophies, but it wasn’t like a college course where you’re learning.” He also stated that this particular district established its own system of teaching and learning that was expected to be implemented by all teachers. According to Frank, limited technology training was provided on an as-needed basis. Frank’s induction process also included the assignment of a mentor, who also taught the same grade level. His mentor was a veteran teacher with approximately 20 years of experience. Frank indicated that the induction process did not vary based on years of experience. He noted the introductory activities included all beginning teachers and experienced teachers new to the district.
Sam described his first induction process as unstructured. He was assigned a mentor who was also his co-teacher to help guide him through the day-to-day activities, lesson planning, and other teacher duties. However, Sam stated he did not receive continuous feedback which made it difficult for him to evaluate the effectiveness of his teaching or to discern what improvements needed to be made. Sam described his second induction experience as “more structured.” In this school system, he found more opportunities for new teachers to discuss their experiences, “There was a chance for us to talk about how things were going from a lesson plan perspective to a classroom management perspective to just like how’s your life going perspective.” For Sam, the most positive component of the induction process was the strong mentorship program. His mentor was a veteran teacher with at least 20 years of experience, who provided him support throughout the year. Sam indicated a better evaluation system was implemented by his principal, and that he provided appropriate feedback following classroom observations.

Summary of the induction process.

Based on the participants’ interview responses, the induction process was not differentiated based on years of experience, the activities included both new teachers and veteran teachers. Their induction processes included mentorship, but the components of that process varied for each participant. Further, some of the participants received limited or no induction process during some of their teaching assignments.

Secondary Researcher Question 2B: What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in the induction process?

Interviews.

Olivia stated during her experiences she did not see much involvement from the administrator in the induction process. In her experience, the administrator’s responsibilities
included welcoming activities, introductory information, introduction to school staff, and facilitation of meetings. “It was usually other kinds of people that were in specific roles.”

Similarly, Tracy stated the administrator led the introductory meetings. Tracy also indicated that the administrator’s role was limited in the induction process. She saw the administrator’s role as being the leader and evaluator, “They were who you reported to.”

Like the other female teachers, Trisha described the administrator’s role as “pretty minimal.” The administrator gave her a tour of the building and introduced her to the staff. She stated other staff members were expected to help the new staff members acclimate to the school and with other daily routines.

Unlike the others, Frank stated his administrator was effective in his introductory activities. During the initial induction phase, the principal showed him the school building and talked about his philosophies related to education. Frank indicated the principal was approachable and that made him comfortable when asking questions of his administrator. He noted initially it was stressful when the principal observed his classroom many times during the early part of the year. Later, he became accustomed to seeing him in the classroom and welcomed the feedback following the observations. He recalled the principal was, “very visible and did a good job of giving the appropriate amount of support and feedback.”

Sam described the administrator’s role as “regimented, a little bit cold.” In his estimation, the administrator was inundated with many responsibilities that he would seemingly “check off boxes” to fulfill his administrative duties in the induction process and move on. Sam’s meetings with the principal were limited to pre-observation and post-observation evaluations. He recalled not establishing a positive relationship with one of his administration, which made his teaching assignment difficult.
Summary notes of the administrator’s role.

According to the participants, the administrator’s role consisted of introductory activities with limited interaction during the induction process. The administrator’s role for the rest of the year was as an evaluator through classroom observations. Most of the participants indicated that administrative support was limited. The two male participants recalled a positive experience in their interactions with at least one administrator.

Secondary Research Question 2C: What do participants describe as the relevance of the context and content of the induction process?

Interviews.

Olivia stated that her experience with the induction process was minimal. She indicated most of her induction process was completed at the beginning of the school year with little to no support after a two to three-day training session. During some of her teacher assignments, Olivia was assigned a mentor, and other times she had to rely on other staff for support. She also commented on the need for the induction process to be differentiated based on teacher experience and teacher needs.

Tracy recounted her induction experience as limited, so she offered her opinion on what the process should have provided for her. Her belief was the induction process should provide a sense of culture climate within the school where teachers can “get a sense of how the school operates.” She believed the everyday daily routines should be part of the induction process to help teachers spend less time on those types of activities throughout the year. She summed up her beliefs by commenting, “I think that content and context has to provide a multilayered and multifaceted approach to support teachers so that they feel like they are a part of something greater.”
Trisha described the mentorship part of the induction process as the most relevant component. The mentor provided her support with not only the day-to-day operations but also emotional support. However, she commented, she was not always assigned a mentor or given opportunities to participate in any formal induction processes, which hindered her ability to spend more time on teaching activities. Her biggest complaint was “having to figure out things” as she went through the school year. She further added she felt frustrated when as an experienced teacher she was expected to know what to do, “Every school district uses different systems or has different expectations, and different timelines for getting things done.”

Frank recalled his teacher induction experience as meeting most of his needs as a first-year teacher. He participated in only one induction process during his teaching career as he taught all five years at the same school. His perception of the school district’s induction process was that it provided the teachers with school philosophies and educational teaching structures to be able to carry out their teaching assignments. He indicated another effective part of the induction process was the mentor assigned to him, who was “his go-to person” whenever he had questions or needed assistance and support. For Frank, the most relevant aspect of the induction process came from the veteran teacher’s experience, support, and guidance during the first years of his career.

For Sam, receiving constructive feedback to guide his teaching goals was an important part of the induction process. This feedback provided him with suggestions and ideas on how to refine his teaching strategies and lesson plan goals. In addition, he mentioned team collaboration as a helpful component in his new teacher experience at his second teaching position. He considered departmental support a critical component of the overall induction process where his co-teachers were able to contribute their expertise and share their experiences in his subject area.
Summary notes on the relevance of the context and content of the induction process.

For all the participants, the mentorship component as a support structure was a critical part of their induction. However, this process varied for each participant and was not included in the induction process for all their teaching assignments. This part of the induction process provided the participants with a “go-to person” for questions related to school daily routines and functions, advice on teaching strategies, or for moral support. However, not all collegial support was in the form of a mentorship, but rather from other staff members who volunteered their assistance.

Secondary Research Question 2D: What recommendations do participants offer for improving the induction process for teachers?

Interviews.

According to Olivia, the induction process should be differentiated to meet each teacher’s needs based on experience. She suggested training should occur throughout the year instead of overwhelming teachers with a vast amount of information at the beginning of the year. In addition, meeting with a mentor every month to evaluate, review and discuss different topics could provide helpful opportunities to examine information in smaller segments.

Tracy also agreed that mentorship was a key component of the induction process. However, these mentors needed to be well-trained and purposively selected to match the needs of the new teacher. She communicated, “The induction process needs to be really grounded in diversity, equity and inclusion to be truly effective.” Her position is that not all schools are created equal, making the case for identifying the community of educators within each school district and then “support and grow those teachers, just like they support and grow students.”
Trisha recommended that the induction process include practical activities designed for teachers to be able to navigate through their day without having to learn all school systems and processes throughout the year. She further added that the process should be specific to the subject area, or a particular area of interest for each teacher. For example, if a teacher required technology training, the school would provide that teacher with this specific training.

Frank stated his induction process was satisfactory and met most of his needs. The only recommendation he suggested was to increase the amount of time observing other teachers, particularly in the same grade level and subject area. He felt added observations of veteran teachers would have provided him with further teaching strategies and how to implement those effectively.

Sam recommended principals establish a positive relationship with the new teachers much like teachers do with students at the beginning of the year. “They have to start building that trust personally with you.” He suggested appropriate feedback and constructive criticism be incorporated throughout the induction process. In his induction experiences, he expressed having more than one mentor was instrumental in his development as a teacher. He stated, “It takes a village to raise a teacher.” His final suggestion was to provide a mental health component to the induction process for new teachers to check on “their total well-being.”

Summary of recommendations for improving the induction process.

All participants agreed that support of teachers during their induction phase was important to the success of their teaching experiences. The participants also expressed a need to differentiate the induction process to meet the specific needs of each teacher. Included in their recommendations were the opportunity to observe other teachers, the ability to form positive relationships with staff and administrators, and the incorporation of a mental health check.
component for teachers. Table 2 provides a summary of the components of the induction process described by the participants. Emergent themes are included in the table.

Table 2

*Teacher Induction Process*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New teacher orientation</td>
<td>Same for both beginning and experienced teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship</td>
<td>Assigned with varying degrees of interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No mentor assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance of content and context</td>
<td>Introduction to school building and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School district philosophies and policies addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training for daily activities and routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mentorships established for support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator’s role</td>
<td>Limited to no involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective and positive interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for improvement</td>
<td>Differentiate the programs to meet the needs of the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structured mentorship programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practical day-to-day activities outlined for teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation of experienced teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better communication with administrators</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The emergent themes for the induction process revealed there was either no process or the process was the same for all teachers new to a school district. Each participant was assigned a mentor; however, the interactions varied among the participants. The relevance of their induction process was described by the participants as including an introduction to the school building and staff, an explanation of district philosophies and policies, training for day-to-day activities and establishment of mentorships. The participants described the administrator’s role as limited to no involvement in the induction process. Both male participants stated that some administrators were effective in their introductory activities. Recommendations from the participants for improvement of the induction process included differentiation of induction programs to meet the needs of the teacher, structured mentorship programs, practical outline of day-to-day activities, the opportunity to observe experienced teachers, and better communication and relationships with administrators.

Secondary Research Question 3: Professional Satisfaction as a Teacher

The following secondary research question related to professional satisfaction during the teacher’s career helped guide the study.

How do participants describe their professional satisfaction as related to teaching longevity?

The participants were asked four questions related to the secondary question about professional satisfaction.

A. What do participants describe as their perceptions of professional satisfaction related to teaching longevity?

B. What do participants describe as their career rewards (intrinsic or extrinsic) related to teacher longevity?
C. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in contributing to their professional satisfaction as related to teacher longevity?

D. What do participants perceive as the primary motivating factor that caused them to remain in the teaching profession?

**Overview of field notes related to professional satisfaction.**

The participants were asked to describe their experiences related to professional satisfaction during their teaching careers. Each participant shared their experiences and perceptions about their professional experience in as much detail as they could provide. Each participant stated that these experiences made their teaching experiences enjoyable and worthwhile. However, the participants commented that the intrinsic rewards outweighed the extrinsic rewards.

**Secondary Research Question 3A: What do participates describe as their perceptions of professional satisfaction related to teaching longevity?**

**Interviews.**

For Olivia, satisfaction came from her love of the language which included learning more about French, teaching French, and increasing her proficiency as a French teacher. While Tracy’s personal satisfaction came from educating, facilitating and guiding students as a teacher. She also described her professional satisfaction came from meeting the challenges of teaching when adequate time and resources were allocated to accomplish her goals as a teacher. Trisha described her main professional satisfaction was derived from the connection with her students and that made her teaching a worthwhile experience. “I think satisfaction from being a teacher comes from making a difference; that’s why we all do it.” Frank and Sam also felt the connection with their students made the biggest impact on their professional satisfaction. Sam commented,
“So I guess my satisfaction was knowing that they (students) were finding success in one way or another after they left my classroom.” Both men derived personal satisfaction from knowing their teaching helped students succeed in the classroom and how that influenced their students’ perceptions of education.

**Summary of perceptions of professional satisfaction related to teacher longevity.**

All participants derived professional satisfaction from their love of teaching, particularly their subject and their care for students. The participants’ main source of professional satisfaction came from creating a positive influence in their students’ educational experiences.

**Secondary Research Question 3B: What do participants describe as their career rewards (intrinsic or extrinsic) related to teaching longevity?**

**Interviews.**

The participants indicated their career rewards centered on the positive influence their teaching had on their students. The participants also agreed that strong collegial connections were central to their satisfaction during their teaching careers. For Olivia, seeing the kids engaged and learning French was rewarding. While, Tracy stated caring about the students and helping them learn was a primary motivating factor for teaching. Along with caring for her students, Trisha described salary and benefits, along with a schedule that supported family life, as extrinsic rewards. Frank also felt intrinsic rewards contributed to his teaching longevity; “There wasn’t always like the extrinsic.” Intrinsically, he was proud to be a teacher and the impact he was making on his students made his job gratifying. Sam described his career rewards in terms of leadership and training opportunities. He commented,

For me, it was being able to attend different professional development conferences and for me to be asked to present at different meetings; I took a lot of pride in that. And I
really was proud and honored that they would ask me to do that because that showed that they trusted what I was doing and that they're comfortable with me speaking on behalf of the school. So even though that's not a formal reward, I feel like that was rewarding what I was doing in the classroom.

**Summary of career rewards (intrinsic and extrinsic).**

The participants stated that their career rewards were based primarily on intrinsic motivational incentives. They reported impacting student’s achievements and learning outcomes as a rewarding experience as a teacher. In addition, they established positive relationships with their students as well as formed strong collegial relationships which added to their professional satisfaction. Monetary rewards were not reported by the all participants as extrinsic rewards but rather a schedule that was conducive to family life and leadership opportunities.

**Secondary Research Question 3C: What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in professional satisfaction related to teaching longevity?**

**Interviews.**

Olivia did not describe any influencing factors regarding the role of the administrator and her professional satisfaction. Tracy described the administrator’s role as the person who “set the kind of tone or climate for the whole school.” She stated that in schools where she had administrative support and constructive feedback, her role as a teacher was more effective and enjoyable. Tracy recounted a positive experience with her administrator in which he allowed her to contribute and institute a discipline procedure system. She commented it was important for her, “to be part of different leadership opportunities, crafting different programs and having a voice at the table.” For Trisha, having administrative support played an important part of being able to teach effectively instead of managing behavioral problems for most of the day. She
described this support as taking many different forms; “it might be just lending an ear, or it might be supporting the teacher in the face of parental concerns.” The male participants described greater positive relationships with their administrators. Frank recounted that the relationship with his administrator contributed to his professional satisfaction during his teaching career. He described his interactions with his principal as positive: “He was very professional, good with kids, I felt like I could talk to him about anything.” Sam described his relationship with the principal, during his last teaching assignment, as a big brother figure who inspired him to work to meet the expectations of the school culture. He commented, “I would definitely work for that administrator again.” In his opinion, the principal’s management style was conducive to creating a balance between being personable and drawing a line at being too friend-like with the staff.

Summary of administrator’s role in contributing to professional satisfaction related to teaching longevity.

All participants agreed that administrative support was critical to the success of teachers. The participants also indicated an importance for administrators to include teachers in leadership opportunities or other school related activities to create a sense of identity within the school. The female participants viewed the role of the principal as contributing to the culture of the school; however, did not attribute professional satisfaction to the administrators of their respective schools. The male participants recalled positive relationships with their administrators and indicated that was not a factor in their decision to leave their teaching assignments.

Secondary Research Question 3D: What do participants perceive as the primary motivating factor that caused them to remain in the teaching profession?

Interviews.

Early in her career, Olivia stated she looked for opportunities to experience different school environments and cultures to give her a sense of adventure. Later in her career, she looked
for more permanent and stable positions to establish a better salary and retirement plan. She did express difficulty retaining full-time positions contributed to her leaving teaching positions throughout her career.

Initially for Tracy, the idea of contributing to the education of students and helping them reach their academic goals was her primary reason to become a teacher. Then the challenges of teaching put a strain on her mental health as she felt overwhelmed with her teaching duties. “I couldn’t do it anymore; I stayed as long as I could.”

Trisha stated that her extensive education and years of experience made it difficult for her to give up on the profession. She commented, “When you’ve invested like half your life into a field and then not knowing what else to do instead. And certainly, there’s financial concern, you fear of, of walking away from any career.”

Frank wanted to follow in his father’s footsteps and become a teacher. In his initial years, he took pride in being a teacher, but as the years progressed his view of the teaching profession would change to negative perceptions. He stayed in education to continue to impact his students’ educational successes.

Uncertainty about other job opportunities and a strong relationship with other teachers were reasons Sam remained in the profession. Sam described the teaching profession as a cycle of “when you’re teaching, and you don’t know how to do something else.” He stated he did not realize he could transfer his skillset to another profession or acquire new skills for another profession. He also stated he gained satisfaction through leading professional development sessions and training workshops in technology. In addition, he felt a strong connection and collegiality with the other teachers and principal. He commented, “It was like family to me; some of those teachers were some of my best friends.”
**Summary of reasons participants remained in the profession.**

The participants stated that financial security and the fear of the unknown in another employment opportunity were reasons they remained in the profession. They further commented, they remained until the stress and challenges began to negatively impact their professional and personal lives. One participant wanted to carry on the work of his father; however, made the decision to seek a position with a better salary. Most agreed their relationships with other colleagues contributed the most to their decision to remain in the profession. 

Table 3 provides a summary of professional satisfaction as related to teacher longevity as described by participants in their interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of professional satisfaction</td>
<td>Love of subject taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educating, facilitating, and guiding students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connection with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contributing to student success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Rewards (intrinsic or extrinsic)</td>
<td>Salary and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schedule that supported family life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact on students’ success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership and training opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrator’s role in contributing to professional satisfaction</td>
<td>Set the tone or climate for the whole school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provided opportunities for leadership activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supported teachers during their teaching careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provided positive feedback and constructive criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for remaining in the profession</td>
<td>Fear of changing careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to contribute to the education field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education/years of experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pride for the career and caring about the students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong collegial connection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary notes of professional satisfaction.**

The participants recalled intrinsically motivating aspects of their career more so than extrinsic rewards. As the participants discussed their reasons for remaining, they exhibited remorse about leaving their students and colleagues. The participants noted the importance of the administrator’s role in setting the tone for the school culture and providing support to teachers. Their reasons for remaining in the profession were fear of changing careers, desire to contribute to the education field, the amount of education acquired, time within the profession, the sense of pride to follow a role model’s career path, and a strong collegial bond with their coworkers.
Secondary Research Question 4: Professional Dissatisfaction as a Teacher

The following secondary research question related to professional dissatisfaction during the teacher’s career helped guide the study.

How do participants describe their professional dissatisfaction as related to teaching longevity?

The participants were asked four questions related to the secondary question about professional dissatisfaction.

A. What do participants describe as their perceptions of professional dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity?

B. What do participants describe as their career challenges (intrinsic or extrinsic) related to teacher longevity?

C. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in contributing to their professional dissatisfaction as related to teacher longevity?

D. What do participants describe as the reasons for leaving the teaching profession?

Overview of field notes related to professional dissatisfaction.

The participants were asked to describe their experiences related to professional dissatisfaction during their teaching careers. Each participant shared their experiences and perceptions about their professional dissatisfaction in as much detail as they could provide. Each participant shared more experiences and perceptions about dissatisfaction with the teaching profession than professional satisfaction.
Secondary Research Question 4A: What do participants describe as their perceptions of professional dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity?

*Interviews.*

The participants recounted varying experiences and perceptions about what contributed to their professional dissatisfaction during their teaching careers. In Olivia’s experience, language learning was not seen as a vital part of the curriculum, “French is kind of a subject that a lot of people don’t know a lot about and I feel like it becomes unimportant.” Whereas, Tracy described her dissatisfaction with the profession as “the lack of control, lack of power and lack of respect.” Her belief was that much of the dissatisfaction comes from the fact that “teachers are expected to be everything, but yet are not respected.”

Like Tracy, Trisha also believed the teaching profession lacked respect from the community and the students she was entrusted to teach. Trisha described her professional dissatisfaction derived from feelings of inadequacy and infectiveness as a teacher. In her last teaching position, she spent much of her classroom time managing behaviors instead of actual teaching. She described her perception of the teaching profession as “a decline in support of teachers, a decline in public perceptions, a decline in what unions can do to support teachers and a decline in salaries and benefits.”

Frank’s professional dissatisfaction was related to the amount of time required to complete additional duties or tasks. He recalled during his years of teaching the added responsibilities made his teaching assignment more difficult because he often used his lunch time, prep time or recess to accomplish these tasks. He described his experience as overwhelming, “Part of the burnout is the amount of things put on a teacher’s plate, and nothing gets taken off.”
Similar to Trisha’s views related to the classroom environment, Sam attributed his anxiety and stress-related health problems to an overwhelming class size coupled with behavioral challenges. His professional dissatisfaction came from managing classroom behavior which became the focus of his daily routine. He described his experience as; “I felt like I was putting out fires all over the place.”

**Summary of perceptions of professional dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity.**

All participants stated lack of respect for the profession as part of their professional dissatisfaction. The participants also conveyed that the overwhelming stress created by the added responsibilities made it difficult to enjoy the profession. Further, the participants noted classroom environments became one in which classroom management superseded instruction making teaching less desirable.

**Secondary Research Question 4B: What do participants describe as their career challenges (intrinsic or extrinsic) related to teaching longevity?**

**Interviews.**

The participants reported many challenges during their teaching careers and attributed these as reasons for their dissatisfaction with the profession. For Olivia, keeping or finding full-time employment in her subject was a challenge throughout her career. She recalled her frustration with the inconsistency of sustaining a French program in a school. During her teaching career, she had her teaching position cut from full-time to part-time employment, or had her program removed from the course selections. She felt it was unfair to the students who registered for the courses and would have to take an online course or Spanish instead. However, she stated some schools reportedly cut the French program due to budgetary concerns.
Tracy and Frank both described negative perceptions associated with being a teacher as a career challenge. Tracy recounted that when she told her mother about her desire to become a teacher, her mother asked her why she would want to pursue a teaching career stating she felt her daughter was “too smart for that.” Frank stated it was a challenge to continue to portray a positive nature that was in direct contrast with the negativity he often encountered in his teaching environment. Frank also found his positivity about the profession challenged when he felt a sense of guilt for not feeling proud to be a teacher like his father. He shared that his father was his role model during his formative years and that contributed to his career decision to become a teacher. However, his perceptions about being a teacher changed during his teaching career.

My dad is my role model, one of my biggest role models, and so I have a lot pride in teaching. And I had a lot of pride in teaching, but sometimes I felt there was a negative perception of teachers. I wish that I would have been more proud to tell people I was a teacher. I think the world of teachers, I really do.

The most challenging aspect for Trisha was student behavior and academic deficiencies which led her to feel ineffective as a teacher. She described another challenge to be the large number of students assigned to her classroom. Her students exhibited a wide range of behaviors and varied academic levels within a classroom of 27 students. Trisha’s feeling of ineffectiveness was further exacerbated by the fact that she had spent a great deal of time planning lessons that she was not able to implement. The participant was visibly distressed as she recounted her experience, “I was parenting and babysitting and redirecting behavior all day long.” She shared her opinion about the state of student behavior within schools.

It’s like the rights of one child or a handful of children who have (and they may or may not have special needs but they definitely have challenges academic or behavioral
challenges) have superseded the rights of the entire class of students for learning and for safety…their own personal safety.

Sam also articulated managing challenging behavioral issues in the classroom took precedent over teaching and learning. He felt he was no longer making a difference for his students. He recalled thinking, “I can’t do this for the next 20 years and just ride it out, there has to be more fulfillment for me because right now I don’t feel that.” He described another career challenge as reporting data-driven initiatives which added to his daily workload and hindered his teaching activities. He often struggled to see the vision or the intended goals and outcomes of these initiatives. His opinion was, “It was just frustrating because I felt like we were creating more work for ourselves that didn’t really need to be there. I felt like we were jumping through hoops because we had to.” In addition, he stated to lighten his workload, he began to choose which reports were practical to complete as it would have required spending nights and weekends to complete all the managerial tasks.

**Summary of career challenges (intrinsic or extrinsic) related to teacher longevity.**

The participants recounted career challenges that included an unimportance of their subject, lack of respect which led to negative perceptions of the teaching profession, added responsibilities and duties, and the increase of challenging behaviors that interrupted instructional goals.
Secondary Research Question 4C: What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in professional dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity?

*Interviews.*

The female participants described how the administrator’s role affected their professional dissatisfaction, particularly lack of support. The male participants did not report dissatisfaction with their administrators.

Olivia’s perception of the French program was that her subject was deemed less important than core subjects. She felt administrators did not place great importance in keeping language programs within the curriculum by cutting them when the numbers were fewer in any given year. In her opinion, administrators needed to support the world language program and understand how these programs are vital to students’ cultural learning experiences.

Tracy described the administrator’s role as one of evaluator and assessor of her work. During her teaching career, she stated communication with her principal was either limited or ineffective. In addition, she conveyed lack of administrative support in some of her teaching assignments.

Similarly, Trisha recounted several instances during her teaching career where the administrator did not address discipline problems but rather suggested the teachers change their patterns of behavior to accommodate the students. In her last position as a teacher, her principal assigned a teacher helper to assist at the beginning of class for the first 30 minutes of the morning. She stated the students were typically not misbehaving during that time, expressing she did not find this strategy helpful or supportive. In previous teaching assignments, she also recalled instances where one student exhibited extreme misbehavior and stated there was no support from administration.
In one first grade class, as a support staff, I observed a student who would get up and walk on top of the desks while the teacher was trying to teach. He would take the kids glasses off their face while they were trying to learn. The administration’s response was to ignore it because he was just looking for attention. On another day the same teacher was wearing a scarf; the same student tried to choke her with it. The administration’s response was for the teacher to discontinue wearing scarfs.

Frank and Sam reported no professional dissatisfaction associated with the role of the administrator. Both men described positive relationships with their principals and commented on the strengths of the administrator. Frank stated the principal was able to communicate effectively with the staff. While, Sam did not build a positive relationship with the first administrator, he stated he did have a “big brother” relationship with his last administrator. Their dissatisfaction during their teaching professions resulted from other aspects of the career.

Summary of administrator’s role in contributing to professional dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity.

The female participants recounted instances of unimportance for the subject, lack of communication and lack of support from administration as contributing to their professional dissatisfaction. While the male participants reported positive relationships with their administrators and stated their dissatisfaction of the profession stemmed from other aspects of teaching.
Secondary Research Question 4D: What do participants describe as the reasons for leaving the profession?

*Interviews.*

The female participants commented that lack of support in some form contributed to their departures. In Olivia’s case, she felt administration did not place importance on her subject. She also commented that to sustain a livable wage and a viable retirement account, she needed to be employed full-time. Tracy described her reasons for leaving the profession as, “Burnout, pay, support, respect, all those high pieces that we see over and over again in the teaching profession.” “And also lack of control over your craft.” Trisha’s reasons for leaving stemmed from the overwhelming behavioral problems in her classroom, limited time for planning and lack of administrative support. She did admit that after Act 10, she was part of a group that was caught in the middle, where it was too early to retire and yet she still wanted to carry out her duties as a teacher. Ultimately, she left because she no longer felt the joy in teaching.

The male participants noted financial concerns led to their departure. Frank’s desire to provide a comfortable living for his family was the primary reason for seeking another employment opportunity. He stated earlier in his career decision-making process, he was not aware of the educational costs related to obtaining a teaching degree or the salary range related to a teaching career. His considerations for future financial stability led him to change career paths; however, when asked how much of an increase in salary he needed to remain in teaching he stated, “couple more thousand dollars to offset the negative aspects and added responsibilities.” He added that the stress of not being able to reach all his students and the pressure he put on himself to be an almost “perfect teacher” also contributed to his burnout and departure from the profession. He described his experience as; “I put too much pressure on myself to be the best teacher I could be.” Eventually, not being able to reach every student or see improvement in
every student weighed on his conscience. “I took it to heart when a kid didn’t succeed as much as I hoped.” He contemplated leaving approximately 1½ years before actually ending his teaching assignment. Frank felt called “to do something else”, and he stated considerable thought went into his decision to leave the teaching profession.

Along with monetary concerns, Sam wanted an opportunity to use his technological skills in a productive and satisfying career. He described his current position as, “I was able to use my skills in social media technology, networking, and everything in my roundhouse to go for a job that would fit my skillset.” Other benefits he considered important were the flexibility of requesting days off, managing work hours, and the ability to take breaks when needed. He recounted days when he had little to no time for breaks from lunchtime until the end of the school day. He likened the experience to being in a jail cell with 30 rambunctious 12-year-olds. He also described student behavior as challenging and how stressful the days in his classroom were in his final teaching days. When asked if he would have continued teaching for more money, he commented a substantial increase of $10,000 more a year would not have enticed him to stay. He also communicated that he had enjoyed teaching and was open to the idea of teaching in higher education, “I do have a master’s degree and I’d be qualified to teach college level courses.”

Teaching was the participants’ first career choice and they all wanted to succeed in the profession. However, all participants were explicit that their decision to leave the profession was made in the best interest of their respective lives.

**Summary of reasons participants left the profession.**

The participants gave varied reasons for leaving the profession such as feeling their subject was unimportant, the lack of respect, the lack of control over the classroom, burnout and
stress, feelings of inadequacy and ineffectiveness as a teacher, and monetary concerns. Three of the participants noted their decision to leave the profession was a culmination of years of contemplation.

Table 4 provides a summary of professional dissatisfaction related to teacher longevity.

Table 4

*Professional Dissatisfaction as a Teacher*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of professional</td>
<td>Subject perceived as unimportant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Lack of control and lack of power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feelings of ineffectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Added responsibilities/duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burnout/stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Challenges (intrinsic or extrinsic)</td>
<td>Keeping full-time employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative public perceptions of the teaching profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenging behaviors &amp; classroom size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Varying student academic levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complying with data-driven initiatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrator’s role in contributing to</td>
<td>Inability to place importance on certain subjects/programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Limited role, primarily as evaluator and assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ineffective communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inadequate support for classroom assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of support related to student discipline problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for leaving the profession</td>
<td>Inconsistency in finding full-time employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenges of teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concern for physical and mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Added duties and responsibilities without extra pay or extra time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenging student behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of support from administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insufficient salary scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Summary Notes of Professional Dissatisfaction.*

As the participants discussed their reasons for leaving the profession it was noticeable during the interviews and they indicated that leaving was not an easy decision. All participants expressed care about the well-being and learning outcomes of their students. For Frank, the
impact he made on his students made his decision more difficult, “I’ve got cool stories of kids that came back a year later or during that year and said they have never had a year like that.” The participants’ self-efficacy in teaching had changed during their teaching careers from feelings of “making a difference” to feelings of “ineffectiveness as a teacher.” Each participant stated their decision to leave the profession was preceded by a long contemplation of personal and professional advantages and consequences. For most of the participants, the decision to depart from the teaching profession was not a quick decision, but instead took years to become a final outcome.

As a follow-up question, the participants were asked what would have made them stay in the profession. Olivia’s main concern was to retain have full-time employment. When she was informed at the end of the year that her position would be cut to a part-time position; she decided to leave her teaching assignment to look for full-time employment. She expressed concern about seeking employment outside of teaching since her professional career consisted only of teaching. Tracy was overwhelmed with the challenges of meeting teacher expectations and student behaviors. She did not state if she would have stayed had those components been addressed. Trisha was also overwhelmed with the amount of lesson planning and classroom management. If she had been provided with time to complete her teacher duties and provided support for disruptive students, she would have been able to complete the year. Frank commented he might have remained for a few more thousand dollars to compensate for the extra responsibilities and stress associated with his teaching position. However, Sam, who also mentioned salary as a reason for leaving, would not have remained for an increase in salary. He stated he would consider a position at the collegiate level if he returned to education.
Other Non-Structured Interviews/Conversations

During the recruitment process, the researcher had conversations with current teachers who shared their contemplations about leaving their teaching positions. These four teachers shared their reasons for considering departure from the profession. These conversations confirmed what the participants in the study gave as reasons for leaving the profession. Through these conversations, five major areas of concern were identified: 1) insufficient salary; 2) lack of administrative support; 3) lack of parental support; 4) student discipline issues; and 5) extra duties and responsibilities. All four teachers were beyond the initial educator years, they reported their teaching experience as follows: 7, 12, 19, 28. In addition, two principals described their school’s procedures on the induction process for both beginning teachers and teachers new to the district with teaching experience. The non-structured interviews with principals described the induction processes in their respective schools. The principals also described their support structure for teachers. Through these conversations, the researcher determined that the level of expectation for experienced teachers is greater than those for beginning teachers.

For the purpose of ethical consideration, all current teachers and principals were asked to sign a consent form. The consent form gave the researcher permission to use their shared information as part of the study. The researcher made notes about the conversations for accurate recounting of their stories and to add validity to the study.

Conversations with current teachers.

Current teacher 1, a 6th grade teacher with 7 years of experience, contemplated leaving due to financial concerns. He explained that pay for teachers was not sufficient for the amount of work that is required. This teacher generated income in excess of his teaching salary in only one summer through another employment opportunity. According to this teacher, “the thought of
being able to make a better living doing something else is too difficult to ignore.” His other concern was the newly appointed task of writing curriculum, as he did not feel he had sufficient training and expertise to accomplish this task, as well as time to write the curriculum in addition to his other regular duties as a teacher.

Current teacher 2, a middle-school teacher with 12 years of experience, communicated her intent to leave was based on stressful situations. She described the career challenges that made it difficult to stay in the profession as lack of support, student behavioral issues, and overwhelming workload. She described an incident in which one child bullied another child, where consequences were not enforced. The teacher stated that the injured child, as this child sustained a physical injury, showed visible anxiety and fearfulness with the other student in the classroom. She felt the burden of protecting this child was now her responsibility. She stated her belief that more behavior modification was placed on teachers rather than on parents. She commented that these incidents stemmed from a lack of support from building and school district administration regarding the teaching environment. She mentioned that monetary concerns did not make it necessary for her to remain in her position. She also communicated that her love for teaching students and her collegiality with the other 6th grade teachers, kept her from leaving at the current time. At the time of our conversation, the researcher visibly noticed her anguish as she recounted her stories and stated her concerns.

Current teacher 3, an elementary teacher with 19 years of experience, contacted the researcher about her current situation. She emailed the researcher after seeing the notice about study participants needed in a teacher union newsletter. This teacher described her struggle to stay in the teaching profession. The teacher stated she was uncertain if she would remain in her teaching assignment for the rest of the year. Her frustrations centered on the fact that
administration expected more from her each year with little explanation or respect for her current duties. Her greatest concern was teaching to “targets.” She stated, “Why do I have to teach to a target? Why can’t I just teach kids?” Her position is that educator accountability forces teachers to present their lessons in a structured nonflexible approach. Her position was that without creative flexibility teaching is no longer about the needs of the children, instead about reaching targets. Her personal statement to all stakeholders in education was, “We need administrators and parents to understand that we are not perfect, but we are trying. We need them to listen.”

Current teacher 4, a middle-school teacher with 28 years of experience, described how Act 10 changed the educational environment in Wisconsin. She was waiting on her retirement eligibility to exit the profession. She disclosed that Act 10 was a cause of concern for her retirement contributions, as she saw a decrease in her benefits and salary after the legislative act was enacted. She commented that she strongly discouraged her son from becoming a teacher because she viewed it as negligent parenting. Her view centered on the perception that the teaching profession is on a downward spiral and that the salary is not sufficient to compensate for the negative aspects of the profession.

Principal discussions.

Principal 1 stated that both beginning teachers and teachers new to a district with experience participated in the same induction process. The induction process in his school building includes technical training, curriculum components, basic school structures, and routine day-to-day processes. Every new teacher is allotted a half day meeting with the principal, during the first few days to communicate any concerns or ask questions. Afterwards, meetings continue throughout the school year. The new teachers participate in a district induction process for three days prior to start of the school year. During this induction process, new teachers are assigned a
mentor for the remainder of the school year. There is an expectation that experienced teachers should have some knowledge of the way school systems function. His philosophy from an administrative standpoint is that teachers should feel supported and be able to communicate with their administrator. This school principal attributed the school’s positive culture as a key contributor for limited teacher turnover rate in this particular intermediate school that served 5-6 grade levels. This school did not participate in Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) strategies; the students were given social expectations and worked to meet those goals. Through researcher observations during substitute teaching assignments, the school environment reflected that students had limited behavioral issues and that the principal was highly visible throughout the school.

Principal 2 described the induction process for his school included the following: technology training, curriculum training, district policy and procedures training, and assignment of mentors to new teachers. The induction process was similar for both beginning teachers and experienced teachers new to the district. Principal 2 disclosed that four teachers had left their teaching assignments at this particular middle school serving seventh and eighth grade students after the 2018-2019 school year. He stated that the teachers each presented different personal reasons for leaving their positions. He also agreed that administrative support was important for teacher success; however, did not comment on student behavior or structures of discipline for this middle school. In contrast with Principal 1, the researcher’s observations indicated this principal was not highly visible during the researcher’s substitute teaching assignments.

Summary of Results

This qualitative study examined the lived experiences of teachers with five or more years of experiences who left the teaching profession. These participants provided in-depth
descriptions of their induction processes and how these impacted their professional careers. As part of the investigation, the participants described professional satisfaction related to reasons they remained in the profession. The participants also described professional dissatisfaction within their teaching careers that contributed to their departure from the profession. By examining their accounts, the researcher developed reoccurring themes among the participants related to their teaching experiences and subsequent departures.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the study, a discussion of major findings, limitations, recommendations for practitioners and policymakers, and suggestions for future research. This qualitative phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of teachers with five or more years of experience who exited the teaching profession before retirement eligibility. The participants provided in-depth descriptions of their induction process, both as beginning and veteran teachers. They also described factors influencing professional satisfaction and professional dissatisfaction during their teaching careers. By examining their accounts, the researcher developed reoccurring themes based on the participants’ interviews related to their professional experiences and departure from the profession. During the analysis stage, all data were stored in the qualitative software program NVivo 12 Plus, coded, and analyzed. From the analysis, emergent themes among the interviews were identified and presented.

Primary and secondary research questions guided the study. The primary overarching research question was as follows: How do teachers who left the profession describe their professional profiles, induction processes as veteran teachers, and reasons for subsequently leaving the teaching profession? Secondary research questions were developed to further guide the study’s investigation and included participants’ profiles (gender, age, race/ethnicity, years of experience in teaching profession, subject/discipline, education/degrees held), details about their
teacher induction processes, and descriptions about their professional satisfaction and dissatisfaction during their teaching careers.

Summary

The study’s purpose was to examine the induction process and professional experiences to determine if commonalities existed that led to veteran teacher attrition. The participants of the study were veteran teachers who left the teaching profession before retirement. At the time of the study, three of the participants were working in other fields not related to teaching, one was looking for full-time employment and the other was staying home to care for her children.

The theoretical framework employed was based on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation theory to explain the study and draw inferences about the participants’ job satisfaction (Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000). The authors suggested intrinsic motivation is caused by the satisfaction derived from people’s behavior. In addition, these satisfactions are related to positive feelings of effectiveness (Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000). The theory was also used to examine common motivating factors related to the perceptions of job satisfaction during the participants’ careers.

The participants indicated their prime motivation to remain in the profession during their teaching careers was related to the intrinsic value of teaching students and helping them succeed academically. The participants’ noted the following extrinsic motivational factors during their careers: salary and benefits, a work schedule conducive to family life, and leadership opportunities.

The literature review consisted of empirical research conducted regarding teacher turnover and teacher attrition. As part of the discourse on national teacher shortages, this study identified veteran teacher attrition in the state of Wisconsin as a subgroup of the total teacher shortage. To further explain Wisconsin teacher shortages, studies found consistent evidence of
teacher attrition in the state was a direct result of the Wisconsin Act 10 (Goff et al., 2018; Madland & Rowell, 2017). Included in the literature were research studies regarding the teacher induction process as a retention strategy. To establish confirmability of past research, the participants described their induction processes as inefficient and recommended more support and differentiated induction processes, these were consistent with suggestions from previous studies (Ingersoll, 2012). In addition, studies indicated the role of the principal when effective leadership abilities were found, was a strong predictor for teacher retention (Boyd et al., 2011; Broquard, 2010; Brown & Wynn, 2009; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Peronto, 2013). Conversely, the female participants stated one reason for their departure was the lack of or limited administrative support.

This study employed a phenomenological research approach to examine in-depth accounts of veteran teachers’ experiences related to teacher attrition. Through data analysis of their interviews, emergent themes were found among the participants’ shared perspectives and experiences. These commonalities helped explain the reasons the teachers left the profession. Furthermore, the current teachers’ contemplations about leaving the profession were consistent with the former teachers’ reasons for leaving. By examining both sets of interviews and conversations, general recommendations were derived.

The study’s findings were guided by the primary and secondary research questions and were structured within four sections for presentation of the findings. The findings included participant demographics and participant professional profiles, descriptions of teacher induction processes, and narratives of professional satisfaction and professional dissatisfaction as related to teacher longevity. The analysis of the data was guided by the theoretical and conceptual frameworks described in chapter one. The findings were consistent with previous literature.
regarding teacher attrition, the induction process, and the role of the principal. Through comparisons of former and current teachers’ statements, similar reasons for leaving or contemplation of leaving the profession were found.

Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes for Secondary Research Question 1: Participant Demographics and Professional Profiles

The participant demographics and professional profiles described the participants’ characteristics during their teaching careers. The demographic components included gender, age, and race/ethnicity. Their professional profiles included years of teaching experience, the subject/discipline taught, and education/degrees held by each participant.

The emergent themes of the participant demographics showed that the sample consisted of 60% female and 40% male population. The participants’ ages ranged from 28 to 49 years, and all participants classified themselves as White or Caucasian. The participants’ professional profiles indicated that the years of experience ranged from 5 to 21 years, and subject/disciplines taught included world languages, health education, and elementary education within K-12 environments. In addition, the participants’ education levels consisted of four (80%) who held master’s degrees while one (20%) held a bachelor’s degree. In general, the participants were under 50, White, with an average of 13½ years of teaching experience. The majority of the participants were female and held masters’ degrees.

Table 5 provides a summary of the emergent themes for the participants’ demographic information and professional profiles during their teaching careers.
Table 5

Summary of Emergent Themes Related to Demographics and Professional Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic/Professional Profile</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Three were female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two were male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Average age of 38 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>All participants identified as White/Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td>An average of 13½ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject/Discipline</td>
<td>Public school districts K-12 education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/ Degrees</td>
<td>Four held master’s degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One held a bachelor’s degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes for Secondary Research Question 2: Veteran Teacher Perceptions of the Induction Process

The three areas of examination included in the study were the teacher induction process, professional satisfaction and professional dissatisfaction as related to teacher longevity.

How do the participants describe their teacher induction process as an experienced teacher?

The participants were asked four questions related to the secondary question about the teacher induction process.

A. What do participants describe as their induction process?

B. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in the induction process?
C. What do participants describe as the relevance of the context and content of the induction process?

D. What recommendations do participants offer for improving the induction process for new or experienced veteran teachers?

The emergent themes related to the induction process were new teacher orientation, mentorship, relevance of content and context, the administrator’s role, and recommendations for improvement. Four participants described the induction processes during their careers included both beginning teachers and veteran teachers. One teacher stated she did not participate in an induction process as a veteran teacher. All participants recommended that the induction process be differentiated based on a teacher’s need and experience. Four participants agreed that mentorships were important to the support system of teachers. One participant stated she was not assigned a mentor, but instead a “buddy teacher” who provided support with daily routines. All participants recommended a structured mentorship program with clear goals and effective support strategies. The five participants indicated that the content and context of their induction processes were to establish introductory activities and processes, day-to-day routines, and mentorships for support. One participant suggested an outline of daily activities and routines as a source of reference throughout the year. Two participants suggested more observational opportunities of other teachers as a beneficial component in lesson planning. Three participants reported limited to no interaction with their principals during the induction process. All participants agreed that strong administrative support and effective communication with administration were critical to the success of the induction process.

Table 6 provides a summary of the emergent themes from participants’ teacher induction experiences during their teaching career.
Table 6

*Summary of Emergent Themes Related to the Teacher Induction Process*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New teacher orientation</td>
<td>Induction process same for both beginning and experienced teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship</td>
<td>Mentors with varying degrees of interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance of content and context</td>
<td>Introduction to school building and staff school district philosophies and policies, daily activities and routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator’s role</td>
<td>Limited to no involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective and positive interactions (males only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for improvement</td>
<td>Differentiated induction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structured mentorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outlined activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes for Secondary Research Question 3: Professional Satisfaction as a Teacher**

A. What do participants describe as their perceptions of professional satisfaction as it relates to teaching longevity?

B. What do participants describe as their perceptions of career rewards (intrinsic or extrinsic) as they relate to teaching longevity?
C. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in contributing to professional satisfaction as related to teacher longevity?

D. What do participants perceive as the primary motivating factor that caused them to remain in the teaching profession?

Emergent themes related to professional satisfaction included teacher perceptions, career rewards, administrator’s role, and reasons for remaining in the profession. The participants indicated that their professional satisfaction was related to the connections with their students and contributions to their educational success. The participants described their career rewards in terms of intrinsic rewards, which included the impact on students’ success, leadership opportunities and pride in their work. Extrinsic rewards included a schedule conducive to family life and salary and benefits. Some of the participants commented the administrator contributed to their professional satisfaction by establishing a positive school culture, providing leadership opportunities, providing support, and providing positive and constructive feedback. The participants’ reasons for remaining in the profession included fear of changing careers, desire to contribute to the education field, the amount of education acquired and years of experience within the profession, and connections with their students and colleagues.

Table 7 provides a summary of the emergent themes from participants’ perceptions related to professional satisfaction as a teacher as related to teaching longevity.
Table 7

*Summary of Emergent Themes Related to the Professional Satisfaction as a Teacher*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of professional satisfaction</td>
<td>Love of subject taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educating, facilitating, and guiding students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connection with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contributing to student success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Rewards (intrinsic or extrinsic)</td>
<td>Salary and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schedule that supported family life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact on students’ success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership and training opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pride in their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator’s role in contributing to professional</td>
<td>Set the tone or climate for the whole school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satisfaction</td>
<td>Opportunities for leadership activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supportive during teaching careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provided positive and constructive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for remaining in the profession</td>
<td>Fear of changing careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to contribute to the education field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education and years of experience within the profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong collegial connection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes for Secondary Research Question 4: Professional Dissatisfaction as a Teacher

A. What do participants describe as their perceptions of professional dissatisfaction as it relates to teaching longevity?

B. What do participants describe as their career challenges (intrinsic or extrinsic) related to teaching longevity?

C. What do participants describe as the administrator’s role in contributing to professional dissatisfaction as related to teacher longevity?

D. What do participants describe as reasons for leaving the teaching profession?

Emergent themes in the participants’ perceptions of professional dissatisfaction included unimportance placed on their subject; lack of control and lack of power in their classrooms; lack of respect from administrators; parents, students and the public; feelings of inadequacy and ineffectiveness in their craft; added responsibilities and duties; and burnout and stress associated with teaching. The participants reported the following career challenges; keeping or finding full-time employment; encountering negative public perceptions of the teaching profession; managing challenging behaviors; teaching varying student academic levels, managing an overwhelming classroom size; and complying with data-driven initiatives which required personal time to complete. The administrator’s role in contributing to their professional dissatisfaction was related to the perceived inability to place importance on certain subjects, the limited role as evaluator and assessor only, ineffective communication, and inadequate support in classroom assistance and student discipline matters. The participants provided the following reasons for leaving the profession as: inconsistency in finding full-time employment, the challenges of teaching, concern for physical and mental health, lack of administrative support,
added responsibilities and duties without extra pay or time, the amount of challenging student behaviors within one classroom, and unsatisfactory or insufficient salary.

The participants indicated they could have remained in the profession based on the following conditions: provided full-time employment, adequate administrative support related to challenging student behavior, a decrease in responsibilities or more time to complete extra duties, and an increase in salary. However, three of the participants found job satisfaction with their current employment. One participant would only consider returning to an educational career at the collegiate level and one participant in an administrative capacity.

The research questions aimed to identify and explain the reasons the participants (veteran teachers) exited the profession before retirement. During the researcher’s last teaching assignment, she resigned from the teaching position as a Spanish teacher for reasons related to a limited induction process, health concerns, lack of administrative support, challenging behaviors, and inconsistency in teaching and learning objectives. The researcher, with extra support related to extreme student behaviors, and additional training or coaching on teaching targets in a middle school environment, would have reconsidered the decision to leave the position.

Table 8 provides a summary of the emergent themes from the participants’ voices of professional dissatisfaction as related to teaching longevity.
Table 8

*Summary of Emergent Themes Related to the Professional Dissatisfaction as a Teacher*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of professional dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Subject is perceived as unimportant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of control and lack of power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feelings of ineffectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Added responsibilities/duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burnout/stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Challenges (intrinsic or extrinsic)</td>
<td>Keeping full-time employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative public perceptions of the teaching profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenging behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Varying student academic levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complying with data driven initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator’s role in contributing to professional dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Inability to place importance on certain subjects/programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited role, primarily as evaluator and assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ineffective communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inadequate or lack of support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
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<td>Reasons for leaving the profession</td>
<td>Inconsistency in finding full-time employment</td>
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<td>Challenges of teaching</td>
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<td>Concern for physical and mental health</td>
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<td>Added duties and responsibilities without extra pay</td>
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<td>Challenging student behavior</td>
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<td>Lack of or inadequate administrative support</td>
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<td>Insufficient salary scale</td>
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**Discussion**

The study presented narratives from the interviews of veteran teachers who exited the profession before retirement to add to the discourse on teacher attrition in relation to this group of teachers. Through the interview process, the participants shared their views and experiences related to both their beginning teacher and teacher new to a district induction processes. An emergent theme of the study was the need for differentiation in the induction process for all teachers, particularly with distinction between beginning teachers and veteran teachers. The participants commented on the need for administrators to acknowledge their years of experience when conducting this process. Their views were substantiated with prior research that indicated more comprehensive and differentiated induction programs led to better retention rates (Ingersoll, 2012). Moreover, the mentorship part of the process was beneficial for all participants.
as it provided a support structure. Previous research identified strong support from mentors and administration as one component of a successful induction process (Bland et al., 2014).

According to the AEE (2014), “the very culture of how teachers are supported must change” (p. 1).

The participants described their professional satisfaction with the teaching career in terms of intrinsic rewards and motivations related to connections with students and colleagues. Although two participants noted leadership opportunities as a contributor to career satisfaction, both participants felt adequate and allotted time in addition to supplementary monetary compensation were needed to make their teaching endeavor worthwhile. These findings are somewhat consistent with the literature in that similar recommended strategies for leadership roles were suggested by The New Teacher Project (2012) for teacher retention.

The female participants described the role of the administrator as limited and did not contribute to their career satisfaction. The literature review revealed teacher retention was directly affected by the role of the administrator in managing and creating positive school environments (Fuller et al., 2017; Grissom & Bartanen, 2018). However, the male participants indicated positive and supportive relationships with their principals, yet that did not influence their decision to remain in the profession.

The participants’ reasons for remaining in the profession were more closely related to positive relationships and connections with the students and colleagues. In the conversations with current teachers, they described collegial connection and support as one of the primary reasons for remaining in the profession. In a study conducted in Eastern states, participants described collegial support as influencing their decisions to remain in the profession longer than if they had not received the support (Luther & Richman, 2009). Similarly, Dorcé’s (2014) study
identified intrinsic motivating factors for the longevity of veteran teachers were related to the “joy” of teaching and influencing students. Abdallah (2009) suggested good collegiality decreases the likelihood of teacher attrition by providing teachers a working environment where “they feel safe, respected and valued as part of a team” (p. 4).

Conversely, the participants’ described their professional dissatisfaction stemmed from the challenges of teaching overcrowded classrooms, managing challenging behaviors and meeting the objectives with varying student academic levels. The role of the administrator contributed to the participants’ dissatisfaction in terms of lack of support in addressing challenging behaviors and guidance on implementing instructional goals and objectives. The participants’ reasons for leaving the profession were primarily due to overwhelming responsibilities coupled with an increase in classroom management activities versus actual teaching and learning activities. These findings were consistent with other studies examining teacher turnover (Buchanan, 2012; Carroll, 2007; TNTP, 2012). Current teachers also noted student behavioral issues and added responsibilities and duties as main considerations for leaving their teaching professions. In addition, the financial aspect of the teaching profession influenced the male participants to search for other employment opportunities with better salaries and benefits. The current male teacher indicated the opportunity to generate more income in another profession was a considering factor in his contemplation for leaving the profession.

Through the study’s goal of assessing the reasons veteran teachers exit the profession, connections were made between former and current teacher perceptions of their teaching experiences as related to career satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the study revealed that many teachers contemplate the decision to leave the profession, at times, years before they actually depart. This suggests a possibility exists to retain veteran teachers before they make a
final decision on exiting their teaching positions. The dilemma of keeping these teachers arises from their trepidation of disclosing the dissatisfaction and challenges of their careers to administrators. Finally, the participants indicated that sharing their experiences and giving their stories “a voice” was a primary reason for agreeing to participate in the study. Through continued discourse about what leads to veteran teacher attrition, more solutions and recommendations for improving the teaching profession can be formulated.

In general, this study places emphasis on the importance of recognizing the needs of veteran teachers related to the induction process, added responsibilities, challenges related to student characteristics, administrative support, and financial concerns.

**Limitations**

Due to the nature of the research questions, the participants’ overall recollection of events and opinions were expressed as the representative data. As a result, the data analysis may be influenced by what the participants were able to remember. Further, the study was conducted during a 6-month time frame. Recruitment of participants related to work and life schedules impeded the researcher’s ability to conduct more interviews during this time frame. Lastly, the study’s sample size was selected from a small localized population which may not be generalizable to the general population.

**General Recommendations for Practitioners and Policymakers**

The teaching profession continues to be characterized as an occupation with a seemingly high attrition rate, which includes veteran teacher attrition. This study determined that veteran teacher attrition before retirement can pose a concern for administrators, as some school districts struggle to find replacement teachers. Through conversations with current teachers who are
contemplating leaving the profession, the problem of veteran teacher attrition is still a concern but could be prevented. As possible solutions, administrators should reevaluate their induction processes for veteran teachers new to their districts to better acclimate these teachers by focusing on their specific needs. These findings are consistent with other research that show reasons veteran teachers exit the profession; however, this study provided information and presented new discoveries that added to the knowledge on veteran teacher attrition. The following are general recommendations for improving the induction process for veteran teachers new to a district, while evaluating and designing school processes to meet the needs of this group of teachers.

1. Evaluate the teacher induction process for veteran teachers new to a district. Design induction programs to meet veteran teachers’ specific needs instead of requiring these teachers to attend novice teacher activities. Provide more opportunities for new teachers to observe other teachers within their respective schools and/or subject areas, particularly at the beginning of the school year.

2. Evaluate mentorship programs to ensure adequate support for new teachers to a district. Develop and train mentors by giving veteran teachers leadership opportunities. Provide mentors and mentees with sufficient time to co-plan and build positive relationships throughout the year.

3. Develop a school policy and procedure handbook with frequently asked questions on how to accomplish school-related tasks to limit the amount of training or retraining for new teachers to the school.

4. Develop training for administrators on strategies to improve communication with teachers, provide appropriate feedback, and create supportive environments for teachers to feel supported and to communicate their concerns.
Recommendations for Future Research

This study presented veteran teachers’ perceptions of induction processes, and their professional satisfaction and dissatisfaction as related to career longevity. The study, which was conducted in Northeast Wisconsin, examined reasons why these veteran teachers left the profession. To broaden the scope of this research on veteran teacher attrition, the following are recommendations for future research.

1. This study examined a small sample size in the state of Wisconsin. Future research could include other regions of the state to expand the study to a larger population of veteran teachers who have exited the teaching profession.

2. The research site was limited to the northeast region of Wisconsin. Although the demographics of the school districts in which these teachers taught included urban, suburban and rural areas, for future data analysis expansion could include other states for representation of a larger population.

3. Future research could focus on current teachers who are contemplating leaving the profession, including an examination of effective strategies that could prompt these teachers to remain in their teaching positions.
REFERENCES


https://doi.org/10.5929/2014.4.1.2


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https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170808900614


https://www.jstor.org/stable/20067265


https://www.jstor.org/stable/4150022


APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACCEPTANCE
NOTICE OF DETERMINATION FROM THE HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION PROGRAM

DATE: June 17, 2019
TO: Frankie Williams, PhD, Educational Leadership, Eric Moyen; Leigh McMullan; Stephanie King
Eric Moyen, PhD, Educational Leadership, Leigh McMullan, PhD, Educational Leadership,
Margie Westmoreland, Educational Leadership, Stephanie King, PhD, Educational Leadership

A Phenomenological Case Study: Professional Profiles, Induction Processes, and Reasons
Veteran Teachers Exit the Profession

PROTOCOL TITLE: IRB-19-255
PROTOCOL NUMBER:
Approval Date: June 17, 2019 Expiration Date: June 16, 2024

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

The review of your research study referenced above has been completed. The HRPP had made an Exemption Determination as defined by 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Based on this determination, and in accordance with Federal Regulations, your research does not require further oversight by the HRPP.

Employing best practices for Exempt studies is strongly encouraged such as adherence to the ethical principles articulated in the Belmont Report, found at www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report as well as the MSU HRPP Operations Manual, found at www.orc.msstate.edu/humanstudies. As part of best practices in research, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that personnel added after this Exemption Determination notice have completed IRB training prior to their involvement in the research study. Additionally, to protect the confidentiality of research participants, we encourage you to destroy private information which can be linked to the identities of individuals as soon as it is reasonable to do so.

Based on this determination, this study has been inactivated in our system. This means that recruitment, enrollment, data collection, and/or data analysis CAN continue, yet personnel and procedural amendments to this study are no longer required. If at any point, however, the risk to participants increases, you must contact the HRPP immediately. If you are unsure if your proposed change would increase the risk, please call the HRPP office and they can guide you.

If this research is for a thesis or dissertation, this notification is your official documentation that the HRPP has made this determination.

If you have any questions relating to the protection of human research participants, please contact the HRPP Office at irb@research.msstate.edu. We wish you success in carrying out your research project.

Review Type: EXEMPT
IRB Number: IORG0000467
APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER
Participation Invitation Letter

Dear Invitee,

My name is Margie Westmoreland. I am a doctoral student at Mississippi State University’s Educational Leadership Program. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting titled: A Phenomenological Study: Professional Profiles, Induction Processes, and Reasons Veteran Teachers Exit the Profession.

The intention is to assess what is driving experienced teachers from the teaching profession after five or more years into their careers. The data will add to the discourse on teacher attrition and give suggestions for further improvements and/or changes to policies that will help decrease the number of teachers who exit the profession.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study’s results will be completely anonymous; therefore, it will not reveal your name or any other identifying information.

If you would like to participate in the study, please read the Informed Consent letter provided and sign to acknowledge your participation in the study.

Your participation in the research will be of great importance to assist in social change in educational conditions and practices that lead to teacher attrition. Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Margie Westmoreland, Doctoral Student, Mississippi State University

mtucker676.mt@gmail.com

662.889.4272
APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPTION
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Study Title: A Phenomenological Study: Professional profiles, Induction processes, and reasons why experienced teachers leave the profession

Principal Investigator/Student Researcher: Margie Westmoreland

IRB Approved Study

I am a doctoral candidate at Mississippi State University, in the Leadership Department of the College of Education. I am planning to conduct a research study, which I invite you to take part in. This form has important information about the reason for doing this study, what we will ask you to do if you decide to be in this study, and the way we would like to use information about you if you choose to be in the study.

Why are you doing this study?

You are being asked to participate in a research study about teacher attrition in the state for teachers with more than five years of experience who have left the teaching profession. The purpose of the study is to investigate the reasons why teachers with many years of experience exit their teaching assignments. This examination will add to the discussion about what is happening in relation to teacher shortages in the state.

What will I do if I choose to be in this study?

You will be asked to:
- answer questions about your teaching experience
- describe your experiences in as much detail as you would like
- speak clearly so that the information can be audio-recorded

Study time: Study participation will take approximately one meeting with the researcher for approximately one hour. If more time is needed the participation time will be adjusted but only if you are willing to provide extra time.

Study location: All study procedures will take place at a public library conference room or other location that is in close proximity and convenient to you, to the participant. I would like to audio-record this interview to make sure that I remember accurately all the information you provide. I will keep these recordings in a locked fireproof safe. Only the
researcher will have access and they will only be used by the researcher for analysis for the study. If you prefer not to be audio-recorded, I will take notes instead.

I may quote your remarks in presentations or articles resulting from this work. A pseudonym will be used to protect your identity, unless you specifically request that you be identified by your true name.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts?**

To the best of my knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life. Your participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk to you beyond that of everyday life.

- If you feel emotional or upset when answering some of the questions, tell the interviewer at any time if you wish to take a break or stop the interview.
- If you are uncomfortable with some of the questions and topics we will ask about, you are free to not answer or to skip to the next question.

As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality of the information we collect from you could be breached – we will take steps to minimize this risk by limiting access of the data to only the researcher and coding the information with anonymous labels.

**What are the possible benefits for me or others?**

You are not likely to have any direct benefit from being in this research study. This study is designed to learn more about teacher attrition and teacher shortages in the state. The study results may be used to help other teachers and/or educational leaders and administrators in the future.

**How will you protect the information you collect about me, and how will that information be shared?**

Results of this study may be used in publications and presentations. Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. If results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used. To minimize the risks to confidentiality, I will store the information in a locked and safe location, access is limited to the researcher.

**Financial Information**

Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for participating in this study.

**What are my rights as a research participant?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer. If at any time and for any reason, you would prefer not to participate in this
study, please feel free not to. If at any time you would like to stop participating, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether. You may withdraw from this study at any time, and you will not be penalized in any way for deciding to stop participation. If you decide to withdraw from this study, the researchers will ask you if the information already collected from you can be used.

**Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns about this research study?**
If you have questions, you are free to ask them now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher at: Margie Westmoreland, 662.889.4272 or mtucker676.mt@gmail.com

**Consent**
I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form.

______________________________________________________
Participant’s Name (printed)

______________________________________________________
Participant’s Signature                             Date
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH STUDY

Introductory Interview Information

People in attendance:  Researcher Name: ____________________________________

Participant Name: ____________________________________

Date/Time: ____________________________________

Place: ____________________________________

Notes about surroundings:

Researcher Introduction

1. Researcher will state the nature of the study, state qualifications, and thank the participant for agreeing to meet.

2. Researcher will give participant consent document to review and sign.

3. Researcher will setup instruments (computer, audio-recorder, files) for interview, while the interviewee reviews document. Notes will also be hand-written while conducting the interview.

4. Researcher will begin interview with non-study related conversation (weather, children, weekend activities, hobbies) as an icebreaker.

Interviewee Instructions

1. Interviewee will read the consent document, which explains the purpose of the study and ask questions for clarification.

2. Interviewee will sign consent document before beginning the interview.
3. Interviewee will be reminded that he or she can stop the interview at any time.

**Interview Questions**

**Participant Profile**

1. What is your gender, race/ethnicity?
2. How many years of teaching experience do you have in the teaching profession, what
degree level, subject/discipline did you teach?
3. How would you describe your career path?

**Teacher Induction Process**

1. How do you, the participant, describe your teacher induction processes as an
   experienced teacher?
   a. What did your induction processes include?
   b. What or how would you describe the as the administrator’s role in the
      induction process?
   c. What would you describe as the relevance of the context and content of the
      induction process?
   d. What recommendations would you offer for improving the induction process
      for experienced teachers?

**Professional Satisfaction as Teacher**

1. What or how would you describe your perceptions of professional satisfaction related to
   teaching longevity?
2. What or how would you do describe as your career rewards (intrinsic or extrinsic) related
to teaching longevity?
3. What would you describe as the administrator’s role in contributing to your professional satisfaction as related to teaching longevity?

4. Why did you remain in the profession as long as you did?

**Professional Dissatisfaction as a Teacher**

1. What or how would you describe as your perceptions of professional dissatisfaction related to teaching longevity?

2. What or how you would describe as your career challenges (intrinsic and extrinsic) related to teaching longevity?

3. What do you describe as the administrator’s role in contributing to their professional dissatisfaction as related to teaching longevity?

4. What would you describe as the reasons for leaving the teaching profession?

5. What would have made you want to remain?