

# INCREASING BEGINNING TEACHER EFFICACY & RETENTION IN A DIVERSE MIDDLE SCHOOL SETTING WITH APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

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## ABSTRACT

Teacher retention, particularly among beginning educators, remains a pressing concern in education, especially in Title I middle schools that serve diverse student populations. High teacher attrition rates negatively impact student achievement, school culture, and overall educational equity. This study examines the role of targeted professional learning in increasing beginning teacher efficacy and retention in a rural North Carolina middle school. Through an exploratory sequential mixed methods approach, qualitative data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and instructional rounds, followed by quantitative analysis utilizing pre- and post-surveys to measure changes in teacher confidence and instructional effectiveness. The findings reveal that relevant, structured, and ongoing professional learning opportunities significantly enhance teacher efficacy by providing educators with the tools and strategies necessary to navigate the challenges of their early careers. Key themes that emerged from the study include the importance of classroom management training, content-specific instructional strategies, culturally responsive pedagogy, and mentorship programs. Teachers who received professional learning tailored to their individual needs reported increased confidence in their instructional delivery, greater job satisfaction, and a stronger sense of belonging within the school community. Additionally, opportunities for collaboration, reflection, and leadership

development played a pivotal role in sustaining teacher engagement and reducing burnout.

Despite its contributions, this study acknowledges certain limitations, including the relatively small sample size and its focus on a single school setting. However, the findings offer meaningful insights into the design and implementation of effective professional learning programs that can support beginning teachers in similar educational contexts. Future research should explore the long-term impact of professional learning on teacher retention rates across multiple school districts and investigate its direct correlation to student achievement. By prioritizing intentional, sustained, and responsive professional development, school leaders can foster a culture of continuous learning, ultimately improving both teacher retention and student outcomes.



INCREASING BEGINNING TEACHER EFFICACY & RETENTION IN A DIVERSE  
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## **DEDICATION**

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my grandparents, Johnny Morris (in loving memory) and Zula Morris, whose faith and unwavering belief in the power of education laid the foundation for my journey. From them, I learned that I can do all things through God who strengthens me, and they instilled in me a deep respect for learning and perseverance. To my parents, Chester and Sheila Neal (in loving memory), thank you for your constant support, love, and for always pushing me to excel. You encouraged me to dream big, even when the dreams seemed impossible, and reminded me that with hard work, anything is within reach. To my siblings, Shelby Neal and Chester Neal, Jr. (CJ in loving memory), your encouragement and belief in me have meant more than words can express. Your support has been a steady force throughout this journey. I also want to dedicate this work to my son, Keith Jaimison Neal, and my nephew, Jeremiah Jones. May this accomplishment serve as a reminder to you both that anything is possible. Let this be a symbol of what faith, dedication, and resilience can achieve. This dissertation is a testament to all of you; for your love, patience, encouragement, and belief in me, I am forever grateful.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Beginning teachers (BT) and Dual Language (DL) teachers are tasked with balancing effective teaching, classroom management, and cultural relevance. However, many struggle due to a lack of instructional skills and pedagogical preparation. Research indicates that a significant number of beginning teachers exit the profession within their first three years (Castro et al., 2018). For example, in North Carolina, the attrition rate for beginning teachers—those with fewer than three years of experience—is 12.7%, compared to 6.8% for experienced teachers (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2019). Additionally, beginning teachers account for 27% of all teacher separations in North Carolina public schools (NCDPI, 2022). In 2021-2022, 8.2% of teachers statewide left the profession. The teacher shortage has become a pressing issue, exacerbated by the fact that many new hires lack traditional teacher preparation programs (Sutcher et al., 2019). Beginning teachers face barriers such as inadequate Professional Learning (PL), limited community involvement, underdeveloped self-reflection skills, and insufficient understanding of district policies. While these barriers are well-documented, the root causes behind beginning teachers' lack of instructional skills require further investigation. Understanding how insufficient Professional Learning affects teacher retention could provide solutions to this growing issue. Enhancing beginning teachers' experiences not only supports their retention but also contributes to improved student outcomes (Allen & Butler, 1996; Gay, 2013). For beginning and alternatively licensed teachers, targeted Professional Learning, administrative support, and formative assessment early in their careers can strengthen instructional effectiveness.

## **Background of the Problem of Practice**

Teacher education programs often struggle to prepare aspiring teachers for the realities of modern classrooms. Kea et al. (2006) identified challenges such as integrating culturally responsive teaching practices, which are critical for teachers to meet the needs of diverse student populations. Some schools recognize the value of such training but face difficulties with implementation, funding, and assessment. Reflective practice is another key area for growth. Dewey (1933) emphasized the importance of reflection as an active and deliberate process of problem-solving based on real-world experiences. For beginning teachers, self-reflection must begin with identifying and challenging deficit-based assumptions about diverse students (Kea et al., 2006). By valuing “cultural capital” as an asset, teachers can foster equitable learning environments (Milner, 2006). Culturally responsive Professional Learning encourages beginning teachers to critically examine their reliance on Eurocentric values and teaching methods. Palmer (2010) asserts that teaching is deeply personal, requiring educators to reflect on whether their practices perpetuate systemic inequities. Self-reflection, as suggested by Milner (2006), can help teachers navigate complex topics such as race and cultural relevance in a private, introspective manner. Schön (1987) posits that reflection is an iterative process, requiring ongoing evaluation and adaptation of teaching practices. This approach is particularly relevant as beginning teachers encounter students who differ from them in race, culture, and socioeconomic background. Sheets (2003) highlights that these cultural disconnects often lead to challenges in public schools, emphasizing the need for culturally responsive teaching and reflection early in teachers’ careers.

## **Context of Inquiry**

North Carolina Middle School (NCMS) (a pseudonym) is a Title I school in rural eastern North Carolina. Title I funding supports schools serving low-income families to ensure students

meet state academic standards. NCMS serves approximately 425 students, with a demographic breakdown of 48% Black, 40% Hispanic, 7% White, and 5% multiracial (see Figure 1).

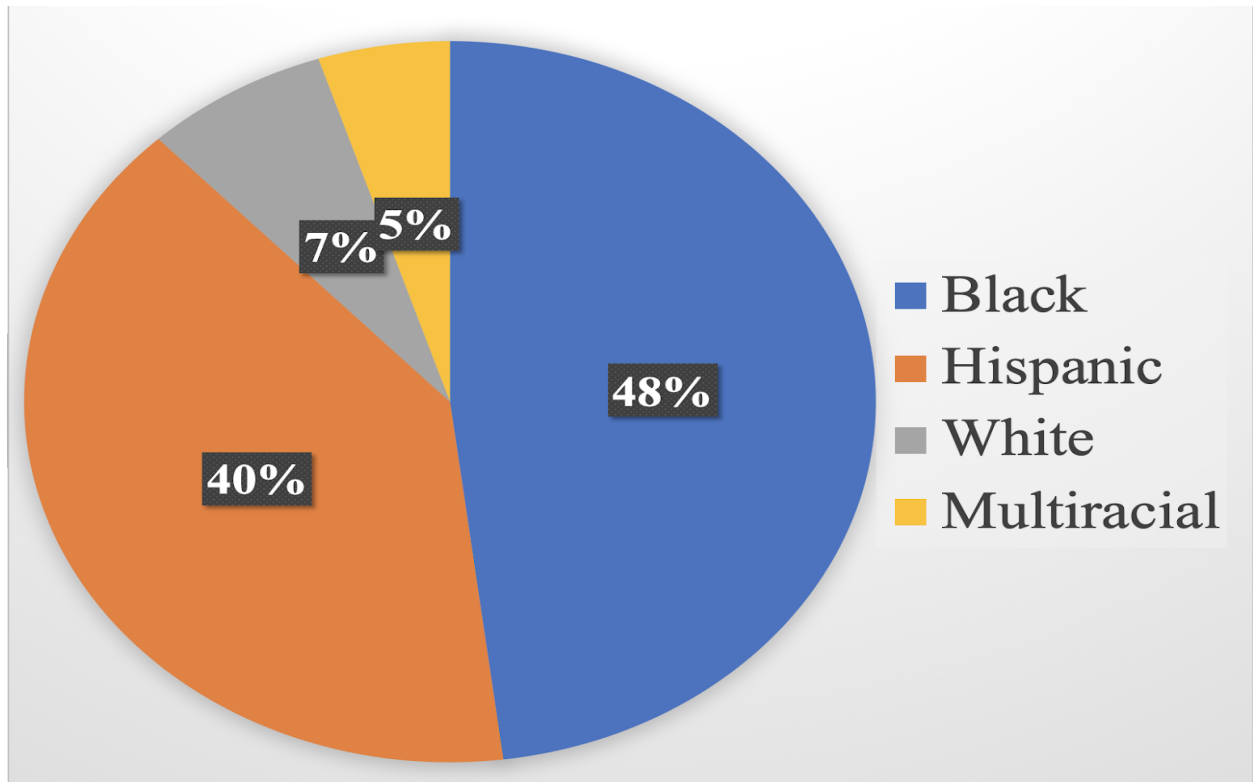
The school has a significant number of beginning teachers across all grades:

- 6th Grade: 50%
- 7th Grade: 50%
- 8th Grade: 67%
- ENCORE Subjects: 40%

ENCORE teachers specialize in areas such as art, STEM, physical education, and Spanish, rather than core academic subjects like math and science. These statistics underscore the importance of targeted Professional Learning initiatives for beginning teachers at NCMS.

### **Statement of the Problem of Practice**

Beginning teachers often lack the preparation to effectively balance teaching, classroom management, and cultural responsiveness. Many enter the profession through alternative licensure programs without formal teacher preparation (Crosnoe et al., 2004; Hamre & Pianta, 2006). This lack of preparation leaves them under-equipped to address the diverse needs of their students and the demands of the profession. Strengthening their instructional skills requires a multi-faceted approach, including tailored Professional Learning, administrative support, and ongoing assessment of teaching practices. While barriers and challenges for beginning teachers have been extensively documented, I contend that their root cause lies in insufficient instructional skills and inadequate Professional Learning opportunities. These factors are critical to understanding the persistent teacher shortage and the pressing need to enhance student achievement (Allen & Butler, 1996; Gay, 2013). By addressing this foundational issue, we can effectively mitigate the challenges faced by beginning teachers. Examining their experiences



*Figure 1.* NCMS demographics in 2023-24.

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becomes essential in light of the ongoing teacher shortage, emphasizing the urgency of recruiting and supporting educators. Furthermore, the connection between teacher preparation and student outcomes underscores the importance of equipping new teachers with the tools, knowledge, and resources needed to succeed. Providing early, targeted support through tailored Professional Learning, administrative backing, and ongoing assessments of instructional effectiveness can significantly strengthen these teachers' skills. As a practitioner, I aimed to improve my ability to support beginning teachers by designing personalized Professional Learning opportunities at the school level. Recognizing the limitations of a one-size-fits-all approach, I assessed their individual needs and encouraged reflective practices to improve instructional methods. This approach will better prepare them for success in their roles while fostering a sense of teacher efficacy and preparedness. At North Carolina Middle School (NCMS), where beginning teachers (BTs) are present at all grade levels, this inquiry had a direct impact. NCMS has BTs teaching core subjects such as social studies and science across grades 6–8, with some coming from alternative licensure pathways. By implementing tailored Professional Learning strategies, I hoped to cultivate greater efficacy among these teachers and prepare them for the complexities of middle school instruction. Ultimately, this approach was anticipated to contribute to reducing teacher attrition rates in the following year.

### **Inquiry Guiding Questions**

This inquiry seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does an individualized Professional Learning program impact beginning teachers' self-efficacy in a diverse Title I middle school setting?
2. To what extent does an individualized Professional Learning program impact the retention of beginning teachers in a diverse Title I middle school?

3. What effects does a personalized Professional Learning program have on the retention of beginning teachers?

### **Overview of Inquiry**

This study's focus was on three beginning teachers at NCMS with one to three years of experience. These participants did:

- Complete a Pre-Needs Professional Learning Survey, a Short Teacher Efficacy Survey, and a Long Teacher Efficacy Survey to assess their baseline skills and challenges.
- Engage in instructional rounds and walkthroughs conducted by the school's Instructional Coach and administrator.
- Participate in post-observation debriefs and coaching sessions to reflect on and implement feedback.

The effectiveness of the Professional Learning program was measured through post-assessment surveys, retention data, and formal conversations about its impact on participants' decision to remain in the profession.

### **Inquiry Partners**

Key inquiry partners included:

- The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
- Members of the Department of Excellence, Equity, and Leadership (DEEL)
- The District Secondary Director
- The Chief of School Support
- The NCMS Lead Mentor
- NCMS beginning teacher

These partners brought a wealth of expertise in areas such as teacher recruitment, retention, leadership development, and instructional support. Documentation of meetings will be collected using detailed notes and meeting logs.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This inquiry utilized the Spiral of Inquiry Framework for professional growth, as developed by Halbert and Kaser (2022). This model is designed as a continuous cycle of learning, with findings from each stage feeding into the next, thereby fostering improvement. Its key elements included, starting from student experiences, using evidence to guide decisions, encouraging reflection on teaching practices, and ensuring progress toward improved outcomes. The framework emphasized collaborative learning, reflective practice, and individualized Professional Growth Planning, making it highly adaptable to beginning teachers' needs. At NCMS, BTs, participated in current Professional Learning initiatives focused on effective teaching and learning strategies, developed personalized Professional Learning plans to support their growth, & engaged with veteran colleagues for collaborative planning, inquiry rounds, and focused observations. These activities were designed to build teacher efficacy, enhance instructional quality, and ultimately reduce attrition rates.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

The following terms will be used throughout this inquiry and are defined as follows:

*Alternative Licensure Teachers* - Teachers from a non-education background (NCDPI, 2022).

*Beginning Teachers (BTs)* - Teachers with one to three years of professional experience (NCDPI, 2022).

*Beginning Teacher Program* - A district program to assist BTs with ongoing Professional Learning (NCDPI, 2022).

*Dual Language Teachers* - Teachers from Hispanic-speaking countries coming to America to teach. For these students, they are Math and Spanish teachers (NCDPI, 2022).

*Efficacy* - The ability to produce a desired or intended result  
(<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/efficacy> (<https://www2.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>))

*No Child Left Behind Act* - The main law for K–12 general education in the United States from 2002–2015. The law held schools accountable for how kids learned and achieved. The law was controversial in part because it penalized schools that didn't show improvement (<https://www2.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>).

*North Carolina Educators Effectiveness* - Observation tool to evaluate teachers in NC teachers (NCDPI, 2022).

*Alternative Licensure* - Teachers who are not graduates of a Teacher Prep program (NCDPI, 2022).

*Instructional Rounds* - Instructional rounds are a disciplined way for educators to work together to improve instruction. The practice combines three common elements of improvement: classroom observation, an improvement strategy, and a network of educators (City et al., 2009).

*Residency Licensure* - Teachers from a non-education background who have not completed a traditional teacher preparation program (NCDPI, 2022).

*Veteran Teacher* - Teachers with more than 3 years of experience (NCDPI, 2022).

### **Assumptions**

For this study, I assumed the Professional Learning I conducted would align with the district expectations as well. For example, Professional Learning provided was in line with any

district training for BTs who are alternatively licensed. In addition, Instructional Rounds and Walkthroughs were also a part of the imperatives outlined in the district's aims. A final assumption was beginning teachers want the Professional Learning and recognize their need to improve. I also assumed teachers will implement the strategies with fidelity

### **Scope and Delimitations**

On a national level, challenges include decreased enrollment in teacher preparation programs and high turnover. Enrollment in teacher preparation programs at universities has decreased significantly. Since 2000, the number steadily decreased in bachelor's degrees in education each year, while the number of master's degrees has taken a considerable downfall since 2010 (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Along with low numbers of graduates with education degrees, teachers are leaving the profession at an increasing rate. Reasons provided include low salaries, poor working conditions, and the lack of feeling appreciated (Imazeki, 2005). With the teacher shortage prevalent nationwide, more and more schools have to hire teachers through an alternate route certification program or from international programs. Unfortunately, such teachers are leaving the profession faster than those who graduated from a college or university teacher preparation program (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). This study addressed alternative licensed teachers and retention, not veteran teachers, not traditional BTs.

### **Limitations**

Education in North Carolina has numerous challenges that have presented setbacks for teachers and students. One of the major problems is funding. Schools and their educators are being asked to do more with less. According to the 2021 North Carolina Teacher Working

Conditions Survey results, 33% of teachers stated they did not have the appropriate Professional Learning.

On top of that, teachers have also inherited many roles within the school compared to a few decades ago. Challenges are similar but unique simultaneously at the school and district levels. One challenge is the inconsistency with the administrator in schools. With the constant changing of the guard comes new expectations and systems. Changes in leadership can enhance or frustrate beginning teachers where change is the only constant. Turnover at the top allows for more opportunity for turnover to occur down the line. Another challenge is beginning teachers often come into the profession with a strong sense of wanting to enact change but need to learn how to handle things appropriately when adversity strikes.

In addition, district training in a massive rollout of a new instructional program would slow new teachers in being able to carry out what was taught in my Professional Learning with fidelity. Another limitation is that new teachers may have told me what I want to hear. This could impact data's validity and is therefore limiting.

### **Significance of Inquiry**

The shifting demographics of U.S. public schools, combined with the growing prevalence of beginning teachers, highlight the urgency of this study. Many new educators lack the pedagogical skills, classroom management strategies, and cultural awareness necessary to meet the needs of diverse student populations. This study aims to address these gaps by supporting beginning teachers through reflective, tailored Professional Learning. From my own experience as a beginning teacher, I understand the struggles of managing diverse classrooms while balancing instructional demands. As the principal of NCMS, I see the same challenges faced by my BTs today. This inquiry seeks to provide these teachers with strategies that not only enhance

their efficacy but also foster a deeper understanding of their students. Ultimately, supporting BTs can help bridge the achievement gap and ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students.

### **Summary**

The teacher shortage, declining teacher preparation program enrollment, and increasing reliance on alternative licensure pathways necessitate innovative solutions. This inquiry will explore how tailored Professional Learning can support beginning teachers in developing the skills they need to succeed, reducing attrition rates while improving student outcomes.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the study's aim, focusing on the critical elements required to support beginning teachers in their professional growth. The literature underscores the importance of beginning teachers fostering an understanding of the responsibilities of an educator primarily through Professional Learning. Recognizing the importance of the formation of the foundation for effective teaching, the chapter examines various aspects of beginning teacher support. The review begins with an exploration of beginning teacher orientation, emphasizing its role in equipping new educators with essential tools and insights for navigating the early stages of their careers. Following this, coaching and mentoring are discussed as pivotal strategies to enhance professional growth and confidence. The discussion then transitions to the importance of ongoing Professional Learning and its role in developing a teacher's instructional capacity. Evaluation and administrative support are highlighted as key factors in sustaining a positive and productive learning environment for teachers. In addition to structural support, the chapter delves into the concept of culturally responsive teaching, emphasizing its significance in addressing the unique needs of minority students. The discussion incorporates examples of cultural disconnections to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced in diverse classrooms. Culturally responsive teaching pedagogies are explored in detail, illustrating how cultivating relationships and empathy can transform a teacher's perspective and practice. Finally, the chapter examines the interplay between student achievement and teacher efficacy. The reciprocal relationship between these factors underscores the importance of empowering teachers to foster positive outcomes for students while building their confidence and commitment to the profession.

Together, these themes provide a robust foundation for understanding how to best support beginning teachers in fostering student success and professional growth.

### **Conceptual Framework**

To better understand the role of Professional Learning and its impact on Beginning Teachers (BTs), this study employed the Spiral of Inquiry framework for professional inquiry and growth (see Figure 2). This framework, developed by Halbert and Kaser (2022), provided a structured yet flexible process for continuous learning and improvement. It emphasized collaboration and reflective practice as central components of Professional Growth, ensuring that educators can adapt and thrive in diverse teaching environments. A central feature of this framework was the active involvement of BTs in their own Professional Learning. By engaging with tailored learning opportunities, beginning teachers were better equipped to enhance both their instructional quality and student outcomes. This approach aimed to address the dual goals of improving student learning and reducing teacher turnover. The Spiral of Inquiry framework is grounded in three major components: research, reflection, and assumptions. Each element plays a critical role in fostering professional growth. BTs will explore and engage with evidence-based Professional Learning resources on effective teaching and learning. At North Carolina Middle School (NCMS), these resources were consistently updated and made accessible to ensure relevance and applicability to the teachers' contexts. Reflection was integral to linking Professional Learning experiences with real-world teaching practices. BTs were encouraged to analyze their learning in relation to their classroom experiences, using insights gained to inform their teaching strategies. The framework operated under several key assumptions. The first assumption was BTs are motivated to remain current in their content areas and instructional methodologies. Secondly, BTs view learning as a lifelong process that contributes to both



*Figure 2. Spiral of Inquiry Framework.*

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personal and professional growth. Thirdly, professional growth is perceived by BTs as a means to improve student learning and overall success. A supportive climate was essential for effective Professional Learning. Such an environment fosters openness, collaboration, and trust, which were critical for enabling BTs to engage fully in reflective and collaborative practices. As the principal of NCMS, my role was to actively support this environment by staying involved in teachers' professional growth. This included providing consistent encouragement, guidance, and feedback. Collaboration was a cornerstone of the Spiral of Inquiry framework. BTs worked closely with colleagues, including veteran teachers, support staff, administrators, and district specialists. Key collaborative activities included: Teacher Inquiry (focused exploration of specific teaching challenges and strategies), Learning Rounds and Focused Observations (classroom observations, followed by reflective discussions and feedback) and Self-Reflection (BTs were encouraged to engage in ongoing self-assessment to track their professional growth and identify areas for improvement). Through these collaborative and reflective practices, BTs better understood and applied effective teaching strategies, fostering both their own growth and that of their students. The ultimate goal of the Spiral of Inquiry framework was to create a sustainable learning process for BTs. By aligning their professional growth with student success, NCMS aims to build teacher efficacy and foster a strong sense of preparedness and confidence among beginning teachers. Over time, these efforts were expected to contribute to higher teacher retention rates, improved student achievement, and a more cohesive and supportive school community.

### **Beginning Teacher Support**

The first three years of a teacher's career are recognized as the beginning teacher phase, a critical period for professional growth and adjustment. To ensure the success of educators during

this phase, the North Carolina State Board of Education mandates structured support for all beginning teachers. This support is designed to be a continuous process aimed at fostering learning and growth, rather than merely providing temporary assistance (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2022). This teacher induction process is fundamental for guiding new teachers through the challenges of their initial years in the profession. According to Curran and Goldrick (2002), effective induction programs integrate training, mentorship, and support from experienced educators and staff. These components work together to build the foundation for a teacher's long-term success. Bartell (2004) underscores the importance of intentional and systematic planning in induction, stating: "The goal of a systematically planned program of induction is to help new teachers not just survive but to succeed and thrive" (p. 6). The induction process goes beyond survival skills, encouraging beginning teachers to reflect, adapt, and enhance their teaching practice. This continuous improvement is essential for achieving two core goals: improving instructional quality and enhancing student learning outcomes. The theory of action underpinning new teacher induction emphasizes the interplay between structured support and professional growth. It assumes that with adequate guidance, new teachers are more likely to develop confidence and efficacy in their roles, structured mentoring and collaborative learning experiences accelerate the transition from novice to proficient educator, supporting teachers during the beginning phase reduces attrition, fostering long-term stability in schools. Through effective induction, new teachers are encouraged to hone their craft, aligning their professional growth with the broader goal of improving student success. By equipping teachers with the tools and skills needed to thrive, the induction process not only benefits educators but also contributes to the creation of vibrant and high-achieving learning environments.

Training, professional learning, and mentoring for new teachers enhance their practice and positively impact student achievement. According to Wong (2004), effective induction programs integrate five key components: orientation, mentoring, professional learning, evaluation, and administrative support. These components should work together, not in isolation, to provide ongoing, tiered support throughout a teacher's career. Orientation, as part of a comprehensive induction program, introduces new teachers to the district and school culture, including vision, mission, goals, policies, and procedures (Potemski & Matlach, 2014; Reeder, 2013). It also fosters networking, builds connections with supervisors, and creates a supportive environment where teachers can ask questions and understand expectations. This approach helps new teachers feel valued and invested in their roles, promoting long-term professional growth.

### **Teacher Shortage and Costs**

Teacher shortages are increasingly recognized as not only a matter of quantity but also of quality, particularly in schools with higher proportions of students of color and students living in poverty. These schools are 3 to 10 times more likely to have uncertified teachers (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003), reflecting disparities that policies like the No Child Left Behind Act aimed to address. Teacher attrition and mobility impose significant financial burdens, with estimates of \$2.2 billion annually for attrition and \$4.9 billion for replacing teachers who transfer schools. District-specific costs range from \$4,366 per teacher in small rural districts to \$17,872 in large urban districts (Barnes, 2007; Castro et al., 2018). A major reason for teacher departures is a lack of administrative support. A recent Rand Corporation survey revealed that one in four teachers planned to leave the profession by the end of the school year, marking a 60% increase from pre-pandemic levels, largely due to inadequate administrative support.

Principal support including mentoring, professional development, and fostering collaboration—has a significant positive impact on teacher retention and job satisfaction (Redding & Henry, 2019). Higher levels of perceived administrative support correlate with greater teacher retention. The scale of teacher turnover is startling. The number of new teachers hired annually increased from 50,000 in 1987-1988 to 200,000 in 2007-2008, while 112,000 teaching positions remained unfilled in 2018 (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Schwan et al., 2019). Research shows that mentoring and induction programs improve retention and job satisfaction for new teachers, with studies indicating that participants in such programs report higher satisfaction, commitment, and retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Turnover impacts the achievement of all students in a school, disrupting instructional consistency and teacher collaboration (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). High turnover often forces schools to hire inexperienced or unqualified teachers, increase class sizes, or reduce class offerings, disadvantaging students (Sutcher et al., 2019). Turnover disrupts teacher collaboration and hampers instructional improvement efforts. Financial costs for replacing teachers in urban districts can exceed \$20,000 per teacher, placing a strain on resources (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). By fostering teacher efficacy and addressing turnover, schools can improve student achievement, enhance teacher collaboration, and reduce costs associated with attrition.

### **Mentoring**

Mentoring is a cornerstone of effective beginning teacher induction programs (Bullough, 2012). Mentors play a critical role in supporting new teachers by fostering professional and confidential relationships to impart ethical standards, best instructional practices, and leadership opportunities (NCDPI, 2022). A mentor, typically a trusted and experienced teacher, provides both formal and informal guidance, creating an ally for beginning teachers to approach with

questions and concerns (Moir, 2007; Simos, 2013). This supportive relationship enables new teachers to implement effective classroom practices, including maintaining positive classroom environments, engaging students, and managing classrooms effectively (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Accessibility and compatibility of mentors are vital to the success of mentoring programs. Research emphasizes the importance of pairing mentors and mentees within the same building and preferably within the same subject area or grade level to foster regular collaboration and reflection (Schwan et al., 2019; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Consistent mentor-mentee meetings allow for the exchange of ideas and support, mitigating the isolation and frustration that new teachers often experience and reducing attrition rates. State and local policymakers have increasingly prioritized mentoring as a key strategy to address these challenges and enhance teacher retention. Mentoring programs also have a proven positive impact on student achievement. Studies show that new teachers participating in mentoring programs are more effective at developing lesson plans, engaging students, and adjusting instruction, which leads to better academic outcomes for their students (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Additionally, mentors gain professional benefits, including increased recognition, emotional support, and respect from their mentees (Ragins et al., 2000). The effectiveness of mentoring depends on systematic training and professional development for mentors. Highly qualified mentors lead to greater student achievement, enhanced teacher satisfaction, and improved student behavior. Proper mentor-mentee pairing and ongoing support are critical factors for successful mentoring programs, ensuring both teacher growth and student success (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

### **Coaching**

Coaching is a collaborative and creative process designed to help beginning teachers maximize their personal and professional potential (International Coach Federation). Unlike

mentoring, which involves guidance from a more experienced teacher, coaching focuses on supporting teachers in achieving specific goals through observation, feedback, and strategy development (Bloom et al., 2005). Effective coaching can be provided by instructional coaches, peers, or administrators and should be tailored to the teacher's individual needs. Coaching allows beginning teachers to gain fresh perspectives on challenges, develop actionable strategies, and refine their instructional practices. It is distinct from training, supervision, or mentoring, though strong mentors often integrate coaching techniques. Silver et al. (2009) found that coaching programs were highly beneficial during the teacher induction process, offering personalized and differentiated support. This individualized approach helps beginning teachers transition from "students of teaching to teachers of students" (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004, p. 29). Research shows that coaching positively impacts teacher performance and retention. Beginning teachers who receive coaching are more likely to implement effective instructional strategies, improve classroom management, and achieve better student outcomes (Brewster & Railsback, 2001). Furthermore, teachers supported through coaching are more likely to remain in the profession, underscoring its value in teacher induction and development.

### **Professional Learning**

The distinction between traditional "professional development" and "professional learning" is essential for improving teaching quality and student outcomes. Professional development often consists of one-time, standardized workshops or lectures delivered to teachers. In contrast, professional learning is interactive, sustained, and tailored to individual teacher needs. It empowers teachers to take responsibility for their growth and integrate learning into their teaching contexts, resulting in system-wide improvements (Archibald et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Labone & Long, 2016). Professional learning focuses on

subject-specific content and educational standards. Teachers engage in activities that involve active participation and reflection. Learning occurs in the context of teachers' daily work. Teachers work in professional learning communities and with colleagues. Teachers receive support through modeling of strategies and coaching. Learning happens over time, not in isolated sessions. Activities connect with broader school and district objectives. Teacher agency, or the capacity of teachers to take charge of their growth, is vital for systemic change and professional learning success (Calvert, 2016). Involving teachers in professional learning ensures they remain lifelong learners, which is crucial during the early years of teaching (Taranto, 2011). Effective professional learning fosters a culture centered on growth and supports diverse learners to ensure equitable outcomes for all students (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Wei et al., 2009). Professional support through collegial interactions significantly influences teachers' job satisfaction and retention. Teachers' embeddedness in social networks allows them to access resources and knowledge, impacting both individual and school-wide growth (Thomas et al., 2019). Schools with isolated social structures risk limiting teachers' resource access and collaboration opportunities. Principals play a critical role in creating environments conducive to professional learning. Successful principals foster productive learning climates, facilitate collaborative communities, and strategically manage resources. They engage teachers in instructionally focused interactions and use evaluation strategies to enhance teaching practices (Grissom, 2011). High-quality professional learning incorporates self-assessment, data-driven goals, and collaborative problem-solving to address teaching challenges (Psencik, 2022). Professional learning improves teacher effectiveness, raises student achievement, and retains teachers by promoting collaboration and growth-oriented practices. It equips teachers to work

effectively with diverse learners and aligns individual goals with district and school objectives, creating a culture of continuous improvement (Desimone & Parsons, 2020; Wong, 2004).

### **Evaluation**

In North Carolina, beginning teachers are required to undergo a structured observation and evaluation process. This comprehensive process includes three full administrative observations and one full peer observation throughout the school year. Evaluations are based on a standardized rubric provided by the state, which aligns with North Carolina teaching standards. At the start of the school year, school administrators conduct staff training where all teachers learn about the rubric and how it will be applied during evaluation. Beginning teachers undergo four observations: three by administrators to assess teaching performance and alignment with state standard & one by a peer to offer additional perspectives and support. Evaluations help administrators identify areas where beginning teachers excel and where they need support (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). The rubric ensures observations are objective and tied directly to state standards, promoting consistent expectations. The process should be used not just for assessment but to provide targeted support and professional growth opportunities for beginning teachers. The ultimate goal of this observation and evaluation process is to ensure beginning teachers are supported and guided in their professional development, fostering improved teaching practices and alignment with state educational goals.

### **Administrative Support for Beginning Teachers**

School administrators play a pivotal role in the induction process for beginning teachers. They are responsible for providing orientation, assigning mentors, fostering collaboration, and creating a supportive school climate (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010; Brewster & Railsback,

2001). Mentorship, a critical component of beginning teacher support, is facilitated by administrators who build strong relationships and guide teachers toward professional growth (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). Administrators help develop novice teachers into master teachers by offering constructive feedback, facilitating professional learning, and creating opportunities for extended learning (Inman & Marlow, 2004). Checking in with beginning teachers and maintaining consistent conversations allow administrators to identify and address teachers' challenges and needs. Teachers thrive when they feel valued and respected (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010). Principals create this environment by modeling respect, fostering cultural responsiveness, and encouraging equity-focused practices (Boske, 2009). Administrators significantly influence teacher efficacy, which is tied to increased commitment, partnerships, and student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Principals can support teachers in achieving their potential and addressing equity gaps. Teacher efficacy grows when administrators build learning teams, maintain sustained focus, and implement cycles of inquiry followed by reflection (Fullan & Kirtman, 2019). Professional learning opportunities should be ongoing, goal-oriented, and embedded in the school's daily culture. This approach enhances teacher skills, morale, and commitment (Fullan & Kirtman, 2019; Wang, 2023). A supportive school leader who invests in teachers can lower attrition rates by building trust, morale, and efficacy. Teachers with a sense of belonging and commitment to their school are more likely to stay in the profession. Administrators who foster collaboration and professional growth create unified school environments where teachers and students thrive. Leaders with strong curriculum knowledge can identify inequitable practices and lead their schools toward inclusivity and equity (Boske, 2009). Ultimately, school administrators must act as proactive leaders, ensuring teachers feel supported, valued, and empowered to contribute to their schools' success. By creating a culture of

collaboration and growth, administrators can build the foundation for a sustainable and effective educational community.

### **Relationships and Understanding**

Each classroom has the potential to develop a unique culture guided by the teacher, who acts as the facilitator. Strong relationships are essential for building this culture, as they foster trust, care, and mutual respect. Gay (2013) emphasized that effective classroom relationships are built on patience, persistence, facilitation, validation, and empowerment. These relationships are the foundation for nurturing classroom environments where high standards are set, and failure is not an option. Teachers who create environments of care and support are most successful in closing achievement gaps (Benard, 2003). Students are more engaged and willing to strive when they feel valued and cared for. Culturally responsive teachers build meaningful connections, making relationships a necessity rather than an option (Noddings, 1992). Effective teachers ensure students understand the high standards set for them while also helping them recognize their worth and assisting in goal-setting (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Teachers motivate students to excel without allowing excuses, focusing on their potential and pushing them to achieve (Delpit, 1995). Kleinfeld (1975) introduced the concept of "warm demanders," teachers who blend positive motivation with high expectations. These teachers build confidence in their students and foster successful learning outcomes through encouragement and accountability (Kuykendall, 2004). Culturally responsive teachers foster a "community of learners," where students collaborate, teach one another, and share responsibility for their collective success (Noddings, 1992). Warm demanders create inclusive classrooms where every student feels valued and supported, cultivating a sense of belonging and community. Classrooms characterized by care, inclusivity, and high expectations create environments where students feel empowered

to succeed. Teachers who embrace these principles not only nurture academic achievement but also build resilient, motivated, and confident learners capable of reaching their full potential. By establishing strong relationships and fostering collaboration, teachers lay the groundwork for success in every aspect of student development.

### **Teacher Efficacy**

Teacher efficacy, the belief in one's ability to influence student engagement and learning, is a crucial factor for both teacher and student success (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001a). Rooted in Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, this belief shapes teachers' behaviors, motivation, and persistence in overcoming challenges (Bandura, 1986). High teacher efficacy correlates with greater commitment to students, job satisfaction, and retention in the teaching profession (Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Positive teaching experiences build confidence in handling classroom management, student engagement, and collaboration. Observing peers successfully manage challenges enhances self-efficacy. Encouragement from colleagues and supervisors reinforces confidence. Positive emotions and reduced stress contribute to higher self-efficacy. Time pressure, discipline issues, low student motivation, and lack of administrative support decrease teacher efficacy. Supportive social relations, collegial collaboration, and shared values within the school boost self-efficacy and reduce burnout. Alignment between teachers' personal values and the school's norms, goals, and methods is positively associated with self-efficacy and feelings of belonging. Teachers driven by intrinsic motivation and ethical considerations thrive in environments where their values are respected (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2019). Teachers with high self-efficacy are more engaged, committed, and motivated to overcome challenges. High self-efficacy reduces burnout and the desire to leave the profession, promoting job satisfaction and longevity in teaching (Klassen & Chiu, 2010;

Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2019). Teachers confident in their ability to influence students are more likely to adopt effective teaching strategies and foster positive classroom environments. Supportive relationships with colleagues and supervisors enhance teacher well-being and self-efficacy. School leaders must reduce factors like discipline issues and workload pressures that negatively affect self-efficacy. Providing mentoring, professional learning opportunities, and a supportive social environment fosters teacher growth and resilience. Schools should ensure alignment between institutional values and teachers' intrinsic motivations to create a cohesive and supportive culture. By understanding and leveraging these factors, schools can cultivate environments that enhance teacher efficacy, benefiting both educators and students. Teacher efficacy not only predicts motivation and engagement but also lays the foundation for sustained professional success and improved student learning outcomes.

### **Student Achievement**

Research consistently links high teacher efficacy to improved student achievement and better classroom practices. Holzberger et al. (2013) contend high teacher efficacy correlates with better classroom management and higher achievement scores for students. Caprara et al. (2006): A survey of over 2,000 teachers revealed a positive correlation between teacher efficacy and student achievement. Khan (2011) states teachers with high efficacy set higher expectations for their students, fostering a belief in student success, whereas those with low efficacy tend to expect failure. Jerald (2007) argue teachers with high efficacy are better planners, more organized, open to innovation, and less critical of their students' work. These behaviors lead to improved student outcomes. Teachers with high efficacy invest more time in preparation and achieve better results in student performance (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Teachers with high efficacy design engaging lessons and exhibit superior classroom management, dealing effectively

with behavioral challenges while fostering persistence and resiliency (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001b). High rates of teacher turnover negatively affect student achievement, school culture, and finances.

### **Role of Commitment to Equity in Efficacy Building Dual Language Teachers**

Dual language (DL) teachers play a critical role in fostering social justice by examining their own identities, abilities, language, and culture while navigating the diverse environments of schools and society (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Their work requires continuous reflection and adaptation to meet the needs of their students and communities. Administrators are key partners in this process, acting as co-constructors of knowledge and supporting DL teachers in their professional and cultural growth. Administrators facilitate professional learning tailored to DL teachers' unique needs, offering opportunities for teachers to volunteer and provide input on topics, present at workshops, engage in dialogue across grade levels and districts, and renew practices to address the needs of DL students. Effective professional learning builds a culture that aligns beliefs and practices with growth targets, fostering meaningful change in schools (Lammert et al., 2015). The support administrators provide affects how DL teachers perceive their abilities, their students, and their capacity to influence program success. This includes onboarding new DL teachers, engaging parents in the DL process and building partnerships with district teacher preparation programs to mentor candidates and host clinical practice sites in DL settings. Efficacy building involves developing the skills, processes, and resources needed to achieve goals. Administrators achieve this by aligning beliefs and refining practices with desired growth targets, using tools like coaching and feedback (Lammert et al., 2015). When administrators actively support DL teachers, the effects extend beyond individual classrooms. Professional learning fosters a shift in school culture and beliefs, resulting in systemic changes

that benefit DL programs at the district level. DL teachers gain confidence in their ability to create meaningful change, improving outcomes for students and their communities.

Administrators help instill a mindset of cultural growth, ensuring that DL programs remain equitable and inclusive. In summary, administrators play a pivotal role in supporting DL teachers through professional learning, efficacy building, and fostering collaboration. This collaborative approach leads to stronger programs and more significant, equity-driven outcomes for dual language learners and their communities.

### **Summary**

The literature highlights the critical need for administrative and collegial support to adequately prepare beginning teachers (BTs) for the teaching profession. This need is especially pressing given the increasing diversity of student demographics, contrasted with insufficient preparatory programs to equip BTs with the necessary skills to teach students who may differ significantly from themselves in cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. To support beginning teachers in this context, effective Professional Learning practices is essential. Teachers must learn about their students' backgrounds, cultures, and experiences to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. By developing a deeper understanding of their students, teachers can foster connections that are both personal and professional. Positive teacher-student relationships are foundational to improving self-efficacy for teachers and creating trust and engagement for students. When teachers feel confident in their ability to connect with students, they are more likely to persist in their profession and positively impact student achievement. As teachers successfully connect with students and implement strategies acquired via Professional Learning, their belief in their ability to influence student outcomes strengthens. High teacher self-efficacy not only leads to improved instructional practices but also

contributes to higher teacher satisfaction and retention. Beginning teachers who are exposed and implement newly acquired skills via Professional Learning are better able to engage their students, resulting in improved academic performance. When teachers feel equipped and supported in addressing the diverse needs of their students, they are more likely to remain in the profession. Professional learning can ensure that all students, regardless of their backgrounds, feel valued and supported in their educational journey. Supporting beginning teachers not only enhances their teaching experience but also positively impacts the broader educational landscape by fostering equity, connection, and achievement.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF INQUIRY**

While barriers and challenges for beginning teachers have been identified, I proposed that the root cause lies in their lack of instructional skills and the impact of inadequate Professional Learning opportunities. Examining beginning teachers' experiences is important because of the ongoing teacher shortage (need to hire teachers) and increasing student achievement (Allen & Butler, 1996; Gay, 2013).

### **Inquiry Guiding Questions**

The following questions will guide this inquiry:

1. To what extent does an individualized Professional Learning program impact beginning teachers' instructional self-efficacy in a diverse Title I middle school setting?
2. To what extent does an individualized Professional Learning program impact the retention of beginning teachers in a diverse Title I middle school setting?
3. What effects does a personalized Professional Learning program have on the retention of beginning teachers?

For the purpose of my inquiry, beginning teachers referred to those that either came through a traditional teacher preparation program (four-year college or university) or alternative pathway or are dual language teachers at NCMS. These questions will be answered through short efficacy surveys, long teacher efficacy surveys, teacher intent to return forms and individual interviews.

### **Inquiry Design and Rationale**

This inquiry used improvement science to assist beginning teachers with developing instructional pedagogy while balancing classroom management efficacy through appropriate

Professional Learning. Improvement science focused on improving beginning teacher efficacy and retention while examining the systems and procedures that surround this system (Perry et al., 2020). This inquiry used an exploratory sequential design. This design prioritized the collection and analysis of qualitative data during the first phase. Building on those exploratory results, I conducted a second phase, where qualitative data was collected and analyzed. Beginning teachers completed a short and long efficacy survey of their skills as a teacher. Next, they completed a pre- Professional Learning survey of the needs they needed to be successful. Inquiry partners and administration conducted Professional Learning during the throughout the 2023-2024 school year to coach teachers and build their efficacy. Finally, beginning teachers took a post-survey of professional development and I analyzed the retention data to gauge the effects of Professional Learning. Reflection incorporated strategies gained from Professional Learning. Altogether, each used the data gathered and lessons learned in the previous part.

To answer the guiding questions of this inquiry, a mixed methods approach was used to understand the areas of improvement of beginning teachers identified as increased teacher efficacy via Professional Learning. I utilized an exploratory-sequential, mixed methods design grounded in improvement science (Mertler, 2022). Open-ended interview questions were used to identify similarities, patterns, and trends that define the qualities of increased teacher efficacy. This specific question allowed for more accessibility for in-depth responses. Observations and instructional rounds of three beginning teachers and their practices added to the rich data drawn in a qualitative study. Teacher participants were selected based on administrative input and current licensure. Criteria for selection consisted of administrator recommendations based on observations as described in detail in the following section. The focus of the classroom observations was to gather information on the teaching methods of each beginning teacher, how

BTs motivated and engaged students, in what ways the BTs interacted with students, and how the students interacted with each other, in addition to BTs' approaches to addressing disciplinary issues, after attending Professional Learning opportunities.

A qualitative design was used to achieve depth rather than breadth (Mertler, 2022). In its simplest form, data collected from interviews and observations was used to tell a story about what the participants did and what kinds of practices they implemented after Professional Learning that led to increased teacher efficacy and retention. A qualitative design is best conducted in a natural setting, such as a classroom, without intentionally manipulating the environment (Mertler, 2022). Therefore, I chose to conduct my inquiry within classroom settings.

Beginning teachers need a foundational understanding of the role of the teacher and an opportunity to self-reflect on their assumptions/experiences. As a principal, I provided a space for the teachers to feel comfortable sharing their ideas and thoughts. It was important for them to understand their value to the school culture and students. This process was overseen and facilitated by me.

Next, beginning teachers were provided a brief reminder of the goal of this inquiry. I secured a facilitator from the school's district and outside partners to provide relevant Professional Learning who understood the challenges of BTs. Following that, the BTs reflected and shared the value and application of the strategies learned in Professional Learning. Throughout these stages, feedback was collected and analyzed.

Finally, beginning teachers must understand the connections between Professional Learning and the project's purpose. Follow-up discussions were held with individual BTs to get input on how they thought they had grown from participating and determined how their progress

had transformed their approach to the students, their teaching styles, and plans to continue in the teaching profession. Feedback was recorded and used to analyze the implications. The basis of this research utilized the Spiral of Inquiry cycle to improve relationships between teachers and students. This framework answered the following questions: What am I trying to accomplish; how will I know that a change is an Improvement; and what changes can we make that will result in improvement?

- Phase I-Distributed a study description and consent to all participating teachers. Teachers were asked to complete the pre-assessment of their efficacy and return it to me if willing to participate in the study. I created questions and procedures for the focus groups, gathered materials, and created a plan for utilizing the data.
- Phase I/II-This phase of the study involved a focus group of beginning teachers. The questions focused on the influences of Professional Learning and how it shapes what happens in the classroom.
- Phase II/III-This step involved data analysis, comparing data, and determining similarities. Next, I gathered the qualitative data and then coded the data to find similarities. The qualitative data collection also included classroom observations to determine what actions occurred in classrooms with teachers that had developed increased efficacy. Follow-up questions were created to clarify and refine the analysis and develop based on the unique responses of the participant.
- Phase III-The final step required me to work with the beginning teachers. I was able to implement some Professional Learning with the beginning teachers to help refocus or refine the efficacy they had developed. They will complete a post efficacy survey to gauge the effectiveness of the Professional Learning.

### **Context of the Inquiry**

North Carolina Middle School (NCMS) was a pseudonym for a middle school in one of the most rural parts of an eastern North Carolina (NC) county. NCMS is a Title 1 school. Regarding teacher experience, 50% of 6th-grade, 50% of 7th-grade, 67% of 8th-grade, and 40% of ENCORE are designated beginning teachers (BTs) (see Figure 3).

### **Collaborative Inquiry Partners**

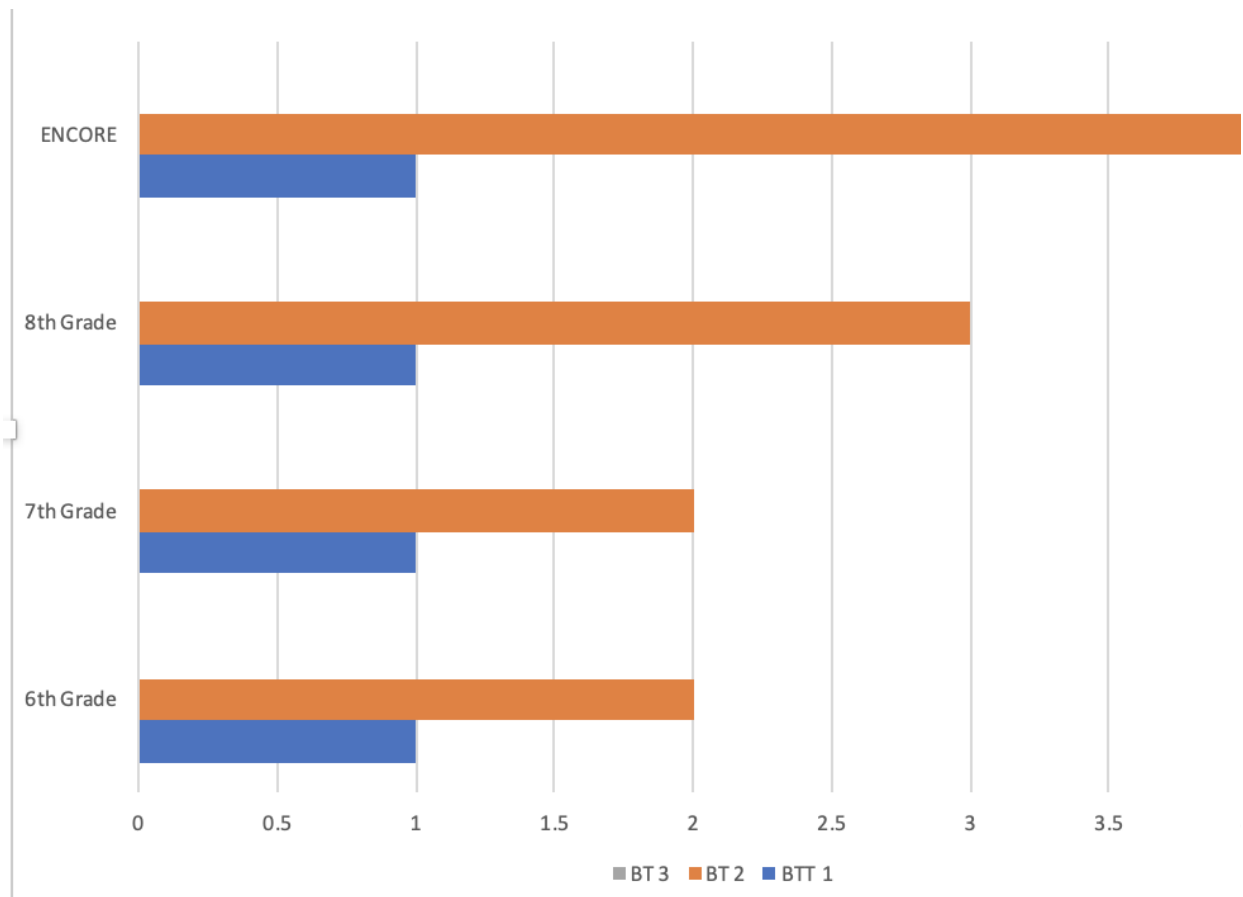
For the purpose of this inquiry, I engaged inquiry partners from the school and district levels (see Table 1):

- Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources - Recruits, hires, and implements retention procedures
- Department of Excellence, Equity and Leadership (DEEL office) - Responsible to recruit, retain, and reward effective educators to ensure the success of every child through Professional Learning, leadership Learning, and career advancement.
- Secondary Director, Chief of School Support - Supports beginning principals and low performing schools as designated by the state
- NCMS Lead Mentor - coordinates school mentors and monthly beginning teacher meetings
- NCMS Beginning Teachers - will make up my inquiry partner team.

Documentation of meetings will be collected using notes and meeting logs.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As the scholarly practitioner and principal of NCMS, I brought a unique perspective to this inquiry, but my dual role also presented potential challenges related to participant bias and ethical concerns. Recognizing and addressing these concerns was essential to conducting a



*Figure 3. Beginning teacher experience at NCMS by grade level or encore in 2023-24.*

Table 1

*Inquiry Partners*

| <u>Inquiry Partner</u>           | <u>Role in Study</u>                                                                                                                                 | <u>Phases of Inquiry</u> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Assistant Superintendent of HR   | Ensure the study is aligned with the districts goals                                                                                                 | I                        |
| DEEL office                      | Provides details concerning onboarding processes for BTs; Works with school leader to support the growth of BTs in areas related to NCEES Standard I | II/III                   |
| Directory of Secondary Education | Provides relevant district Instructional expectations for BTs                                                                                        | II/II                    |
| Chief of School Support          | Works with school leader to support the growth of BTs in areas of related to NCEES Standard I                                                        | I/III                    |
| NCMS Lead Mentor                 | Schedules and BT mentor meetings and makes sure all BTs have a mentor and are supported throughout the year                                          | I/II/III                 |
| NCMS Beginning Teachers          | Study participants                                                                                                                                   | I/II/III                 |
| NCMS Peer Observers              | Study participants                                                                                                                                   | I/II/III                 |

rigorous and ethical study. Clear communication to participants that this study was not evaluative and would not impact their performance evaluations or professional standing is vital. In addition, an emphasis that the inquiry aimed to improve teaching experiences and ultimately increase retention of BTs. Using separate walkthrough rubrics and success measures from those used in the North Carolina Educators Effectiveness System (NCEES) tool to ensure the inquiry data was distinct from formal evaluations was employed. A reinforcement that participation and responses were confidential and independent of formal administrative assessments. Successfully completing the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) ensured I was equipped to uphold the ethical treatment of human subjects, including protecting participant rights, confidentiality, and informed consent. I provided detailed descriptions of the study's purpose, procedures, and non-evaluative nature in the consent forms. Participants were allowed to withdraw at any time without penalty, reinforcing voluntariness. Approval from the Superintendent of Eastern County Schools (ECS) was obtained to ensure the study aligns with district policies and ethical standards. Storage of all data was securely and anonymized during analysis to protect participant identities. Usage of coding or pseudonyms for teacher participants in all reports or presentations was used. Surveys, interviews, and focus groups were held in settings that did not feel evaluative (e.g., not during formal teacher meetings or observation feedback sessions). I shared preliminary findings with participants to validate interpretations and ensured they felt accurately represented. My dual role as the principal and researcher provided a valuable opportunity to directly implement findings for immediate impact. However, maintaining clear boundaries between administrative duties and inquiry activities was crucial to ensure participant trust and ethical integrity. By adhering to rigorous ethical standards, completing CITI

training, and obtaining district approval, I could conduct an inquiry that benefits both teachers and students while maintaining professional and scholarly credibility.

To conduct this inquiry in alignment with district and university policies, the following steps were taken to ensure ethical integrity and rigor. Obtaining approval from the Eastern County Schools (ECS) district to conduct the study, adhering to their policies for research involving teachers and student and secure approval from East Carolina University's Internal Review Board (IRB) to ensure compliance with ethical research standards, particularly those involving human subjects. In addition, I met with participants before the inquiry begins to explain the study's purpose, methods, and non-evaluative nature. A clarification that participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time without consequence. A detailed informed consent form (see Appendix B) was provided, ensuring participants fully understood their rights. An assurance to participants that their responses would not impact their formal evaluations. Lastly, usage of coding to anonymize data, ensured participant identities were protected throughout the study. Data collection Instruments used were the Short and Long Efficacy Scales (Ohio State University). The Short Efficacy Scale measured challenges faced by teachers, focusing on teaching-related tasks. The Long Efficacy Scale provides a comprehensive assessment of difficulties teachers encounter in school activities. Both instruments are reliable and valid tools designed to measure teacher beliefs and efficacy. Also the Professional Learning Needs Assessment Survey (Hanover Research) was used as part of this study. This survey targeted BT perceptions of professional learning in the district. It provided insights into current strengths and areas for improvement in professional learning offerings. These results helped to prioritize future professional learning needs. Data security and storage was on a password-protected laptop I ensured survey responses remained anonymous and were used

solely for research purposes. I recognized the potential for subjectivity due to my dual role as a principal and scholarly practitioner. I sought to maintain a reflective stance to mitigate bias, ensuring fairness and objectivity in all aspects of the inquiry. Transparency with participants included communication of my vested interest in their success while emphasizing the study's goal of improving professional learning for all BTs. Analysis of the results from the Short and Long Efficacy Scales to assess changes in teacher beliefs and efficacy over time were completed. Those findings from the Professional Learning Needs Assessment Survey were used to identify patterns in BT perceptions and inform recommendations for district professional learning improvements. Integration of data from observations and interviews to triangulate findings and provide a comprehensive understanding of BT experiences completed this phase. This rigorous approach ensured ethical treatment of participants while leveraging reliable instruments to identify strengths and gaps in current professional learning offerings, enhance beginning teachers' efficacy and retention through targeted professional learning initiatives, contribute actionable insights for district-wide improvements in teacher support and development.

### **Data Collection Tools**

This research employs a mixed methods design, incorporating qualitative and explanatory measures, to explore themes supporting beginning teacher efficacy and retention. The methodology focuses on collecting, coding, and analyzing data to guide conversations and inform actionable strategies (Mertler, 2022). As I, I attended monthly beginning teacher meetings led by the school's lead mentor. During these meetings, I observed discussions on themes related to teacher efficacy and retention. Afterwards, I collected and compared participant feedback over time. This comparison allowed me to identify changes in participant perspectives, draw connections between evolving themes and participant feedback. Coded notes from meetings

would inform emerging themes and guide ongoing reflection. Using a coding system to analyze data from, interviews and informal interactions allowed me to recognize themes and patterns to reflect participants' experiences and perspectives. Comparison of data across cycles to observe changes in participants' perspectives and practices was key to reflect on how these changes aligned with professional learning interventions and teacher retention efforts. Collaborative inquiry and reflection involved participant engagement. Actively involving participants in the reflective process during meetings allowed structured discussions to gather feedback and insights on their evolving experiences. My collaboration with the lead mentor aided to align meeting discussions with research goals, gather data on participant perspectives and provide support. Continuous reflection was part of the process of the inquiry, with shifts in participant engagement, efficacy, and retention. By integrating qualitative and explanatory data collection methods with ongoing reflection and collaboration, this methodology identified several themes. Themes aided in a comprehensive understanding of the factors supporting beginning teacher efficacy and retention. Furthermore, guiding conversations led to findings to inform discussions with stakeholders and improve professional learning programs. As a result, a fostering of transformative process led to the enhanced professional experiences of beginning teachers and supported long-term retention efforts. This approach ensured a thorough, reflective, and collaborative process that aligned with the inquiry's goals and produced actionable insights.

### **Pilot Study**

The Professional Learning session, facilitated by an instructional coach, focused on three beginning teachers completing their first year in the profession. These teachers were not part of the initial BT group and represented diverse demographics: two Black females, one White female, and one White male. The process emphasized inclusivity, classroom management, and

relationship building, with data collected to measure the effectiveness of these activities.

Efficacy and Professional Learning surveys used were the Long and Short efficacy scales (Ohio State University) and the Hanover Professional Learning Effectiveness Survey. The purpose was to gauge participants' sense of instructional efficacy and their perceptions of the Professional Learning program. Opportunities included teachers were asked to view classroom dynamics from their students' perspectives. A reflection focused on building connections and relationships with students to bridge gaps in understanding and foster engagement. Teachers reviewed discipline data and discussed the qualities of effective classroom management. Conversations were guided by reflection questions aimed at defining the teacher's role in maintaining well-managed classroom. Teachers were tasked with implementing one classroom management strategy learned during the session and reflecting on its impact in their classrooms before the next meeting. A debrief was held with the instructional coach and myself to document discussions and reflections, which were reviewed and coded. Several themes emerged from the raw data, providing insight into teacher experiences and the effectiveness of the Professional Learning strategies. Emerging themes included inclusivity and relationship building. Teachers identified the importance of understanding their students' diverse traits and creating a sense of belonging in the classroom. Strategies for inclusivity were seen as valuable tools for fostering stronger teacher-student relationships. Effective classroom management was recognized as a cornerstone of a positive learning environment, with teachers expressing the need for consistent and adaptable approaches. Implementing learned strategies sparked reflection on their role in shaping classroom culture. Guided reflection activities helped teachers critically evaluate their practices and identify areas for improvement. Teachers valued the opportunity to discuss challenges and successes with peers, reinforcing the importance of collaborative learning. The Professional

Learning activities appeared to positively impact teacher efficacy, as participants reported feeling more confident in addressing opportunity gaps and managing their classroom. The facilitated Professional Learning sessions demonstrated the value of targeted coaching, structured reflection, and collaborative discussion for beginning teachers. By engaging in these activities, teachers were able to gain practical strategies for fostering inclusivity and improving classroom management., reflect on their practices, enhancing self-awareness and instructional efficacy, and develop a stronger sense of connection with their students and peers. The themes derived from coded minutes highlight the critical role of Professional Learning in supporting beginning teachers and shaping their ability to create equitable and effective learning environments. These findings can inform future efforts to strengthen teacher preparation and retention strategies.

### **Inquiry Procedures**

This inquiry occurred over the course of one calendar year, including one academic school year, and was organized into three cycles of inquiry. Each cycle from the Spiral of Inquiry will aim for beginning teachers to increase their efficacy and pedagogy practices while also increasing beginning teachers' self-efficacy and, thus, the retention rate.

#### **Phase I**

I began by identifying beginning teachers (BTs) in the building. After explaining the purpose of the study and obtaining their agreement to participate, I administered a pre-survey that included the Hanover Institute Professional Learning Survey to gather insights into their previous experiences and satisfaction with school- and district-level professional learning. Additionally, I administered the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (Short and Long Form) to assess their self-perceived teaching efficacy prior to the implementation of the study. My collaborative inquiry partners and I took the following steps in order to increase the rigor of this

inquiry. As the interviews were conducted, I repeated answers and used probing questions to seek clarification (Mertler, 2022). After the interviews, I transcribed the interviews into a Microsoft Word document and review the transcripts with the participants for feedback and clarification.

## **Phase II**

I conducted pre/post-assessment feedback, classroom walkthroughs, observations, reflection forms, instructional rounds, and face-to-face interviews with the three-member focus group to assess their Professional Learning needs. Before and after classroom observations/walkthroughs, teachers would be interviewed separately to discuss their biographical background, personal teaching philosophies, demographic information, and teacher beliefs. Classroom walkthroughs occurred 2-3 days a week, lasting approximately 15 minutes, focusing on teachers' instructional practices, classroom culture, and student engagement. I used field notes to remember and record the observation's behaviors, activities, events, and other features (Mertler, 2022). Instructional rounds were conducted approximately every nine weeks and used to “corroborate evidence and locate major and minor themes.” Using a variety of instruments, methods, and sources to collect data, I hoped to enhance the validity of the research (see Table 2). How did you grow by implementing the strategies gained in Professional Learning in their classrooms?

1. How can these newly acquired skills contribute to their self-efficacy and retention in teaching?
2. What effects does a personalized Professional Learning program have on the retention of beginning teachers?

Table 2

*Inquiry Matrix*

| Inquiry Questions                                                                                                          | Instrumentation & Questions                                                                                                                 | Inquiry Phase         | Timeline                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. What impact does a personalized Professional Learning program have on the self-efficacy of beginning teachers?          | Pre-survey Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) survey                                                                                        | Phase II              | September 2023 – May 2024 |
|                                                                                                                            | Post-survey Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) survey                                                                                       | Phase III             |                           |
|                                                                                                                            | Interviews (BTs)                                                                                                                            | Phase III             |                           |
| 2. What impact does a personalized Professional Learning program have on the instructional pedagogy of beginning teachers? | Instructional Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walkthroughs</li> <li>• Instructional Rounds</li> <li>• Lesson Plans</li> </ul> | Phase II              | September 2023 – May 2024 |
|                                                                                                                            | Test Scores <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative</li> <li>• Summative</li> </ul>                                              | Phase II<br>Phase III | June – August 2024        |
|                                                                                                                            | Interviews (BTs)                                                                                                                            | Phase III             |                           |
|                                                                                                                            | Interview (IC)                                                                                                                              | Phase III             |                           |
|                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                             |                       |                           |
| 3. What effects does a personalized Professional Learning program have on the retention of beginning teachers?             | Existing Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retention Rate</li> <li>• Intent Forms</li> </ul>                                    | Phase III             | June – August 2024        |
|                                                                                                                            | Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Assessment</li> <li>• Post Assessment</li> </ul>                                        | Phase II<br>Phase III |                           |
|                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                             | Phase III             |                           |
|                                                                                                                            | Interviews (BTs)                                                                                                                            |                       |                           |

We examined breakthroughs from previous learning and future desires. We reflected upon the first two meetings and changes to beginning teachers' approaches for their next year of service. By examining meeting notes, policy documents, and conversations with constituents, I investigated the changes to philosophies, teaching strategies, self-efficacy, and understanding.

### **Phase III**

I transcribed the recorded audio from the teacher interviews and analyzed the data derived from the notes taken during classroom observations/walkthroughs/instructional rounds/BT monthly meetings. Data supported by observations and questionnaire responses led to an accurate conclusion of my guiding questions.

The first part of the study required developing a system of routines and procedures. As the scholarly practitioner leading this inquiry and the direct supervisor of the teachers, I obtained an informed consent form from the participating beginning teachers. The team included three beginning teacher participants, Instructional Coach, and me. Next, the team focused on the outcomes of the first inquiry cycle. Everyone had to have a chance to reflect and to look inward on their areas of improvement. The next task was to determine how to increase teacher efficiency (classroom management, instructional practices, etc.) and practices to implement. Finally, we needed to collect feedback on the participants' experiences after guiding the team through Professional Learning. Informal conversations would broaden the understanding of what takes place and use it to plan for the next cycle. In addition, Professional Learning would occur according to the teacher's needs. BTs would take part in instructional rounds held every quarter. Data collected would be from the debrief and reflect on teaching strategies they witnessed during instructional rounds and how they can effectively implement them in their classrooms. In addition, they would debrief with an Instructional coach to gauge the effectiveness of

Instructional Rounds. I would review the debrief notes and convert the raw data to codes. From that, I would be able to develop emerging themes. The final cycle explored themes from the data. In our final meeting, teachers would answer three questions:

### **Data Collection Tools**

The research project methodology involves mixed methods (qualitative and explanatory) measures. The project design relies on collecting, coding, and analyzing data. Ultimately, we hope to gather enough evidence to support themes and guide conversations to support beginning teachers and teacher retention (Mertler, 2022). The study utilized a combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments to gather comprehensive data. These tools were either adapted from established resources or developed specifically for this research. Pre/Post-surveys were designed to measure changes in teacher perceptions and professional growth over the course of the study. They included both Likert-scale and open-ended questions. The Short & Long Efficacy Scales (Ohio State University) validated instruments, developed by Ohio State University, were used to measure teacher self-efficacy in instructional practices, classroom management, and student engagement. They are widely recognized in educational research. The Professional Learning Needs Assessment Survey (Hanover Research Institute) helped identify perceived areas of need and satisfaction with existing professional development opportunities. It was sourced from Hanover's research-based tools and adapted to fit the context of the study. A classroom walkthrough tool was created by the researcher to observe and document instructional practices and the implementation of strategies discussed in professional development sessions. This tool focused on classroom engagement, instructional clarity, and the use of evidence-based strategies. Teacher interviews interview questions were developed by the researcher to gain deeper insight into teachers' experiences, perceptions, and the impact of professional learning on their

classroom practice. These interviews supported the triangulation of data collected through surveys and observations.

Each instrument was selected or designed to align with the research questions and ensure a well-rounded understanding of the study's outcomes.

### **Beginning Teacher Meeting Minutes**

The inquiry design integrates structured data collection during monthly beginning teacher (BT) meetings, facilitated by the lead mentor, to explore changes in participant perspectives and experiences. This process focused on documenting reflections, identifying patterns, and fostering a transformative journey for BTs. During each meeting, detailed minutes were recorded to document key discussions and reflections from participants, observations of any changes in participants' perspectives and practice, and feedback on the impact of Professional Learning (PL) and classroom experiences. The lead mentor collected meeting minutes, ensuring consistency in documentation.

### **Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumption**

My inquiry focused on retention of alternatively licensed and traditionally licensed teachers, but not veteran teacher retention. In addition, I will be looking at teacher self-efficacy versus student achievement for those teachers. I assume BTs want to keep current in their content area/field, view learning as a lifelong process, and see their professional growth as enhancing student learning and success. A supportive climate that encourages openness and collaboration is critical for professional growth. As principal of NCMS, I stay involved in supporting teachers' professional growth. BT, honest reflection is a limitation. Colleague and team collaboration, classroom observation, and supportive feedback can significantly enhance professional growth if honest (Halbert & Kaser, 2022). In addition, there is an assumption teacher will implement the

strategies provided with fidelity. My role as principal and investigator is a limitation, will I get honest responses? Lastly, my role as evaluator for NC system as well as non-evaluative support could be confusing or a limitation. Ultimately this inquiry involved: Working with other colleagues (Veteran Teachers, Support Staff, administration, and District specialists), Teacher Inquiry, Learning Rounds and Focused Observations, and Self-Reflection.

### **Role of the Scholarly Practitioner**

As the scholarly practitioner of this inquiry, I also served as the principal of NCMS. I was be in my second year of tenure when this inquiry is conducted. As such, I have direct knowledge of all beginning teachers participating in the inquiry. I serve as their evaluator and may have hired them to the school. Knowing that my positionality may influence their responses in the data collection, I met with the participants to obtain informed consent and reiterate to them that their participation or lack of participation in the inquiry will not impact their teaching evaluation.

All participants understood their right to participate or decline inclusion in the study. I remained unbiased throughout the inquiry. My vested interest in all of the participants and the success of this inquiry presented subjectivity concerns. I remained neutral during the survey to the best of my ability. I ensured the confidentiality of all conversations and data collection.

### **Summary**

A mixed exploratory-sequential method was used to collect data from participants. Beginning teachers took a short and long efficacy survey followed by a needs assessment for Professional Learning needs they have. After reviewing this data, I facilitated Professional Learning throughout the year along with beginning teacher walkthroughs (to observe the implementation of newly acquired skills) and instructional rounds. An instructional coach

debriefed with each of the beginning teachers after instructional rounds. I met with the BTs to discuss their progress on their efficacy level. In Chapter 4, I detail their experiences and examine the effectiveness of Professional Learning on their efficacy and likelihood to remain in education.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

This study aimed to increase beginning teacher efficacy and retention in a diverse middle school setting with appropriate professional learning. Qualitative data was collected through teacher pre- and post-professional learning needs surveys and classroom walkthroughs.

The following section provides a narrative overview of each teacher's professional learning experiences, and instructional practices, and a summary of the interviews conducted with the teachers. Interview questions that were asked were:

- What does quality Professional Learning mean to you?
- How does professional learning shape us?  
How did Professional Learning influence prior knowledge
- How can we use different Professional Learning experiences to shape our teaching?
- Did participating in Professional Learning have an impact on your return to NCMS?
- What is one area of growth for Professional Development
- What is an area of strength?
- What types of Professional Learning do you think a new teacher here would benefit the most back?
- Do you feel like the Professional Learning you participated in was geared individually to your needs?

### **Data Collection**

Data collection for this study took place over the course of one full academic school year. Recruitment began at the start of the year by identifying and inviting Beginning Teachers (BTs)

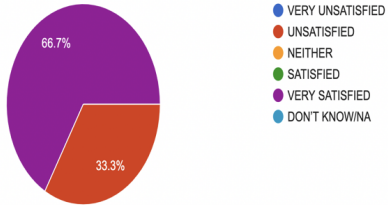
across multiple content areas to participate. Teachers were selected based on their licensure status and included those teaching both state-tested and non-tested subjects. This diverse recruitment approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of professional learning needs and teacher efficacy across different instructional contexts. Teachers were informed about the study through direct communication and voluntary participation was emphasized. Once interest was confirmed, participants completed consent forms and were enrolled in the study. Pre-surveys were administered early in the school year, followed by the implementation of professional learning opportunities and regular walkthroughs, interviews, and post-surveys conducted toward the end of the year. The response rate was strong, with the majority of recruited teachers completing both the pre- and post-surveys, as well as participating in at least one classroom walkthrough and interview. A few minor deviations from the original plan occurred. For example, although focus groups were initially considered for qualitative data collection, one participant expressed a preference for a one-on-one interview due to scheduling conflicts and personal comfort, which was honored to maintain engagement. Additionally, due to varying pacing of instructional units across different content areas, some walkthroughs were rescheduled to better align with instructional observation goals. These small adjustments did not impact the integrity of the data collection process but reflect the flexible and responsive approach taken to support participant needs while still meeting the research objectives.

### **Data Analysis**

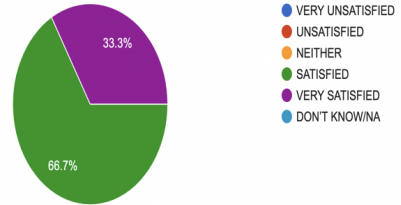
All data for this study were securely managed using a password-protected computer to ensure participant confidentiality and data integrity. Survey data collected through Google Forms were accessible only to me, as the sole owner of the form and results. For qualitative data, interviews were conducted via Zoom and recorded with participant permission. Immediately

after each session, recordings were uploaded to Otter.ai, a secure transcription service that captures detailed. Quantitative data were collected through two validated survey instruments (the Professional Learning Needs Assessment Survey (Hanover Research Institute) and the Short and Long Efficacy Scales developed by Ohio State University. Pre- and post-surveys were administered to measure growth in teacher perceptions of professional learning and self-efficacy (see Figures 4 & 5). For qualitative data, I followed a systematic thematic analysis approach. First, I reviewed each transcript multiple times to familiarize myself with the data. I then conducted initial coding using open coding strategies to capture significant statements and patterns. Codes were organized into categories, which were then synthesized into emerging themes aligned with the study's research questions. The analysis continued across participants and refining themes to ensure consistency. This study followed a mixed methods design as outlined in Chapter 3. Quantitative data helped establish patterns in teacher satisfaction and efficacy growth, while qualitative data from interviews and classroom walkthroughs added context and depth to these patterns. Integration occurred during the interpretation phase, where qualitative findings were used to explain or elaborate on quantitative trends. While the original plan called for all interviews to be conducted in person, scheduling constraints led to the use of Zoom instead. This adjustment did not compromise data quality, and in some cases, allowed for more flexible and candid conversations. This comprehensive data management and analysis process allowed for triangulation of results and supported the credibility and validity of the study's findings.

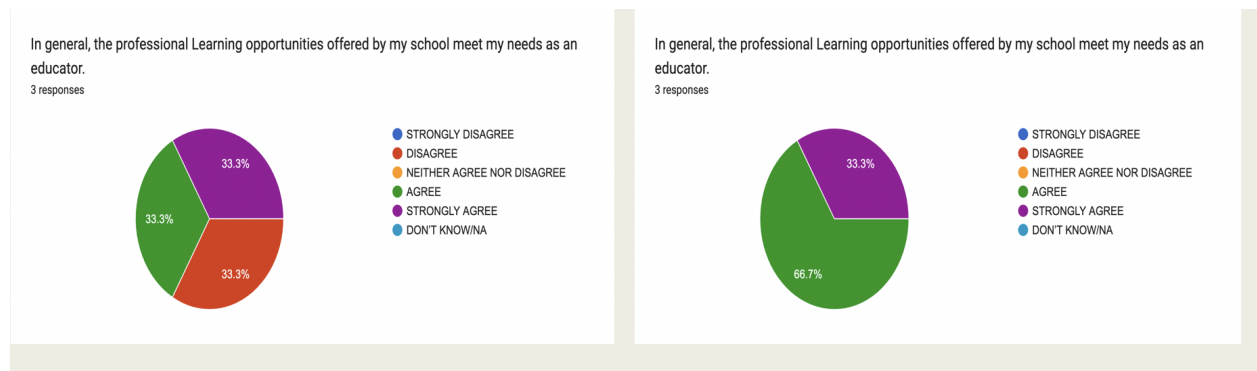
Overall, how satisfied are you with the PL your programs offered by your school?  
3 responses



Overall, how satisfied are you with the PL your programs offered by your school this year?  
3 responses



*Figure 4. Pre & Post Survey Professional Learning Programs Satisfaction.*



*Figure 5. Pre & Post Short & Long Term Efficacy.*

## **Demographics**

### **Mr. Rubio**

Mr. Rubio, an international teacher from Colombia, discussed his two years of teaching experience in the US, focusing on math and Spanish. I met with Mr. Rubio throughout the fall 2023 semester to better understand his experiences from the previous year. In addition, he took the Professional Learning Pre-Assessment. He began to participate in Professional learning as highlighted in Table 3. In the fall of 2024, I interviewed Mr. Rubio to ascertain his experiences as highlighted in Table 3. He highlighted cultural differences and the importance of professional learning, noting that U.S. methods differ from those in Colombia. Professional learning helped him adapt by providing structured models for collaborative learning and classroom management. He emphasized the significance of classroom management for new international teachers. Mr. Uribe found professional learning beneficial, particularly for balancing cultural expectations with teaching strategies. He noted that collaborative learning is a current strength, and there is no immediate area for growth (see Table 3).

### **Ms. Stief**

I met with Ms. Stief throughout the fall 2023 semester to better understand her experiences from the previous year. In addition, she took the Professional Learning Pre-Assessment. She began to participate in Professional learning as highlighted in Table 4. In the fall of 2024, I interviewed Ms. Stief to ascertain her experiences as highlighted in Table 4. Ms. Stief emphasized that quality professional learning (PL) should be led by experienced educators who are recently in the classroom and familiar with the audience's demographic and resources (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Mr. Rubio*

| Question                                                                                                                                                | Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What does professional development or professional learning mean to you?                                                                                | “When I arrived in the US and I started to participate in those professional learning programs or courses, I realized that here in the US, they have a style. The way we have professional development in Colombia, and when I mean style, it means that the way that a trainer develops a workshop is it. They have a structure, a clear structure. I realized that that would be like a model for my class.” |
| The professional learning that you did, how do you think it shaped you and enhanced the skills that you already had?                                    | “So when I try to combine the model of professional learning and then the activities that I proposed in the class and I balanced, like, try to try to connect the two things, like, here the culture, here the model, and I try to do in the middle, that's when the things went much better.”                                                                                                                 |
| How did professional learning influence what you already knew?                                                                                          | “I love to participate in those professional learning opportunities. I think that even if you know something, you can learn things from the person, from the content.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| How can you use the different professional development experiences to shape your teaching, or how do you use them to shape your teaching for this year? | “The way that I structured my classroom was an activity that I learned in one of the professional learning activities. So, for example, I realized that I want to work in a collaborative environment. So the structure of my classroom, that setting up my classroom has to be in a specific way to do my things in my classroom.”                                                                            |
| Do you feel like participating in professional learning and development had an impact on your return to your current school?                            | Yes, sir. Yes, definitely,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

Table 3 (continued)

| Question                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| To what extent do you think it played a large part? Is continued professional learning one of the things that makes you excited? Or how would you describe that?                                              | “It was great. When I got the best professional learning was when I was physically ready to learn. I was like, open mind to receive the information. I was excited because I got the time, I was mentally ready so and when the workshops finished, I reviewed my notes, and I said, okay, I can connect this even though I take notes for the behavior, as I told you, of the person who's who was training. So I was trying to figure out how I'm going to put that in my classrooms.” |
| What types of professional learning Do you think a new teacher would benefit the most? What would you think would be the most beneficial types of professional learning to get them through their first year? | “I think that there is a big difference between BT, an American teacher and BT, who is an international teacher. I had nine years of experience teaching but when I arrived here, it was like negative nine like, I got like, no experience at all. I think that is going to be beneficial for a beginner teacher and international beginner teacher, to work around classroom management. I think that that's the huge challenge that we faced when we arrived the first week.”         |
| Do you feel like so far, the professional, learning that you have done is being geared individually to what your needs are?                                                                                   | “I think so. The way that the presenters behave models what is expected to have in a classroom, like in a middle class, in a middle school classroom.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| What is one area of strength for the professional learning that occurs at NCMS? What is one area of growth                                                                                                    | “Collaborative learning, it's a strength. I think we plan, using the different strategies, the wider strategies.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

Table 4

*Ms. Stief*

| Question                                                                                                                                                         | Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What does professional development or professional learning mean to you?                                                                                         | “Quality professional learning looks like someone who has been in the field for a long time and is as close to being in the classroom as they can so it's not somebody that is so far removed from being in the classroom, like they're not years out of practice of being in the classroom.” |
| The professional learning that you did, how do you think it shaped you and enhanced the skills that you already had?                                             | “I think that it reminds us that we're in a field that changes constantly, and it's not something that's ever going to stay the same. It's always going to be changing, and we have to evolve with it.”                                                                                       |
| How did professional learning influence what you already knew?                                                                                                   | “I just, I've come back with a bit more confidence, and the prior knowledge is now a little bit more solidified.”                                                                                                                                                                             |
| How can you use the different professional development experiences to shape your teaching, or how do you use them to shape your teaching for this year?          | “If we just go to the same professional development sessions all the time. We're never going to get enough strategies to fully help our kids and with us, for instance, me going to the PLC conference and the AVID conference.”                                                              |
| Do you feel like participating in professional learning and development had an impact on your return to your current school?                                     | “I think it did, especially this past year, my first year of education, of teaching, was tough for me, and I felt like I didn't go on a lot of professional development, and I was constantly left with this feeling of, Am I doing the right thing?”                                         |
| To what extent do you think it played a large part? Is continued professional learning one of the things that makes you excited? Or how would you describe that? | “The mentorship that is at the school is incredible. The weak point is that there are not a whole lot of lateral meetups with other teachers. We're not having any vertical alignment meetings”                                                                                               |

Table 4 (continued)

| Question                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>What types of professional learning Do you think a new teacher would benefit the most?<br/> What would you think would be the most beneficial types of professional learning to get them through their first year?</p> | <p>“I would say, almost after the first semester, start sending them to at least one day of professional development.”</p>                                                                                                |
| <p>Do you feel like so far, the professional, learning that you have done is being geared individually to what your needs are?</p>                                                                                        | <p>“I would say that yes, it contributed a lot to my growth and my confidence as an educator, it contributed to me feeling like I could come back and do well.”</p>                                                       |
| <p>What is one area of strength for the professional learning that occurs at NCMS?<br/> What is one area of growth</p>                                                                                                    | <p>“I think with maybe the EC population, I didn't have to work with a lot of MS last year, so it wasn't as significant for me, but I had a whole class of EC kids, and who knows when I'm going to have that again?”</p> |

She highlighted that professional learning is crucial for educators to evolve with the ever-changing field of education and to maintain a student perspective. Last year's PL, including AVID and PLC conferences, influenced her teaching practices, solidifying her prior knowledge and boosting her confidence. She recommended starting new teachers on professional development after their first semester, focusing on behavior management and content-specific training. She also noted the need for better vertical alignment meetings and more PL to support English learners and special education students.

### **Mr. Racey**

I met with Mr. Racey throughout the fall 2023 semester to better understand his experiences from the previous year. In addition, he took the Professional Learning Pre-Assessment. He began to participate in Professional learning as highlighted in Table 5. In the fall of 2024, I interviewed Mr. Racey to ascertain his experiences as highlighted in Table 5. Mr. Racey views professional learning as a tool for career development, emphasizing its role in providing unique perspectives and additional information. Last year's professional learning focused on integrating assignments, effective leadership, and understanding what constitutes a good leader. Despite loving his community and school, the PD influenced his decision to become a grade-level chair. He stresses the importance of realistic, relatable PD for teacher retention and confidence. Effective PD should be specific to the school's demographics and practical for classroom application. New teachers need foundational skills first, followed by advanced integrations in their second year (see Table 5).

### **Quality Professional Learning**

A theme that emerged during this researcher's observations and interviews with teachers was the need for quality professional learning. On multiple occasions, they emphasized the

Table 5

*Mr. Racey*

| Question                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What does professional development or professional learning mean to you?                                                                                                                                      | “Tools to further your development within your job and your career.”                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| The professional learning that you did, how do you think it shaped you and enhanced the skills that you already had?                                                                                          | “Unique perspectives that you may not have additional information on a topic that you may not have known could have been done one way, or that had an alternate way of handling a situation.”                                                                              |
| How did professional learning influence what you already knew?                                                                                                                                                | “They helped a lot with working on ways to integrate assignments and make assignments, how to work on that, how to be an effective leader, how to be the leader to visualize the leader you want to be, and how to meet that.”                                             |
| How can you use the different professional development experiences to shape your teaching, or how do you use them to shape your teaching for this year?                                                       | “Understanding of my expectations this year as team lead, as grade level chair on how to approach situations and how to be as effective of a leader as I can be.”                                                                                                          |
| Do you feel like participating in professional learning and development had an impact on your return to your current school?                                                                                  | “No, primarily because I love NCMS. I love the community that we have here.”                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| To what extent do you think it played a large part? Is continued professional learning one of the things that makes you excited? Or how would you describe that?                                              | “The school-level AVID professional learning is great because it is done here. The instructional coach does them; she knows what we deal with, and she makes them relatable.”                                                                                              |
| What types of professional learning Do you think a new teacher would benefit the most? What would you think would be the most beneficial types of professional learning to get them through their first year? | “Realistic classroom management & time management.<br>“Second year like the academic integrations, like the AI integrations, the Avid that kind of things, because that first year, you're lost & then second year you incorporate, hey, you have a wonderful foundation.” |

Table 5 (continued)

| Question                                                                                                                   | Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Do you feel like so far, the professional learning that you have done is being geared individually to what your needs are? | “A vast majority of them. I did a couple of teaching American history, and those were directly related to topics that I will be covering, and it gave me wonderful and useful information and knowledge, a deeper understanding of topics that I can pass along to them. So absolutely.” |
| What is one area of strength for the professional learning that occurs at NCMS?<br>What is one area of growth?             | “We did some PD and some grade level PL last year with the IC. Those were fantastic.”                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

importance of professional learning being led by someone recently in the classroom and familiar with the current educational environment.

So it's hard for me to go to a PL and hear from somebody talking about how their methods work when they work in a school with a different demographic than we have, or with a set of community support that they have, that we might not have, or resources that we don't have, that they do, and it just doesn't end up translating the way that it should. So it looks like someone qualified and recently in the classroom and aware of the audience that they're speaking to.

Having quality professional learning for beginning teachers is crucial, and we must closely examine the experiences of beginning teachers, given the persistent teacher shortage and the pressing need to enhance student achievement (Allen & Butler, 1996; Gay, 2013). Ms. Stief expressed that public education is never going to stay the same. It's always going to be changing, and we have to evolve with it. It's never going to be stagnant. Mr. Racey commented,

Consider making professional development more realistic and applicable to the student demographics. Continue providing professional learning like AVID training and instructional coaching that is specific and relatable to the school.

### **Advanced Instructional Practice of Professional Learning**

Professional learning advanced practice as teachers from PL were another theme. All of the participants mentioned that many PLs were BT-related, focusing on integrating assignments and effective leadership. In addition, they discussed the importance of visualizing and becoming an effective leader, which the PL also dealt with throughout this study. They confirmed that the PL (this study) covered both instructional and leadership skills. Mr. Rubio noted that professional learning helped educators see things from their students' perspectives, fostering empathy and understanding. He mentioned that attending professional learning sessions puts educators back in the role of a student, allowing them to reflect on their own learning experiences. In addition, Ms. Stief appreciates the opportunity to learn new strategies and approaches that can be applied in the classroom.

## **Professional Learning Supports Teacher Efficacy and Retention**

Participants reflected on their first year of teaching and the lack of professional learning, which left them feeling uncertain and unprepared. All conveyed that receiving professional development solidified their skills and confidence, making them feel more invested in their role. Ms. Stief stated that she appreciates being sent on professional learning sessions, which they felt was a sign of being valued and supported by the school. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of professional development in helping new teachers feel confident and prepared for their role. Mr. Racey suggests that beginning teachers should start attending professional development sessions after their first semester while recommending sending teachers on one-day professional development sessions or after-school sessions to introduce them to new strategies. Mr. Rubio advises waiting until the second year to send teachers on away conferences to ensure they have a solid foundation and can apply what they learn. He emphasizes the importance of behavior management and content-specific professional development for new teachers.

### **Walkthroughs**

My inquiry focused on the retention of alternatively licensed and traditionally licensed teachers. In addition, it looked at teacher self-efficacy versus student achievement for those teachers. I assume BTs want to keep current in their content area/field, view learning as a lifelong process, and see their professional growth as enhancing student learning and success. A supportive climate that encourages openness and collaboration is critical for professional growth.

In addition, teachers are assumed to implement the strategies provided with fidelity. A mixed exploratory-sequential method was used to collect data from participants. Beginning teachers took a short and long efficacy survey followed by a needs assessment for Professional Learning needs they have. After reviewing this data, I facilitated Professional Learning

throughout the year along with beginning teacher walkthroughs (see Tables 6 & 7) (to observe the implementation of newly acquired skills) and instructional rounds. An instructional coach debriefed each of the beginning teachers after instructional rounds. I also met with the BTs to discuss their progress on their efficacy level. I was responsible for developing novice teachers into master teachers through constructive feedback, Professional Learning, and opportunities to extend learning via Walkthroughs (see Tables 6 & 7, and Appendix I). If beginning teachers lack support, they tend to feel undervalued and unappreciated. I facilitated the walkthroughs to help retain teachers and keep attrition numbers low. Constant conversations and checking in with beginning teachers gauge the teacher's learning and allowed me to address any concerns. Beginning teachers enter a profession where they must prepare to face the challenges. These teachers need support from every level within a district for them to teach. With an ever-changing country that has become more diverse, beginning teachers require support to retain and build successful schools.

I was tasked with creating an environment that models respect and value. Once that safe space is created, other staff members recognize and emulate those expectations for others to see. I must also consider opportunities to break the mold and lead staff in these instructional practices.

Consider making professional development more realistic and applicable to the student demographics. Continue providing professional development like AVID training and instructional coaching that is specific and relatable to the school. Provide new teachers support on using Canvas, PowerSchool, and other school systems as a priority in their first year. Explore opportunities for teachers to observe lessons at other schools. Focus on beginning teacher professional development on behavior management and content-specific topics. Consider

Table 6

*Results*

| Teacher                                            | Highlights                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mr. Rubio (International Teacher – Math & Spanish) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Emphasized structured Professional Learning models for international teachers.</li> <li>● Highlighted cultural differences in teaching methods.</li> <li>● Found classroom management &amp; collaborative learning essential.</li> </ul>                                                      |
| Ms. Stief (BT2 – Math)                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stressed need for experienced facilitators in Professional Learning.</li> <li>● Recommended behavior management &amp; vertical alignment support.</li> <li>● Benefited from AVID training &amp; Professional Learning Teams (PLTs).</li> </ul>                                                |
| Mr. Racey (BT2 – Social Studies)                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Professional Learning strengthened his leadership &amp; integration of assignments.</li> <li>● Found realistic, school-specific Professional Learning more effective.</li> <li>● Advocated foundational Professional Learning in Year 1, advanced Professional Learning in Year 2.</li> </ul> |

Table 7

*Professional Learning Offered*

| Teacher | Experience/Subject | Professional Learning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rubio   | International/Math | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly School level AVID</li> <li>• Monthly School Level (based on Needs Surveys)</li> <li>• Participate Professional Learning</li> <li>• NCCAT</li> <li>• STEM East: Biopharma</li> <li>• Data-Driven</li> <li>• EOG Reviews: It could be fun!</li> </ul> |
| Stief   | BT2/Math           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly School level AVID</li> <li>• Monthly School Level (based on Needs Surveys)</li> <li>• AVID Training</li> <li>• PLC Conference</li> </ul>                                                                                                            |
| Racey   | BT2/Social Studies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly School level AVID</li> <li>• Monthly School Level (based on Needs Surveys)</li> <li>• Monthly PD with District History Specialist</li> </ul>                                                                                                        |

sending beginning teachers to one-day professional development sessions starting in their first semester of teaching. Continue implementing strategies learned from professional development in the classroom. The focus was on discussing past experiences. All participants echoed the belief that effective professional learning not only has the potential to improve both teaching and student outcomes but can also be effective in recruiting and retaining teachers. To involve teachers in high-quality professional learning, administrators must also consider teacher agency, which is the power for teachers to act decisively and positively to better ensure their professional growth. In other words, teachers must decide to improve their practice before systemic change can happen through professional development activities. Teachers who participated in Professional Learning during the first few years of teaching shared that it helped to instill the importance of being a lifelong learner linked to professional growth. In addition, Professional Learning supports the growth of educators. Learning should create a culture centered around professional growth for beginning teachers to succeed. Induction programs should offer various Professional Learning opportunities that cater to the teacher's needs. The ultimate goal of Professional Learning for teachers should be to build knowledge while improving student learning. Most importantly, high-quality Professional Learning focuses on supporting teachers with diverse learners.

### **Role of the Administrator**

School leaders must develop a sense of responsibility to help staff efficiently for all students to learn effectively. Effective school leadership is also necessary for developing teacher efficacy. Schools with administrators that helped build teacher efficacy had more significant teacher commitment, partnerships, and higher academic achievement. Those partnerships showed unity was expected no matter the title of an individual. Self-efficacy can be developed

early in learning. Administrators can affect a teacher's efficacy positively or negatively. School administrators should see this as an opportunity to develop and grow novice teachers who can positively affect our world's outcome. School leaders should understand the importance of investing in teachers to see constant improvement. Additionally, school leaders should aim to help teachers engage in Professional Learning every day. Teachers who are involved in a focused, consistent approach to developing themselves further will begin to have a deeper commitment to the school and its purpose. With deeper commitments, teachers will choose to stay in the profession and work toward collective goals of improvement. School leaders must consider building trust, building teacher morale, and building efficiency among their staff. The school leader is the one who sets the tone, the culture, and the climate of a school building. With the rates of teacher retention in mind, leaders should be proactive and invest in teachers. Teachers cannot survive isolated and alone in their classrooms.

### **Teacher Efficacy**

Teacher self-efficacy beliefs were positively associated with engagement. As expected teacher self-efficacy would, through teaching experiences, be positively associated with job resources and negatively associated with job demands. These participants echoed that their teacher's self-efficacy was positively affected by a supportive social environment and the experience of value consonance, and negatively affected by job demands, for instance, discipline problems.

### **Summary**

The findings of this study addressed the core research questions by highlighting the critical role of meaningful, job-embedded professional learning in fostering beginning teacher growth, retention, and instructional effectiveness. Participants consistently emphasized that

effective professional development, especially when tailored to the needs of the school's diverse student population, can lead to improved teaching practices and student outcomes. Furthermore, early exposure to professional learning opportunities, such as AVID training, instructional coaching, and content-specific sessions, helped shape teachers' perceptions of themselves as lifelong learners and professionals capable of adapting and thriving in their roles. Several themes emerged from the data, including the importance of teacher agency, practical and relevant learning experiences, and the need for structured support systems for new teachers. Participants advocated for a stronger emphasis on classroom management training, access to instructional tools like Canvas and PowerSchool, and the opportunity to observe effective teaching practices in different settings. These findings align with existing research that suggests a culture of continuous learning, backed by responsive leadership, contributes significantly to teacher self-efficacy and commitment to the profession. Administrators play a vital role in this process. As leaders, they are tasked with creating an environment of support, trust, and professional growth. Their actions can directly influence teacher efficacy, morale, and ultimately, retention. Leaders who invest in their staff, foster collaboration, and prioritize differentiated professional learning can expect a more committed and empowered teaching force. In Chapter 5, these findings will connect the lived experiences of beginning teachers with the implications for professional learning design, school leadership, and the cultivation of teacher efficacy. The chapter also presents practical recommendations for school leaders and policymakers, with the ultimate goal of strengthening the professional journeys of early-career educators.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS**

This study explored Professional Learning practices and their impact on Beginning Teachers' (BT) efficacy and retention in a diverse middle school setting. The findings underscore the nuanced relationship between instructional pedagogy, student engagement, and teacher efficacy.

### **Summary of the Findings**

The findings of this study highlight that high-quality professional learning is a critical component in supporting beginning teachers and ensuring long-term educator effectiveness. Participants overwhelmingly emphasized that professional learning must be structured, relevant, and timely to meet the real challenges faced in the classroom. When professional development is directly tied to teachers' day-to-day experiences, it becomes more impactful and meaningful. For BTs, professional learning should prioritize classroom management strategies and deep content knowledge, equipping them with practical tools for immediate success. As teachers grow in experience, professional learning should evolve to focus on leadership development, collaborative practices, and advanced instructional strategies, helping educators expand their influence beyond the classroom. A key finding of this study is that school leaders play a vital role in creating a culture of continuous learning. When administrators prioritize teacher growth and create structured opportunities for reflection, collaboration, and coaching, teachers are more likely to feel supported and remain committed to their school community. Equally important is the need for professional learning to be responsive to the individual needs of teachers. Participants noted that one-size-fits-all approaches are often ineffective, while learning opportunities tailored to a teacher's role, experience, and student demographics produce far better outcomes. Additionally, professional learning that incorporates cultural understanding and

relevance helps teachers create more inclusive and responsive classrooms. Finally, this study emphasizes that timely and consistent professional development is not just beneficial—it is essential for teacher retention and growth. When schools invest in meaningful learning experiences, they are also investing in the long-term success of both their teachers and their students.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The findings of this study both confirm and extend the body of knowledge explored in Chapter 2. Consistent with the existing literature, the study affirms that school leaders play a pivotal role in cultivating a culture of continuous professional learning. As discussed in the literature, effective leadership fosters environments in which teachers feel valued, supported, and empowered to grow professionally (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This study reinforces those claims by demonstrating that when administrators provide structured, reflective, and collaborative learning opportunities, teachers report higher levels of engagement and commitment to their school communities. The study also confirms literature that critiques generic professional development models. Much like Desimone's (2009) emphasis on content-focused, active learning experiences, participants in this study emphasized the ineffectiveness of one-size-fits-all approaches. Instead, they advocated for professional learning tailored to the diverse needs of teachers, echoing research that highlights differentiation and contextual relevance as hallmarks of effective professional development. Moreover, this study extends the discussion on culturally responsive teaching by highlighting the importance of integrating cultural relevance into professional learning. This supports and expands upon research by Gay (2013) and Ladson-Billings (1995), which emphasize the need for educators to be equipped with the skills to navigate and honor the cultural contexts of their students.

In alignment with the study's conceptual framework, rooted in Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and adult learning principles, the findings further demonstrate that professional learning impacts teacher efficacy and retention. Teachers who engaged in meaningful, consistent professional development reported increased confidence and a stronger sense of agency, which is central to Bandura's model of self-efficacy. These findings also support Knowles' theory of adult learning, which posits that adults are motivated to learn when the learning is relevant to their immediate context and goals. In summary, the findings confirm the literature regarding the importance of leadership, customization, and cultural responsiveness in professional development. They also extend the conversation by showing how these elements, when aligned with principles of adult learning and self-efficacy, can foster long-term retention and growth in BTs. All interpretations remain grounded in the data and within the scope of this study.

### **Applicable in Instructional Practices**

Professional Learning (PL) opportunities must tailor their strategies to their teachers' professional and educational needs, rejecting one-size-fits-all approaches. Flexibility in PL delivery, such as collaborative learning opportunities and relevant, student-centered instruction, effectively enhances engagement and reduces disciplinary issues. Teacher instructional efficacy grows when administrators build learning teams, maintain sustained focus, and implement cycles of inquiry followed by reflection (Fullan & Kirtman, 2019). Professional Learning opportunities should be ongoing, goal-oriented, and embedded in the school's daily culture. This approach enhances teacher skills, morale, and commitment (Fullan & Kirtman, 2019; Wang, 2023). A supportive school leader who invests in teachers can lower attrition rates by building trust, morale, and efficacy. Teachers confident in their ability to influence students are more likely to adopt effective teaching strategies and foster positive classroom environments. Supportive

relationships with colleagues and supervisors enhance teacher well-being and self-efficacy. School leaders must reduce factors like discipline issues and workload pressures that negatively affect self-efficacy.

### **Acceptance of Cultural Contexts**

A thorough understanding of participants' cultural backgrounds enriches classroom dynamics and promotes student success. Study participants responded positively to teaching methods that acknowledged and valued their and their students' lived experiences, fostering a sense of inclusion and ownership in their learning. Administrators facilitate Professional Learning tailored to DL teachers' unique needs, offering opportunities for teachers to volunteer and provide input on topics, present at workshops, engage in dialogue across grade levels and districts, and renew practices to address the needs of DL students. Effective Professional Learning builds a culture that aligns beliefs and practices with growth targets, fostering meaningful change in schools (Lammert et al., 2015). The support administrators provide affects how DL teachers perceive their abilities, their students, and their capacity to influence program success. This includes onboarding new DL teachers, engaging parents in the DL process and building partnerships with district teacher preparation programs to mentor candidates, and hosting clinical practice sites in DL settings. Efficacy building involves developing the skills, processes, and resources needed to achieve goals. Administrators achieve this by aligning beliefs and refining practices with desired growth targets, using tools like coaching and feedback (Lammert et al., 2015). When administrators actively support DL teachers, the effects extend beyond individual classrooms. Administrators help instill a mindset of cultural growth, ensuring that DL programs remain equitable and inclusive. In summary, administrators play a pivotal role in supporting DL teachers through Professional Learning, efficacy building, and fostering

collaboration. This collaborative approach leads to stronger programs and more significant, equity-driven outcomes for dual language learners and their communities (Lammert et al., 2015).

### **Professional Learning Timeliness**

Involving teachers in Professional Learning ensures they remain lifelong learners, which is crucial during the early years of teaching (Taranto, 2011). Effective Professional Learning fosters a culture centered on growth and supports diverse learners to ensure equitable outcomes for all students (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Wei et al., 2009). Professional support through collegial interactions significantly influences teachers' job satisfaction and retention. Teachers' embeddedness in social networks allows them to access resources and knowledge, impacting both individual and school-wide growth (Thomas et al., 2019). Schools with isolated social structures risk limiting teachers' resource access and collaboration opportunities. Principals play a critical role in creating environments conducive to Professional Learning. Successful principals foster productive learning climates, facilitate collaborative communities, and strategically manage resources. They engage teachers in instructional-focused interactions and use evaluation strategies to enhance teaching practices (Grissom, 2021). High-quality Professional Learning incorporates self-assessment, data-driven goals, and collaborative problem-solving to address teaching challenges (Psencik, 2022). Professional Learning improves teacher effectiveness, raises student achievement, and retains teachers by promoting collaboration and growth-oriented practices. It equips teachers to work effectively with diverse learners and aligns individual goals with district and school objectives, creating a culture of continuous improvement (Desimone & Parsons, 2020; Wong, 2004). Evaluations help administrators identify areas where beginning teachers excel and where they need support (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). The rubric ensures

observations are objective and tied directly to state standards, promoting consistent expectations. The process should be used not just for assessment but to provide targeted support and professional growth opportunities for beginning teachers. The ultimate goal of this observation and evaluation process is to ensure beginning teachers are supported and guided in their professional development, fostering improved teaching practices and alignment with state educational goals. While PL can help support good teaching, this study highlighted the importance of early PL (in the first couple years of a BT) to help with equitable disciplinary practices, communication with stakeholders, and an intentional focus on understanding the job demands of a teacher. These findings suggest that PL can help build a BTs confidence by creating rigorous, student-centered environments. In addition, effective PL can emphasize collaboration, respect, and high expectations among their colleagues.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study focused on the retention of alternatively licensed and traditionally licensed teachers, excluding veteran teacher retention. As previously stated, I assumed that Beginning Teachers (BTs) aim to stay current in their content areas, view learning as a lifelong process, and understand that their professional growth directly enhances student learning and success. A supportive climate fostering openness and collaboration is critical for professional growth, and as the principal of NCMS, I recognized the importance of staying actively involved in supporting teachers' professional development. One notable limitation of the study is that honest reflection can often be a challenge for BTs. Additionally, a key assumption for this study was that teachers would implement the strategies and practices provided to them with fidelity. However, this may not always be the case, presenting a potential limitation for replicating the study. Several other limitations must also be acknowledged. As both the principal and investigator, there was a risk

that my position may have influenced the honesty of the responses I received. Teachers may have felt conflicted or hesitant to provide fully candid feedback due to my dual roles as evaluator and researcher. This duality could create confusion for teachers and present a limitation in how my involvement was perceived. The small sample size (three participants) may have been a limitation. When selecting participants, I sought to ensure representation across content areas and years of experience. However, including a broader range of participants, such as first-year BTs or third-year BTs, could have provided additional perspectives when answering guided questions. This study was conducted at a small, rural middle school. As a result, the findings may not directly apply to larger schools, urban schools, or schools with different grade spans. Future research could explore how the results might differ in urban settings, larger schools, or other contexts. The study was conducted for one school year. It would be interesting to explore how the effects of the strategies studied might change over an extended period, such as two years, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their impact. Future studies could examine how these findings translate to rural schools, urban districts, or larger educational settings, and whether longer-term implementation of these strategies would yield different outcomes. Despite these challenges, the focus remains on fostering an environment where BTs feel supported and empowered to grow, ultimately benefiting their professional development and student achievement.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The study's findings suggest several actionable strategies for effective Professional Learning. Teachers should engage in continuous self-reflection to identify and address their instructional areas of improvement. Reflective practices, such as walkthroughs and instructional rounds, can help teachers develop a deeper understanding of their students' needs about their

instructional methods. Secondly, teachers thrive in environments where they feel empowered. Providing options in school-level Professional Learning opportunities encourages engagement and fosters a sense of responsibility. At NCMS, a comprehensive approach to Professional Learning was adopted, emphasizing both school-wide and departmental development. NCMS offered monthly AVID Professional Learning sessions tailored to staff needs. At the beginning of the year, staff members rated their specific areas of interest and growth. Based on this feedback, administration and the instructional coach collaboratively developed seminars that addressed these needs, with a particular focus on supporting Beginning Teachers (BTs). In addition to AVID sessions, NCMS provided monthly departmental Professional Learning led by an Instructional Coach. This targeted approach ensured that each department received content-specific training and support. By partnering with District content specialists, administration facilitated weekly instructional meetings that extended beyond the typical Professional Learning Teams (PLTs). These sessions provided ongoing support and deeper content exploration, further enhancing instructional practices. Administration worked closely with BTs to identify valuable external Professional Learning opportunities that would be crucial for their development. These opportunities included participation in programs such as Solution Tree, Participate Learning and Teach for America. Solution Tree offered strategies for effective teaching and leadership. Participate Learning provided global and cultural education resources. Teach For America supported continuous growth and equity-focused teaching practices. These efforts demonstrate NCMS's commitment to providing personalized, ongoing, and collaborative Professional Learning experiences that cater to the evolving needs of educators, particularly those new to the profession. Next, Professional Learning coupled with effective mentoring that emphasizes teamwork and shared goals promotes inclusivity and cooperation. Collaborative

strategies also allow BTs to learn from each other's diverse perspectives. Finally, Professional Learning opportunities should connect to BTs and students' lived experiences and challenge them. Incorporating relevant presenters, Professional Learning, and real-world applications makes learning more meaningful.

### **Implications for School Leadership and Policy**

The study also carries significant implications for school administrators and policymakers. Along with schools, districts must invest (financial and human capital) in workshops and Professional Learning communities focused on all facets of growing a BTs effectiveness. In addition, pre-service teacher education programs should prioritize cultural competence as a core component of their programs. Future teachers need practical training that equips them to navigate diverse classrooms. Lastly, schools with predominantly minority student populations often have a higher percentage of beginning teachers. This disparity highlights the need for equitable distribution of experienced educators and tailored support for new teachers in high-need areas.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Based on the results of this study, several actionable recommendations can be made for practitioners and educational leaders at the local, district, state, and national levels. These recommendations are grounded in the study's findings and aim to enhance teacher retention, professional growth, and instructional effectiveness, particularly for beginning teachers. School districts should move away from generalized, one-size-fits-all professional development models and instead offer differentiated learning opportunities based on teacher experience, content area, and student demographics. This could include offering choice-based PD tracks, needs-based coaching, and targeted support for teachers of diverse learners. Local and district-level leaders

should revise induction programs to prioritize high-need areas such as classroom management, content-specific strategies, and school systems (e.g., PowerSchool, Canvas). First-year teachers should receive immediate and structured onboarding to these platforms, with ongoing check-ins throughout the year. School administrators should create a culture of ongoing learning by integrating regular coaching, peer observations, and collaborative planning into the school calendar. Leadership teams must model and promote continuous improvement, encouraging teachers to engage in professional learning as a natural part of their work. District and school leaders should implement systems that allow teachers, particularly beginning teachers, to observe strong instructional practices within their school or at other campuses. This could include release time for walkthroughs, professional learning communities (PLCs), or video-based lesson studies at the state and district levels, policies should support PL that enhances cultural competence and understanding. Teachers should receive training that equips them to meet the needs of diverse learners, ensuring inclusive, equitable classrooms. Teachers benefit from flexible, bite-sized PL that addresses immediate classroom needs. Districts should offer one-day or half-day workshops throughout the year that focus on topics like student engagement, assessment strategies, and content pedagogy. State and national education agencies should recognize high-quality, personalized professional learning as a key component of teacher retention strategies. Funding should be directed toward sustained PL programs that go beyond compliance and foster growth, efficacy, and community among educators. Policy makers should include teacher feedback in the design and evaluation of professional learning initiatives. This will increase teacher agency and ensure that PL aligns with real classroom needs.

These recommendations collectively support a vision of professional learning that is relevant, responsive, and relational, key components that, according to this study, foster teacher efficacy, student success, and long-term commitment to the profession.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

While this study provided valuable insights, future research could deepen our understanding of Professional Learning. Conducting studies across multiple schools and regions in the US would provide a more comprehensive view of how Professional Learning varies in different educational settings. Moreover, examining how teacher preparation programs address cultural responsiveness would help identify gaps and inform curriculum improvements. In conclusion, a closer look at what school districts are doing to equip their teachers with individualized Professional Learning for BTs, Alternative Licensed teachers, and International teachers would highlight successful practices and areas for growth.

### **Conclusions**

The study confirms many elements of Professional Learning that BTs need to be exposed to, however, they need to be done with fidelity and intentional in practice. The failure to prepare teachers adequately for diverse classrooms continues to affect the confidence and retention of BTs negatively. However, there is reason for optimism. The findings demonstrate that BTs of all backgrounds can thrive when PL is applied to their setting, BTs are given a tool to self-reflect in determining their areas of improvement and beginning teachers are equipped with the tools to meet their needs. By prioritizing Professional Learning, educators not only promote growth but also enhance the academic and social experiences of their students, while retaining newly hired BTs. This work requires commitment, reflection, and collaboration, but its impact on the educational landscape is profound. While there are no simple solutions, a collective effort will

help ensure that all Beginning Teachers, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to succeed.

### **Scholarly Practitioner Reflections on Leadership**

Through the process of completing this dissertation and accompanying study, I have gained a deeper understanding of my leadership styles, and decision-making skills, and how they are developed over time. This reflection has allowed me to assess my strengths, identify areas for growth, and recognize the importance of adaptability when leading and supporting beginning teachers (BTs).

I naturally gravitate toward a detail-oriented approach, ensuring tasks are completed thoroughly and accurately. Double- and triple-checking my work brings me confidence that decisions are sound and implemented correctly. However, I acknowledge this tendency can sometimes be a hindrance, leading to prolonged task completion or frustrations with team members who may approach work differently. Recognizing this, I strive to balance precision with efficiency and collaboration. I believe in universal guidelines, rules, and principles that serve as anchors for decision-making. This structured approach provides consistency and fairness, qualities I value in leadership. However, I must remain mindful of flexibility when principles need to be adjusted to address situational nuances or unique challenges. Effective leaders strive to leave emotions out of decisions, and I aim to do the same. While remaining rational and objective is essential, I also understand the importance of balancing this with emotional intelligence to maintain relationships and trust. This study reaffirmed that I am someone who pays close attention to group dynamics and prioritizes trust in my interactions. For me, effective leadership is not just about making the right decision but also about ensuring the decision respects and strengthens relationships. Trust is a foundational component of leadership,

particularly when working with BTs, as it fosters collaboration, growth, and morale. I have come to appreciate that leadership requires adaptability. Many leaders fail when they are unable or unwilling to adjust their style to fit a given situation while balancing the needs of individuals and the collective group. Whether handling student conflicts, addressing staff concerns, or navigating personal challenges, I recognize the importance of weighing the costs and benefits of decisions while considering their impact on all stakeholders. This process has provided clarity on where I stand as a leader and where I aspire to be. I know my strengths—detailed focus, principled decision-making, and relational trust-building. These qualities have guided my leadership and will continue to shape my growth. Recognizing that leadership is a dynamic process, I can fine-tune my approach. I will make minor adjustments where needed without compromising what is already working effectively. As I move forward I will continue to build on my strengths, using trust and relationships as a foundation for leadership. I will maintain a balance between precision and collaboration to support team efficiency. I will prioritize adaptability, ensuring I adjust my leadership style to fit the needs of the moment, while keeping stakeholders' needs at the forefront. This journey has reinforced that leadership is a continual process of learning, reflection, and growth. By fine-tuning my qualities, maintaining trust, and preserving relationships, I am confident in my ability to support beginning teachers, foster a positive school culture, and lead with purpose and integrity.

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## APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



**EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY**  
**University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board**  
Willis Building · Mail Stop 682  
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834  
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** ·  
[rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/](https://rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/)

### Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB  
To: [Keith Neal](#)  
CC: [Karen Jones](#)  
Date: 4/23/2024  
Re: [UMCIRB 23-002521](#)  
Increasing Beginning Teacher Efficacy and Retention Rate

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 4/23/2024. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category # 2b.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

## APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Classroom Teacher,

I am currently working on my Doctor of Education at East Carolina University. As part of a course assignment, I have developed Dissertation in Practice (DiP) to be conducted at North Carolina Middle (NCMS) School. I am asking if you would be willing to participate in my study. This project must be submitted and approved by ECU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before it can be implemented; your permission to allow yourself to be a part of this project is a requirement of the IRB review process. I am required to provide the IRB with a copy of your permission before the IRB will review and/or approve the project. Please note that as your direct supervisor, your decision to participate in this research project will not affect your current job status. If you decide not to participate, no repercussions will be held against you.

Please review the Dissertation in Practice and sign the bottom of this form if the inclusion of your classroom in this DiP, *INCREASING BEGINNING TEACHER EFFICACY & RETENTION IN A DIVERSE MIDDLE SCHOOL SETTING WITH APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING*, meets with your approval.

Sincerely,

Keith L. Neal

Principal of Wellcome Middle School

### **Teacher's Signature and Date:**

I have received and reviewed a copy of Keith L. Neal's DiP , and I give my permission for him to include my classroom in his DiP at Wellcome Middle School.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature Date

## APPENDIX C: PCS RESEARCH APPROVAL

### REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY OR SPECIAL PROJECT

I agree to furnish Pitt County Schools a copy of the results of this research study or special project.

Signature of Person Making Request Keith L. Neal Date 10-12-23

Signature of supervising Professor Karen D Jones Date 10/12/2023

Address University/College Organization E 5th St, Greenville, NC 27858

Telephone Number (252) 268-0687

E-Mail Address nealk@pitt.k12.nc.us

### Approval

Project Approved: ✓

Project Disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred to: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Superintendent/Designee Monny Date 10/11/23

## APPENDIX D: TEACHERS' SENSE OF EFFICACY SCALE (LONG)

**Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale<sup>1</sup> (long form)**

| <b>Teacher Beliefs</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                  | <b>How much can you do?</b> |             |                |             |              |     |     |     |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential. |                                                                                                  | Nothing                     | Very Little | Some Influence | Quite A Bit | A Great Deal |     |     |     |     |
| 1.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?                               | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 2.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | How much can you do to help your students think critically?                                      | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 3.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?                             | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 4.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?                   | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 5.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?                      | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 6.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?                  | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 7.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students ?                             | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 8.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?                         | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 9.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | How much can you do to help your students value learning?                                        | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 10.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?                            | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 11.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?                                   | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 12.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you do to foster student creativity?                                                | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 13.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?                                   | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 14.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?                    | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 15.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?                                | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 16.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?            | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 17.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?          | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 18.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?                                         | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 19.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?                      | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 20.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 21.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How well can you respond to defiant students?                                                    | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 22.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?                    | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 23.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?                             | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 24.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?                       | (1)                         | (2)         | (3)            | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |

Source: (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

## APPENDIX E: TEACHERS' SENSE OF EFFICACY SCALE (SHORT)

| Teacher Beliefs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                  | This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for teachers. Your answers are confidential. |             |             |             |              |     |     |     |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Directions: Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side, ranging from (1) "None at all" to (9) "A Great Deal" as each represents a degree on the continuum. Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position. |                                                                                                  | None at all                                                                                                                                                      | Very Little | Some Degree | Quite A Bit | A Great Deal |     |     |     |     |
| 1.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?                             | (1)                                                                                                                                                              | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 2.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?                   | (1)                                                                                                                                                              | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 3.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?                                | (1)                                                                                                                                                              | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 4.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you do to help your students value learning?                                        | (1)                                                                                                                                                              | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 5.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?                                   | (1)                                                                                                                                                              | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 6.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?                                   | (1)                                                                                                                                                              | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 7.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?                  | (1)                                                                                                                                                              | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 8.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?            | (1)                                                                                                                                                              | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 9.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?                                   | (1)                                                                                                                                                              | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 10.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? | (1)                                                                                                                                                              | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 11.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?                    | (1)                                                                                                                                                              | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| 12.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | How well can you implement alternative teaching strategies in your classroom?                    | (1)                                                                                                                                                              | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)          | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |

|     |                                                      |                                                           |     |                                                                                                     |                                  |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 13. | What is your gender?                                 | <input type="radio"/> Male                                | 16. | What level do you teach?                                                                            | <input type="radio"/> Elementary |
|     |                                                      | <input type="radio"/> Female                              |     |                                                                                                     | <input type="radio"/> Middle     |
|     |                                                      |                                                           |     |                                                                                                     | <input type="radio"/> High       |
| 14. | What is your racial identity?                        | <input type="radio"/> African American                    | 17. | What is the context of your school?                                                                 | <input type="radio"/> Urban      |
|     |                                                      | <input type="radio"/> White, Non-Hispanic                 |     |                                                                                                     | <input type="radio"/> Suburban   |
|     |                                                      | <input type="radio"/> Other                               |     |                                                                                                     | <input type="radio"/> Rural      |
| 15. | What subject matter do you teach? (as many as apply) | <input type="radio"/> All (Elementary/<br>Self-contained) | 18. | What is the approximate proportion of students who receive free and reduced lunches at your school? | <input type="radio"/> 0-20%      |
|     |                                                      | <input type="radio"/> Math                                |     |                                                                                                     | <input type="radio"/> 21-40%     |
|     |                                                      | <input type="radio"/> Science                             |     |                                                                                                     | <input type="radio"/> 41-60%     |
|     |                                                      | <input type="radio"/> Language Arts                       |     |                                                                                                     | <input type="radio"/> 61-80%     |
|     |                                                      | <input type="radio"/> Social Studies                      |     |                                                                                                     | <input type="radio"/> 81-100%    |

|     |                                   |                                         |                      |                                         |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 19. | What grade level(s) do you teach? | (K) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) | For office use only. | (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) |
| 20. | How many years have you taught?   | (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) |                      | (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) |
|     |                                   | (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) |                      | (0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) |

Source: (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001)

## APPENDIX F: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SURVEY

Which of the following best describes your role at NCMS? \*

- ☐ Classroom Teacher
- ☐ Instructional Coach/Specialist
- ☐ Instructional Support Staff (e.g., instructional aide, teaching assistant)
- ☐ School Administrator (e.g., principal, assistant principal)

What grade levels do you currently teach? Please select all that apply.\*

- ☐ Grade 6
- ☐ Grade 7
- ☐ Grade 8

What are your total years of experience in the field of education? \*

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 to 3 years

How long have you been employed by NCMS \*

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 to 3 years

What do you teach? Please select all that apply. \*

- ☐ Art
- ☐ Business, Computer, or Information Technology
- ☐ English Language Arts
- ☐ General classroom instruction
- ☐ Health and Physical Education
- ☐ Math
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Performing Arts
- ☐ Science

In which of the following types of professional learning (PL) programs or workshops did you participate during the 2022-23 school year that were offered by your school or district? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Technology-related (e.g., integration, skill development)
- ☐ Differentiated instruction
- ☐ Promoting equitable education (e.g., cultural competency, equity practices)
- ☐ Data collection and analysis (e.g., analyzing or tracking student assessment or progress)
- ☐ Safety (e.g., bullying, mandatory reporting OSHA)
- ☐ Subject-specific programs (e.g., math, literacy, foreign language)
- ☐ Supporting special student populations (e.g., EL, Special Education, At-Risk)
- ☐ Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)
- ☐ Classroom management
- ☐ Lesson planning/curriculum development
- ☐ Parent communication and engagement
- ☐ Professional responsibility (e.g., legal and ethical responsibilities)
- ☐ Developing and using formative/summative assessments
- ☐ Other (please specify):\_\_\_\_\_

Overall, how satisfied are you with the PL your programs offered by your school? \*

- ☐ VERY UNSATISFIED
- ☐ UNSATISFIED
- ☐ NEITHER
- ☐ SATISFIED
- ☐ VERY SATISFIED
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA



Overall, how satisfied are you with the PL your programs offered by your school? \*

- ☐ VERY UNSATISFIED
- ☐ UNSATISFIED
- ☐ NEITHER
- ☐ SATISFIED
- ☐ VERY SATISFIED
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA

How satisfied are you with the quality of training you received in the following PL programs/workshops? \*

- ☐ VERY UNSATISFIED
- ☐ UNSATISFIED
- ☐ NEITHER
- ☐ SATISFIED
- ☐ VERY SATISFIED
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA

...

How satisfied are you with the ongoing support and reinforcement of material following training for the following PL programs/workshops? \*

- ☐ VERY UNSATISFIED
- ☐ UNSATISFIED
- ☐ NEITHER
- ☐ SATISFIED
- ☐ VERY SATISFIED
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA

How satisfied are you with the convenience and accessibility of training for the following PL <sup>\*</sup> programs/workshops?

- ☐ VERY UNSATISFIED
- ☐ UNSATISFIED
- ☐ NEITHER
- ☐ SATISFIED
- ☐ VERY SATISFIED
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA

...

In general, the professional Learning opportunities offered by my school meet my needs as an <sup>\*</sup> educator.

- ☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE
- ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- ☐ AGREE
- ☐ STRONGLY AGREE
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA

In general, the professional learning opportunities offered by my school are relevant to my work. \*

- ☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE
- ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- ☐ AGREE
- ☐ STRONGLY AGREE
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA

\*\*\*

In general, the professional development learning offered by my school positively impact my instructional practice. \*

- ☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE
- ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- ☐ AGREE
- ☐ STRONGLY AGREE
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA

In general, the professional learning opportunities offered by my school include offerings for participants of different skill/experience levels. \*

- ☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE
- ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- ☐ AGREE
- ☐ STRONGLY AGREE
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA



In general, the professional learning opportunities offered by my school offer practical information or skills for me to implement. \*

- ☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE
- ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- ☐ AGREE
- ☐ STRONGLY AGREE
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA

In general, the professional learning opportunities offered by my district meet my needs as an educator. \*

- ☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE
- ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- ☐ AGREE
- ☐ STRONGLY AGREE
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA

...

In general, the professional learning opportunities offered by my district are relevant to my work. \*

- ☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE
- ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- ☐ AGREE
- ☐ STRONGLY AGREE
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA

In general, the professional learning opportunities offered by my district positively impact my instructional practice. \*

- ☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE
- ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- ☐ AGREE
- ☐ STRONGLY AGREE
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA

...

In general, the professional learning opportunities offered by my district include offerings for participants of different skill/experience levels. \*

- ☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE
- ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- ☐ AGREE
- ☐ STRONGLY AGREE
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA

In general, the professional learning opportunities offered by my district offer practical information or skills for me to implement. \*

- ☐ STRONGLY DISAGREE
- ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- ☐ AGREE
- ☐ STRONGLY AGREE
- ☐ DON'T KNOW/NA



In which of the following areas would you be most interested in receiving additional PD? Please select up to 5 options. \*

- ☐ Technology-related (e.g., integration, skill development)
- ☐ Differentiated instruction
- ☐ Promoting equitable education (e.g., cultural competency, equity practices)
- ☐ Data collection and analysis (e.g., analyzing or tracking student assessment or progress)
- ☐ Safety (e.g., bullying, mandatory reporting OSHA)

What time of day do you prefer to participate in professional development? Please select up to <sup>\*</sup> 3 options.

- ☐ During planning time
- ☐ During school-day release time
- ☐ During designated district early-release days
- ☐ After school hours
- ☐ Before school hours
- ☐ No Preference

## APPENDIX G: CITI PROGRAM CERTIFICATION



Completion Date 27-Aug-2023  
Expiration Date 27-Aug-2026  
Record ID 57758352

This is to certify that:

**Keith Neal**

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of  
certification through CME.

**Human Research**  
(Curriculum Group)  
**Group 2.Social / Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel**  
(Course Learner Group)  
**1 - Basic Course**  
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

**East Carolina University**

**CITI**  
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US  
[www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org)

APPENDIX H: WALKTHROUGH INSTRUMENT

Section 1 of 7

Beginning Teacher Wellcome Walk-Through

B

I

U

Form description

Email \*

Valid email

This form is collecting emails. [Change settings](#)

OBSERVER \*

Lane

Neal

TEACHER \*

Section 2 of 7

Walkthrough Look For



Description (optional)



What are we Looking for Today

- ☐ Culture and Environment
- ☐ Student Engagment/Rigor
- ☐ Instructional Strategies
- ☐ Blended Learning

After section 2 Continue to next section



Section 3 of 7

Culture and Environment



Description (optional)

SUBJECT

1. ELA/Reading
2. Math
3. Science
4. Social Studies
5. Encore

ESSENTIAL QUESTION STATEMENTS \*

- ☐ Posted
- ☐ Referenced During Lesson
- ☐ Not Posted

Section 3 of 7

Culture and Environment



Description (optional)

SUBJECT

1. ELA/Reading
2. Math
3. Science
4. Social Studies
5. Encore

ESSENTIAL QUESTION STATEMENTS \*

- ☐ Posted
- ☐ Referenced During Lesson
- ☐ Not Posted

### TEACHER ENGAGEMENT

- ☐ Front of the Room
- ☐ Sitting at Desk
- ☐ Walking around monitoring
- ☐ Working with groups
- ☐ Working one-on-one



### LOOK FOR

- ☐ Anchor Charts
- ☐ Graphic Organizers
- ☐ Higher Level Questioning
- ☐ Scaffolding/Intervention
- ☐ Small Group and/or Small Group Instruction
- ☐ Student Collaboration
- ☐ Taking Assessment
- ☐ Teacher Modeling
- ☐ Using Technology

## Student Engagement and Rigor



Description (optional)

### SUBJECT

1. ELA/Reading
2. Math
3. Science
4. Social Studies
5. Encore



### ESSENTIAL QUESTION STATEMENTS

- ☐ Posted
- ☐ Referenced During Lesson
- ☐ Not Posted

### TEACHER ENGAGEMENT

- ☐ Front of the Room
- ☐ Sitting at Desk
- ☐ Walking around monitoring
- ☐ Working with groups
- ☐ Working one-on-one



### LOOK FOR

- ☐ Anchor Charts
- ☐ Graphic Organizers
- ☐ Higher Level Questioning
- ☐ Scaffolding/Intervention
- ☐ Small Group and/or Small Group Instruction
- ☐ Student Collaboration
- ☐ Taking Assessment
- ☐ Teacher Modeling
- ☐ Using Technology

### Instructional Strategies



Description (optional)



#### SUBJECT

1. ELA/Reading
2. Math
3. Science
4. Social Studies
5. Encore

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTION STATEMENTS

- ☐ Posted
- ☐ Referenced During Lesson
- ☐ Not Posted

### TEACHER ENGAGEMENT

- ☐ Front of the Room
- ☐ Sitting at Desk
- ☐ Walking around monitoring
- ☐ Working with groups
- ☐ Working one-on-one



### LOOK FORs

- ☐ Anchor Charts
- ☐ Graphic Organizers
- ☐ Higher Level Questioning
- ☐ Scaffolding/Intervention
- ☐ Small Group and/or Small Group Instruction
- ☐ Student Collaboration
- ☐ Taking Assessment
- ☐ Teacher Modeling

Blended Learning



Description (optional)



SUBJECT

1. ELA/Reading
2. Math
3. Science
4. Social Studies
5. Encore

ESSENTIAL QUESTION STATEMENTS

- ☐ Posted
- ☐ Referenced During Lesson
- ☐ Not Posted

Closing



Description (optional)

**FEEDBACK ON LOOK FORS**

Please respond via this email to these questions within 48 hours.

Long answer text

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Long answer text

## APPENDIX I: WALKTHROUGH DATA

| OBSERVER | TEACHER | What are we Looking for Today | TEACHER ENGAGEMENT       | LOOK FOR                                                                                                                |
|----------|---------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Neal     | Stief   | Culture and Environment       | Walking around monitorir | Whole Group Instruction                                                                                                 |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Culture and Environment       | Walking around monitorir | Anchor Charts, Teacher Modeling, Using Technology, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary                                        |
| Neal     | Racey   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Whole Group Instruction                                                                                                 |
| Neal     | Racey   | Culture and Environment       | Walking around monitorir | Anchor Charts, Teacher Modeling, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction                                 |
| Neal     | Stief   | Culture and Environment       | Walking around monitorir | Anchor Charts, Scaffolding/Intervention, Student Collaboration, Using Technology, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary         |
| Neal     | Stief   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Anchor Charts                                                                                                           |
| Neal     | Stief   | Culture and Environment       | Walking around monitorir | Graphic Organizers, Using Technology                                                                                    |
| Neal     | Racey   | Culture and Environment       | Walking around monitorir | Anchor Charts, Using Technology                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Stief   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Teacher Modeling, Whole Group Instruction                                                                               |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Teacher Modeling, Using Technology, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction                              |
| Neal     | Racey   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Using Technology, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Anchor Charts, Using Technology, Whole Group Instruction                                                                |
| Neal     | Rubio   |                               | Walking around monitorir | Using Technology, Whole Group Instruction                                                                               |
| Neal     | Racey   | Culture and Environment       | Walking around monitorir | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers, Student Collaboration                                                                |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Anchor Charts, Teacher Modeling, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction                                 |
| Neal     | Stief   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Anchor Charts, Teacher Modeling, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction                                 |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction                                                                  |
| Neal     | Racey   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Racey   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Racey   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Racey   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Stief   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Racey   | Culture and Environment       | Walking around monitorir | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers, Using Technology, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary                                      |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Stief   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Using Technology, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction                                                |
|          |         |                               |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Culture and Environment       | Working with groups      | Anchor Charts, Small Group and/or Small Group Instruction                                                               |
| Neal     | Racey   | Culture and Environment       | Sitting at Desk, Walking | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers, Higher Level Questioning, Student Collaboration, Teacher Modeling, Using Technok     |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Culture and Environment       | Walking around monitorir | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers, Using Technology, Whole Group Instruction                                            |
| Neal     | Racey   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers, Using Technology, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction             |
| Neal     | Stief   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Stief   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Higher Level Questioning, Using Technology, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction                      |
| Neal     | Racey   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Racey   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers, Using Technology, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction             |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Racey   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Graphic Organizers, Small Group and/or Small Group Instruction, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Writing and/or Writing / |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Racey   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Racey   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Stief   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Stief   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Racey   | Culture and Environment       | Walking around monitorir | Graphic Organizers, Using Technology, Whole Group Instruction                                                           |
| Neal     | Stief   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room        | Using Technology, Whole Group Instruction                                                                               |
| Neal     | Stief   | Culture and Environment       | Front of the Room, Worki | Anchor Charts, Student Collaboration, Using Technology                                                                  |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Racey   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Stief   | Culture and Environment       | Walking around monitorir | Anchor Charts, Teacher Modeling, Using Technology, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction               |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Culture and Environment       | Sitting at Desk          | Anchor Charts, Using Technology, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction                                 |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Racey   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Stief   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Stief   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Racey   | Student Engagement/Rigor      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Stief   | Culture and Environment       | Walking around monitorir | Anchor Charts, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary                                                                            |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Stief   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |
| Neal     | Rubio   | Instructional Strategies      |                          |                                                                                                                         |

|      |       |                          |                          |                                                                                            |
|------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Neal | Rubio | Culture and Environment  | Sitting at Desk, Walking | Anchor Charts, Using Technology                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Culture and Environment  | Walking around monitor   | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary                           |
| Neal | Racey | Culture and Environment  | Sitting at Desk          | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction  |
| Neal | Stief | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Culture and Environment  |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Culture and Environment  | Sitting at Desk          | Anchor Charts, Teacher Modeling, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction    |
| Neal | Stief | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Stief | Culture and Environment  |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Stief | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Stief | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Culture and Environment  | Walking around monitor   | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction  |
| Neal | Stief | Culture and Environment  | Front of the Room        | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers                                                          |
| Neal | Racey | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Stief | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Culture and Environment  | Walking around monitor   | Taking Assessment                                                                          |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Stief | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Culture and Environment  | Walking around monitor   | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary, Whole Group Instruction  |
| Neal | Rubio | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Stief | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Stief | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Culture and Environment  | Front of the Room        | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers                                                          |
| Neal | Stief | Culture and Environment  | Sitting at Desk          | Using Technology                                                                           |
| Neal | Stief | Culture and Environment  | Sitting at Desk          | Anchor Charts, Graphic Organizers, Higher Level Questioning, Whole Group Instruction       |
| Neal | Racey | Culture and Environment  |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Blended Learning         |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Stief | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Stief | Culture and Environment  |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Stief | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Instructional Strategies |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Rubio | Student Engagement/Rigor |                          |                                                                                            |
| Neal | Racey | Culture and Environment  | Sitting at Desk          | Graphic Organizers, Student Collaboration, Teacher Modeling, Utilizing Academic Vocabulary |

